

Minutes of Full Board

Date: 4th Dec 2024

Time: 4.30 pm

Location: Itchen College, S10

Present:	Mr B Jones (Chair)	Mr A Scott (Principal)
	Mr D Batten	Mrs C Carpenter
	Mr R Parke	Mr C Breckenridge
	Mr D Shepherd	Mr J Johnson
	Mrs I Henson	Mrs L Court
	Miss S Duggan	Mr M McCauley
	Mr M Stancheris	Mrs C Wilson
	Mrs C Lowe	Mr A Fitt
	Mrs S Hammett	Mrs M Harris-Bridge
	Mr T Grant	
In attendance:	Mrs S Carter (Vice principal)	Mr M Jones (Vice principal)
	Miss F McIntyre (Clerk)	Mrs R Stratton (Assistant principal)
	Mrs E Barrett (Vice principal)	
Apologies:	Ms S Garner	Mr M Brown
Absent:	Mr E Unuigbe	Ms S Smith

1 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

- 1.1 New governors were proposed by the S&G committee. Agreed by board. MS, JJ and IH joined the meeting. They were introduced and welcomed.

2 Declarations of interest

None were declared.

3 Minutes of the last meetings – 2nd July 2024

Minutes approved as true record.

3.1 Matters arising:

8.3 - RS action - action taken on questions raised regarding attendance, the QIP and levels of study.

FM - To assist all governors(both new and current), a list of key documents would be made available. A draft of the key documents was nearing completion and would be circulated in the new year.

A governor asked if the format and quality of the minutes of meetings could be given special attention, especially in the light of Itchen being graded an

outstanding college. Chair thanked the governor and indicated that special attention would be given.

4 Chairs Update

The Chair reported that he had written a letter to all College staff, on behalf of the governing body, thanking them for all their hard work and commitment both before and during the Ofsted inspection.

The governors thanked Alex for his leadership of the college. A special thanks to Becky and Emma who managed the inspection process on a daily basis and provided extra evidence required by the inspection team in a timely manner.

4.1 A review of the performance of the chair has been completed.

4.2 FE Commissioner feedback suggests that more reviews should be completed in preparation for the next review of governance. S&G would discuss what extra reviews should take place in the future.

Following the OUTSTANDING grade by OFSTED, the chair indicated that many would expect that everything the college did, from November 2024 onwards, should be of the highest quality.

5 Principal's Report

Principal's Report circulated prior to the meeting and the Principal highlighted the following and answered questions from governors :

- Unusual for a College like Itchen to get an Outstanding grade, so all should all be very proud. At a recent conference, Itchen was used as an example of a College that does not 'cherry pick' its students but still gets an outstanding grade. Our challenge now is to capitalise on this opportunity.
- 2024/25 enrollments indicate that the college is in a strong position.
- Demographic peak - over the coming years the overall number of students in the area seeking a place at local colleges will reduce.
- Applications currently received put Itchen in a strong position and staff have no major concerns but will monitor carefully.
- Additional 'in year' funding is still not known. Confident that there will be some funding but the level is unknown. Government is working on a number of items that will have an impact on College funding.
- Southampton City Councillors are visiting the College in January 2025.
- There is prospect of greater devolution in the local area. The structure of local Government in Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight is expected to change. The anticipated change should see the look of local government, similar to those changes that have taken place in the north of England, where certain types of funding for areas of college work are managed via a local executive mayor. This change of approach could be an opportunity for College.
- The College has been involved In conversations with the City Council regarding students with high needs provision. The college will need to consider how growth in that area will impact Itchen.

- From reports given by project managers and building contractors, the new build is progressing well and on schedule. The college has been agreeing internal colour schemes with the contractors.
- The Estates Strategy will need to be active about possible future growth, new areas of work, and a possible relook at student catering and social areas. The recent increase in learner numbers suggests a 'new look' may be needed.

5.1 Industrial action

There has been industrial action by teaching staff for three days. Day one saw twenty six staff withdraw their labour, day two thirteen and day three nineteen staff. This action has an impact but the staff are letting the students know when they will not be in College, so disruption to date has been kept to a minimum. A judicial review is proposed by the Unions involved.

5.2 Questions:

Q: Staff that are striking, are they duty bound to help students make up the work they missed?

A: No, they do not have to but most would do so. One teacher, when on strike, came in to teach one class that they were particularly worried about.

Q: Given the success of the Ofsted result and the excellent marketing of the college, is there risk that the harder to reach families will not apply in time. How will this risk be mitigated?

A: Do not want to enforce a deadline for receipt of applications and not proposing to move away from our present approach but we may need to have conversation about mechanisms that can be used, as we cannot recruit endlessly and accommodate everyone who applies.

Statement used is:

"recommend applications by Easter and any received after that date, we may not be able to accommodate"

Q: On the back of this situation, are there plans to collaborate with other providers with empty space / buildings?

A: These conversations are always around and are never straightforward and Itchen is not part of an academy grouping. Enrollment is currently at 1850 students which are being accommodated even without the seven classroom spaces the newbuild will provide. In terms of demographics we are in a good place and coping with growth within our own site without the need to seek accommodation on any other site.

Q: Applications - is there an increase in applications following a school visit? Are timings for this important?

A: Data on applications is tracked carefully. It is early days yet and there are no areas of significant concern. Assembly dates \ talks to schools are all booked in advance, leading up to the College open events and then the receipt and the opening of the completed applications.

Q: Are exit interviews conducted with staff? One member of staff is seen to leave after only 11 months, is this normal?

A: No...it is not normal and was not a reflection on the College. Exit interviews take place. Staff retention is good.

Q: Aside from industrial action, some courses are missing a high number of teaching days?

A: Some courses are affected more than others and these are carefully looked at.

Q: Is the Outstanding Ofsted judgement helpful for the Colleges International Work?

A: Yes, very helpful. Staff look carefully at demand and how to maximise take up, bearing in mind accommodation, facilities and resources.

5.3 All governors were requested to follow the Principal on LinkedIn and share his posts.

6 Finance Report

Finance Report circulated to Governors which covers the period to the end of September 2024. Annual surplus budget is still achievable and tracking slightly higher.

The following parts of the report were highlighted:

- Page 3 shows a list of what is not currently included.
- Page 6/7 trading income streams outside of funding, are tracking well and there are no issues.
- Page 8 - new build. As of the end October 2024, £1.8m spent with £1.2m received back from the grant. There is an issue with cash flow as College cannot draw down funds until invoices are received and submitted every month. There can be a six week time lag.
- Page 10 shows the cash flow, which is close to the internal limit set. This situation is down to timings rather than any issues. As soon as the new building is completed in March 2025 the situation will return to steady state.
- Page 11 - Financial health score of 180. Last year it was also 180 which is a good result.

6.1 Questions:

Q: What is the impact of NI changes?

A: This year it will cost £71,000 for four months, so it will be significant. Full year cost will be around £250,000. Extra Funding has been promised but as yet there is no indication of the level of funding.

Q: The age debtors - is this a normal level?

A: Over 90 days age debtor, relates to one invoice to China. College has a staff member based in China and their costs are reimbursed. There is often a time delay. Debts Relating to the Nursery do tend to creep up and is generally down to parents paying off fees in instalments. Invoices for fees are generally paid monthly but some parents can only pay weekly. There is a deposit held and it can be called upon if required.

7 Approval of annual audit reports

7.1 External auditor plans

Annual plan was distributed prior to the meeting. The audit ensures the college is a going concern. They did comment on how well the audits went this year.

Audit committee recommend report for approval: **Annual Audit Plan approved.**

8 College SAR

The SAR utilises reports from Faculty evaluations of curriculum areas, whole college data and evaluation of the 2023-4 QIP. The SAR structure is based on the judgements made during the Ofsted inspection, using this to review provision and plan for improvement..

One area where the college disagrees with the Ofsted judgement . Ofsted judged the colleges work on the skills agenda to be reasonable. The college feels that we make a strong contribution to meeting the local skills agenda via the college's work on diversity and the impact on curriculum design.

9 Strategic Plan and KPIs

KPIs emerge from the strategic plan. College nearing its final position but waiting for some extra data.

A red area for Itchen will be in attendance. Attendance remains an issue for the College and as it does nationally. Currently 3% above other Colleges, so not in a bad position.

Q: Could attendance be broken down into provision and also by age groups?

A: Yes, it can be done.

ACTION RS

Q: KPIs for staff? Can see the one for staff within the staff survey but is there one for learning and development? Where does this sit and who monitors? Can only one for staff on staff survey. None for learning and development. Where does such information sit?

A: The college could look at extending the surveys or developing a dashboard approach. Material is looked at within the G&E and C&Q brief / meetings. Similar reports go to both committees.

10 Reports from committee Chairs

10.1 S&G

Discussed governor recruitment but also gave some thought to the future look of the College.

10.2 Audit

Went through the external report in detail.

Internal auditors - TIAA. Not happy with service provided but College cannot find a suitable replacement. Considering whether to identify areas for an in depth report /survey and go to specific companies rather than 'all round' / 'generalist auditors. Areas like H&S, IT and HR could be included in some form of 'deep dive' exercise..

College would have fewer reports but they could be more valuable / useful, as they look at areas in more depth. Currently TIAA reports are late and create extra work for the finance team.

The Audit committee asks all other committees to consider what areas of their brief would be enhanced by an in depth review into specific areas of their work.

Chairs of committees to submit their thoughts/specific areas for review, by the date of the next full board meeting.

Action - Chairs of all committees.

Principal informed Governors that an external H&S audit was done and it was really valuable and identified some specific issues.

10.3 Estates

New build work is progressing on program and on budget. College has met all the planning requirements and all identified issues resolved.

College has an occupation plan so once available it can get operational in the shortest possible time.

The Estates committee will consider the future development of the College estate.

10.4 Finance

SC covered points under the finance report.

Surplus of £345,000 is predicted.

10.5 C&Q

The SAR and QIP are looked at in detail and throughout the year.

Also looked at destination data. The number of students going to apprenticeships is down. Good apprenticeship opportunities appear to be getting harder to access.

Discussion on the difficulties of getting full destination data. Recent detail published is much fuller than it has been in the past.

10.6 G&E

Covers a lot of topics.

The new governors joining made a good impact. They helped make a difference to the level of discussion and debate. Governors receive detailed reports. Committees on occasions have not had the number of governors necessary to make detailed scrutiny of all reports tabled. This is now not the case.

Committee looks at staff related matters, staff surveys and turnover of staff.

Growth in student numbers does have challenges for staff and this has been discussed.

The committee receives reports from Debbie Finch (regarding safeguarding) and from Aidy Waters (head of student support) with reports on the tutorial program.

Both attend the meetings which is very useful as it helps to promote good discussion and questions.

The Ofsted report highlighted that students feel safe at Itchen... which is good.

Adult education - presentation from Jo Brookes. Governors noted that over 3000 adult education students are involved in her programs, both within the college itself,

although the majority are programmed right across the Southampton area in community settings.

Comment from a governor. Had a visit with AW (student support) who said he values attending governor meetings and having that direct input.

Greenlight classrooms - Governor attended and thought the experience valuable and good. An excellent opportunity to see good practice being modelled.

11 Risk Register

Governors received a report prior to the meeting with the Risk Register for information.

Q: What are the yellow highlights?

A: Changes that have been made recently.

12 Governance Matters

12.1 AOC Code - for approval

Vote approved.

FM ACTION

Suggestion to have an agenda item to acknowledge it is demonstrated.

13 Policies

- Prevent
- H&S
- Safeguarding

Comment: Documents on Prevent are very useful especially when a governor does not have such a background.

Q: Ofsted looked at policies - any feedback?

A: In terms of our policies they were content. The Prevent action plan has to go to governors annually.

H&S policy - updated

Since College had a subsequent audit, there are likely to be changes made to the policy. This policy will return at a later date for approval.

Q: Do we have mental health first aiders?

A: Yes

Q: Prevent action plan - can column be on one page

A: Yeschanges can be made.

Q: Emergency controls. What happens when the named person is not in College? Is this an issue?

A: No, not an issue as long as people know their roles and who to contact.

13.1 Policies approved.

14 Impact, action review and possible visits

14.1 Action summary

Item	Action	Owner
9	Attendance data broken down into provision and also by age groups	RS
10.2	Committees to consider what Audits could be undertaken	Committee Chairs
12	Store AoC code for info	FM

14.2 Impact

- *Policies and code of governance approved*
- *Recognised the significance of the OUTSTANDING grade by Ofsted and how it will impact the development of the college and its standing in the local community it serves..*
- *The Governor's role is to remain strategic.*
- *Committees to consider how internal audit reviews can be used to assist further development. Suggestions to be made by the date of the next board meeting.*
- *New governors have a greater understanding of the structure of governance at Itchen...how committees operate with each other and roles of individuals.*
- *The importance of governors being physically present at main board meetings. Virtual attendance is allowed for committees but not for the main board.*

15 AOB

Q: Run, hide & tell - are we confident all students are aware of the process?

A: Yes... confident. Running simulator drills so not asking them to run, hide or tell! The drill will be asking what will they do? Some ongoing work needed.

16 Date of next meeting

Full Board Training development and strategy - 13th February 2025

17 Confidential meeting item

A confidential item followed. Staff and student governors were not present.