

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Minutes of the meeting held on 14TH July 2021, Microsoft Teams
17:00 – 19:00

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance 2020/21	Present at this meeting
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	7 of 8	Yes (in part)
Rebecca Carrington	Independent	7 of 8	Yes (in part)
Alan Cook	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Peter Cox	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Kaye Dwight	Staff	8 of 8	Yes (in part)
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Liz Marr	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
David Meadowcroft	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Julie Mills	CEO	8 of 8	Yes
Stephen Norrish	Independent	7 of 8	Yes
Ruby Parmar	Independent	7 of 8	No
Charlynn Pullen	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Ian Revell (from 10.6.21)	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Aniesa Shah	Staff	6 of 8	No
Gwynneth Tan	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Manish Verma	Independent	6 of 8	No
Tony Berwick resigned 5/11/20	Independent	1 of 1	
Asad Mir (resigned 11/5/21)	Student	6 of 6	
Georgia Pongourou (resigned 9/6/21)	Student	3 of 4	
Attendance % this meeting		82%	14 / 17
Attendance % year to date		93%	131 / 141

Regular attendees: Sally Alexander (Principal: Quality & Student Experience), Annie Allen (CPO), Alex Warner (Principal: Curriculum Innovation & Pedagogy), Karen Brown (Head of Governance)

Other attendees in part: Maria Bowness (Executive Head 16-19)

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

- The Chair welcomed Ian Revell to his first meeting.
- Apologies had been received from Ruby Parmar, Manish Verma, Aniesa Shah and Imelda Galvin.
- It had been agreed that Rebecca Carrington would join after item 3.2.
- Richard Bartlett-Rawlings and Kaye Dwight would be joining later due to work commitments.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

There is a standing declaration from Rebecca Carrington (Director and Principal of Arts1). Rebecca Carrington was not in attendance for item 3.2.

There was an agreed change of order to the agenda

3.2 Sub-contracting 2021/22 (Paper 3.2)

Julie Mills referred to paper 3.2 which sets out the policy and rationale for sub-contracting.

- The College is compliant with all rules relating to sub-contracting. The draft internal audit report on subcontracting in 2020/21 has been published with an audit opinion of 'satisfactory assurance' (which is the highest level of assurance). There was one minor recommendation relating to clarifying the contract duration when seeking Board approval.
- Curriculum plans for 2021/22 include two subcontracting arrangements for the provision of study programmes: Arts1 (an existing sub-contractor) and SOFEA (a new relationship).

Arts 1

- The contract duration is fully explained in Paper 3.2.
- Arts 1 is a specialist, high quality independent theatre school based in Milton Keynes. It has extremely high levels of vocational quality with a national reputation within the arts training sector. An extremely high proportion of students progress to HE and industry.
- Governor Rebecca Carrington is Principal and Owner of Arts 1. Due diligence has been completed and the requirements in the Conflicts of Interest Policy, which refer to related party transactions, have been met.
- The contract for the 2021/22 academic year is expected to be of similar value to 2020/21 (£469k) however final student numbers will not be confirmed until enrolments are complete. As contracts of £150k and over require Board approval, the final contract value will be confirmed in the Autumn term.

Action 1: Julie Mills

- Because of the partnership with Arts1, the College's performing arts provision is focusing on other aspects.
- In response to a governor question, Julie confirmed that should the contract not continue, there are contractual arrangements which would allow existing students to complete their course of study.

SOFEA

- SOFEA is a third sector organisation providing education, employability and wellbeing programmes for young people aged 14 – 24. With premises in Bletchley, SOFEA runs Fare Share and Community Larders projects (distributing food to families in need) while offering study programmes, DWP employability programmes and coaching and mentoring in partnership with Thames Valley Police.
- The College already works with SOFEA to support specific students with work experience and volunteering opportunities. The College is now exploring a subcontracted arrangement to deliver up to 20 study programme places during

2021/22; this will provide an alternative offer for students for whom mainstream programmes are not suitable.

- Due diligence has been completed. A contract for 20 students would be in the order of £85k (i.e. below the limit requiring Board approval).

The Board:

- **Approved the policy and rationale for sub-contracting**
- **Noted the assurance re compliance with sub-contracting rules**
- **Approved sub-contracting arrangements with Arts1 and SOFEA for 2021/22**
- **Approved the contract with Arts1 for 2021/22**

Rebecca Carrington joined the meeting

2.0 Strategic Priorities

2.1 CEO's Report to the Board (Paper 2.1)

- Julie Mills referred to her report which includes an overview of Board Strategic Priorities for 2020/21 (Table 1) and a recommendation to continue these into 2021/22.
- The CEO report also includes a summary of the bids and expressions of interest submitted to date. Since publishing the report, the College has received confirmation that the College's stage 1 submission to the FE CTF (Capital Transformation Fund) for £8.266m, has been successful. Subject to finding 10% savings, the stage 2 application must be submitted by 8th October (and may require the Board's Approvals T&FG to convene). If successful, this will accelerate capital investment at Chaffron Way. The College's contribution is up to 50%.

Governors asked questions:

In relation to staff joiners and leavers (Annex 1), what is the duration of the reporting period?

It is cumulative to date.¹

Have we engaged with the Parliamentary Select Committee on prison education?

Yes, we made a submission in January, and some prison colleagues also made personal submissions. We have been influencing as much as possible as the outcomes are likely to inform future procurement and contracts. It has been confirmed that learners cannot complete an apprenticeship whilst in prison.

The Property Strategy is not listed as a Board Strategic Priority for 2021/22 but is it the intention to bring this to the Board in the next cycle?

Yes, we are proposing to convene a Task & Finish Group comprising governors and external stakeholders in the Autumn. It is likely to be a key item at the Board Awayday in March 2022.

¹ After the meeting, it was established that the 60 leavers include:

- 21 employees being moved to the Probation Service under transfer arrangements (CRC contract)
- 22 occasional workers who have not worked in the year to date being removed from the database
- 17 resignations

The Board:

- **Received the CEO's Report**
- **Approved the Board's Strategic Priorities for 2021/22**

2.2 Financial Sustainability (Paper 2.2)

Julie Mills referred governors to Paper 2.2 and highlighted:

a) Financial Health 2020/21 - Period 10 Management Accounts:

- Suzanne Whitling, interim Finance Director, has worked with the Finance Team to produce Paper 2.2, She is very positive about the skills in the Finance Team and the ways of working.
- Overall College contribution YTD is £2k behind as at P10. The College is predicted to come in £58k ahead of budget full year (with an overall contribution of £717k).
- The cash balance was £5.90m at the 31st May (budget £5.61m). The full year cash balance is forecast to be £5.39m (budget £4.57m).
- The Board approved a campus investment budget of £1.3m for 2020/21 of which £724k has been spent year to date.
- The anomaly relating to the reporting of teaching pay costs (raised at a previous Board meeting) still exists. Julie assured governors that (as budgeted), an additional £1m is being spent on teaching pay costs this is being incorrectly reported as non-teaching pay costs. This anomaly in reporting will be addressed for the 2021/22 cycle.

In response to a governor question, Julie will clarify if the EFSA has reconciled for any over performance in R10.²

Signatories for Bank Authorisations

Annex 1 included a proposal to extend the list of authorised signatories (which will ensure there is sufficient cover during holiday periods) as follows:

Role Title	Name	Mandate List
CEO & Group Principal	Dr Julie Mills OBE	A
COO	Imelda Galvin	A
Principal: Quality & Student Experience	Sally Alexander	A
Principal: Curriculum Innovation and Pedagogy	Alex Warner	A
Director of Finance & Estates	Will Gordon	B
Group Director: Inclusion	Lindsey Styles	B
Senior Operations Director: Prison Services	Jason Mansell	B

² Subsequent to the meeting the College received notification from ESFA that reconciliation at R10 does not indicate any additional growth funding.

The Board:

- **Noted the financial position as of 31st May 2021 including the financial KPIs**
- **Noted the forecast year end position**
- **Noted the predicted cashflow forecast**
- **Noted the Campus Investment budget (Capex)**
- **Approved the mandate signatories**

b) Budget 2021/22

- Julie gave a verbal update on the budget which will be presented for approval at the additional meeting scheduled on 22nd July 2021. Detailed scrutiny and challenge is taking place to finalise the budget in line with the three year plan and to ensure a continuing 'good' financial health score.
- It may not be possible to absorb the cost of interim resource; this will be clarified by 22nd July.

The Board noted the update on the budget for 2021/22.

c) Finance Group Meeting 5th July 2021 (Paper 2.2C)

Mat Gotkowski referred to the report of the meeting and highlighted:

- At the meeting on 5th July, the FinG sought and received assurance on interim measures, governance, and controls.
- The FinG has provisionally agreed to convene on 28th July if the Board requests further scrutiny of the budget (i.e. after the Board meeting on 22nd July but prior to the ESFA deadline).

2.3 Student Experience

Richard Bartlett-Rawlings and Kaye Dwight joined the meeting during item 2.3.

Alex Warner, Sally Alexander and Maria Bowness led on this item.

a) Report on the Student Experience (Paper 2.3A)

Executive and Senior Leadership: Quality & Student Experience

- Alex Warner explained the new Group structure for Curriculum which will deliver the new Strategic Plan and the aim of 'Building Fairer Futures'. The Group structure will drive a joined up approach across all areas of the Group to ensure effective working, shared experiences, and best practice.
- The Curriculum Planning Project has led to a curriculum resourcing model which is being implemented. The model will ensure greater levels of consistency between schools, making sure that resource is allocated equally, and staff have equitable workloads.

Campus forecast Achievement, forecast headline targets and analysis by School

- Student achievement is forecast to be at similar levels to 2019/20 despite the challenges arising from the pandemic including the disruptions to learning.

- For many areas, there were no external examinations this year and schools and colleges were required to submit teacher assessed grades (TAGs) which significantly increased the workload of teachers. Internal assessments were developed (and marked) and moderated. There is evidence to support the TAG for every student.
- GCSE English and Maths (E&M) results (i.e. TAGs) are good and similar to last year.
- Functional Skills E&M results will be a focus for the E&M Strategy Group. All E&M provision has been online during 2020/21 and lower attainers, i.e. generally those who are most likely to be enrolled on Functional Skills, did not cope as well during lockdown without regular face to face support.
- Some Schools have out-performed last year's results, but others have been adversely affected by multiple lock downs especially those whose qualification includes hands-on / practical elements e.g. Construction. Curriculum teams are continuing into the summer period to support those learners to complete their assessments.
- Final 2020/21 Performance will be recorded in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and will inform the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2021/22.

Maria Bowness was welcomed to the meeting

Induction Plan for the first six weeks of term 2021/22

- Maria described the induction plan for the first six weeks of term; the aim is to have early diagnostic assessments, including E&M, to ensure that students are on the right course / right level and have appropriate support. The induction plan details actions on a week by week basis.
- Although entry requirements were met, some students struggled this year due to inflated grades. In September, students will be assessed early (and BRAG rated) and if appropriate, students will move to a more suitable course / level.

Learner Voice and Feedback

- The methods, used to collate feedback from students, employers, staff and other stakeholders, were detailed in Paper 2.3. In the JISC survey 'Learning Online', the College scored consistently above the benchmark.
- Currently feedback is processed locally but next year the Quality Team will have an overview so that trends can be identified and acted upon.

Student Union Budget

- The SU budget is managed by a College budget holder. The College is allocating up to £5k to support the Student Union (SU) and the SU will generate further income through NUS membership.

Governors asked questions:

How much of the 1-6 week induction plan is new?

Most of this is happening already but not in a consistent way. We have always monitored students and held 'right choice reviews' prior to day 42 but

this plan will represent a more structured and detailed approach with prompt action to move students to a more suitable programme where necessary. It will be a purposeful and robust six week period.

We have information about students much earlier than in previous years e.g. we are already grouping progressing students and are planning support based on EHCP information.

The drop in Functional Skills this year is a concern. What are your plans?

This has been an exceptional year.³

Challenges with Functional Skills this year have included:

- All E&M learning has been online to avoid mixing bubbles.
- Students joined with inflated grades (i.e. operating at a lower level than their TAG on entry would suggest).
- Students were unable to take online exams in Term 2 due to lockdown (they would usually take the exam in January with an opportunity to retake).
- Slow turn around by exam boards (so less opportunity to re-enter students)
- Lower student attendance and engagement (lower attainers generally were less engaged with online learning).

Going forward:

- We are looking forward to E&M students being back on site regularly so they can be supported.
- An E&M Strategy Group has been established with a refocused priority on Functional Skills.
- A structured induction plan, which includes E&M, will be in place.
- There will be better data to track student progress.
- The reporting line for the HoE and HoM has changed; both will report to Gail Lomas (Group Director: Student & Quality Experience) who has a lot of expertise in this area.
- The E&M team will be working more collaboratively with vocational teams to ensure that student progress is monitored across all elements of the study programme e.g. embedding 'speaking and listening' into the vocational curriculum.

The proposed integration of English and maths with vocational teams has been tried before. Can the Board have more regular updates on E&M?

Yes, there will be better and more regular data reporting next year and the HoE and HoM will be supported by an experienced practitioner.

³ After the meeting there was further analysis (attached to these minutes as Annex 1) which demonstrates an improving trend in English & Maths during the period 2017/18 – 2019/20 (2020/21 final data not yet available). The reason for the dip in Functional Skills results in 2020/21 was discussed at the meeting.

What is the national picture for English and maths and / or vocational subjects?

Most colleges have faced the same challenges with Functional Skills. We have not been able to benchmark results nationally, but we know that programmes involving 'hand skills' have been most adversely affected.

What will the new normal look like?

We are expecting more students to be onsite from September with more face to face learning (this year we had to restrict numbers to accommodate social distancing).

There will be more in depth and regular conversations with students in the first six weeks and interventions will be put in place earlier.

A structured personal development programme will be in place including one hour per week with a Progress Mentor; Progress Mentors will be integrated within the school and line managed by the HoS.

Many of these students have been out of school for a long period. What additional actions are you putting in place to prepare them for learning?

For students joining at age 16 (year 11), their last uninterrupted school year would have been in 2018/19 (year 9).

The induction plan for the first six weeks will ensure students are on the right course / right level and we will identify, on an individual basis, the support and intervention they require. They have missed socialising as well as education.

Within the induction period, at what stage would students to move to another programme?

As soon as possible after conversations with the student and parents. We will be analysing the diagnostic assessments and taking action, from week one.

Many students will have suffered from digital poverty or have inflated (or deflated) grades. We can assess them in person and accelerate their learning.

We are planning a series of programmes which could start later in the year e.g. the SOFEA sub-contracting could have multiple start dates.

Amy Langford, Executive Head of Inclusion, will be attending the Board meeting in October and can provide more information on student support and personal development.

The Board:

- ***Noted the report on the Student Experience***
- ***Approved the Student Union Budget for 2021/22***

b) CQG Meeting 6th July 2021 (Paper 2.3B)

Liz Marr referred to the report of the meeting and highlighted:

- Two SU officers gave an excellent presentation from which it was clear how they had grown in confidence and benefited from the experience of serving on the SU Board. They will film videos about their role / personal benefits to assist with recruitment for next year.
- The proposed SU budget for 21/22 is sensible. There was underspend against budget in 20/21 as events could not be arranged due to the pandemic.

The Board noted the report from the CQG meeting on 6th July 2021

3.0 Governance and Compliance

3.1 Audit & Risk Committee 17th June 2021 (Paper 3.1)

Alan Cook referred to the report of the meeting of 17th June. The Committee reviewed, and is recommended the following documents to the Board for approval:

- a) External Audit Strategy 2020/21 (Paper 4.4A)
- b) Internal Audit Strategy 2021/22 (Paper 4.4B)
- c) Strategic Risk Register (Paper 4.4C)
- d) Risk Management Policy (Paper 4.4D)
- e) Financial Regs Section 2 (Paper 4.4E)
- f) Data Protection Policy / FOI Policy (Paper 4.4F)
- g) Committee TOR (Paper 4.4G)

The Committee also received a briefing from the external auditor on the new Post 16 Audit Code of Practice and reviewed a funding assurance report from RSM.

The Board noted the report from the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 17th June 2021 (see also consent item 4.4)

3.2 Subcontracting 2021/22 – minuted above

3.3 PDMG 15th June 2021 (Paper 3.2) and 13th July 2021

Peter Cox referred to the report of the meeting of 15th June and gave a verbal update on the meeting of 13th July.

- The Group received assurance on project progress, variations from budget and vision / design principles.
- The DfE has given approval to proceed to RIBA4 (Bletchley) and planning permission has been submitted (the submission was delayed to enable a potential noise issue to be addressed).
- There continues to be a (pre-tender) risk concerning the cost of cladding at Oxford; Activate Learning has agreed to under-write the costs (and a legal agreement is in place).
- The PDMG approved the contract for the main works at Reading (as delegated by the Board) and work is underway and is on schedule.

- The Board was requested to delegate specific authority to the PDMG to review and approve the contract for the main works at Oxford, which will be above the PDMGs delegated power.

The Board:

- **Noted the report from the PDMG meetings on 15th June 2021 and 13th July 2021**
- **Agreed to delegate authority to the PDMG to approve the contract for the main works for the IoT site at Oxford**

3.4 Remuneration Committee 1st July 2021

Gwynneth Tan advised the Board that the Remuneration Committee met on 1st July and approved pay awards for senior post-holders. In accordance with the agreed process, the confidential minutes are not circulated but are available to independent governors on request.

3.5 Meeting Effectiveness

The Board confirmed there had been sufficient time for debate and apart from any specific items minuted elsewhere, there were no further items requiring additional time at a future meeting / follow-up discussion.

3.6 Agenda items for the October meeting

- SEND / Safeguarding
- Board Plan for 2021/22

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

- 4.1 Health & Safety (Paper 4.1)**
a) H&S Annual Report 2020/21 (Paper 4.1A)
b) H&S Policy (Paper 4.1B)
c) H&S Policy Statement 2021/22 for signing and publication (Paper 4.1B Appendix 1)
- 4.2 Approvals Task & Finish Group (Paper 4.2)**
a) Ratified the bids approved since the last meeting
b) ATFG Terms of Reference (Paper 4.1)
- 4.3 Travel & Subsistence Expenses Policy (Paper 4.3)**
- 4.4 Reports recommended by the Audit & Risk Committee (see item 3.1 above):**
a) External Audit Strategy 2020/21 (Paper 4.4A)
b) Internal Audit Strategy 2021/22 (Paper 4.4B)
c) Strategic Risk Register (Paper 4.4C)
d) Risk Management Policy (Paper 4.4D)
e) Financial Regs Section 2 (Paper 4.4E)
f) Data Protection Policy / FOI Policy (Paper 4.4F)
g) Committee TOR (Paper 4.4G)
- 4.5 Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 9th June 2021 (Papers 4.5A and Confidential 4.5B)**
- 4.6 Cleaning Contract (Paper 4.6)**
The Board approved the contract for Lewis & Graves for the provision of cleaning services in 2021/22 (as detailed in paper 4.6)

Next Meeting(s)

- 22nd July 2021 – single item agenda (budget)
- 6th October 2021

AOB

- 5.1 Governors asked for an update on plans for September following the latest government guidance on COVID measures, which allows providers to make local decisions.

Julie advised that the Stage 4 road map is being finalised and will then be circulated.

Action 2: Julie Mills

English and Maths Achievement 2016/17 – 2019/20

1. Overall context

At the Board meeting on 14th July, governors were concerned that E&M performance has been in decline. Revisiting the results however shows that was an improving trend in E&M achievement over the 4 years 16/17 – 19/20.

Predictions for 20/21 (not included in the graphs below), are impacted by poor achievement in Functional Skills as a direct impact of COVID (as discussed at the meeting). This will be a focus for the E&M Strategy Group in 21/22.

Challenges with Functional Skills in 20/21 included:

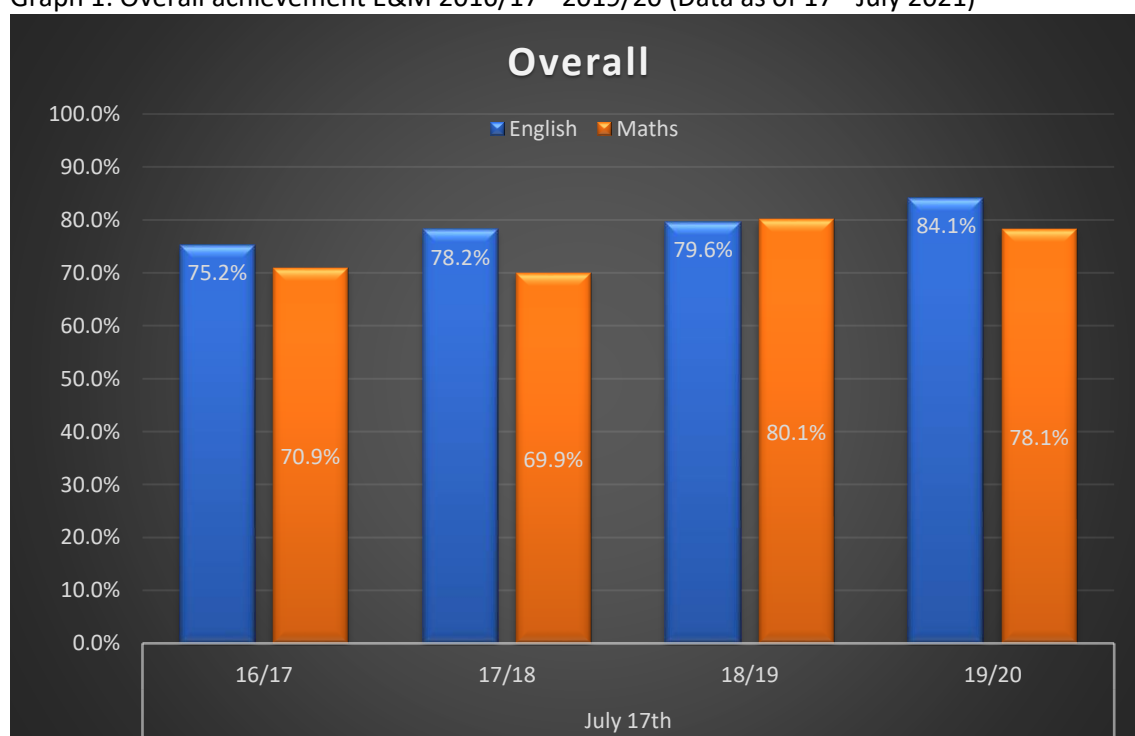
- All E&M learning was online to avoid mixing bubbles.
- Lower student attendance and engagement (lower attainers generally were less engaged with online learning).
- Students joined in September 20 with inflated grades (i.e. operating at a lower level than their TAG on entry would suggest).
- Students were unable to take online exams in Term 2 due to lockdown (they would usually take the exam in January with an opportunity to retake).
- Slow turn around by exam boards (so less opportunity to re-enter students)

2. English & Maths (E&M) GCSE and Functional Skills combined 2016/17 - 2019/20

(Graph 1):

- Overall, English improved from 75.2%¹ to 84.1%
- Overall, Maths improved from 70.9% 78.1%

Graph 1: Overall achievement E&M 2016/17 - 2019/20 (Data as of 17th July 2021)



¹ Percentages refer to the overall Achievement recorded in ProAchieve for all those learners on Campus undertaking an English and maths qualification)

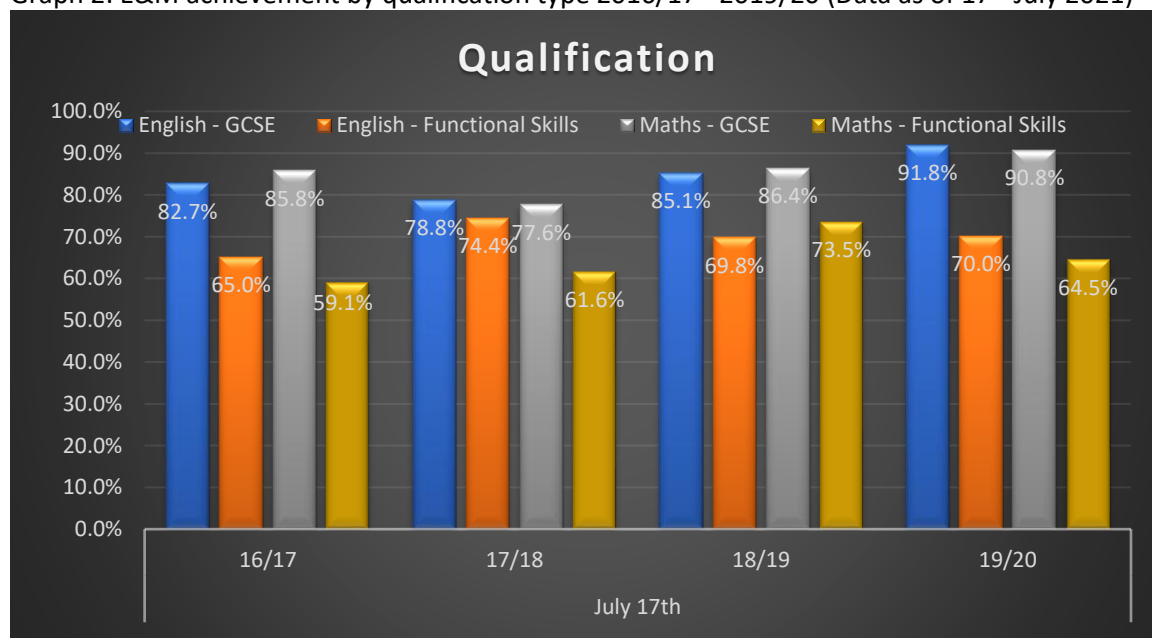
3. English & Maths performance by qualification type 2016/17 - 2019/20 (Graph 2):

- English GCSE improved from 82.7% to 91.8%
- English Functional Skills improved from 65% to 70%
- Maths GCSE improved 85.8% to 90.8%
- Maths Functional Skills improved from 59.1% to 64.5%

Over the four year period, there was good progress with GCSE outcomes (9.1 percentage points improvement in English and 5 percentage points improvement in Maths).

Over the four year period, there was good progress with Functional Skills outcomes (5 percentage points improvement in English and 5 percentage points improvement in Maths). However, due to the impact of COVID, Functional Skills achievement in Maths 20/21 will be lower than 19/20 (Functional Skills English is expected to be at a similar level).

Graph 2: E&M achievement by qualification type 2016/17 - 2019/20 (Data as of 17th July 2021)

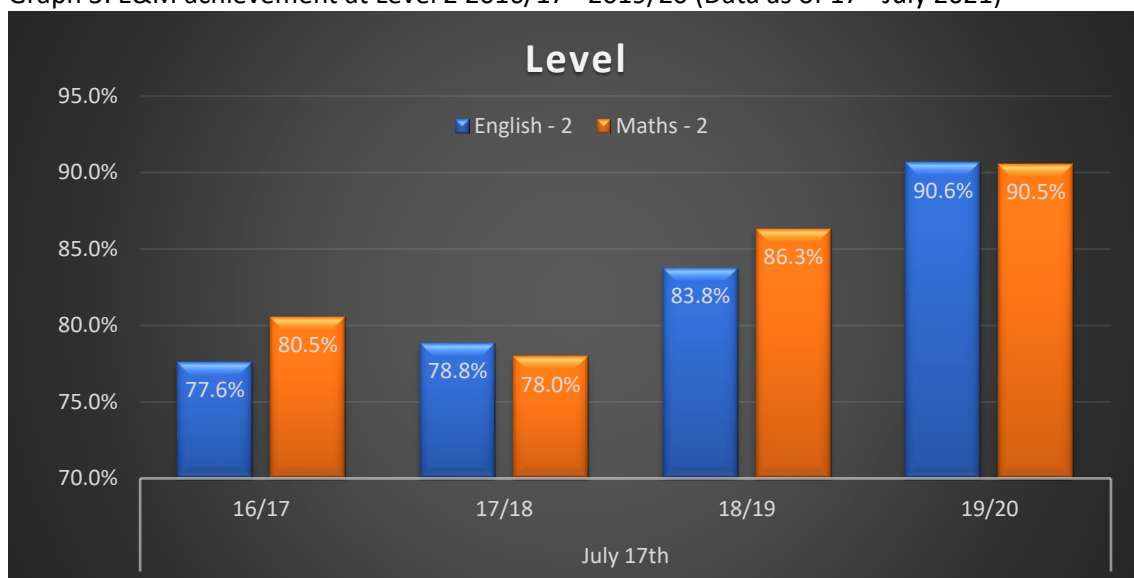


4. English & Maths performance at Level 2 - 2016/17 - 2019/20 (Graph 3)

An analysis of Level 2-specific (GCSE-level) qualifications shows that performance has been very strong over the four year period:

- English has improved from 77.6% to 90.6%
- Maths has improved from 80.5% to 90.5%

Graph 3: E&M achievement at Level 2 2016/17 - 2019/20 (Data as of 17th July 2021)



Alex Warner
17th July 2021