

Curriculum & Quality Committee

Approved Minutes

Minutes of a Meeting of the Committee held on Monday 10 February 2014 at the Thurrock Campus, Woodview at 6.00pm.

Present:	Mr D O'Halloran (Chairman) Mr T Knight Mrs A O'Donoghue CBE Mrs G Williams
In Attendance:	Mr J Hayles (Deputy Principal) Ms C Anson-Higgs (Vice Principal, Business Development) Mrs W Barnes (Vice Principal Teaching, Learning & Student Support) Mr R Davies (Head of College Information Services) Mr Paramajit Singh Narang (Observer) Mr S Williams (Sabbatical Officer, Observer) Mr R I Millea FCA (Clerk to the Corporation)

Mr T Knight was welcomed to his first Meeting as a new Member of the Committee.

Mr S Williams (Student Union Sabbatical Officer) was welcomed to the Meeting as an Observer to provide student input, given that both Student Governors were unable to attend.

1. Presentation from Paul Smith (Media & Performing Arts)

The Committee received a presentation from Paul Smith: Head of Media & Performing Arts on his Department and took questions from Members. He was accompanied by Sam Summerson (Deputy Head) and Sofia Pileci (Curriculum Manager).

Members noted that the focus for the Department for 2013/14 is on improving teaching and learning alongside more rigorous learning observations and to build on progress in success for students with difficulties, disabilities or health problems.

Members were pleased to hear of good comments made about the Department in the Ofsted inspection last November.

A copy of the slides used in Paul's presentation are attached to these minutes.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S Carr, Mrs K Davison, Mr R Hughes and Mr L Wright.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Urgent Business

- a. The Clerk reported that Mr T Knight had been transferred to this Committee from Policy & Resources Committee and that change had been approved by a majority of Board Members, by written resolution.
- b. The Committee confirmed that this meeting was quorate – four members being required.
- c. The Clerk reported that Mrs K Davison has resigned as Student Union President and will cease to be a Student Governor immediately. He indicated that he is liaising with the Student Union in order to identify a replacement. He also reported that Lewis Wright is getting better and hopes to attend the next meeting.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 2 December 2013

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 2 December 2013 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

6. Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that the final Ofsted Report from last November's inspection has been distributed to all Members of the Board.

7. Learner Performance 2013/14 (Paper CQC.14.01)

The Committee received a report on the current position based on data to 24 January 2014, presented by John Hayles and Richard Davies.

The Committee noted that retention rates for this year so far are slightly higher than at the comparable time last year (up 0.4pp to 96.83%), whereas 19+ Learners were showing a decline of 0.4pp to 95.96%). Total retention to date is up 0.1pp on last year's final outturn.

This area remains challenging for the College but it is believed the statistics now are more realistic and reflects the fact that the students are not staying if they will not complete and if they are staying it is because they have a realistic prospect of success.

The Senior Leadership Team is focused on retention at their regular meetings weekly. The Data Services Manager follows up issues arising from retention statistical movements with each Department. Students are followed up if they have four weeks of non-attendance, because beyond that date funding would be restricted or terminated.

Overall attendance has seen a marginal increase of 0.5pp to 86.8%, which is anticipated to rise by year end as withdrawn learners are removed from the data. It still remains a challenge to meet the College target of 90% and not meeting the target could be a possible indicator of issues, such as poor teaching and learning and inappropriate/inconvenient timetabling. Considerable progress still needs to be made in this area – thus far, it looks a bit slow. There is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement.

Staff may be less keen in encouraging adults to attend compared to 16-18 year olds.

Members asked that Appendix 1 (Departmental Breakdown) should include student numbers by each Department.

The Committee was informed that it is expected that the College will achieve its learner number targets for 2013-14 for both 16-18 and 19+ learners and therefore will generate the funding allocations. This area is closely monitored by the Policy & Resources Committee, which has also had this information.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

8. Monitoring of Quality Improvement Plan Targets (Paper CQC.14.02)

This matter was deemed to be a confidential item under the Instrument & Articles and a separate minute has been prepared, which is attached to these minutes.

9. Student Services Report (Paper CQC.14.03)

This Report was presented by the Vice Principal, Curriculum and was designed to give the Committee an insight into the workings and development of the service.

It covered the National Express Foundation Bursary, Discretionary Funding, Courses and Careers Advice, Safeguarding and Pastoral Matters, the Student Union, Sport Enrichment and Student Life and Enrichment generally.

Work to develop Student Services is progressing well and the Team have identified further awareness of the services that are provided for students. Tracking interaction with students is vital for measuring the impact of the service. It was noted that Ofsted highlighted some very good practice in Student Services, particularly Safeguarding and the Learner Coach role.

Members asked what impact was made by all the activity undertaken by the Student Services Department and it is intended to capture on a software package student views and experiences of Student Services so that impact can be judged.

The Report was **RECEIVED**.

10. Equality & Diversity Annual Report & Action Plan (Paper CQC.14.04)

The Principal & Chief Executive presented this Report. It meets the requirement of the Committee to monitor College performance of equality & diversity issues. It summarises the many events that took place in the College and data on student performance and staffing for the year 2013-14 (January to January).

The document includes an Executive Summary to emphasize key highlights which included %age of students from ethnic backgrounds (19% vs 11.6% in local population). Female students (51%) achieve better than male students (2% difference). Students of Indian and Asian backgrounds were the highest achievers. The overall achievement gaps between White British and Non-White British have improved. Success Rates for those who have disclosed a learning difficulty or disability has dipped to 5% below other students.

Staff comprise 66% female and 34% male, with 3% disclosing a disability. The College has more ethnic minority staff than the general population 22% vs 15% but it is still difficult to attract sufficient applications from ethnic minority staff, particularly at more senior levels.

It was noted that Ofsted identified some major concerns re the embedding of equality and diversity within teaching and learning and noted that many staff did not take advantage of opportunities to embed/promote equality and diversity in their teaching.

The Action Plan aims to tackle this issue raised by Ofsted.

The Committee **DISCUSSED** the Report and **RECOMMENDED** that the Report, including the Action Plan be approved by the full Board at their next Meeting on 17 March.

11. Analysis of Compliments and Complaints (Paper CQC.14.05)

The Committee received a Report on this subject from the Deputy Principal. It analysed complaints in detail and also reminded the Committee of the College's Complaints process, and the role of the Quality Improvement Team.

Most complaints revolved around Level of Service and the Learner Experience.

It was noted that complaints had reduced for the third successive year and that compliments again increased this year.

A member observed that there was a disproportionate number of complaints coming from students who notified a disability, notwithstanding the overall number of complaints having declined. This point is to be investigated. It was noted that 'disability' covers a wide scope of issues.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

The Committee asked Sam Williams to take this Report back to the Student Union Committee for their comments and observations and to report back to the next meeting of this Committee.

12. Report on Curriculum Links

The Clerk advised that he had sought feedback from Board Members on the Governor Link Programme and had received a number of quite detailed responses. Copies of these responses have been forwarded to the Principal & Chief Executive and the Deputy Principal for them to respond, where necessary, to Members. The Chairman of the Committee has also been copied in.

He also advised that he had completed the allocation of new Governors to a Departmental Link and told them accordingly. They have been provided with a copy of the Protocol agreed by the Board in connection with Link Visits.

The Clerk was asked to report this matter to the full Board on 17 March.

13. Forthcoming Events (Paper CQC.14.06)

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided by the Clerk relating to forthcoming events.

14. Any Other Business

The Clerk notified the meeting of a National Governor Conference being run by Ofsted on 10 April 2014 in London and indicated he would attend. Mr Knight indicated he would see if he was available. The invitation is to governors of Colleges rated 3 or 4 in their most recent inspection.

15. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 19 May 2014 at the Basildon Campus, Nethermayne at 6.00 pm.

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 8.10 pm.

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