

Curriculum & Quality Committee

Approved Minutes

Minutes of a Meeting of the Committee held on Monday 16 May 2016 at the Basildon Campus at 6.00 pm.

Present: Mr D O'Halloran (Chairman)
Ms S Bridle
Mr B Brooks
Ms A Clarke
Ms A O'Donoghue CBE (items 1 and 8 only)
Mrs G Williams

In Attendance: Ms D Brown (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality)
Ms K Mulvey (Director of Teaching & Learning)
Mr R I Millea FCA (Clerk to the Corporation)

1. Presentation from Lisa MacCormac (Apprenticeships and Subcontracting)

The Committee received a PowerPoint presentation from Lisa MacCormac, Head of Apprenticeships and Subcontracting Team, on activities in and the performance of her Department in the last year.

Apprenticeship levy

Cost to College – can we use levy – we have Apprenticeships in house already.

Will employers use us to deliver their training which they can purchase through their digital account – this is a big challenge for us to get them on board, especially in respect of 16-18 Apprenticeships.

Only 10% of employers actively using Apprenticeships throughout the country.

Earn as you learn – the numbers are going up – it is a really viable way to learn and progress – higher level Apprenticeships being promoted.

Area Reviews need to take ability to deliver Apprenticeships into account as part of the outcomes of the process – SEC is the fifth largest provider of Apprenticeships in the country.

A question was asked re status of our internal apprentices and who they need to contact if they need support. Our internal apprentices are employees – if they have difficulties direct them to Lisa for student support and then ultimately go to HR. Those employed outside are able to access student services in the College.

Monitoring of the quality of sub contracting – internal controls, SFA standards, Quality Manager looks after maintaining quality in those companies, mature systems in place, inspection grade for Apprenticeships was grade 2 – success rates are very good, above National Average – chance of grade 1 at the next Inspection.

Traineeships being rolled out in the new academic year – springboard to Apprenticeships – generally last up to six months.

Huge change to the College caused by the levy and its administration and the attitude of employers. They rely on College for a lot of support in the whole system including finding Apprentices in the first place.

The Committee **THANKED** Lisa for her presentation.

The Chairman reordered the Agenda to take item 8 next.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Terry Knight, Sally Carr and Wendy Barnes (Vice Principal, Student Support).

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

The Chairman of the Committee (also the Chairman of the Corporation) informed the Committee that, in the light of the Area Review process later this calendar year, with which he will be heavily involved on behalf of the College, he wished to relinquish Chairmanship of this Committee for the next academic year.

The Committee **AGREED** that Gwynn Williams be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the academic year 2016/17.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 29 February 2016

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 29 February 2016 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

6. Matters Arising (Paper CQC.16.11)

The Clerk **TABLED** a Paper itemising Matters brought forward from the previous Meeting, outlining progress in actioning the points raised.

The only matters not cleared or not on this Agenda were:

The Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality provided an update on Initial Teacher Education. A new HE partner is being investigated for this training but it has not yet been confirmed. There will be a presentation on this topic at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Clerk reported that the Internal Audit on Curriculum Planning had been substantially completed and the Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality has met (11 May) with RSM to discuss issues arising and to close down the Audit. The finalised Report will be circulated to the Audit & Risk Committee by email and will be placed on the Agenda for the Board Meeting on 11 July 2016.

A copy of the Ofsted Improvement Visit letter (dated 11 March 2016 following the visit by Janet Mercer HMI on 28 January) was provided to Members of the Committee and informed the Committee that Janet Mercer has now retired and we will now have Deborah Vaughan-Jenkins for support and challenge.

7. Curriculum Planning Briefing 2016-17 (Paper CQC.16.12)

The Committee **RECEIVED** a paper Briefing from the Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality on progress in developing the Curriculum Plan for 2016/17, alongside a PowerPoint presentation. This outlined proposed changes to the planning and organisation of the curriculum for next year.

It has been prompted by curriculum reforms in a variety of areas including English and Maths, Adult Funding, Traineeships, A Levels and 16-18 Study Programmes.

Key proposals

- Two types of curriculum pathway at each level – ‘into work’ and ‘into further study’
- Changes to the new measures of performance and how value added is computed leads the College to change how English and Mathematics is offered with emphasis on getting learners onto a GCSE course as soon as possible
- An element of blended learning to all levels/courses to reduce teacher input time and encourage independent learning
- Less sub-contracting for Apprenticeships and greater delivery in-house
- Offering more Traineeships for those not ready for Apprenticeships
- Adult Institute of Professional Education
- 2 year – A levels – commencing 1 September 2016
- Demonstrate value added for students
- Access to Level 3 programme being introduced

In response to a Committee question, there is a financial penalty to students if they don't get GCSEs until they are 19+ at Level 3 as they will not be state funded at that point, but they will have to take out a FE Loan to fund their progression.

It was noted that Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications are now dependent on student passing external examinations, not on teacher controlled assessment and coursework.

The College will have to offer progression to students who do not have the necessary level of maths and English to move on to Level 3, hence the introduction of Access to Level 3.

The Committee was informed that effective progression to HE can be a challenge for many learners as, at FE level, there is too little support and challenge and too much teacher input rather than the development of independent learners. We are addressing this next year through the introduction of blended learning alongside significant professional development in 2017/18.

The finalised Plan will be brought to the Board for approval on 11 July 2016.

The Committee **APPROVED** the principles of the outline proposals for development and presentation to the Board.

ACTION: DENISE BROWN

8. Learner Applications 2016-17 (Paper CQC.16.13)

The Board **RECEIVED** a Report from the Principal & Chief Executive, in the absence of the Vice Principal, Student Support on the applications for 16-18 courses and 19+ courses for next academic year, which, in both cases, based on data up to 25 April 2016. It covers only new students, not returning students.

Compared to last year at the same date, overall total individual applications are down by 5.7% (266 learners). However these numbers (4,363) do not include progressing learners which will be approx. 2,000 learners.

The number of applicants for A level programmes has dropped by 20% (nearly 200 students). It was noted that applications for the Thurrock Campus are up 5% (about 50 learners).

The Committee noted that 19+ headcount applicants were not included in the paper because the key factor is the income allocation rather than headcount of applications.

It was noted that the enrolments at Basildon continue to fall and the proposed new Sixth Form did not manage to recruit sufficient numbers to make it viable. All students have been offered a place at Southend.

Although the trends appear lower than this time last year, the Principal & Chief Executive expressed a cautionary note. The application recording system is much more accurate than in previous years, because it records students not just applications (students may make more than one application) so we can have more confidence in the figures reported for this year to date compared to last year's figures.

In response to a question from a Member, it was confirmed that the applications only cover new students, not progressing students.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

9. Current Learner Performance – Retention/Attendance/Learner Numbers 2015/16 (Paper CQC.16.14)

The Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality, on behalf of the Interim Head of College Information Services, presented a detailed dataset on College KPIs for retention and attendance at 4 May 2016, plus learner numbers, based on the ILR funding file at that date.

Retention

The Committee noted that retention rates for this year for 16-18 learners is 92.2%, up 3.1% on last year. For 19+ learners, retention stands at 93.3%, 3% up on last year.

The KPI in each case is 91%.

All 16-18 Departments have a retention rate above 91% and a number of areas have a current retention rate of more than 10% above the 2014/15 final outturn figures.

All 19+ Departments have a retention rate above the target and a number are 10% higher than last year's final outturn.

Attendance

16-18 attendance is at 85%, 0.2% above last year and 19+ attendance is 2.2% higher than last year at 83.2%.

A number of Departments in each cohort are achieving over 85% attendance.

The College continues to monitor retention and attendance in both age groups to ensure successful outcomes.

Learner Numbers

The College has not reached its 16-18 learner allocation for the 2015/16 year with current enrolment representing 92% of the allocation at 6007 as against 6565. This deficit may reduce by year end to 359.

Clearly, this has impacted on our student number allocation for 2017/18 which has been reduced.

Overall SFA Adult Budget line is performing above allocation and the current figures indicate that we may well over deliver on 19+ Apprenticeships by a small amount. However, 16-18 Apprenticeships are below target at present but further activity is taking place which will close this gap.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

10. Monitoring of College Improvement Plan Targets (Paper CQC.16.15)

The Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality and the Director of Teaching & Learning presented the updated Quality Improvement Plan, showing progress against agreed Actions to Improve.

The QIP continues to use the RAG rating system and only one RED rated action is noted as was the case at the time of the last meeting, that being a small increase this year in serious breaches by certain students of the Student Behaviour Policy. Overall, the numbers are small and it is occurring outside the campus premises. The increase reflects the College's 'zero tolerance' policy.- the Police are aware of this situation.

Progress has been noted on the QIP covering other areas. As a result of this being 'in year' monitoring, many actions are not yet due to complete or their impact is too early to judge. As such, these are rated AMBER at this point but are expected to be rated GREEN by the end of the academic year:

- Use of Teachers' Toolkits
- Use of group profiles and students' starting points in planning and delivery
- Improvement in checking the pace of learning in classes
- Improve teacher questioning through CPD activities
- TLA in English & Mathematics too low with consequent poor success rates
- Attendance in English & Maths classes
- Adult attendance and punctuality needs improvement
- Better tracking of in-year achievement and progress
- Some instances of poor feedback to students
- Inconsistency in lesson observations and walkthroughs
- Poor success rates in a number of key areas (itemised in QIP)

- Some teachers lack skill to address under performance and therefore improve success rates of students including replicating good practice in their teaching
- Performance Management requires further improvement

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

11. Departmental Review Report (Paper CQC.16.16)

The Committee **RECEIVED** progress on the actions identified for Development as a consequence of the Departmental Reviews which took place in February 2016, as reported to the last Meeting of this Committee.

The Committee had requested a follow up Report at the last Meeting.

Since the February Reviews, all Department Heads were given actions to ensure completion of Promonitor for all students and this has been scrutinised since then, enabling Assistant Principals to monitor student progress with increased accuracy.

Management Team Meetings have been used to monitor required improvement actions and the recording of learner achievement has got better through Promonitor.

The following actions have been completed since the last Report:

- Assessment schedules fully uploaded
- Full tracking of courses
- Learners not submitting or not meeting criteria are now tracked
- Department teams are taking responsibility for monitoring learner progress and setting up mechanisms to address students who are falling behind
- RAG rating for students was agreed with Department Heads and all department working to consistent framework

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

12. QAA HE Review Process (Paper CQC.16.17)

The Committee **RECEIVED** a paper explaining the HE Review process, which had been undertaken between 3 and 6 May 2016.

This process is the equivalent of inspection activity and is focused entirely on HE provision. The initial findings of the Review will be known on 20 May and a draft Report issued on 17 June. Three weeks are allowed for factual checking and the final Report will be issued on 29 July. The resultant Action Plan must be prepared by 7 October which will come to the next Meeting of this Committee.

The Board will receive an update at its Meeting on 11 July. The Members of the Committee will receive a copy of the findings of the Review with planned actions as soon as possible.

As part of the process, the College submitted a Self Evaluation Document and this is accessible by governors. It was noted that the thematic element of the inspection for the College was Digital Literacy and Employability.

The Committee thanked all those involved in the process.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

13. Committee Schedule of Business 2016/17 (Paper CQC.16.18)

The Committee **RECEIVED** a draft Schedule of Business for the Committee for 2016/17, prepared by the Clerk, which was **AGREED**, subject to adding 'Draft Self-Assessment Report 2015/16' to the Schedule for the November 2016 Meeting. The Committee also **NOTED** proposed Meeting Dates and Locations for the Committee for 2016/17 (see 16 below).

14. Forthcoming Events (Paper CQC.16.19)

The Committee **NOTED** the schedule prepared by the Clerk.

15. Any Other Business

The Chairman thanked Angelina Clarke for her contribution to the work of the Committee during her two year term as a student governor, as this was her last Meeting before her term of office expires.

There were no items of Any Other Business.

16. Dates of Forthcoming Meetings 2016/17

Monday 7 November 2016 – Thurrock Campus
Monday 27 February 2017 – Thurrock Campus
Monday 15 May 2017 – Basildon Campus

All Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm.

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 7.45 pm.

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