

The Corporation Board of Accrington and Rossendale College

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

Date: 19th November 2013

Location: The Boardroom, Broad Oak Centre



Confirmed

Members Present:

Mr S Ireland	Chair of the Committee and Independent Member
Dr M Lee	Independent Member
Dr A M Coyne	Independent Member
Mr R Grigorjevs	Independent Member
Miss T Landon	Staff Governor

In Attendance:

Mrs S Collinge	Vice Principal (Business and Innovation)
Mr H Tallon	Vice Principal (Quality and Standards)
Mrs J Crowther	Director of Learner Services
Miss T Deasey	Director of Business and Partnerships
Mrs B Tootell	Head of Quality & Standards
Mr A Armiger	Clerk to the Corporation
Mrs N Tattersall	Minuting Clerk

Apologies were received from:

Mrs S Taylor	Principal
Miss W Higgin	Director of Curriculum Development and Delivery

Draft Minutes Prepared by: NT-AA

Draft Minutes approved by the Chair: SI

Minutes Approved by the Committee:

Date:

25-11-13

26-11-13

11-02-14

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

Chair

C&QSC

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Vice Principal (Business and Innovation) advised that she was attending the meeting as an observer as it was the committee's first meeting of this academic year and Mrs Collinge was interested in the work of the committee.

13/14-1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S Taylor and Miss W Higgin.

13/14-1.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13/14-1.3 Minutes of Meeting held on 18th June 2013

The minutes from the meeting held on the 18th June 2013 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting

Resolved

13/14-1.3 to approve the minutes from the meeting held on 18th June 2013

13/14-1.4 Matters arising not otherwise on agenda

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

01 i) - as Student Members don't attend this meeting, the Clerk will organise on a trial basis, meetings for Student Governors with the Chair of Governors and Principal.

01 ii) – the Terms of Reference (ToR) were updated for recommendation to the Corporation Board on 9th July 2013. The ToR were approved

04 – the HE Strategy was presented to the Corporation Board for approval on 9th July 2013 and approved

Resolved

13/14-1.4 that the Clerk to the Corporation will arrange meetings between the Student Governors and the Chair of Governors and Principal

13/14-1.5 College Recruitment

The Director of Business and Partnerships presented an update on the College's Recruitment for this academic year. In previous years this report has focused primarily on 16-18 learners but this year it has looked at a much broader update. Miss Deasey advised that at this point the College doesn't currently have all the statistics for 19+ and 14 year olds, therefore an updated report will be provided at the next meeting in February 2014.

14-16 Year Olds –the College has seen a slight increase the numbers of learners from last year. The key message is that the College is beginning to work with a wider range of schools, 2 more than last year. The Year 11 programme has recruited at the same level but from more schools.

16-18 Year Olds – the College has recruited, at the time of the report, just over 1,000 learners compared to 1,198 this time last year, this represents a decrease of 15%. The main reasons are due to new 6th form provisions equating to around 800 additional places over the last 5 years, which appears to have taken a large percentage of our market share. Burnley and Blackburn Colleges remain the closest competitors. There has also been a drop in the 16 year old cohort. On a positive

side the College has more learners on long programmes so the Funding should be equal to last year. The top growth areas this year are Motor Engineering, Media, Uniformed Services and Science. Computing has seen the greatest decline. The college 16 – 18 cohort is comprised, this year, of 49% school leavers and 51% college returners. This is a slight decrease compared to last year, but on a positive note the college is recruiting from more schools.

Declining enrolment by schools – the College has seen a loss in enrolment from 5 of its normally high recruitment schools, but 3 of these schools now have 6th Forms.

Apprenticeships – this still remains a challenge this year for both 16-18 and 19+ groups despite the fact that rollovers have risen in both categories. There have been a total of 69 new learners for 16-18 year olds compared to 138 last year. This, however, is not necessarily an up to date figure as learners are recruited all year. In terms of funding for Adult Apprentices, this is estimated to be above last year at £128k compared to £98k in the same period and 16-18 year old funding is lower at £184k compared to £240k. The College is struggling to recruit the right level of 16-18 year old apprentice for the vacancies available

Community Work – this has been enhanced this year and the College is working hard to meet the demand for work in this area. It is estimated that the Communities Team will hit their full year funding target by the end of the year (December 2013). The adult work is a real success representing 35% of the adult funding.

Higher Education – the information contained within the report only shows degree HEFCE programmes. This year the College is 97 learners down, but again with the new fee structure the College can earn more per learner and the profile of learner is shifting to longer qualifications. This should mean that funding will be in line with previous years.

Factors for Consideration – Miss Deasey told members it has become apparent that 6th Forms are the biggest threat to the college intake and the College needs to start considering this together with potential loss of students to competitor colleges. Apprenticeships still remain a challenge and the College is also losing learners who are going out of area. In addition 16 year old cohort numbers will continue to drop until 2016. It is felt that the College needs to ensure it is able to maintain its numbers rather than look to increase over the next couple of years.

The following Risks were noted by members:

- Achievement of the 16-18 year old recruitment target - if target not hit funding will be reduced
- 16-18 Apprentices remains a risk
- Losing more of our market share of school leavers to competitor colleges.

The Chair thanked Miss Deasey for her detailed report which highlighted a fantastic beacon of light in the adult community and work based learning area. However, Mr Ireland expressed his view, as did other members, that there was concern around to the increased amount of competition. Miss Deasey said that the College was in a period of change and she and other members of the SMT spend considerable time focusing on the ever changing educational and funding landscape and the college's responsiveness to it.

Miss Deasey explained that if 16-18 year old recruitment continued to reduce the College will need to look at shifting to more adult work, where there is more funding. The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) advised that the College has always had anxiety about the recruitment of 16-18 year olds and that the Senior Management Team is looking at a range of diversification opportunities to enhance what it is doing to add value to it. The Vice Principal (Business & Innovation) commented that the 16-18 year old provision is currently very strong and if the learners don't come to take up our offer then the College will have to accept that it will need to be modified again.

Members noted that the Senior Management Team is also looking at whether to offer A Levels as part of its vocational programmes and a review of the colleges 14-16 year olds offer is underway. Dr Coyne noted that there appeared to be light at the end of the tunnel with the possible partnerships with schools. It was noted that the Principal had done an excellent job in establishing new relationships with the School Heads which has resulted in one school now establishing a Progression Partnership model

The Chair clarified with the other members what they perceived to be the College's USPs given that there are fewer potential learners with more providers trying to attract them. Mr Grigorjevs thought from a parent's point of view the were definite perceptions of the work of 6th forms and that of colleges i.e. in terms of levels of work, which college members knew to be incorrect but it was about getting this message out to parents of learners. He also felt that the college should hold its position as the 16 year old cohort will begin to rise again from 2015/6.

Dr Lee said that he was worried that the college is always under such pressure for 16-18 recruitment, but can't see it going away. In the past the college was able to build on 16-18 recruitment to provide reasonable income streams, but it was a concern that it is decreasing. He went on to say he was a member when the College made decision not to carry on doing A levels and asked whether the college should look at that again in collaboration with another school. Mr Tallon noted that the Principal has been recently in discussions with Heathland/Moorland Schools about the potential to collaborate in this area

Dr Lee asked what is it that those teams are succeeding in recruitment doing compared to others. Mr Tallon said that it was apparent that those teams who do have fantastic success rates have a personal pride and passion for what they do. If teams want to be outstanding they need to go the extra mile and this will result in increased learner numbers. Mr Ireland said it was important that the college website needs to reflect this and the necessary work done to ensure it does

Mr Grigorjevs said that the college should continue to develop its excellent HE provision to ensure an increase in demand and this could also mean looking at accommodation for HE learners. Mrs Collinge said that the college was in discussion with one or two potential partners to provide that type of accommodation and that members would be updated as those discussion progressed.

Mr Ireland Thanked Miss Deasey for her report which had prompted considerable discussion amongst those present. Members

Resolved

13/14-1.5

to note the report and the actions being taken by the College to increase recruitment across its target learner groups

13/14-1.6 Success Rates and High Level Performance Data for 2012/13

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) highlighted, through his presentation to members, the College's Success Rates for 2012/13 and advised that the overall Success Rate was 89%. Mr Tallon took members through the various groups of learners that contributed to this very high level of success which has placed the college, again, in the top 10% of colleges nationwide concluding by saying that this was the best result the college had ever achieved.

Dr Lee reminded members how difficult it was for the College to achieve this level of Success Rates. Mr Tallon agreed and said that there were still curriculum areas that needed work to ensure that they attained higher levels of success. Dr Lee concurred and reminded other members that the success rate included not only achievement on programmes, but also retention of learners on programmes and therefore the high level of success was an excellent achievement in both of those areas across many of the college programmes.

Members discussed those areas identified as needing to improve to ensure the college maintains the high level of success rates and Mr Tallon explained what work was being carried out at management and team level to support and rectify those areas that needed to improve. Members were assured that the college would be able to sustain the level of commitment and use the college processes needed to achieve high levels of success in those areas that required the extra work which Mr Tallon had highlighted in his presentation.

Resolved

13/14-1.6 to note the report and the actions being taken by the College to ensure high levels of success across all college programme.

13/14-1.7 Progression and Destination of Students

The Director of Learner Services began presenting the Progression and Destination of Students Report by saying that, although not the only reason for examining this area, the New Common Inspection Framework now puts more emphasis on the recognition of destination and progression of college students. Mrs Crowther stated that internal progression rates between programme levels and retaining learners is of particular importance for the College and using the graphs included in the report discussed with members the situation for those learners finishing their programmes in June/ July 2013.

In her report Mrs Crowther noted that Progression from Entry Level to higher level programmes shows an improving trend; that there is a slight decline from Level 1 to Level 2, but the College is still seeing progression of 79%; Level 3 year 1 to 2 the overall trend has improved and internal progression stands at 90%.

She went to tell members that Level 3 into HE was still not as high as the college would like and there is a priority for improvement in the current year 13/14 and work was being carried out with those learners who could progress to HE to consider all the options available to them at higher levels of learning. Level 2 to Level 3 is difficult to report as there are so many different influencing factors. Mrs Crowther advised that Level 2 is commonly a stepping off point for some learners who may wish to progress to employment or consider their options at level 3

Mrs Crowther told members that a huge amount of work has been carried out during the past year on recording and analysing destinations of students, which has given the college reassurance, because it is now much more rigorous, that learners are moving forward into positive progression routes either by way of employment or new programmes. The question was asked by a member if college learners had targets and it was confirmed that they do all have Value Added Targets based on the qualifications they had achieved either from school or whilst on college programmes

Learners appear to be coming back to College to re-enrol - 66% of completers returned and 33% left. In terms of HE progression, 64% progressed externally and 36% internally. The unknowns, around 3%, have been difficult to track, but the college is still trying to discover where these learners are

Mrs Crowther explained that a number of actions have been put in place by the college to ensure that progression is positive for as many students as possible and these were noted and discussed by members. These included:

- Ensuing that there are Curriculum progression routes through all levels for learners
- Ensure all programme areas have progression targets for 2013/14
- Ensure there are individual progression guidance interviews for learners
- Programme areas with low rates of progression to HE will be reviewed to establish what support is required to raise aspirations for those learners

In summary Mrs Crowther said that this important work gives the college a clear picture of what our learners want from us and where they go when they leave us

Members then discussed the report. Mr Ireland said that the tracking of the progression had been a great achievement and congratulated all those who had been involved. Dr Lee said that the idea of 98% progression into something positive is remarkable and, again, offered his congratulations.

Dr Lee went on to say that he felt that the influx of learners into HE are those who wouldn't have come to us before. He explained that he thought that previously learners who wanted higher level courses had wanted part time courses and the fees we charge were now very complete for full time courses. He asked if the College was losing any part time HE learners due to demand for full time courses. He was assured by the SMT members present that this was not the case and Miss Deasey said the college was continuing to look at niche offers that would be of interest and benefit to both full time and part time HE learners. Following further discussion members

Resolved
13/14-1.7 to note the report and the destinations and progression of College students

13/14-1.8

The College Quality Strategy

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented a draft of a new College Quality Strategy. Mr Tallon said that although he felt that previously written quality strategies have in the past detracted from the job in hand he understood that there was a view that the college needed a strategy which outlines the quality processes and key issues so that those involved, those need to understand what we do and

external bodies are clear on what the college is setting out to do and how it carries out the processes involved. Mr Tallon noted that the strategy's key aims that will be reviewed annually.

Mr Ireland told members and college managers that he looked at other college's strategies and felt that this was primarily an out-facing document. Mr Tallon agreed that it would have its use of use of a public facing statement and could be used by awarding bodies and Ofsted as a college position statement.

Dr Lee said that he thought that level of detail was spot on for a strategy and that further detail in the document wasn't necessary as it is a high level document. The Clerk said that he saw it as a valuable document for members as it sets out the process of quality which they would be able to use to monitor the colleges work in this area. Mr Ireland suggested that the document could be trimmed down for external use. Dr Lee thought that the entire document should be published and could make reference to role of the board members in monitoring the strategy and in particular the type of reports prepared for this meeting and attendance at such events as Self- Assessment Reviews

Mr Tallon agreed to relook at the draft document, taking into account members suggestions and prepare an updated document for presentation to members of this committee at its February 2014 meeting. Members

Resolved

13/14-1.8

i) to note the report

ii) that the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) will present an updated Quality Strategy to members of the committee, at its February 2014 meeting, for consideration and recommendation for approval to the Corporation Board

13/14-1.9

Performance Management Process – current position

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented his report with regard to the performance management system for Teaching Learning and Assessment within the college and reviewed the current situation in the college he began by looking at the management of individuals and overall outcomes of professional practioner appraisals carried out. Mr Tallon led members through the information in the report highlighting areas of success, improvement and where work still needed to be carried out.

Mr Tallon explained to committee members how members of teaching staff were able to access a rolling programme of development to ensure they could update their skills and knowledge when required. Miss Landon said that she, as a teacher, was able to access training quickly where it had been identified that it would be useful to her. Mr Tallon concluded this section by telling members that running parallel to the CDP programme was a meeting each term delivered by one of the college's professional practioner that looked at sharing good practice. Teaching, Learning and Assessment staff had also attended a 1 day session at start of term on "what constitutes outstanding teaching and learning".

Mr Tallon moved on to the current college situation regarding those teams in Special Measures. Looking at the high level information in the report he led the committee members through the work that was being carried out to support those teams to enable them to move out of the special measures category. It was

suggested that it may be of use to members of the committee, if possible, to attend a Special Measures meeting to observe at first hand and to aid understanding the type of work carried out to lift curriculum teams out of this designation. Mrs Coyne asked that the opportunity be open to all members of the Board if possible.

Members did note and commented that the criteria used for determining the grading given for the areas within the reviews were very high. Mr Tallon replied that this was necessary to ensure that as many teams as possible were performing at a very high "outstanding" rate in their day to day work.

Following further discussion members

Resolved

- 13/14-1.9** **i) to note the report**
ii) that the Clerk will liaise with the Head of Quality and Standards to organise opportunities for Board Members to observe Special Measures meetings

13/14-1.10 **Self-Assessment Review 2013/14 – Current Outcomes (Autumn)**

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented his report and circulated the scoring criteria and the Self-Assessment Review (SAR) scorecard for October 2013.

Mr Tallon noted that curriculum teams have a live action plan which forms the focus of the meetings. He also added that it was pleasing to see Board members attending these reviews to see and understand the process. (Mrs Bridgeman had attended the most recent review). Mr Tallon highlighted the top 10 outstanding (Grade 1) teams, the 15 teams rated good (Grade 2), 8 who requires improvement (Grade 3) and the 2 teams who are unsatisfactory (Grade 4).

Mr Tallon informed members that the SAR scorecards are sent to all members of college staff to ensure that the process is transparent

As the academic year progress members will be able to be updated on the movement of the teams within this dynamic process and be able to question College managers at committee meeting on the reasons for upward and downwards movement

Mr Tallon noted that the next SAR will take place in March 2014 and Board members will be invited. Members

Resolved

- 13/14-1.10** **i) to note the report**
ii) that the Clerk will ensure Board members are invited to attend the next SAR process in March 2014

13/14-1.11 **Governor Involvement in the College quality process**

The Head of Quality and Standards presented her report giving an overview on the 183 observations of teaching and learning carried out in 2012/13 (an increase from 106 in 2011/12). Mrs Tootell told committee members that with the exception of 4 members of staff, all other teaching and learning staff were observed at least once with the priorities, anyone missed during the previous year, agency staff and new staff. This year includes anyone teaching in a team in the Special Measures process.

Members noted that 50 teaching staff had attained Grade 1 profile 50, 99 a grade 2 , 20 grade 3 and 14 teaching sessions were graded grade 4 and of those having teaching sessions graded 3 or 4 no one has remained at grade onto 3 or 4 this year , so these staff had either improved , improved after having a mentor assigned or had left the college.

Mrs Tootell explained that No Notice Observations (NNO) had been a key factor in the process last year and continuing this year. Some other colleges have up to 12 months' notice, whereas this college had previously given 5 days. It was deemed that this process was not robust. NNO has been welcomed quite well with no major issues. The start of NNO increased number of grade 3/4s, but the college can find the support to help staff through CPD programme and advanced practitioner/mentoring. This happens on a weekly basis.

Mrs Tootell moved on to the College teaching and Learning Grade profiles. This is currently, if HE is included, 81% at good or better. The Target in the strategy is 85%. It should be noted that HE uses different methodology as based on university model. This year, 2013/14, would seem to be at a similar position.

Mrs Tootell informed members about the improvements to the process for this year. In addition to NNO it is important to see improvements in year, therefore teachers are re-observed in 3 weeks if get they grade 3. If there no improvement by 2nd observation staff are talked to by HR about performance management.

Last year saw the introduction of College Walkabouts, dropping in at beginning and middle of teaching sessions. Recent developments have been around introduced to look at start times, session objectives etc.. With exception of some areas, Mrs Tootell told members that there had been improvements in some areas e.g. 91% of classes started on time.

Mrs Tootell noted that members had already expressed interest in attending special measures meetings and it would be good to open up further opportunities for members to observe the involved in NNO process. Mrs Tootell expressed that it would be good if members could become aware of what an outstanding teaching and learning looks like and through this understand what expectations look like. Members could attend on an announced observation basis which isn't a graded. Mrs Tootell said she would liaise with the Clerk to set up a way of introducing these observations. Members agreed it would be of benefit to all Board members and following further discussion

Resolved

- 13/14-1.11** **i) to note the report**
ii)that the Clerk would liaise with Mrs Tootell to organise member participation in announced teaching and learning observations

13/14-1.12 **safeguarding our learners – update**

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the report. Year on year the number of referrals has increased despite a small drop in small drop in 12/13, but it is felt that this is due to awareness being raised amongst staff and students.

Mr Tallon lead members through the report, highlighting the breakdown of all categories and referrals, gender breakdown and was pleased to note the overall success rate of 84% for those students who had experienced difficulties during the

year. Mr Tallon also highlighted the Success rates for Children Looked after (CLA) of 73 % which was very good given the context of these students' circumstances. Mr Tallon noted that referrals around e-safety have increased and staff are being trained. To deal with this complicated area. Members were informed that there had been a new system implemented in college, "Pro Monitor," which has assisted in the process of managing student records and is used by the college safeguarding team. Mr Tallon noted that as the Hyndburn Studio School has been assimilated into the College as The Studio @ ACCROSS it is now part of the college and therefore will need to implement into the colleges systems.

Mr Tallon advised members that there had been recent changes to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) which meant that a whole family approach would be adopted at the point serious intervention is required. Relevant college staff and members of the College Safeguarding team will be receiving training on this from the College's Deputy Designated Person (Mrs Lisa Hartley). Mr Tallon also took this opportunity to tell members that Mrs Lorraine Higham, the College Director of People and Performance, would become the College's Senior Designated Person (SDP) for safeguarding matters when he left the college in February 2014.

Mr Tallon reported, as he had been asked to at the last meeting of this committee, on the success rates for those students with criminal convictions. He reported that this was 89% for learners with prior convictions. Members commented that this was excellent.

It was noted by the Clerk that he had agreed with Mrs Hartley that members would receive specific safeguarding training at the next Development Event in May 2014. After further discussion regarding the Safeguarding training plan for college staff members

Resolved

13/14-1/11 to note the report and outcomes presented within it

13/14-1.13 Dates and Times of Next Meeting

11th February 2014 at 5.00pm