

## Curriculum & Quality Committee

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### Approved Minutes

Minutes of a Meeting of the Committee held on Monday 1 June 2015 at the Basildon Campus at 6.00 pm.

Present: Mr D O'Halloran (Chairman)  
Mr B Brooks  
Mr T Knight (until 7.35 pm)  
Ms A O'Donoghue CBE  
Mrs G Williams

In Attendance: Ms C Anson-Higgs (Vice Principal, Business Development)  
Ms W Barnes (Assistant Principal, Student Support)  
Ms D Brown (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality)  
Ms J Belcher (Head of Student Services) (Items 1-6)  
Mr A Rees (Head of HE) (Items 1-7)  
Mr R Davies (Head of College Information Services)  
Mr R I Millea FCA (Clerk to the Corporation)  
Ms Angelina Clarke (SU President – Observer)  
Ms S Bridle (SU Vice President – Observer)

The Chairman welcomed Angelina and Skye to the Meeting as Observers. Both are candidates for appointment as Student Governors at the Board Meeting on 6 July 2015.

The Chairman reordered the agenda so that items 9 and 14 were covered after items 1 to 6 and items 7 and 8 were covered as the last items on the agenda, due to their confidential nature. The two Student Observers did not attend for the Confidential Items as they are not yet full Members of the Board.

### **1. Presentation from Gemma Simmons (Early Years, Health & Care)**

The Committee received a presentation from Gemma Simmons, Head of Early Years, Health & Care, which had been postponed from the previous Meeting, followed by questions from Members.

The Committee were pleased to see the progress that had been made in this Department, which had been an area of improvement. The area has improved since Gemma's appointment as Interim Head of Department nine months ago, and Ofsted acknowledged the improvements made during their recent inspection when it received a Grade 2.

A copy of her slides are attached to these Minutes.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S Carr, Ms E Mead and Ms K Mulvey (Director of Teaching & Learning).

Ms R Hawkridge was not present.

## 3. Declarations of Interest

Members confirmed that they had no declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.

## 4. Urgent Business

The Committee noted the resignation of Michael Allars (Student Union President) as HE Student Governor and as a Member of this Committee on 12 February 2015.

## 5. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 9 February 2015

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 1 June 2015 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

## 6. Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that the full Board had approved the Equality & Diversity Annual Report (including Action Plan) at its Meeting on 16 March 2015.

The Student Union Observers provided feedback on the Compliments and Complaints Annual Report, as requested at the last Meeting. The feedback was limited but did indicate that only about 50% students are aware of the process.

It was **AGREED** that a more detailed report would be requested from the Student Union next year, and this would be co-ordinated through the Assistant Principal, Student Support.

**(ACTION: Wendy Barnes)**

*Items 7. and 8. were deemed to be Confidential Items and a separate minute has been prepared and is attached to these minutes.*

## 7. Whole College Ofsted Inspection 11-15 May 2015 (Paper CQC.15.09)

## 8. Initial Teacher Education Ofsted Inspection 11-13 May 2015 (Paper CQC.15.10)

## 9. Bi-Annual Safeguarding Report (Paper CQC.15.11)

Ms Jane Belcher (Head of Student Services) presented this Report and answered questions from Members in connection with the College's Safeguarding procedures. The Report was supported by a detailed Section 11 Audit – this was a thorough and robust analysis and is carried out annually.

The Committee was reminded of its responsibility to ensure the College is meeting its statutory duty to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults.

The Committee noted that Safeguarding has become again a judgement grade within Leadership & Management in Ofsted inspections, but not a limitation grade.

The College's Safeguarding procedures were awarded a Grade 2 in the recent unmoderated Ofsted inspection.

Training is now being rolled out to students on extremism as part of the PREVENT strategy. The College will include PREVENT within the next revision of the Safeguarding Policy. Staff have been reminded of the College Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Whistleblowing Policy) – it sits on the College intranet as part of Human Resources policy.

The Report identifies clearly the key areas for developments to further strengthen the service and support to staff.

The Committee **requested** a further analysis of issues which are troubling/concerning students who are working with Student Services and how their performance compares with the rest of the student population.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

**ACTION: Jane Belcher**

### **10. Curriculum Plan 2015-16 (Paper CQC.15.12)**

The Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality presented this Report which informs the Committee of the College's 16-18 Curriculum Plan for next academic year, which enables Governors to discharge their statutory duty to determine the educational character of the College.

The Plan outlined a reduction in student numbers in Health & Social Care, Motor Vehicle and Science where provision requires improvement. There will only be a small reduction on overall learner numbers for 16-18 year olds and it is felt that reduction can be recovered by higher numbers in other areas of curriculum, e.g Sport & Media. There will also be changes in the delivery of English and Mathematics which were outlined in the study programme guidelines. These will now be delivered in the departments rather than as an additional department.

Other changes are explained in detail in the accompanying papers and were highlighted by the Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality in her verbal presentation. They are designed to address a number of issues, namely

- Difficulty in recruiting high quality lecturers (Motor Vehicle/Health and Social Care)
- Changes in Government Policy (English and Mathematics)
- Quality of delivery (Science)
- Change in qualification structure (BTEC Level 2)

There is a need to effectively utilise the College's accommodation, given that Southend is full and Basildon is in poor condition. Also, there is currently duplication of curriculum provision which stretches management ability to manage and can produce quality issues.

Planning is also affected by the reduction in the 16-18 EFA Contract of 500 learners in 2015/16, although most of this reduction will be made through reduced contract numbers to outside providers as part of the collaborative provision programme plus planned reductions in Motor Vehicle (40), Health & Social Care (75) and Science (30). There may be some reductions in A Level Provision for unpopular subjects or subjects which are duplicated in our mainstream FE provision.

The Report was supplemented by an Appendix to the Paper outlining Guidelines for Staff for the delivery of 16-19 Study Programmes and a Summary of the arrangements for English and Mathematics at the College. These updated the existing guidelines which the Board had approved last year.

The Committee discussed the Government requirement to provide work experience/work related learning for all learners (minimum 25 hours per year). This is a challenging requirement and the College recognises that it will not be possible to find suitable external work experience for the entire cohort in 2015/16.

The Appendix outlines the priorities which will be applied in providing such experience (where possible) and also stresses the need for it to be effective for the learner.

The SLT believe the changes are necessary and that the impact on overall learner numbers will be small with most numbers being reassigned to growth areas in the College, e.g. Sport and Media. The impact of the changes on quality should be favourable and the College will be able to resolve some staffing issues and curriculum design and delivery issues.

**ACTION: Denise Brown**

The Vice Principal, Business Development stated that the Adult programmes for 2015/16 are currently being developed. A paper on Adult proposals will be sent to the Committee Members so they have a chance to see it before the Board Meeting on 6 July 2015, when approval will be sought.

**ACTION: Carol Anson-Higgs**

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Curriculum Plan 2015-16 to the Board for approval at its meeting on 6 July 2015, supplemented by a paper outlining Adult provision for next year.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## **11. Current Learner Performance – Retention & Attendance (Paper CQC.15.13)**

The Committee received a Report on the current position based on data to 28 April 2015 with comparative figures as at the same date last year.

The Committee noted that **retention rates** for this year for 16-18 learners so far stand at 92.9%, against a College target of 91% and National Average of 89.2%. For 19+ learners, the retention stands at 91.4%, against College target of 91% and National Average of 89.4%.

The Committee received both **retention** and **attendance** data by Department.

Current attendance for 16-18 learners stands at 89.2%, against College target of 90% and for 19+, attendance stands at 87.3%.

Attendance rates for 16-18 main programme aims compare well with last year and most departments appear on course to just meet the College target.

Overall attendance for 16-18 cohort is improving but still below target for Study Programme Main Aims – this is not helped by improved but still poor attendance on Functional Skills and GCSE English and Maths programmes.

The focus now is on getting the students through their qualification.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

## **12. Monitoring of College Quality Improvement Plan Targets** (Paper CQC.15.14)

This Report was presented by the Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality and the Committee were asked to comment on progress with the implementation and impact of the College QIP.

There is one RED rated action relating to the creation of on line materials for Apprenticeship provision.

There are 12 actions rated AMBER within the QIP as against 18 in the previous Report and they fall into the following categories:

- A Level Teaching & Learning
- Accessibility of data and tracking reports for managers and teachers
- Action to support Maths and English
- Actions around ILPs
- Progress with Level 1 curriculum design

The Vice Principal explained that the AMBER items constitute areas of continued development rather than weaknesses. GREEN items indicate action completed or substantially so.

She further explained the actions to address the first three bullet points, which are deemed to be most critical and that, overall, progress with the implementation of the QIP is good, but the key risk areas have the potential to cause significant impact without continued focused attention.

A Levels (together with Science) is in Departmental Intervention (akin to ‘special measures’) and subject to rigorous monitoring, support and senior management involvement.

English & Maths has a new Head of Department and a new Curriculum Manager. The biggest issue is attendance at GCSE English & Maths. Current exam pass rates for Functional Skills English look better than last year.

Data issues – decisions regarding upgrading/replacing the system will be made shortly. This won’t be available for 2015/6 but for the following year. Meanwhile, all managers are using ProAchieve to monitor attendance, retention and achievement and this is bringing greater consistency to monitoring and reporting.

Members were concerned about the data collection and accessibility and the weaknesses of Pro-Achieve, which is not a fully integrated system with the ILR system.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

The Quality Improvement Plan for 2015/16 will now be updated in conjunction with the production of the 2014/15 Self Assessment Report and brought back to this Committee in the Autumn Term. It will also reflect Actions arising from the recent Ofsted Inspection and the Report on that inspection which will be received before the end of this academic year.

**ACTION: Denise Brown**

### **13. Monitoring of Learner Progress Audits (Paper CQC.15.15)**

The Committee was informed by the Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality as to the results of three Learner Progress Audits, which took place between January and April 2015 in English & Maths, ICT and Science.

LPAs are scheduled on an 'at risk' basis and, for this year, focus mainly on those areas requiring improvement.

The Committee was reminded that, after the LPA, a Report is issued to the Department setting out the actions required which is circulated to all staff and the Learning & Standards team meet with each management team in the Department to agree actions recommended and when they will be implemented.

Progress is reviewed on a bi-monthly basis to ensure six week improvement programme is being followed for those teachers in need thereof and is bearing fruit.

The LPAs are similar to a 'mini-Ofsted'. They are very thorough and rigorous. It is a developmental process review not just an 'inspection' at a snapshot in time. Staff have been very responsive and cooperative and want to do better, if there are issues to be addressed. It is very much a full audit.

The 2014/15 SAR will inform the 2015/16 series of LPAs. Members will be sent a copy of the Quality Grid for the College to show how the LPAs fit in.

Members noted that more professional behaviour is expected from staff and that is now happening – punctuality, dress tidiness, etc.

Members reiterated their desire that the LPA system should be an integral part of the College's Quality Improvement system.

The Committee **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** this Report.

### **14. University of Arts, London Validation (Paper CQC.15.16)**

Andy Rees, Head of HE, outlined progress of the new partnership between the College and the University of Arts London, which are developing effectively. The first programme (BA (Hons) Costume Construction) was validated on 27 March 2015 at High House Production Park and has now received final UAL approval (28 May 2015).

The relationships between key operational staff at the College and UAL are developing effectively.

The seven further degrees will be validated commencing in September 2015. College Staff are being provided with the necessary training and development to meet UAL requirements. Delivery will commence in 2016/17.

This will ensure that no breach occurs of the Validation and Collaboration Agreement which would trigger a financial penalty for the College.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

#### **15. Curriculum Links** (Paper CQC.15.17)

The Clerk provided an update on Governor involvement in their respective Curriculum Links, including an updated list of the Links in place.

Governors are fully supportive of the Links process and provide thorough feedback on a regular basis to the SLT.

A number of governors were concerned that the short notice of Departmental Meetings did not always enable them to attend and this needs to be improved in the future.

This item is to be further discussed at the Meeting of the Search & Governance Committee next Monday evening to establish a satisfactory way forward.

#### **16. Forthcoming Events** (Paper CQC.15.18)

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided by the Clerk.

The Committee expressed their pleasure at the very successful Royal Visit of HRH Prince Edward to open the new Thurrock Campus and, in particular, the superb job done by the College Marketing Team was recorded.

#### **17. Any Other Business**

There were no items of AOB.

#### **18. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 21 September 2015 at the Thurrock Campus at 6.00 pm

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 8.00 pm.

Signed ..... Dated.....