

The Corporation Board of Accrington and Rossendale College

Minutes of a Meeting of: The Curriculum & Quality Standards Committee

Date: 17th June 2014

Location: Conference Room, Broad Oak Centre



Confirmed

Members Present:

Mr S Ireland	Chair of the Committee and Independent Member
Dr M Lee	Independent Member
Mr S Cox	Independent Member
Dr A M Coyne	Independent Member
Mrs S Taylor	Principal
Miss T Landon	Staff Governor

In Attendance:

Miss W Higgin	Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality)
Miss G Atherton	Director of Curriculum Development and Delivery
Mrs J Crowther	Director of Learner Services
Mrs L Higham	Director of People and Performance
Mrs R Tootell	Head of Quality & Standards
Mr A Armiger	Clerk to the Corporation
Mrs N Tattersall	Minuting Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Mr R Grigorjevs	Independent Member
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Draft Minutes Prepared by: NT-AA	Date: 23-06-14
Draft Minutes approved by the Chair:	24-06-14
Minutes Approved by the Committee:	25-11-14

.....*Steve Ireland*.....

Chair

C&QSC

The Chair welcomed members to the meetings.

13/14-3.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Grigorjevs.

13/14-3.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13/14-3.3 Minutes of Meeting held on 11th February 2014

The minutes from the meeting held on the 11th February 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Attendance by Mr S Cox and Mrs L Higham to be included on the front page.

Resolved

13/14-3.3 to approve the minutes from the meeting held on 11th February 2014

13/14-3.4 Matters arising not otherwise on agenda

The Clerk to the Corporation updated on the progress of the following resolutions:

C&QS 13/14-2.5 - to recommend the College Quality Strategy to the Corporation Board for approval – this was presented to and approved by the Corporation Board at its meeting on 26th March 2014.

C&QS 13/14-2.9 - i) the College Senior Management Team would review the College's Media Policy and Training – the process has begun and the Principalship has met to discuss implications. The Principal advised that a review of the training provided in the past had been undertaken but the company no longer exists. Mrs Taylor advised members that she had approached other Local Principals for recommendations and the College is pursuing options for media training.

C&QS 13/14 2.13 - that the Clerk to the Corporation will organise for the Ofsted briefing paper to be circulated to all Board Members for their review – the Ofsted briefing paper was circulated to the Corporation Board at its meeting on 26th March 2014.

Resolved

13/14-3.4 to note the above taken.

13/14-3.5 Safeguarding our Learners Update

The Director of People and Performance presented an update on the safeguarding of learners within College.

Safeguarding Referrals – Mrs Higham advised members that there had been an increase in the number of referrals received during 2103/14 and over the past couple of months the College has seen a rise in the number of domestic violence referrals. Awareness has been raised with staff and the College also has a long standing working relationship with HARV, the Domestic Violence team in the area. Mrs Higham reported that there is no pattern in relation to the domestic violence referrals they range from 16 year olds to HE learners. Dr Coyne pointed out that it had been reported that unfortunately there was expected to be an increase nationally of this type of violence due to the World Cup. Mrs Higham noted that the College has a number of support mechanisms in place for all safeguarding which

included the operational Safeguarding Team and Learning Development Mentors providing pastoral care and other support. Dr Lee asked if referrals come from the students themselves and the response was many are internal referrals and others come from tutors who may suspect that a learner is experiencing issues.

Mrs Higham advised that safeguarding training for all staff was on going and that additional training will be provided on staff development day in July. Training for Governors will be arranged in September when a decision will need to be made by the Board as to whether to appoint a safeguarding link governor.

Mrs Higham, in her role as the College's DSP, advised that members could be assured that at an operational and management level the College is keeping its learners safe within College.

Student Perception of College "SPOC" - as part of a recent SPOC survey learners were asked about whether learners felt safe within college and did they know what to do if they didn't. Mrs Higham reported that 95% strongly or tended to agree. Lisa Hartley, Personal Development Manager is analysing the data by Faculty and Team level in order to support the areas where learners didn't tend to agree with the statement. The Chair asked if there was any difference to a learners perception of feeling safe when they were out on a work placement. It was noted that learners as part of their planning for a work placement ensure that they know what to do to make themselves safe and what to do if they don't feel safe.

Bullying Policy – a bullying policy will be launched and staff will be trained over the next few weeks. Lisa Hartley will be taking a college lead for all disciplinary issues.

Statutory Guidance – some college policies still need to be updated. The Staff Code of Conduct which exists to protect staff and make clear what behaviour is and isn't acceptable has been updated in line with guidance.

Educational Visits – the education visit packs have been updated and trip information together with risk assessments and learner names all have to be completed and approved before any trip takes place. This is a key process for ensuring both the College learners and staff are safe offsite.

Members

Resolved

13/14-3.5

To note the report and current issues in safeguarding the College's Learners

13/14-3.6

College Learner Update including Attendance, Retention and Withdrawals

The Director of Curriculum Development and Delivery provided members with an update on the latest position regarding Learner Attendance, Retention and Withdrawals.

Miss Atherton advised that the College currently has just over 1,000 16 – 18 learners at the end of the year. Attendance has improved since Miss Atherton's last report in February by just over 1%. Although the College has seen a slight improvement attendance is still not where the College would like it to be. The target for attendance is 90% and this has not been reached. In relation to Functional Skills attendance is much lower at 75% and there is still a significant amount of work for the College management to do. Plans are in place for 2014/15 for the College to monitor attendance through the use of new software "Markbook" and

“ProMonitor”. The College will also be looking to increase parental involvement next year with attendance reports and participation at parents’ evenings.

Mrs Crowther, Director of Learner Services advised that there will be a much higher profile for attendance of learners in relation to Maths & English and Functional Skills due to the government rule changes.

The priority next year will be to raise attendance, ensure attendance of learners is marked correctly and more smartly and to change the culture of Maths and English embedding it into the middle of the vocational provision.

In relation to Retention and Withdrawals, the retention rate currently stands at 95.2% against the overall target for the year of 95%. The College is confident this will level off at about 95% by the end of the academic year. Retention has been managed much better this year than previously. In terms of withdrawals, Miss Atherton advised, using the graphs in her report, that there tends to be three peaks during the year in which learners withdraw on both 16-18 and 19+ programmes.

Resolved

13/14-3.6 To note the report

13/14-3.7

The Curriculum Plan for 2014/15

The Director of Curriculum Development and Delivery presented members with the Curriculum Plan for 2014/15 and also demonstrated this by using Power Pivot, the college system used to display data

Miss Atherton outlined the financial income, using the data, what had been planned for last year, what had actually been achieved and what Faculty Heads have planned for next year. Faculty Heads had been asked to be realistic in formulating their curriculum provision for 2014/15. Miss Atherton demonstrated that the Adult Single Budget was reducing and the College would be looking to increase its Full Cost Recovery provision in order to retain the size of the College.

Miss Atherton informed members that the Heads of Faculty (HoFs) has presented their final draft individual curriculum business plans to the Senior Management Team and other College Managers. The HoFs had to explain the decisions they had come to and what they had planned. All those involved in the process thought it was a valuable experience and it gave Heads the opportunity to bounce ideas off one another. The final College Curriculum Plan will be fixed at the end of June and SMT and Heads of Faculty will be able to see a live picture of progress at all times. The Clerk noted that members will be able to, at future meetings, monitor overall College progress against that final plan.

Within Miss Atherton’s report were the new areas of provision for 2014/15 and those areas that had been removed for 2014/15. The College now has a Premier League Training Licence with Blackburn Rovers and Burnley football clubs which, members agreed, is a fantastic opportunity for the college. Work will also continue with Accrington Stanley

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) commented that the way the College undertakes its business plan is not the norm and is innovative in the way it is presented. Miss Higgin advised members that in effect the Senior Management Team is “buying” a negotiated curriculum plan from a Faculty. In other colleges the business plans are given to the Heads of Faculty. The College has been able to do this because it has a strong faculty team structure led by high performing HoFs. The

Principal noted that there was a real “buzz” in the way the plans were presented and Governors will be invited to attend the process next year.

Miss Atherton assured members that when the Curriculum Plans were formulated the Heads of Faculty had given a lot of thought into the LEP priorities and LMI data. This process has also enabled planning for staffing, budgets and capital expenditure to be processed and submitted much earlier as part of the planning process. Dr Coyne noted that it seemed that the process allowed staff and managers to live the outcome through its planning and ensure staff buy in to the outcomes.

Resolved

13/14-3.7 To note the report and the process undertaken to produce the College Curriculum Plan for 2014/15

13/14-3.8 Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Current Position

The Head of Quality provided members with an update on the current profile of Teaching, Learning and Assessment within the college.

Teaching & Learning Analysis – in 2012/13 the College had a good or better profile of 79% based on 154 observations. The College target was then set at 85% for 2014/15. To date, a total of 189 unannounced observations have been carried out and the good or better profile stands at 75%, with the outstanding grade increasing to 29%. There are still 44 observations still to be finalised and the College is confident that the good or better grade will increase to 78%/79%. Unfortunately, it is highly unlikely that the 85% target will be achieved. Mrs Tootell advised that the College process is robust and therefore it is felt by the SMT that a good or better result for unannounced observations of 75% is excellent.

Outcomes of Observations – the total number of grade 3 and 4’s awarded to date is 48, which relates to a total of 38 individuals. 20 have now improved their grade to good or outstanding, 11 have left the College, 3 have received HR support and the remaining are pending. Mrs Tootell advised that 9 of the staff who have left College were agency staff. A better induction process for agency staff is being formulated for next year to aid in improving the TLA performance of agency staff.

Walkabouts – Mrs Tootell reported that the walkabout process had been maintained throughout the year and that standards observed in this process had remained high.

Assessment Management – Mrs Tootell advised members that assessment is reviewed in detail as part of the college Curriculum Self-Assessment Review three times a year. Teams deemed to be in special measures are reviewed on a six weekly basis. The draft scores have recently been released and disseminated to Heads of Faculty. 58% are currently at good or better but with additional work this figure is expected to increase to the mid-70%

Mrs Tootell explained to members the work being undertaken to improve the colleges TLA profile. This included

- A Review of the no notice observation process in entirety. A proposal will be made to SMT later in the year.
- Plans to establish a “Good to Great” group to aid those curriculum teams to be deemed to be good moving upwards to achieve grade one status.
- Plans to offer more recognition to outstanding teachers with the re-launch of Excellent Awards

- Capital bid to purchase “Markbook” new software to support assessment management.
- The College Teaching and Learning Strategy is currently being reviewed with an aim to make the strategy more accessible within the college and more widely understood. Curriculum led teaching, learning and assessment strategies are also be prepared.

Mrs Tootell noted that following a recent staff survey concerns had been raised by staff about the pressure of no notice observations. Dr Coyne suggested that perhaps once no notice observations are more established, after 2 or 3 years, the routine will become much easier. It was noted that the no notice observation process is backed up by the robust walkabout process so changes could be made, if it was felt appropriate, to the observation system.

After further discussion members

Resolved

13/14-3.8 To note the report and the current situation with regard to college Teaching, Learning and Assessment

13/14-3.9 Curriculum Team Progress – Current Position

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) updated members of the committee on the current progress of curriculum teams and in particular those teams in Special Measures.

Self-Assessment Review – the percentage of good or better teams is 14% up on this time last year. The impact of Special Measures has shown that a number of teams have been projected to move up into good or better by the end of this year. Only one team has self-assessed at a Grade 4. Four teams are graded at 3 and the remaining are in the good or better category. This assessment is based on projection of current team performance as the College won't have the final picture until the October self-assessment review.

Miss Higgin advised that there is a clear direction of travel for all curriculum teams since her last report in February. In February 50% of teams in Special Measures were making good or better progress and in May this has risen to 75%. During the year, one team has come out of Special Measures but two have been added following the March self-assessment review. It was noted that the main issues relating to teams in special measures are staffing problems ie recruiting staff with the right skills, qualifications and team leadership.

Miss Higgin summarised what has been undertaken by the College during the Special Measures process in relation to Apprenticeships and reported that there are still some concerns that remain in this area of the curriculum. Some individual teams within the area have made good progress with some teams coming out of special measures process. Key developments have included standardised cross college apprenticeship framework and compliance progress has been good.

Miss Higgin went on to inform members about actions and recommendations which are in place to allow teams to continue to improve:

- From September 2014 the College is looking at the curriculum teams within special measures and will move out a number of teams and put them into post-special measures to be monitored in order to ensure they continue to move forward. Three teams will remain in special measures.

- Reviewing and improving special measures process for next year following feedback from staff and union representatives e.g. assigning a mentor to a curriculum area coming out of special measures
- Good to Great Team process will be established to support teams to make the move from good to outstanding.

Resolved

13/14-3.9 To note report and actions being taken to improve curriculum team positions

13/14-3.10 The College 14-16 Strategy

The Director of Learner Services presented the 14-16 Strategy for 2014/15, which has been created in relation to the structural changes around management of the 14-16 provision. Following the closure of the Studio at ACCROSS from July 2014, the College provision for learners aged 14-16 needed to be consolidated. The College has taken the decision not to directly recruit aged 14-16 year olds leaving the remaining strands of 14 -16 provision going forward:

- The School Partnership Programme managed by the Schools Partnerships Manager – Mr Armiger; and
- The Year 11 Programme managed by the Deputy Head of Faculty Advanced Skills and Foundations – Sarah Walton.

Mrs Crowther advised that both of these strands feed directly into the college recruitment process and both have high rates of progression into College and are therefore linked closely into the School Recruitment Team.

In relation to the draft 14-16 Strategy, Mrs Crowther advised that this had been prepared by Mr Armiger, in his role as Schools Partnership Manager, pulling together the two 14-16 strands and articulating what the College is trying to achieve with the 14-16 programme. Mrs Crowther asked members for any comments before the Strategy is presented to the Corporation Board for approval. It was noted that the College currently sees an 80% conversion rate for year 11's progressing into College. The Year 11 programme is always dependent on recruitment as learners come from local schools and infill into an existing College vocational provision. There are normally between 30 and 35 full time learners and 25 part time. Mr Armiger noted that the Schools Partnerships has reduced slightly over recent years as school funding has been tight. Numbers are starting to grow again.

The College has a high level of attendance from Ribblesdale High School and the partnership has been very successful. Mr Cox commented that schools have tried to deliver vocational qualifications within schools and these have not always been successful. Collaborating with a college who offer the expertise is a real benefit and gives the learners continuity of training. The partnership with Accrington & Rossendale College has enabled Ribblesdale to be flexible with the timetabling of vocational programmes for its learners. Mr Cox advised that the school doesn't offer vocational programmes as part of a learners options, it is a much more personalised programme.

Mr Armiger noted that the Pilkington Scholarship committee will be awarding a learner who original attended a Year 11 programme who has since accessed other college programmes and will be undertaking a HE programme next year. The learner will be awarded for this endeavour.

Resolved

- 13/14-3.10** **i) To note the Report; and**
ii) to recommend the College 14-16 Strategy to the Corporation Board for approval

Before the meeting closed, the Chair commented that he had been really impressed with the Marketing Manager, Suzy Ashcroft-Batty at the recent Board Strategic event and the College should be looking at ways to shout about its successes, sharing of best practice and case studies, especially in the local community.

13/14-3.11 **Dates and Times of Next Meeting**

To be confirmed at the Corporation Board Meeting on Tuesday 8th July 2014.

The meeting closed at 7.05pm