

**CORPORATION BOARD
CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting held on 4 February 2019 at Abingdon Campus at 6pm.

Present:
Di Batchelor (Principal)
Lucy Coppock
Fay Croft
Vicky Field
Tony Petruso
Stephen Vickers
Sean Wellington

In attendance:
Jacqui Canton, Deputy Principal
Maureen Boyle, Vice Principal
Jenny Craig, Vice Principal
Ruth Reavley, Clerk

Governor questions are represented with bullet points, and management responses are italicised.

In the absence of the Committee Chair, members elected Vicky Field to chair the meeting. As this would have been the final meeting of the Committee Chair, Tim Lincoln, members agreed that the election marked the beginning of a two-year term in office for Vicky Field.

1. Opening Comments, apologies, new declarations of interest

Members noted apologies from Tim Lincoln. New declarations of interest were considered: from Stephen Vickers, related to a role as Assessor for SQA and QQI, and from Sean Wellington, who had been re-appointment as a TEF Panellist by the Office for Students (OfS).

Action	By whom	deadline
Update Register of Interests	Clerk	immediate

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November, 2018

With two minor typographical corrections, the minutes were approved and signed.

3. Matters arising

The Matters arising report was noted.

4. Presentation: Health & Social Care and Early Years

Sian Cound, Head of the Service Industries Faculty, gave a presentation on Health & Social Care and Early Years provision. The School of Health and Social Care self-assessed grade had changed from Ofsted grade 3 in 2012 to Ofsted grade 1 in the 2017/18 SAR. Her presentation covered the contributory factors to this transformation.

In discussion:

- Was there a gender issue around recruitment to Health & Social Care and Early Years courses? Should an emphasis, equivalent to that given to recruiting girls to STEM, be considered to recruit boys into the Faculty? *It is a challenge; development of a progression route to a Paramedic Course has improved the gender imbalance.*
- Was the inclusion of substantial work experience a limiting factor? *The dedicated staff team responsible for work placement have a long record of success. Many students are offered roles arising from their work placement; once appointed, some return to College to complete Apprenticeships.*
- Recognising the achievements of the team and the students in terms of outcomes and growth of student numbers, were there key elements to the transformation which

were transferrable? *Using staff performance management effectively had been crucial; generating a cohesive team spirit across the two areas of Health & Social Care and Early Years had been hugely influential; student pride in identity, expressed both in uniforms and in their use of the dedicated student area, was important.*

All governors present commended the Head of Faculty on the turn-round that had been achieved.

5. Presentation: 19+ English and Maths

Elizabeth Frost, Head of the English & Maths Faculty, gave a presentation on 19+ English and Maths provision, covering Functional Skills (FS), GCSE and ESOL provision.

In discussion, governors recognised that the challenges were great, and that nationally student success was poor in this area. In that context, much of what was reported showed that the College was doing well. Governors shared the Head of Faculty's concern that the Department for Education's guidance on the new FS syllabus and exams for 2019 was to be rolled out far too late to enable professionals to plan staff Continuing Professional Development tailored to a new, more challenging system. Governors noted that, in England there was no indication the condition of funding rules (whereby 16-18 year-old students who had not achieved a grade c/4 have to study English and Maths in order to qualify for funding for their vocational programme) would be rescinded, though it had never been included in Wales or Scotland.

- The College had addressed very many of the issues for this student group. Turning around the confidence and ability of students who had not succeeded through many years of school, in just 30 weeks, required many different interventions.
- The Fast Track approach for students ready to take FS exams early is clearly effective. Do students then progress to GCSE? *In the remaining two terms there is not enough time to prepare students for GCSE; the course content is very different. The initial assessment of students is rigorous and identifies whether FS or GCSE is the appropriate course.*
- How is staff morale? *Team members do enjoy the more challenging students – there are many rewards. English and maths Functional Skills are taught by members of faculty teams, and benefit from support from colleagues in the faculty.*
- There are notable differences between Witney and Abingdon Campus GCSE results. What is the explanation? *The same standard is applied across both campuses: students within ten marks of a pass are entered for November retake. At Abingdon Campus, a large proportion of the cohort were students who had not previously been College students and were not known to staff. Their results had, at large, brought down the pass rate for November retakes. The College is taking steps to tailor initial assessment further, to identify more accurately whether November resits are suitable.*
- Is staff recruitment and retention a concern? *The team membership has been steady, though two may leave soon, one for a research position, and one to teach his degree subject of Engineering. Recruitment can be difficult; the cost of housing locally is high. Some creative approaches are being followed targeting Primary Maths specialists, through Marketing and HR.*

Governors thanked the Head of Faculty for a clear and positive presentation on what they recognised was a very challenging area.

6. FE curriculum & quality report

Vice Principal Jenny Craig commented on key points in her report: the published Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) data confirms the College Self-Assessment Report;

the effectiveness of Iris Connect to facilitate teacher professional reflection is such that the technology will be rolled out further.

- Are there lessons learned from the inspection reports of other Colleges? *Yes, Senior Managers regularly scrutinise and consider implications of published reports*
- Does the College have evidence of the educational efficacy of its strategy on stratification of English and maths students, in terms of confidence-building and skill-development through early success on FS courses? *The content of the FS course is highly contextualised, and students are well prepared; this is more true with maths and with English.*
- What accounts for the high progress scores reported for Henley College and Activate? *These may relate to policy on Admissions and Functional Skills.*

Governors noted that a briefing would be provided on the revised Ofsted Education Inspection Framework once the current consultation period is complete and the new Framework confirmed.

Action	By whom	deadline
Add Ofsted Education Inspection Framework briefing to C&Q agenda	Clerk/Vice Principal	When framework is confirmed.

7. HE Curriculum & Quality Report

Vice Principal Jenny Craig drew attention to key points: The new National Student Survey was now open, and teachers were using tutorial time to encourage participation. Arrangements for the inaugural Research Conference were well underway.

- Can governors attend the Research Conference? *Yes; it is aimed at HE students.*
- What is the relationship between the College and the Office for Students (OfS)? How does the OfS know the College is doing a good job? *It is evident that the OfS is struggling with the concept of HE in FE, and is taking steps to adjust its processes. The onus is on governors to assure the OfS, hence the annual review of quality statement approved by the Board in November for an early December 2018 submission deadline.*
- The inspection agency is the QAA. There are a range of triggers for inspection, some related to conditions imposed on HE Institutions on registration. OfS imposed no conditions on AW. There is also an element of random/routine inspection. *The Principal was advised recently that the QAA expected to inspect every HE Institution within a twenty-year cycle – vastly different from the Ofsted inspection cycle.*
- Could students on Level 3 courses with research modules also submit posters for the research conference? *Yes, that would be put in place*
- The legend of Appendix 1 needed updating to reflect three, not four, scoring categories. *That would be done. The categories for “Strength” and “best practice” had been amalgamated in the chart.*

Action	By whom	deadline
Open Research Conference to L3 students with research modules	Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality	immediate
Amend legend of Appendix 1 to amalgamate “Strengths” and “best practice”	Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality	For next meeting

8. Apprenticeships Report

Governors noted that the Apprenticeships Strategy paper, though prepared, had not been seen, as the Strategy & Governance Committee meeting had been re-scheduled to take place after the Board Strategy Day. The Deputy Principal outlined key messages: notably that the College experience was significantly different in a number of measures from the

national picture. Since the paper was written, the College has been invited to re-apply for the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP), slightly earlier than had been expected.

- Will there be an impact of the move from frameworks to standards related to non-completion of the new End Point Assessments by students who have successfully completed the professional qualification within the Apprenticeship? Will overall achievement rates fall? *Yes, it is expected that national timely achievement rates will fall.*
- What progress is there on the Apprenticeship arrangement with Moulton College? *Forty students are coming onto AW books, based on the ongoing provision, with delivery taking place at Moulton, under the oversight of the AW Deputy Principal.*
- Governors should be, justifiably, proud of the achievements to date. What is the College response, firstly to the situation that apprenticeship numbers are not meeting the government's aspiration and that employers are not motivated to spend the levy, and secondly to the possible impact on apprenticeships on contraction in the national car industry owing to Brexit uncertainty? *In terms of the car industry we have not yet seen any indication of falling demand for apprenticeships.*
- BMW has committed to an electric model of Mini being built in Oxford, but the situation is volatile owing to Brexit unknowns. *The government's apprenticeship start target is enshrined in statute; an expectation that national policy will change to respond to unintended consequences of reforms was discussed at a recent Association of Colleges Apprenticeships conference. Starts trends have shifted toward the more expensive apprenticeships, with under-recruitment in other areas, leading towards a potential overspend of the national apprenticeship budget. This has impact for the college in that, for instance, projected growth has been based in significant part on increasing Chartered Manager apprenticeships, but the remuneration has been cut from £27,000 to £22,000 with very little warning. The government appears concerned about Degree Apprenticeships replacing graduate recruitment. There is some national debate now about assessing the value of apprenticeships to various stakeholders and this assessment might well start of impact on the direction of government policy in future.*
- The College has been very successful working with larger levy-paying employers; how is it engaging with the Small and Medium sized Enterprise (SME) employers, who numerically dominate the local economy? *The deferred Apprenticeship Strategy paper covered this topic: priority had been given to levy-payers newly entering the Apprenticeship market, as in the long-run the margins from recurring waves of recruitment would grow as relationships and processes became efficient. Margins are tighter when working with SMEs, as more support is needed, typically. Nonetheless, the SME market is of strategic importance going forward.*

9. Policies

Admissions Policy

Governors noted that the proposed amendments to section 2.1 related purely to statutory definition of protected characteristics. An amendment to 2.3 to replace "Data Protection Act" with "General Data Protection Regulation Regulations" was proposed.

Governors discussed section 5, and the use of interviews as a criterion for admission. It was agreed that the process was robust, and that there were some courses for which passing an interview was a requirement; the wording was approved.

Subject to the GDPR amendment, the Policy was recommended to the Board for approval.

Student Performance Management and Disciplinary Policy.

The revised policy was recommended to the Board for approval.

Student Voice Policy

The revised policy was approved.

Action	By whom	Deadline
Amend Admissions Policy and add to Board agenda	Clerk, in consultation with Policy Author	Board agenda, March meeting
Add Student Performance Management and Disciplinary Policy to Board agenda	Clerk	Board agenda, March meeting
Add approved final version of Student Voice Policy to College Policies tile; ensure notification to staff	Clerk, in consultation with Marketing team	immediate

10. Future Business

Governors agreed that the Head of Landbased Industries and Construction Trades would be invited to present to the June Committee meeting. They noted that the Audit Committee now received presentations from Heads of Business as a regular agenda item. The proposals, subject to amendment in the light of the forthcoming Strategy Day and to external factors, were approved.

Governors reflected on the usefulness of presentations for governors; it was a pity that governors not on the Committee lost out on the additional insights gained.

- How did Heads of Faculty view such invitations? *Heads of Faculty were keen to engage with governors about what they are doing, the challenges and the celebrations. It is useful experience for career progression.*

A governor reflected on the fruitfulness of the Link Governor programme; the rewards were well worth the time given to the meetings and activities.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signature

Date

Matters arising from the Curriculum & Quality Committee, 5 February 2019

Item	Action	By whom	deadline
1. Opening Comments	Update Register of Interests	Clerk	immediate
6. FE C&Q report	Add Ofsted Education Inspection Framework briefing to C&Q agenda	Clerk/Vice Principal	When framework is confirmed.
7. HE C&Q report	Open Research Conference to L3 students with research modules	Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality	immediate
	Amend legend of Appendix 1 to amalgamate "Strengths" and "best practice"	Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality	For next meeting
9. Policies	Amend Admissions Policy and add to Board agenda	Clerk, in consultation with Policy Author	Board agenda, March meeting
	Add Student Performance Management and Disciplinary Policy to Board agenda	Clerk	Board agenda, March meeting
	Add approved final version of Student Voice Policy to College Policies tile; ensure notification to staff	Clerk, in consultation with Marketing team	immediate