



THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Tuesday 23 May 2023 at 5.00 pm

Held online via Zoom

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| PRESENT: | Tina Coates | Chair |
| | Nathan Garat | Governor |
| | Rob Lewis | Governor |
| | Janet Robertson | Staff Governor BCA |
| | Signe Sutherland | Governor |
| | Gillian May | Group Principal & Chief Executive |
| | Antonia Spinks | Co-opted Member of Q&C Committee |
| | Alison Wheatley | Governor |
| | Angela Wellings | Chair of Corporation |
| | Aaina Khan | Student Governor FE |

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| IN ATTENDANCE: | Amanda Down | Principal, Sixth Form |
| | Anne Entwistle | Principal, FE |
| | Jessica Berry | Vice Principal (FE) Curriculum Quality and Innovation |
| | Laura Peters | Assistant Principal FE |
| | Tracy Reeve | Director of Governance |

MINUTE No

ACTION

1. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies had been received from Mobalaji Alabi and Sali Adams. Laura Peters (LP) was introduced to the meeting as Assistant Principal (FE) Safeguarding Curriculum and SEND who was the lead for High Needs provision across TWFCG.
2. **Notification of any other urgent business**
There was no other business notified.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
No member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.
4. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 April 2023**
The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 April 2023, having been previously sent to members, were agreed as a true record and would be taken as signed by the Chair.
All Members were agreed.
5. **Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Held on 25 April 2023**
It was noted that all matters arising had been actioned or would be covered within this agenda.
6. **HIGH NEEDS PROVISION 'DEEP DIVE'**
- 6.1 **High Needs Improvement Plan**
The Assistant Principal FE (LP) presented the report which gave governors an update on progress against the post-Ofsted improvement plan for High Needs provision across The Windsor Forest Colleges Group (TWFCG). The meeting was reminded that High Needs provision was graded as Requires Improvement at the last TWFCG Ofsted Inspection (November 2019). The High Needs provision at BCA pre-merger had been judged as Good by Ofsted. LP informed the meeting that her background was at BCA and she had been working with staff at TWFCG for the year pre-merger as well as leading on this provision post-merger. LP assured Governors that good progress had been made since August 2022 but

the targets in the improvement plan were not yet fully achieved. The detailed progress against each of the four key objectives was considered in more detail.

The meeting noted the four key areas which had been put in place within the improvement plan for High Needs post-merger:

1. To ensure systems/processes (IT/ILP/EBS/curriculum) align to allow staff to effectively identify, assess, monitor and evidence the SEND*/ HNS** learner journey. (*Target date September 2023.*)
2. To ensure impactful use of Learning Support Assistants in lessons so students receive the right support at the right level and make good/outstanding progress from their starting point. (*Target date September 2024.*)
3. To effectively evidence a consistent approach around student progress, stretch and challenge and development of life skills (including communication skills and independence) within our Foundation provision across FE. (*Target date August 2024.*)
4. Adults and apprenticeship provision: To follow clear and consistent policies and procedures that link with a whole college approach to SEND and provide students with high quality support that enhances learning, skills, technical expertise, and experiences enabling them to transition successfully into the workplace. (*Target date December 2023.*)

(**Special Educational Needs and Disability ** High Needs Students*)

Target 1 - Systems/ processes: LP confirmed that the learner journey started at Open Days when staff at both campuses were gathering information on any additional needs. LP highlighted the current work being undertaken to ensure that the application process was fully aligned across the whole of TWFCG. This would be discussed at the next senior curriculum team meeting in order to ensure that consistency was in place for enrolment 2023/24. LP confirmed that there would be specific processes in place at enrolment to identify any additional learning needs and expectations. LP asserted the positive impact of the online Individual Learner Plan (ILP) system which allowed staff to identify additional needs and all staff across the college group could access the learner data. Any Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) information and expected outcomes/ target setting would be included on the ILP. LP informed the meeting that the ILP system was currently being further refined for September 2023.

Governors (RL) sought clarity on this initial assessment process and whether all learners – even those who did not declare an additional learning support (ALS) need - were assessed within enrolment to identify any ALS needs. LP confirmed that all students were asked whether they had any identified need. Learners were also asked questions to identify their preferred learning style which sometimes flagged an ALS need which had not been previously identified. However, LP confirmed that even though the enrolment process was rigorous and tried to capture all ALS needs there were some learners who slipped through this initial assessment 'net'. The meeting noted that although all learners had ILPs, those learners with EHCPs also had additional paperwork which monitored activity and progress.

The meeting discussed the implications of learners who had EHCPs which were legal documents requiring the college to follow certain key steps within the rigorous process. Governors (SS) sought confirmation on whether the Requires Improvement grade for TWFCG had been flagged in relation to Special Needs Learners or Additional Learning Support. LP confirmed that the Ofsted report focussed on designated High Needs learners and those on EHC Plans however, in order to drive up quality across the college group she had broadened the improvement plan to cover all aspects of High Needs provision across the whole of TWFCG. The meeting noted that although four key issues – detailed above - were the areas of focus, the improvement plan was looking at a much larger picture including changing and embedding a new culture across all four sites.

Governors questioned the format of the 'Responsibility' column on the action plan. For example, on Target 1 there were seven key actions but only six people listed as 'responsible'. It was not clear where the responsibility for certain actions sat.

ACTION: 'Responsibility' column of High Needs Improvement Plan to be amended to make it clearer where the accountability for each action completion sat (maybe use a colour code).

LP

Target 2 - Impactful use of learning support assistants (LSAs): LP highlighted that the large number of LSAs (145 across the group) made it difficult to ensure consistency, but the target was to standardise LSA provision across the Group. Senior staff were undertaking learning walks to observe LSA practice and an LSA strategy group had been created to look at development and training for LSAs and the teaching staff expectations of them. The Chair sought clarity on how many LSAs were in each classroom and LP confirmed that it was predicated on the learners EHCPs; there was a legal obligation to meet the support need identified within them. LP confirmed that Ofsted would look at the level of LSA support and whether it was appropriate and was being used correctly and effectively.

Target 3 – Stretch and challenge: LP confirmed that this had been lifted directly from the Ofsted feedback at Langley College in relation to the Foundation provision. The number of learners within this provision across the Group was now 168: 125 learners at BCA and 43 at Langley. LP reminded the meeting that TWFCG now worked with 14 separate local authorities and there was a need for High Needs learners to be allocated to both colleges. The balance between demand for BCA places and Langley was gradually being improved. LP confirmed that the restructured curriculum now meant that pathways for learners were now strong at Langley and marketing was working to try and refocus some applicants towards Langley rather than BCA. Demand for Langley Foundation provision had been strong at the last Open Day. The CEO asked whether there would be a better balance between BCA and Langley numbers for 2023/24; LP confirmed that progress was being made but there were still a number of applicants who favoured BCA as a campus. However, the college was working with the local authorities to move to EHCPs naming TWFCG rather than specifically BCA or Langley. This would then give staff some control on where learners were placed based on their destination and career aims. However, the meeting agreed that the very 'special' BCA environment did suit learners with certain needs. Governors also discussed the importance of the parents' choice and many wanted their children to go to BCA rather than Langley; it was perceived as a more protective environment. The meeting agreed that working to change the parental preference would be key. The High Needs team was looking to work with parents and carers to change perceptions, but LP reminded the meeting that it should not be underestimated how complex that would be. The Team was working hard to get learners, parents and local authority staff into Langley College so that they could see how good the provision now was.

Governors (AH) challenged on why the completion dates for targets 2 and 3 were delayed until September and August 2024. LP informed the meeting that although progress had been made, there was still a lot of work to complete on consistency of process and staff training. The Summer 2024 dates were realistic and achievable. Vice Principal FE (JB) reminded the meeting that the original Area for Improvement from the Ofsted Report had been in relation to process but the College High Needs Team had now widened this to include additional objectives in the improvement plan. JB suggested that the Governors should understand that the team needed more praise as LP was underselling the progress that had already been made. JB suggested that the extended target dates reflected the additional targets that had been included in the improvement plan. The meeting suggested that the SLT needed to consider the presentational aspect of the College asserting that it had two 'Good with Outstanding Features' Foundation Departments but the improvement targets would not be met until summer 2024; to some extent this did not make sense. The Chair highlighted the suggestion in the meeting chat that the targets could be broken down into smaller milestones with more specific dates set against the individual elements. This would enable the progress already made to be seen more clearly.

ACTION: Redraft High Needs Post-Inspection Action Plan to include smaller milestones within targets 2-3 and a range of realistic completion dates.

LP/ SLT

ACTION: The CEO (GM) suggested that a future paper to the Quality & Curriculum Committee in 2023/24 should include learner voice feedback from Foundation Students as well as progression/ destination statistics into employment and higher-level courses.

LP

GM assured the meeting that this area of provision although very important was not causing her any concern as the staff were delivering a high-quality curriculum. The specialism of staff at BCA had been used pre- and post-merger to facilitate quality improvement at Langley.

Target 4 - Adults and Apprenticeships: The meeting was reminded that this had always proven challenging, even at BCA, as the learners started on a 'roll-on' basis throughout the academic year. It was important to have key staff members in all of the Apprenticeship enrolment meetings. LP confirmed that the VP Adults, Commercial and Apprenticeships (KS)

was working on developing a consistency of process around SEND for apprentices and adult learners. LP highlighted the use of additional pastoral support tutors who provided the key link between support and teaching staff. The objective would be to ensure that the college was capturing the right information about all learners at the right time.

6.2 **Ofsted Expectations**

The Chair sought clarification on what the end goal of the Improvement Plan was – whether it was simply to move the Ofsted rating or was it broader than that. LP informed the meeting that each area within High Needs had a separate Quality Improvement Plan, but this was too much detail and paperwork to bring to the Quality & Curriculum Committee. LP asserted that her end goal was to ensure that the whole of TWFCG was fully meeting each student's needs to get them to their desired outcome.

The meeting took the detail on the SEND element of the Ofsted Inspection Framework as read. LP confirmed that Ofsted would look at SEND across the board to assess that there was aspiration and good quality provision for all learners. The college would need to evidence the learner journey all the way through to destinations. LP highlighted that it was sometimes harder to evidence learners gaining softer skills but the High Needs team was creating tools to try and evidence all elements of learning and development.

6.3 **College Key Performance Indicators**

The meeting considered the data which showed that learners at BCA with EHCPs/SEND achieved 3% better than their peers without SEND. The meeting agreed that this suggested that the support provided was appropriate and High Needs students following vocational qualifications made progress and achieved. The 3% achievement gap was minimal which also showed that the college was not over supporting High Needs learners. However, achievement rates for EHCP/ SEND learners for 2021/22 had dropped by 5% from the prior year; this was due to a number of learners withdrawing due to mental health and anxiety difficulties post-Covid.

At Langley the overall achievement for learners with EHCPs had increased by 9% between 2020/21 and 2021/22. This suggested that the changes made to LSA support provided across mainstream areas had a positive impact as well as leadership changes within the Langley Foundation department. LP confirmed that the SLT expected these results to increase further in 2022/23, and staff would continue to work towards the whole group target of 87% achievement. Langley High Needs achievement was now only 1% lower than All students (79% versus 80%). The Chair sought clarity on whether external benchmarking data was available, and governors were reminded that 2020/21 data was impacted by lockdown so was not a useful benchmark. The Principal FE confirmed that all colleges were waiting for meaningful post-Covid benchmarks for all provision.

6.4 **Adult learners**

The meeting discussed the Adult Learning for Independence and Employment (ALFIE) provision which had been a big success story. At BCA and Langley, the ALFIE provision had grown from 52 students in 2020/21 (80 provisions) to 92 students in 2022/23 (166 provisions). Governors sought and were given clarity that a 'provision' was a single course. In 2022/23 ALFIE courses expanded at BCA to meet demand and new courses were launched at Langley, which had been very successful. Feedback from students, parents/carers, supported living, community centres and adult social care had been very positive. This also recognised the lack of alternative services within RBWM and Slough Borough Council (SBC). The meeting noted that a new course focusing on supported employment and getting adult learners into paid and voluntary roles within the community had been extremely successful this year with 33% of the 12 learners – to date – having been offered employment. LP confirmed that ALFIE would be an area of growth for TWFCG and plans were in place to ensure that growth would not have any impact on the high quality provision. Current plans were for an increase of 20% in ALFIE students for 2023/24 with a range of new courses to meet the needs of ALFIE learners. The meeting took the detailed information around the ALFIE course offer and feedback as read.

6.5 **Discussion and conclusion**

Governors sought confirmation that the College was recovering the appropriate Element 3 funding from local authorities to deliver what was required for students. LP confirmed that the college fully costed all elements of the EHCP and fully recovered all the costs of delivery – a small permissible administration fee was also charged to local authorities. The Finance Team had a good relationship with staff at the local authorities and were very good at

recovering all monies due. LP informed the meeting that at the moment there was only £1,700 of Element 3 funding not paid which was very positive and a much better picture than in many FE colleges.

Governors asked whether there was a further breakdown of achievement by level within EHCP learners; LP confirmed that progress trackers were based on individual targets for each learner.

Supported Internships: LP confirmed that the College did offer Supported Internships – there had been 8 during 2022/23 and this was the fourth year of delivery. The plans were to double these places to 16 for 2023/24 as the outcomes from this programme were excellent in terms of employment opportunities. TWFCG was currently seeking capital investment from local authorities to make this increase in numbers. The CEO confirmed that the college was currently negotiating with SBC, Bucks and RBWM for the capital funding. LP confirmed that she had recently attended a very positive meeting with SBC as the college went with a very clear agenda; no further growth would be possible at BCA with the current space.

Governors (AW) highlighted a piece of work recently undertaken by Hampshire County Council to look at the high cost of placing High Needs learners where they had to study a long way from their home local authority. This could often be in excess of £100,000 per learner. There was now a proposal to bring learners closer to home by setting up Enterprise Hubs in FE Colleges in Hants.

ACTION: Hampshire Local Employability Model to be investigated (AW to provide contact details at Hants CC).

LP/ AW

The Chair thanked LP for her very comprehensive update and asked whether there was anything else that governors could do to support this work. LP highlighted the need for ongoing time spent looking at this area and awareness of the issues involved. It was suggested that Governors should be invited to attend any special events involving High Needs learners as well as visiting classrooms to see delivery of this curriculum area in action. LP reaffirmed her view that she needed another year to ensure consistent processes were in place across the whole of TWFCG but she felt that the team had made good progress. The CEO (GM) concurred with this view and thanked LP for doing a great job during the first -year post-merger. GM informed the meeting that she was looking forward to an Ofsted visit to validate the strength of the High Needs provision across TWFCG.

The update report on High Needs provision was NOTED and RECEIVED

7. **Dates and Times of Future Meetings**

The final meeting for the academic year would be held on Tuesday 20 June 2023 @ 5pm and this would be a 'Deep Dive' into the Langley College QIP (online via Zoom).

NOTED

8. **Any Urgent Business**

There was no urgent other business notified.

The meeting ended at 6.10pm

Chair Date