

Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on Thursday 15th March 2018 at 5.10 pm

GOVERNORS John Holford, Chair
PRESENT: Dame Asha Khemka DBE DL
Mark Williams

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
Amanda Jogela, Director Quality and Performance
Louise Knott, Vice Principal Communications, Engagement and Student Experience
Tom Stevens, Deputy Principal Business Development
Alastair Thompson, Deputy Principal/Finance Director

18.13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded Governors present to declare any interests that they may have on items to be considered. No interests other than standing items were declared.

18.14 WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Jane Hawksford, Lewis Maskery, Julian Smith, Eleanor Taylor and Jackie Pugh.

18.15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH JANUARY 2018 AND ANY MATTERS ARISING

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2018.

There were no matters arising.

18.16 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee were content to note the update provided.

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

18.17 STUDY PROGRAMMES

In the absence of the Director for Learning and Innovation, the Director for Quality and Performance presented the content of the detailed report circulated prior to the meeting. Key points noted were:

- A Level value added has declined in 16/17 in comparison to 15/16 by 0.10. This is due to a weaker performance in A2 exams (-0.1), AS results were significantly above the national average at 0.2.
- A Level and Academic combined has stayed the same. The College has seen a positive position in terms of AS results but a decline in terms of A Level value added. The area for improvement focus at the current time is the A Level position. Assurance was given to the Committee that lots of work has been done with the A Level staff over the last few months.
- Progress on applied general courses in 16/17 has improved by 0.05 in comparison to 15/16
- Technical Level 3 attainment has improved in comparison to 15/16 (+5.18 average point score per tech level). The average point score is 0.26 higher than the England all schools/colleges average.
- The Technical Level 2 attainment is higher than the local authority and England all schools/colleges average
- In terms of A Levels the College is looking to develop an intervention policy which will help to further improve the position.
- In terms of the improvements seen in the Technical Level 3 qualifications it was explained that the College took some positive decisions to move some students from Applied General to Technical.
- English progress has improved although it is still lower than the England all schools/colleges average. Maths progress has improved but again is still lower than the England all schools/colleges average.
- In year GCSE English progress is 6% higher than last year
- The overall attendance in Functional Skills English has improved by 1.5% and the pass rate has improved by 17% in comparison to 16/17.
- The overall attendance in GCSE Maths has improved by 5% in comparison to the same point last year. However the percentage of learners on or above target has declined by 7%.
- The overall attendance in Functional Skills Maths has declined slightly by 0.7% in comparison to the same point last year and the overall pass rate percentage has declined by 10%. Assurance was given that these are areas for intensive in year monitoring.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

The Committee questioned why there was such a mismatch between English and Maths. It was explained that a significant influencing factor is attendance, however there is a view that the College needs to be cautious regarding the data that underpins these statistics as it is based upon formative assessments rather than exams. In terms of the future the College is looking to provide much more Maths and English coaching support in class. Staff development initiatives College wide are focusing very heavily on Maths and English GCSE and Functional Skills requirements. It is essential to embed Maths and English within the curriculum areas and link more with employability and destinations. The Committee were advised that the College has done a lot of work in year on Maths and English, including external reviews of marking. Feedback has led to some improvements but there is more to do. Some staff have been challenged regarding potentially over generous marking. The key challenge is to get learners to engage with Maths and English.

- Disadvantaged students perform less well than non-disadvantaged students relating to Applied General, English and Maths & Technical Level 3 courses. Disadvantaged learners outperformed non-disadvantaged students in academic and technical Level 2 courses. Again assurance was given that staff are robustly monitoring this.
- Overall attendance has improved by 2% in comparison to the same point in 16/17.
- Current retention, as at 26th February is very strong (16-18 cohort 96% & 19+ 94.3%) and is projected to improve in comparison to 16/17.
- As at 28th February 2017, 52% of students had an agreed or completed placement (confirmed, all health and safety checked, tutor approved relevant placement, consent forms completed) compared with 56% as at 28th February 2018 which is an increase of 4%. It was explained that the number of hours undertaken as work experience for technical learners is increasing and this is to keep pace and align with expectations being introduced for T Levels.

AGREED: To note the content of the report provided.

18.18 ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET – IN YEAR PROGRESS

The Director of Quality and Performance drew members' attention to the written report and confirmed that the College was in a positive position. She advised that there were no significant concerns that she would wish to bring to Committees attention at this particular point in time. Key points brought to Committees attention were:

- Currently there are no significant differences in retention between direct delivered and subcontract provision

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

- Currently the in year retention is looking strong for all levels for direct delivered and subcontracted 19+ combined provision. Directly delivered provision is weaker at level 3 by 3.4% compared to subcontract provision, however there is a significant difference in learner volumes. Subcontract provision is weaker at Level 1 by 3.4% compared to direct delivery.
- The majority of subcontractors currently have high retention rates with the exception of three, these are the Inspire and Achieve Foundation, the London Hairdressing Apprenticeship Academy and Track Work.
- The courses with direct delivery with the largest learner volumes, which are impacting negatively on the Level 3 in year retention are Access to HE Diploma Business, Access to HE Diploma Nursing & Healthcare and Diploma in specialist support for teaching and learning in schools.

AGREED: To note the content of the report provided.

18.19 APPRENTICESHIPS – IN YEAR PROGRESS

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and confirmed that the report presented is based upon period 5 data, which is to the end of January. Specific attention was drawn to page 27 which confirms that of the 1537 learners impacting the overall achievement rate:

- a) Subcontractor provision accounts for 89%
- b) Direct delivery within schools of learning 4%
- c) Vision Business 7%.

This clearly shows that the outcome of subcontractor performance is very important.

The College is some way behind in terms of its achievement rates. By way of an update a further report was circulated which shows that the position has deteriorated further at period 7 (when compared with period 5 data included in the main body of the report).

Key statistics noted were:

- Subcontractors – total learners to complete by 31st July is 2744
- Subcontractors – total learners to end of programme May 2018 is 3615
- Once these learners complete this will be the end of the programme
- There are 1154 learners past the expected end date and of these 597 are 90+ days, this means that these students cannot now achieve on a timely basis, this is significant as it is 25% of the learners
- Of those learners more than 90+ days past the planned end date 292 are simply awaiting concluding paperwork and will be secured as timely.

Signed : _____ Chair

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As an overview, he explained that it was very difficult for the College to influence contractors' priorities as there are no continuing contracts. In addition to this the College has been very selective over the years in terms of only quality partners being utilised and these companies are more likely than others to be proactive in terms of securing their own organisations contract and performance rather than those activities undertaken on behalf of the College.

There is a real risk that if achievement rates fall further that performance could fall below triggers and this could lead to an Ofsted inspection.

The Committee questioned and challenged whether the team/staff managing this situation are aware that their positions may not be secure going forward because of the restructure. They felt that this was a risk in terms of motivation and commitment that could also lead to a further negative impact. The Deputy Principal indicated that at this stage it is unclear how successful the team will be in managing these risks and that these have to also sit alongside the risks associated with the College's structural changes being implemented.

It was clarified that an Ofsted inspection risk relates to apprenticeship provision only and not a full college re-inspection.

In discussion the Committee expressed some concern and acknowledged the risk, albeit that there was very little that could be done in terms of definitive mitigation actions because of the lack of leverage that the College has with subcontractors.

AGREED: To note the content of the update provided.

18.20 QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING, TRAINING & ASSESSMENT

The Director of Quality and Performance introduced this detailed report and a number of key matters were noted:

- a) Direct College provision
 - 74.1% of individual learning walks have been completed against a target of 100% (the target of 100% for direct College provision is by February 2018 whereas Vision Business runs for the full academic year)
 - 36.2% of learning walks are completed within Vision Business as well as developmental observations in line with probationary periods
 - There are 605 occurrences of delivery staff (schools of learning and Vision Business) accessing training workshops to date
 - There are 181 staff that have accessed individualised coaching to date

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

- b) Subcontract provision
 - QTLP are carrying out all graded observations within subcontractor provision this academic year. The reason for this is all subcontractor providers are deemed to be high risk due to the changing landscape within the apprenticeship provision.

- c) External verification/external examiner reports and visits
 - An investigation was recently conducted by the Head of Quality and Performance at the request of City & Guilds. The investigation relates to rail qualifications delivered within Vision Business and the lack of records relating to assessment and IQA activities for certified learners. City & Guilds are yet to provide feedback and an update will be given at the next meeting. City & Guilds suggest that we have 30 learners but our records say 23 and there is therefore a need to better understand the position. She confirmed that the College is obtaining the portfolios from the employers to check the position.

Director
Quality &
Performance

June 2018

The Committee were advised that learning walks have currently been put on hold because of the constraints that the HR team have in dealing with the significant restructure and that this may impact upon the timelines for completions.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

18.21 HE UPDATE

In the absence of Eleanor Taylor the content of her report was considered. It was confirmed that the HE self-evaluation document confirmed that the College considers that its HE provision meets QAA expectations and this was confirmed through the validation process. In addition, the teaching excellence framework metrics suggest a strong initial hypothesis and the College completed a TEF year 3 submission in January 2018. That being said, there are a number of areas identified for improvement which have been carried forward from 16/17. These focus on employer engagement and employability, staffing and part time student satisfaction where actions to date have not had the impact expected. It was explained that strategies have been implemented but have not yet had any or insufficient impact and as a consequence the teams are looking at different models of activity to secure better impact.

Assurance was given that Eleanor Taylor and Amanda Jogela are working closely together. Members' attention was specifically drawn to the red text in the action plan which highlights the actions still to take.

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A key action that needs further work is to fully involve employers in the annual review of foundation degree programmes. At the current time formal processes at course level remain patchy and need to be improved and consistent. The Committee were advised that the College is taking the same approach with HNCs and HNDs and assurance was given that this is an area of immediate focus.

AGREED: To note the content of the update provided.

18.22 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

The Vice Principal Communications Engagement & Student Experience introduced this item and confirmed that safeguarding referrals continue to see a significant increase on the same period last year with no signs of a slowing. By December 2017 the team had received more referrals than it had for the whole of the academic year in 16/17. (801 to December against 742 full year). She advised that in January there were 177 referrals which should be compared with 90 in the previous year in February there were again 177 referrals which should be compared with 83 in the previous year.

In December 2017 the government published consultation for changes to the Keeping Children Safe in Education document, consultation closed at the end of February and it is likely that revised documentation will be issued in the Spring. There are no indications of major changes within the guidance although there is a recommendation that Colleges collect two emergency contact numbers which will have implications for enrolment.

In terms of Prevent the College is seeing a reverse trend when compared with safeguarding. Students appear not to be trying to access banned websites on College premises. In January 2018 there were 7 prevent referrals which should be compared with 14 in the prior year, in February there were 2 which should be compared with 9 in the prior year. She explained that for the local area, far right extremism has a much heightened profile. It is expected that the counter terrorism profile will be updated in May and as a consequence there will be an update to the Prevent risk assessment and register at the next meeting. She advised that one of the Prevent referrals since Christmas has been referred for assessment to the Police Prevent team however this did not meet the threshold for channel support.

In terms of onward external referrals for safeguarding matters the statistics are fairly comparable, January saw 31 which should be compared with 30 in the prior year. In February there were 28 which should be compared with 19 in the prior year.

The Committee were advised that there is one student who because of mental health issues and concerns is progressing through the College's fitness to study programme.

VP CE & SE

June 2018

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

There was also one student in February who agreed to take a break in learning until March because of mental health issues. There are a further two students who are at the beginning of this process.

AGREED: To note the content of the report provided.

18.23 MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

The Vice Principal for Communications Engagement & Student Experience explained that the College is developing a more holistic approach to mental health given the increasing instances that are being seen. Key points noted were:

- The significance of this issue for our students means that we have prioritised the development of a mental health strategy
- Our aim is to develop a culture whereby everyone recognises that mental health is an issue that affects us all, where people feel confident and comfortable to disclose an issue, safe in the knowledge that the College will provide support and links to external agencies when necessary. The strategy has been drafted in a way that reflects this ambition.
- The College has been doing a significant amount of work with the local authority specialist team to map services and the offering with the intention that the local authority will publish an integrated services model.
- There is the opportunity for the College to access training in trauma based education for up to 50 members of staff. This should be delivered in time for a review of practices in the next academic year.
- The College has been working with Nottinghamshire Healthcare Foundation Trust in the development of a Recovery College within West Notts. We have started to plan a notional curriculum for the Recovery College and are awaiting a meeting with the Trust to plan and deliver responsibilities. This will be a physical entity within the organisation that delivers courses.

The Committee commended the College's approach to tackling mental health issues but challenged senior staff to better communicate the support available for mental health issues. It was explained that in 18/19 the intention is to make mental health training mandatory for staff and students. The Committee questioned what the position was in relation to staff mental health. It was explained that CPD and/or a course will be run through the Recovery College. The challenge from the Committee was to ensure that the mental health strategy developed includes references to both staff and students.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

In terms of funding initiatives to support/improve mental health it was explained that a lot of funding will come from central student services, however there will also be elements paid from the enrichment envelope.

AGREED: To note the content of the update provided.

18.24 CAREER GUIDANCE FOR FE COLLEGES

The Vice Principal for Communications Engagement & Student Experience introduced the detailed written report and key matters noted were:

- In December the government published a careers strategy which sets out its ambitions across the schools and colleges sector and this was then supported by guidance for the College sector which was published in February 2018. The report summarises the key requirements for colleges contained within this guidance document and provides Governors with a summary of the College current position in terms of its own careers advice and guidance.
- It is fair to say that in the last Ofsted inspection careers advice and guidance was an area for development. Going forward meeting expectations will be a condition of funding.
- There are 8 GATSBY standards to be achieved. These include
 - a) A stable careers programme
 - b) Learning from careers and labour market information
 - c) Addressing the needs of each student
 - d) Linking curriculum learning to careers
 - e) Encounters with employees and employers
 - f) Experiences of the workplace
 - g) Encounters with further and higher education
 - h) Personal guidance.
- It is fair to say that no one in the sector has a particular issue with the GATSBY standards. Whereas schools and colleges have started to work to them there has been an impact in terms of the progression of young people and more importantly their knowledge about their career options.
- In order to ensure that Colleges are meeting the requirements of the GATSBY benchmark, statutory guidance was published and includes a detailed summary of the requirements and an assessment tool to quantify the current position.
- Colleges have until 2020 to achieve compliance with all the benchmarks. From September 2018 there will be a self-assessment tool. By September this year the College also has to have identified a named careers leader within the organisation and have published a careers strategy/plan.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

- The guidance states that in larger colleges the careers leader could be a careers leadership team and this is likely to be the model that the college uses with the VP Communications Engagement and Student Experience taking strategic oversight.
- The College's plan will be all encompassing and include all aspects of the College's provision (16-19 study programmes, high level skills and apprenticeships) as well as demonstrating what we have done in terms of careers guidance we will also need to be able to demonstrate the impact of these actions on the destination and progression of students.
- Due to the priority being placed on this aspect of College activity the suggestion made was that this become a regular feature on Standards Committee agendas with at least annual updates on progress. She advised that when Ofsted next inspect they will want to know what actions the College has taken to improve and the impacts seen.

VP CE&SE

September
2018 &
annual
update

The Committee questioned whether there are any CPD implications associated with the requirements. It was confirmed that there are, in that each learner is required to have a 'career intervention' by a Level 6 qualified advisor. The College currently has three Level 6 advisors so more will need to be trained to give capacity. There is work to do with staff in terms of clarifying what a career intervention will look like.

The Committee Chairman questioned whether there is any requirement to share with students the role of a trade union. It was confirmed that at the current time there is no requirement. That being said, the Committee Chairman expressed a personal view that he would like to see the College engage with trade unions and include them in discussions and opportunities to provide information to students as part of careers initiatives. It was acknowledged that this would link in with improved employability skills.

AGREED: To note the content of the update provided.

18.25 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

18.26 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting was 14th June 2018 at 5.00 pm.

Meeting closed at 6.30pm.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date: