



**MINUTES OF THE REIGATE LEARNING ALLIANCE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY
MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2024 AT 16.30**

Present: Mr Spencer Bowen- LGB Member/LGB Chair
Mr Chris Whelan - Chief Executive Officer & LGB Member
Mr Nick Clark – Executive Principal & LGB Member
Mr Gerard Weide – LGB Member
Mr Jeremy Garner – LGB Member
Ms Nicola Thompson- LGB Staff Member
Ms Claire Hassan – LGB Staff Member
Ms Jenny Sharma – LGB Parent Member
Ms Cheryl Agius – LGB Member
Ms Amelia Rolt – LGB Student Member
Ms Eva Da Silva – LGB Student Member

In attendance: Mr Jon Allen – Governance Professional
Ms Sarah Walters - Deputy Principal
Ms Ellen Walkinshaw - Director of Progression & Skills (Agenda item 6 only)

1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Reigate Learning Alliance Local Governing Body (LGB).

Jenny Sharma, the recently elected parent governor, was welcomed to her first meeting.

2 APOLOGIES & QUORACY

Apologies were received from Yvette Robbins. The Governance Professional confirmed the meeting was quorate.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Spencer Bowen, Gerard Weide, Chris Whelan, and Nick Clark declared an interest in being members of the Reigate Trust Board.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting held 10 October 2023 (Paper 1) were received and approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

5 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. SKILLS AGENDA

The report provided governors with an update on the skills agenda and its impact on Reigate College (Paper 2).

Sixth form colleges that are not academised have to prepare an Accountability Agreement (AA) outlining their contribution to meeting the identified local skills gaps. The AA is a 12-14 page document in two parts:

- Part 1 – Terms and conditions to accept government funding similar to existing model agreements from ESFA
- Part 2 – Prepared by Colleges to identify aims for year that reflect the College's priorities which need to link with Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

When Ofsted inspect those colleges in scope the inspection will cover the skills agenda and a separate sub-judgement in the inspection report will make a judgement on whether the college makes a limited, reasonable or strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Although an academy and, therefore, not required to meet the new accountability requirements, the expectation is that Reigate College will have to demonstrate accountability in the near future. To this end, the College has already put in place an action plan.

The action plan included in the report listed a number of aims (intents), actions (implementation) and target outcomes (impact) for the year ahead that reflected how the College is responding to national, regional and/or local priorities and skills needs. The listed actions covered green skills, digital skills, health, STEM, and cross cutting employment skills.

Governors welcomed the proactive action being taken by the College in addressing identified local skills.

The report also provided an update on the number of students attending work experience.

For all Upper Sixth students, 94.4% have undertaken work experience. It was confirmed those Upper Sixth students who have made an UCAS application will not be required to undertake work experience.

For Lower Sixth students the deadline date for students to have planned work experience is 19 March 2024. To date, 19.9% of Lower Sixth students have undertaken work experience. The LGB was informed the College is ahead of where it was this time last year and is on target for all Lower Sixth students to have undertaken work experience.

After completing their work experience, students are asked to complete a short evaluation. Governors asked if the evaluations were showing any positive impact on students arising from undertaking work experience? In response, it was stated that a third of students were able to confirm their work experience reinforced their preferred employment destination decision whereas another third confirmed their experience helped them to re-evaluate their employment options. The two student governors spoke positively about their own work experience. One confirmed her work with an architect firm reaffirmed her wanting to be an architect and the second student reported she has been offered an Apprenticeship with the firm where she undertook her work experience.

Governors welcomed the good progress being made in making available work experience opportunities for students, especially as this was an area identified by Ofsted as being in need of further development.

7. REIGATE COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The report (Paper 3) provided governors with a progress update on performance against annual targets listed in the College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR).

The key priority of the Development Plan was to address the areas of development identified by Ofsted, these being:

- Work experience opportunities for students
- Enhancement activities for students
- EHCP
- Target setting for students

The good progress being made on work experience opportunities for students was outlined in the previous agenda item.

The Development Plan confirmed 89.74% of all students enrolled have taken part in a form of enrichment at the College.

It was confirmed the internal auditor has undertaken a full audit of EHCP and the audit confirmed the actions taken have addressed the areas for development identified during the Ofsted inspection.

Further to the Ofsted report, arrangements were put in place to improve the ability of staff and students to set and monitor academic targets. A new target setting system was introduced in September with staff setting students their targets. The SLT monitoring of progress is on-going and student focus group meetings will be held in February/March to check student engagement and understanding of target setting. The two student governors both confirmed they have had targets set but there were some issues expressed on the robustness of follow-ups and monitoring of targets once set.

In summary the CEO stated there is now in place a robust system for target setting that is understood and used by staff. The next step is to further embed the process of target setting to make sure staff and students continue to review student targets and their performance.

8. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

A report from the CEO was received for information purposes that provided governors with a briefing on current developments of the curriculum available to 16-19 year olds (Paper 4).

In response to the low take up of T levels, lobbying by education and employers and criticism from Ofsted, the DfE have modified their approach on proposed curriculum reform.

T levels and Technical Certificates are still the DfE preferred route for vocational education. This has the same size as three A levels plus substantial work placement. Technical Certificates are intended to be shorter and much more specialised qualifications that might be used in apprenticeships.

Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQ): As BTECs have their funding withdrawn the DfE has agreed that some subject areas may still have a 'BTEC successor' qualification subject to the following considerations (a) not having an A level equivalent (b) they support employment in the NHS (c) they are STEM subjects. There are several considerable inconsistencies in the approach with some subjects that are not A levels (Travel and Tourism) still being defunded and others that do not meet any of the criteria (Performing Arts) being funded.

The AAQ will have a much higher formal examination content compared to BTECs and it is significant that they are described as 'academic' rather than 'vocational'. Some draft courses have been published and the DfE will confirm approval in summer 2024 and summer 2025 with courses starting in 2025 and 2026 depending on subject.

Advanced British Standard (ABS): This was recently unveiled by the Prime Minister. The intention is that this will replace A levels (and possibly replace or incorporate T levels) from the mid 2030s. The central ideas are:

1. Students should take more subjects.
2. Students should have more hours per week of teaching as Britain is a long way behind comparable countries in this respect.
3. Maths and English should be taught to 18.

The Labour Party has said that they may pause or modify the reform process, although it is not clear what this means in terms of any practical consideration. It is also evident that the DfE have set a timeline for implementation to ensure that a different government might find it very difficult to make changes.

The College took an early decision that it would not be practical to run T levels as the College could not guarantee the work placement element. Experience from other colleges and evidence from Ofsted have shown that this was the correct decision.

The following College vocational qualifications will potentially be defunded from 2025 and 2026 without a replacement: Law, Criminology, Travel and Tourism. In addition, Business is defunded but with some more specialist replacement possible in the form of a Finance qualification.

Some of the students currently taking the defunded qualifications will easily be able to take A level equivalents, others will probably not.

The College is currently discussing how this will be managed with the relevant departments based on the draft (ie not yet DfE approved) qualifications. Initial staff reaction to the draft courses is positive.

Final approval for courses starting in September 2025 will be given during the summer of 2024.

Governors asked what was the impact on students on the proposed curriculum reform outlined in the paper? The CEO replied it has the potential to reduce student choice and possible limitations on their choices compared to now. There are a number of College students who are undertaking three BTEC subjects. Under the reforms this would not be possible as students would be required to undertake one A Level plus two other subjects. BTEC subjects follow a modular approach with each module subject to an exam once the module has been completed with course work being part of their overall assessment. This approach on learning suits those students who are less academic and not all BTEC students would be able to do A Levels.

9. STUDENT VOICE

No matters were raised by the two student governors.

10. STAFF VOICE

No matters were raised by the two staff governors.

11. BOARD ASSURANCE ASSESSMENTS

Under the Board Assurance Framework (BAF), each Committee is asked to conduct, at the end of their meeting, an assessment on their level of assurance agreed against each report received.

The Chair sought from Governors their overall view on the level of assurances provided from the reports received at this meeting. The Local Governing Body confirmed the following assurance assessments:

Agenda Item	Subject	RAG rating	Any recommendation(s) or action(s) arising from discussions on the agenda item; Any comment(s) on the quality of the paper(s)/presentation(s) made available for the agenda item.
6	Skills Agenda		No recommendations
7	Development Plan		No recommendations
8	Curriculum Development		No recommendations
9	Student Voice		No recommendations
10	Staff Voice		No recommendations

12. MEETING REVIEW

Governors were asked if there were any new risks, including safeguarding, identified as a result of decisions made at this meeting that might impact upon the College's effectiveness? *(If yes, these should be assessed by SLT and added to the College's risk register).*

It was noted curriculum reform was already a risk identified on the risk register, along with the areas of development identified by Ofsted (work experience, enhancement, EHCP, and target setting).

No new risks were identified as a result of discussions and decisions made at this meeting.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 07 May 2024 at 16.30.

The meeting closed at 17.45.

Signed: _____ Date: _____