

Curriculum & Quality Committee

Approved Minutes

Minutes of a Meeting of the Committee held on Monday 1 December 2014 at the Basildon Campus at 6.10 pm.

Present: Mr D O'Halloran (Chairman)
Mrs S Carr
Ms R Hawkridge
Mr T Knight
Mrs A O'Donoghue CBE
Mrs G Williams

In Attendance: Ms C Anson-Higgs (Vice-Principal, Business Development)
Ms J Belcher (Head of Student Services) (Item 6)
Mr A Rees (Head of HE Development & Delivery) (Item 7)
Ms D Brown (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality)
Ms W Barnes (Assistant Principal, Student Support)
Mr R Davies (Head of College Information Services)
Mr M Twitchett (Head of Learning & Standards)
Ms K Mulvey (Director of Teaching & Learning)
Ms A Clarke (HE Student – Observer)
Mr R I Millea FCA (Clerk to the Corporation)

1. Presentation from Bill Kenney (Art & Design)

The Committee received a presentation from Bill Kenney: Head of Art & Design on his Department. His slides are attached to the file copy of these minutes.

Bill answered a number of questions from members, especially in connection with the relationship with University of Arts, London, and how it might develop further.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Elaine Mead and Rhys Hughes.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Urgent Business

a. The Committee were provided with a copy of a Letter from the FE Commissioner dated 17/10/14, reporting on issues arising from his work. It was noted that his Annual Report, recently published, will be sent to all Members of the Board for their information, accompanied by a summary prepared by the Clerk of key issues to which the Commissioner referred in his Report.

b. The College Academic Board has been resurrected and expressions of interest have been received from a number of staff. This will be up and running shortly and will meet for the first time this Friday. Minutes of the Academic Board will come to this Committee and, once the Board is fully established and operational, some Governor involvement on an 'Observer' basis will be considered.

c. Ofsted is consulting on a revised Inspection Framework, which will align inspections between Colleges and schools. The consultation closes on 5 December and Kathy Mulvey will be drafting and submitting the College's response. The Committee noted that Colleges and schools do not lend themselves to the same inspection framework and it is not practicable for Colleges to be subject to no-notice inspections as the organisations are far too big to make this logistically viable. The Committee also felt that it was a mistake not to include within the new framework sector subject grades, a concept which is irrelevant to schools.

d. The Clerk reported that Elyse Reeve (HE Student Governor and Member of this Committee) has resigned as a governor of the College with effect from 12 November 2014. He reported further that the Student Union Committee is hoping to nominate a replacement for Elyse at their next regular meeting to be held shortly.

So as not to wait until the next Board Meeting due in March to approve a replacement, there are the options of dealing with approval of a new appointment at the Board Development Day in January or by means of a written resolution.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 22 September 2014

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 22 September 2014 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

6. Bi-Annual Safeguarding Report (Paper CQC.14.22)

Ms Jane Belcher (Student Services Manager) 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 their responsibility to ensure the College is meeting its statutory duty to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults. Learner Coaches have been amalgamated into Student Services and work closely with the Safeguarding Team. It is aimed to ensure Learner Coaches are there to give pastoral support to Tutors for individual students and this is a better option than expecting lecturers to do this work and provide this support.

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

Governor Training is to be arranged as there have been recent changes to Safeguarding legislation etc – a refresher is to be arranged to ensure the Board is up to date.

Training is now being rolled out to students on extremism as a prevention strategy, being done on advice from the Police. The College will include this issue within the next revision of the Safeguarding Policy, where it seems to fit naturally. Staff have been reminded of the College Public Interest Disclosure Policy – it sits on the College website as part of Human Resources policy.

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

In response to a question, Jane confirmed that students of the College remain the responsibility of the College when they are on work replacements and relevant risk assessments and reviews of placements from the safeguarding perspective are undertaken. It was noted that the work experience are will expand over the next few months to meet Government targets in this area.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

7. Higher Education Strategy (Paper CQC.14.23)

This was deemed to be a Confidential Item under the Instrument & Articles and a separate minute has been prepared and is attached to these minutes.

8. Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that the Corporation at its last meeting in October had approved the following items on the recommendation of this Committee:

- The Quality Improvement Plan 2014/15
- The Setting of Performance Targets for 2014/15
- The Committee's Terms of Reference (annual review)

9. Ofsted Improvement Visit (Paper CQC.14.24)

The Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality reported to the Committee on the recent Improvement Visit from Ofsted which took place on 17 and 18 November 2014. The visit was to review progress being made by the College against the targets previously agreed with Ofsted.

The visit was positive about the improvements made to date, which were documented in the paper, highlighted by the overall improved success rate for 2013/14, now at the National Average.

They raised a number of areas which still require attention especially Level 1, A Levels, Engineering and Construction and Maths and English, support arrangements for A Level students and A/AS Levels generally, improved and consistent ILPs, employability initiatives and overall assessments for students.

The Committee noted that Ofsted will visit again in the Spring Term, probably February, and will expect to see continuing improvements. They will expect to meet some Governors at this next visit. A full inspection will occur in either the Summer Term or the Autumn Term 2015.

The Committee was informed of the difference of function between student learning coaches, progress coaches and advanced learning practitioners and how each are supporting learning and the drive for improvement.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report, in particular, the improvements made by the College, and acknowledged by Ofsted, and the actions still required to improve the under-performing areas.

The Committee was also provided with a copy of a draft letter issued by the Ofsted Inspectors who conducted this monitoring visit and this was **NOTED**.

10. Learner Performance 2013-14 - Final (Paper CQC.13.26)

The Committee received the final report on Learner Performance for 2013/14, presented by the Head of College Information Services.

The overall headline rate of outcomes for learners for the College for 2013/14 showed a pleasing improvement from 77% to 82%.

The main results of the data analysis were:

- A/AS levels are below the national average – A Levels are 1.7 pp below and AS Levels are 6.5 pp below and both have declined compared to last year by 2.5 pp and 3.3 pp respectively. Significant improvement is needed to this cohort of learners
- Success rates for 16-18 Long Level 3 Diploma programmes are 8.8 pp above last year and are now 0.1% above the national average. However, this obscures some poor provision and results in Science and Health & Care.
- Long Level 1 programmes for both 16-18 and 19+ are significantly below the national average (by 8.4 pp and 14.1 pp respectively). 16-18 success was slightly up on last year but 19+ had declined further by 3.9 pp. Again, this area needs considerable improvement
- Apprenticeship success is 4.1 pp above last year and this is 2.1 pp above the National Average.
- Success rates on HE programmes are 2 pp above last year, with consistent retention

The Report contained full details of results in all framework areas and the Committee **NOTED** the Report.

11. Current Learner Performance – Retention/Attendance/Learner Numbers (Paper CQC.14.26)

The Head of College Information Services presented a detailed dataset on College Student KPIs (16-18) for the year to date (to 28/11/14), which showed retention, starts, attendance, national averages and progress regarding student ILPs. It particularly provided focus on the four College areas of challenge – Early Years, 16-18 Long Level 1, Engineering and SE6 (A Levels). It is analysed by Study Programme (Ofsted measure) and Functional Skills (Maths & English).

The Committee was reminded that retention can be adversely affected by students leaving to take up employment, although that is a positive outcome. The Committee were also reminded that students in part-time employment can count towards achievement of the 80% target set by Government for work experience/placement.

Some slight revamping of the schedule was agreed. It will be sent to Governors monthly and reviewed by this Committee at its regular quarterly meetings.

It was noted that some students previously doing GCSEs have been transferred to Functional Skills, on the basis that they would not be able to cope with GCSEs.

The Committee **APPROVED** this approach for future regular monitoring of in-year data.

12. Key Performance Indicators 2014-15 (Paper CQC.14.27)

The Principal and Chief Executive presented this Report. It reminded members of the KPIs for curriculum agreed by the Corporation at its October Meeting and the Committee **RECOMMENDED** an increase of 1% to 83% for 16-18 Long success rates, for Board approval on 8 December 2014.

The Committee considered Performance Indicators monitoring, in addition to the annual targets already set.

These Performance Indicators cover updates and regular reporting on

- Level 1 provision and Maths and English, where there are serious performance issues and are scoring below national benchmarks, to include retention and attendance
- Progress towards the target of 80% of students undertaking a work placement/work experience (now a requirement of 16-18 study programmes)
- Achievement of all students having an Individual Learning Plan via regular quality checks, with quality SMART targets in place for at least 80% thereof
- In-year student survey results compared to last year identifying areas of concern and improvement which are of interest for Ofsted.

The Committee asked that the May Meeting of this Committee receive an update on progress with regard to Staff Appraisals, where there have been issues in the past. Ofsted did, last week, indicate they were pleased with progress in this area.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that these in-year measures be approved by the Board at its meeting on 8 December 2014.

Finally, the Committee **NOTED** that it will report, after conducting its own scrutiny, regularly to the Board on progress being made in the identified under-performing areas, detailed above.

13. Learner Progress Audits (Paper CQC.14.28)

The Director of Teaching and Learning presented this Report on recently conducted detailed audits on A/AS Level provision and Engineering & Building Technology (Motor Vehicle and Construction). These audits have been introduced into the Quality Assurance cycle with effect from September 2014. They are, in effect, 'mini-inspections' but focusing on the learning experience, from their perspective, which will help validate good teaching.

Such audits are focused on assessing professional practice to support learner progress, leadership and management actions to improve department outcomes and provide feedback to the department linked to specific development action points. Previously, professional practice was only really audited via teaching observations.

Both of these areas are of concern – E&BT is At Risk and A/AS Levels Requires Improvement. The Audits are carried out using Ofsted methodology and detail areas of concern, areas of strength and steps to facilitate improvement.

Action plans have been agreed with the Departmental Managers. Copies of the Reports will go to the relevant Link Governors.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

14. Governor Links (Paper CQC.14.29)

Sally Carr gave a verbal report on an AoC Accountability Conference, which she attended recently. The focus was on using data to facilitate improvement.

The Committee were provided with a current list of Governor Departmental Links and noted vacancies therein. It was noted that Engineering & Building Technology will soon not have a Link Governor with the impending resignation from the Board of Yusuf Goolamali. There are other vacancies as well.

The Links should be reviewed with the objective of ensuring all areas have link governors in place and that generally governors have the time to devote to their Governor Links, with particular emphasis on the areas at risk.

The Clerk was instructed to bring forward a summary of the current position and actions required to consolidate the engagement between governors and College Departments at the Board Meeting next week. The Committee believed there needed to be a clear focus that ensured the poorer College areas are linked with a governor in each case who has the time availability to fulfil the link.

15. Forthcoming Events (Paper CQC14.30)

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

16. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 9 February 2015 at the Thurrock Campus at 6.00 pm.

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 8.20 pm.

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