



MINUTES
of the meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee
held remotely on Wednesday 24 November 2021

Present: - Laura Johnston (Chair)
Igor Andronov
Debbie Lambert
Jeremy Nicholls
David Williams (Principal)

In attendance: - Debra Baldwin (Director of Personnel)
Jo Ricketts (Deputy Principal)
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Corporation)

The meeting was quorate as five Members were present.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

2. Declaration of Interests

None declared.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the last Meeting

The Committee agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021 as a true record. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

4. Student Outcomes and Student Experience

- I. FE Data: 2020/21 qualification achievement rates are 84.4% excluding English and maths. 3-year trends showed an annual increase which was very encouraging. Last year's achievement was based on teacher assessed grades. It is anticipated that achievement rates will remain good in 2021/22.

Walford Campus retention was slightly lower at 80.7% which included adult provision programmes delivered at the Gateway. Walford Campus achievement data was stronger excluding adult provision. Like for like comparisons showed that achievement at Walford Campus had improved since 2017/18.

Action

FTS achieved 81.8% achievement which had been impacted by lockdown when it was not possible to complete teacher assessments for some technical qualifications.

Achievement by qualification type was presented with 3-year trends. The NEET group had attended English, Maths and Functional Skills, and workshops to provide preparation for their next step or employment; achievement had decreased this year. Level 1 had also declined which had been affected by lockdown. Some students on the Access to HE programme had opted to take learning breaks during the pandemic.

GCSE English and maths achievement was low despite strategies embedded last year to improve attendance. There had been insufficient evidence to award teacher assessment grades to some students. ESOL were affected by closure of face to face provision. A Governor asked if ESOL credits are taken into account; these are equally rated with each student being required to enrol on three qualifications. Functional Skills English and maths were affected by remote teaching and assessments. Generally students working towards lower level qualifications found online assessments challenging.

Equality and diversity data was presented by ethnicity, disability/health problem, High Needs and Children Looked After (CLA) by retention, pass and achievement rates compared to other learners. These were reported both including and excluding English and maths. There was a wider achievement gap with CLA. Actions to support CLA and High Needs were outlined in the Annual Operation Plan (AOP).

Apprenticeship achievement had been affected by the pandemic. Overall achievement was 54.3% and timely achievement 34% with better results obtained by 19-24 years. There are no national comparisons this year.

There was a question about value added scores which are available but used cautiously.

The College has commissioned QPD to complete a survey of leaver destinations. A summary will be included in the SAR.

- II. HE Data: This was presented covering enrolment, retention and achievement. The AOP proposed reviewing programmes to ensure that these are appropriate and meet learner demand. The pandemic was likely to have impacted on applications this year. Retention is good with small group sizes and percentages. Foundation Degrees have maintained attendance with online learning and Higher National programmes have been delivered face to face with the exception of lockdowns. The grade profile was varied with very few students achieving lower grades.

The student satisfaction survey and NSS results were good with 75%, overall satisfaction against the national sector score of 74.89%. Issues raised have been analysed noting that some IT issues identified by students had related to their IT at home and not the College's IT system. A Governor asked how many students had completed the

questionnaire noting that only one course had responses from more than ten students.

- III. Courses identified in serious concern were identified in the SAR. CMT are designating courses as red or amber to be overseen by Deputy Principal or Assistant Principals respectively.
- IV. 2021/22 Annual Operating Plan (AOP) had been discussed by the F&E Committee focusing on financial and staffing aspects. Governors agreed that this was comprehensive and ambitious. The AOP would replace the QIP and seek to avoid duplication of several documents. KPIs had provided generic performance data with some duplication. A Governor commented on discussion at the F&E Committee about a digital strategy noting that this would be driven by teaching and learning needs initially suggesting that this is addressed as a priority based of the NSS summary. The digital strategy group could include a student.

KPI's were presented for the current academic year. GCSE English and maths have an 80% attendance target with different targets for 16-18 and 19+ year which had been set based on pre-merger targets with NSC; it could be timely to review these. The national FE target appears to be 85% agreeing that the College has good attendance with an option to increase the target. It would be important to balance this against the impact of the pandemic and purpose of the target which could introduce stretch targets to ensure improvement in faculties. It was agreed to maintain an attendance target of 90% this year with an option to increase marginally next year.

English and maths attendance shows c20% improvement compared to the same period last year. GCSE English and maths progress scores showed several students below progress at their first assessment point. Distance travelled to achieve additional grades will be challenging as several students are below levels that they joined College with. It was anticipated that this would be a national picture.

Apprenticeships data showed anomalies which will be unpicked.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the comprehensive reports and data, particularly the AOP
- The AOP would be finalised taking account of input from CMT and Governors which would be reported to the Board in December for adoption and used as a live document with cyclical reporting.

5. Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

A new model with developmental observations was introduced at the end of the previous academic year. A summary of individual reviews, including seen and unseen observations, was provided noting the positive feedback from staff about the benefits of the model. Staff are working together to share key themes, best practice and learning perspectives.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the positive observation of teaching, learning and assessment report

6. Quality

- I. The Deputy Principal thanked Governors who had participated in the Self Assessment Report (SAR) moderation process; the Chair

commented that this was an extremely useful and informative process. The SAR provided an open and transparent assessment of progress with the summary of grades outlined: by each faculty for quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management. The draft would be updated before being presented to the Board for approval.

- II. The Annual HE Quality Report was presented by qualification and RAG rated. Student recruitment remains a major risk.
- III. The Strategic Higher Education Minutes were noted.
- IV. The Careers Programme offers careers guidance, employability, Higher Education and progression advice evidencing compliance to the Gatsby benchmarks was presented. The Designated Careers Governor has termly meetings with the Student Progression Advisor confirming online training for Governors had been useful. The Student Progression Advisor would be invited to provide a briefing on Gatsby Standards at a Governors' Workshop.
- V. Minutes from the subcontracting termly meeting held on 29 September 2021 were noted.
- VI. The Student and Apprenticeship Protection Plan was presented for information.
- VII. The Access Arrangements Policy was approved.

The Committee agreed: -

- To recommend the Board approve the final SAR
- To recommend the Board approve the Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan with appreciation recorded to the Head of Quality Improvement
- To note reports presented for information
- To approve the Access Arrangements Policy

7. Equality and Diversity

- I. The Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2020/21 included data for protected groups comparing progress with all learners. A further analysis of ethnicity will be undertaken to identify reasons for lower achievement by some groups; however, there were low numbers of students in some of these groups. Socio-economic, Children Looked After and High Needs results were very good and reflected the support staff provided. The majority of achievement rates had improved.
- II. The Single Equality Scheme (SES) includes equality objectives which the College is required to publish every 4 years. The SES will be published once approved by the Board. Activities to embed equality and diversity were outlined with an action plan linked to the equality objectives.
- III. Minutes of the Safeguarding Equality and Diversity Committee were noted.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the detailed annual report which will be presented to the Board
- To recommend the Board approve the Single Equality Scheme
- To note the minutes

8. Safeguarding and Child Protection

- I. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Annual Report 2020/21 was presented which evidenced how the College meets its safeguarding responsibilities and the Prevent Duty. Concerns were presented by

category which included those specifically relating to mental health and wellbeing. Governors were encouraged that staff and students are being given support. Governors' attention was drawn to peer on peer and bullying behaviours showing an increase in incidents following awareness raising in tutorials, training and educating staff and students on appropriate behaviour. A Governor asked if specialist support can be accessed which was confirmed with the Student Services team supporting students with low-level concerns. High-level concerns are addressed promptly by external services.

- II. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy had been updated to include requirements from the recent KCSIE publication with changes highlighted throughout the policy including county lines, missing from education and additional training.
- III. The Child Looked After Policy merged HLC and NSC policies including the change from LAC to CLA.
- IV. The Safeguarding Action Plan 2021/22, including Child Protection and Prevent, incorporated recommendations from the external review of safeguarding to improve site security.
- V. The Leaders in Safeguarding Action Plan had been updated showing progress since the last meeting in June 2021.
- VI. Terms of reference for the Safeguarding Network evidenced robust arrangements to oversee and provide safeguarding throughout the College.
- VII. Minutes of the Safeguarding Network held on 16 September 2021 were noted.
- VIII. Minutes of the Safeguarding arrangements and audit meeting held on 5 October 2021 were noted.
- IX. The Prevent Strategy was noted.
- X. The Prevent Risk Assessment 2021/22 was RAG rated evidencing practices embedded.
- XI. Student Search Policy and Guidelines policy was presented.
- XII. Procedure for Organising Events and External Speakers amalgamated HLC and NSC incorporating the Prevent requirements in response to an audit.
- XIII. The Mental Health Strategy had been updated to reflect the new structure of the team.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the comprehensive annual report which will be presented to the Board
- To recommend that the Board approve the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- To note the reports
- To approve the Child Looked After Policy, Student Search Policy and Guidelines, Procedure for Organising Events and External Speakers
- To approve the Mental Health Strategy which provides a structure to support students and staff experiencing mental health issues
- To record appreciation to the Head of Student Services for her hard work to manage safeguarding throughout the College

9. Student Discipline and Complaints

- I. The Student Discipline Annual Report 2020/21 anonymously outlined 23 incidents across each campus.

- II. The Student Complaints Annual Report 2020/21 reported a total of 17 complaints of which 16 had been resolved and one had not been closed down.
- III. The Complaints Policy for external complaints was presented with no changes proposed.
- IV. The Student Disciplinary Policy was presented with revisions highlighted.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the annual reports showing low levels of both student disciplinary issues and student complaints
- To approve the Complaints Policy and Student Disciplinary Policy

10. Any other business and comments

There were no items with appreciation recorded to the Deputy Principal and Director of Personnel for preparing reports. It was agreed that reports were gratifying evidence of the College's effective management of the College during the pandemic and lockdowns. The professionalism and calmness of staff throughout the pandemic was acknowledged.

11. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Wednesday 23 March 2022 commencing at 3.15 pm.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**