

# The Corporation Board of Accrington and Rossendale College

## Minutes of a Meeting of: The Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Location: Conference Room, Broad Oak Centre



### Confirmed

#### Members Present:

Dr M Lee	Independent Member
Mr R Grigorjevs	Independent Member
Mrs S Taylor	Principal
Miss C Robinson	Staff Governor

#### In Attendance:

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

#### Apologies were received from:

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

Draft Minutes Prepared by: NT/AA      Date: 22-06-15  
Draft Minutes approved by the Chair: RG      23-06-15  
Minutes Approved by the Committee:      17-11-15

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

As Mr Ireland had extended his apologies for the meeting and Mr Grigorjevs chaired the meeting on Mr Ireland's behalf.

## **CQS**

### **14/15-3.1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Ireland, Dr Coyne, Mr Cox and Miss Landon.

### **14/15-3.2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **14/15-3.3 Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015**

Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 were approved as being an accurate record of the meeting.

### **14/15-3.4 Matters Arising**

The Clerk advised that there had been one recommendation requiring action from the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015:

**14/15-2.8 ii) to recommend the Safeguarding and Protecting Policy to the Corporation Board for approval.** The policy was recommended to the Corporation Board and approved on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

### **14/15-3.5 Safeguarding our Learners - Update**

The Director of People and Performance presented an update on Safeguarding the College's Learners. At the previous meeting, members agreed that the college could increase the number of additional Deputy Senior Leads (DSL) to help with increasing college safeguarding workload. Both new DSLs had now received their training and having impact in their roles.

Mrs Higham advised members that her report contained a current list of safeguarding referrals made and the categories of referral. Members noted that the College has dealt with 226 learners to date compared to 151 for the whole of the last academic year 2013-14. Mrs Higham reported that the college continues to see an increase in the number of complex issues including mental health and accommodation issues. Mrs Hartley noted that issues around forced marriage and honour based violence had been dealt with quickly and efficiently highlighting the knowledge of staff enabling them to identify and refer concerns and also the College's approach to referring matters to the appropriate external agencies for assessment and support.

Members agreed that the increasing number of referrals and the complex nature of those referral meant that high demands were placed on College staff in identifying and dealing with students, but it would appear that the impact of the range of support available is of great benefit to the students involved.

Mrs Higham also highlighted that the College has seen an increase in the number of learners who are Looked After or in care, and that this vulnerable can also be time consuming to deal with beyond normal class commitments. Mrs Higham advised that more work is being undertaken this year to ensure the college is able to quickly

identify learners in care when enrolling to ensure appropriate support is available for them from the outset of their course.

Mrs Higham will report to the committee at its next meeting on the success and progression rates achieved by those learners accessing the safeguarding and looked after processes this year. It was hoped would be as good as last year with 100% positive destinations which was a good news story for those learners.

Mrs Higham then went on to update members on the following:

**Criminal convictions** – The number of applicants with criminal convictions had risen again this year, but the college's referral partners had reduced the number of referrals that aren't suitable. Members were informed that the college's Waterside site had now been approved for the delivery and assessment of learners for CSCS cards which many of this type of learner comes to college to acquire.

**Medical/Health Needs** – the number of learners seen by the College Nurse with medical or health needs has increased during January to March. The Chair how the College should be more proactive on this issue. Miss Hartley confirmed that through the work of the North West Regional Healthy FE & Skills Network and the Healthy College Steering Group these issues are addressed and guidance is taken from the Department for Education. Training for college staff on links between mental health and behaviour is taking place on the next staff development day and it was reported that the college is looking to implement a Strategic Plan around mental health issues in college. This will be taken to the Lancashire Principals Group, in order to assist with commissioning for Lancashire. Schools overwhelmed with pupils with mental health and don't have the contacts that colleges have.

The Chair noted that mental health issues are becoming a priority, and that from the various committees he sits on as part of his job he may be able to pass on information to the college about opportunities for funding work in the college on this matter. The Principal also noted that ESIF funding allocations for dealing with mental health have also been identified as a priority with LEP.

**Walkabouts** – Mrs Higham reported that there had been positive outcomes from recent student survey with 98% of learners agreeing or strongly agreeing that they 'felt safe in college'. This had by 1% improved since last SPOC. Miss Hartley undertook a study on those that didn't feel safe and discovered that those who had replied that they didn't feel safe had actually meant outside of college. Members suggested that the question be reworded to be implicit that they felt safe whilst on the college campus or within the college environment

**Student Standards Officers** – the College has started to record and report on incidents dealt with by the Student Standards Officers and to date there have been 39 incidents reported.

**LADO/Serious Case Reviews** – It was noted that there no referrals made or any involvement by the college in any Serious Case Reviews since the last report.

**HR & Staff Training** – Safeguarding for new members of staff has been reviewed and improvements made to the induction process. All new members of staff will be required to complete a generic sector specific on-line test in the first week and then attend mandatory sessions with Miss Hartley around college processes and procedures. Staff must receive a 100% pass rate. The Chair asked if the College was confident that all staff are able to deal with safeguarding issues. Mrs Higham confirmed that the college is confident and that the continuing rise in reported issues from all sections of the college demonstrated this. Mrs Higham went to report that further training will also be provided for existing staff and that different safeguarding messages are also included within the college's e-touch on a weekly basis.

The Chair asked if those who had that attended the 'Prevent in Education' workshop run by Blackburn with Darwen Council had found it useful and informative. Mrs Higham confirmed that it was and there had been an excellent range of speakers from Ofsted/ local Prevent officers, the local Channel team and the LCC.

**Single Central Record** – work in progress and updated daily by HR team. No issues to report.

**Workbased Learner Placements** – Mrs Higham reported that the college work experience team continues to monitor and check all external placements to ensure they are suitable and safe for learners and has introduced a new recording system to ensure effective central administration. Further training for vocational assessors has been planned in order to provide staff with skills and competence required to support learners in the workplace and to undertake checks and ensure that an employer's venue is suitable for learners.

**Health & Safety Legislation within an education environment** – Mrs Higham will update if any radical changes. Compliant in terms of risk.

**Terrorism and Radicalisation** – Mrs Higham advised members that there had been no referrals or concerns raised in the college regarding this area and noted that Mrs Crowther would be presenting a paper on this subject later in the meeting

#### **Resolved**

**14/15-3.5 i) to note the report, the issues raised and the action the college is taking regarding those issues**

#### **14/15-3.6 The Prevent Agenda**

The Director of People and Performance updated members with regard to legislative changes in relation to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill and how the new duty will apply to the College. The Prevent strategy is a key part of CONTEST, the Government's counter terrorism strategy which aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Response to the duty will be incorporated into the new Common Inspection Framework to ensure the colleges are fully compliant with the requirements of the new duty. Guidance from the DfE on the new recommendations are that: Schools and

Colleges in England must promote respect and tolerance for all faiths, races and Cultures and have a duty to 'actively promote' fundamental British Values.

Mrs Higham advised that the College has worked with Prevent teams locally for a number of years and has excellent links with Lancashire Police. The College has worked with the Prevent Agenda and has already had training for managers from the Prevent team in College. In light of the increased requirements, the college is reviewing its approach to extremism and radicalisation. It will be rolled out across College to ensure it is fully compliant.

Information from OFSTED suggests that good practice should have six strands, these are:

- Leadership and Governance
- Training
- Engagement with partner agencies
- Policies and practices
- Curriculum
- Formal and informal processes

Training will also be arranged for Governors.

Dr Lee commented that as governors have a duty to ensure systems in place are effective, is there a consensus about what we should be looking for in College context as far as radicalisation is concerned/what it would look like if had a member of staff or learner who is attempting to influence other learners to do something like. Mrs Higham advised that there is a list of behaviours to look out for and the College is mindful of what should be referred. The Chair referred to common themes about people withdrawing/internet "grooming" and said that it was important that the college reviews its internet policy to make sure it remains tight.

Under the duty does the College need to produce an action plan and Mrs Higham confirmed this was being completed. The Chair said that he was interested in how staff/learners receive the prevent agenda. Miss Hartley replied that the college would create spaces for dialogue and have conversations with learners about how they would like to see it tackled. Mrs Higham noted that there needs to be a forum for staff to air concerns as well. The Chair also advised that policies regarding internet use should be reviewed in light of the revised duty to which Mrs Higham agreed.

#### **Resolved**

**14/15-3.6 i) to note the paper and the issues contained within it**

The Chair thanked Mrs Higham and Miss Hartley for presenting their papers

*Mrs Higham left the meeting at 6pm.*

#### **14/15-3.7 Student Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare – an Overview**

The Director of Learner Services presented an overview of Student Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare and thanked Miss Hartley for her contribution

to the report. Mrs Crowther provided a summary of the type of work that the college carries out to support and develop learners and specifically the work of the Learning and Development Mentors and the College's Enrichment Team and its impact on the retention and achievement of College learners

The College's electronic learner record 'Pro Monitor' provides evidence of the instances of contact and interventions with learners and to date there have been over 10,000. The Team also work with curriculum teams in order to deal with discipline issues where learners are not meeting college standards ensuring that the student behaviour is considered along with what support learners need to improve. To date personal and curriculum tutors have referred 383 instances as 'cause for concern'.

A new "Drop In" room has also been introduced, which allows learners to stop at the room to see the Personal tutor team to discuss an issue and through March, April and May the personal tutors have seen a total of 1,143 learners (some multiples), who have been referred to the appropriate area within College for the support required. This intervention acts as a gateway to get a wide range of support for the learner as quickly as possible.

The College has seen a large amount of enrichment taking place this year, much of it dealing with employability skills and preparing learners for work and life and helping to build the personal qualities that employers need. Mrs Crowther reported that more college learners are attending external work experience than in previous years. This is centrally co-ordinated to ensure consistency and safety.

Mrs Crowther advised members that the work of the College's Student Standards Officers work was now taking a different approach to the previous 'security role' work and was now integrated with the Enrichment Team in the Hub. This is proving extremely successful. Mrs Crowther noted that the Standards Officers know who the difficult learners are and can supervise as and when needed. Major security issues continue to be reported to external agencies as and when required.

Mrs Crowther reported that with regard to Student Learner Voice it had become apparent that learners do not feel that a Student Council is the way they would wish to communicate with the college so student forums and corridor councils have been developed instead and these are proving successful. The College also has 74 cross college student ambassadors who work in a variety of ways with the Enrichment Team and also play an important role in supporting learners with low confidence and vulnerabilities.

The College's Guidance Team also play a key part in the personal development of the students in providing information and advice on a wide range of matters and particularly progression and careers guidance.

In terms of 2015-16, Mrs Crowther advised that the team will start to look at the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework and re-shape the existing team in order to offer the best possible service within the given financial constraints. Mrs Crowther advised that the College Disciplinary process is also being re-written alongside a new College Behaviour Management Strategy which will be introduced in September. This

will provide guidance across College on how to deal with/approach learners behaving inappropriately. The College is also looking at introducing a multi-faith chaplaincy service.

The Chair thanked Mrs Crowther for her very comprehensive report which set out in clear terms the work of the teams involved in providing pastoral support for the College's learners. Mr Grigorjevs said that he and the other members of the committee would be very interested to understand the impact and outcomes of the work being carried out via the use of case studies. Mrs Crowther noted that in terms of hard outcomes the College will be able to see how successful the work has been when College retention and achievement data is collated alongside progression and destinations data. Mrs Crowther will be able to provide case studies as part of future report of how the process developed have impacted on learners' lives and achievements.

**Resolved**

**14/15-3.7            to note the report and the work the college is undertaking to support its learners**

*Miss Hartley left the meeting at 6.20pm*

**14/15-3.8            Curriculum Team Progress – Current Position**

The Director of Quality and Standards updated members on the teams currently being supported by the college's internal Special Measures process and highlighted the concerns that remain for teams in the process and the actions put in place to bring them out of the process. Mrs Tootell advised members that she was pleased to report that three curriculum teams had left the process in year and that two other team continued to be monitored as a prelude to coming out of the process.

Mrs Tootell then led members through her notes on those teams remaining in the process and described the actions being taken to ensure that the teams made progress to enable them to move into the monitoring process as soon as possible.

Members were interested to see the reasons for teams being placed in the process and the work being carried out to ensure that as few teams as possible remained within the process for any sustained period and were able to progress out of the process as soon as possible

**Resolved**

**14/15-3.8            to note the report and the action being taken.**

**14/15-3.9            Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Current Position**

The Director of Quality and Standards updated members on the latest position regarding the observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Mrs Tootell reminded members that the college continues to observe teaching and learning on a no-notice basis and advised that at this point 197 observations has been carried in the year with only a few re-observations remaining to be done in 2014-15. The College set itself a target of 35% Grade 1 and 85% Good (Grade 2) or Better and Mrs Tootell reported that the current position is 33% Grade 1 and 85% Good or Better. Mrs Tootell

commented that it was felt that for a no notice observation regime this was an excellent result.

The profile has remained consistent all the way through the year which has mainly been attributable to the introduction of 'Observation Season', which members had discussed at previous meetings. The total number of initial Grade 3s and 4s awarded was 30 which relates to 25 individuals (compared to 43 individuals in 2013/14). Mrs Tootell reported that of these 4 had improved their grade to Outstanding and 13 individuals had improved their grade to Good.

Mrs Tootell moved on to inform members that at the Self-Assessment Review the following week, the observation profile of each team will be reported. Mrs Tootell confirmed that in order to get a Grade 1 teams needs to get 85% good or better and 50% of the team must also have a Grade 1 for Teaching & Learning.

Throughout the year, the College has continued to report the gap between the performances of staff employed via agency staff compared with those employed by the College. Mrs Tootell was pleased to advise members that his gap has narrowed significantly from 2013/14

Members were informed that the College's Development Season was introduced in February and has continued for the remainder of the academic year. Following feedback from teaching staff, Development Season will continue in 2015/16. The College will be able to measure the impact next year through appraisals and performance reviews.

Mrs Tootell then updated members of the risks within teams and the actions put in place to minimise those risks.

The Chair thanked Mrs Tootell for her comprehensive and very positive report.

#### **Resolved**

**13/14-3.9 to note the report**

#### **14/15-3.10 The Curriculum Plan for 2015/16**

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) updated members on the Curriculum Plan for 2015/16. Miss Higgin advised that Business planning for the next academic year has become an increasingly challenging process, but the College had met it head on through realignment of curriculum teams and ensuring appropriate systems and processes were in place to ensure there was value in the college curriculum, both for the College and its learners. Miss Higgin informed members that there had been increased use of Labour Market Information (LMI) to inform planning of curriculum and also consideration of a wide range of internal and external factors resulting in a more accurate, realistic and efficient business plan

For information, Miss Higgin advised that the timeline for the process, beginning in March, is tight but the college was working to plan at the moment, often on a daily basis and was looking to 'freeze' the plan in July.



Miss Higgin then updated members on the new provision planned. She reported that the College hasn't closed any provision for next academic year but some areas have been repositioned and refocused. An example of this was the College's Beauty Therapy provision. This year and in previous years this programme area had been very much 16-18 classroom based learning, but on reviewing the offer it was recognised that there was continuing low recruitment, that LMI was not pointing in right direction in terms of offer and therefore the provision will be refocused towards full cost recovery in 2015-16. Another major adjustment is that all Foundation Level provision will be centrally located within the college.

Miss Higgin noted the following risks and actions being taken to minimise them:

- Failure to recruit to budget on all lines. This would impact negatively on the college's ability to achieve balanced budget into the future. The College's Curriculum Funding and Development Groups continually monitors each funding line.
- Failure to align costs in line with income will, again, have a negative impact on balanced budget. All teams constantly monitor and action changes required to ensure efficient and effective spending
- ESIF funding line has not been able to be planned as new contracts will not be received until January 2016 at the earliest. The college has put plans in place to carry out other funded work early in the academic year which will allow college resources to be moved towards ESIF funded programmes if and when they come on line. If ESIF funding is not received the college will have to carry out a review of its staffing resource

Dr Lee asked if there would be any provision remaining at Stubbylee. Mrs Taylor explained that she had had talks with Rossendale Borough Council regarding the removal of provision from Stubbylee and reiterated the reasons for withdrawing curriculum from both Stubbylee and the Maden Centre in Bacup to members. The Chair asked if the college had considered Community Asset Transfer. Mrs Taylor advised that she would look into the possibilities of this.

#### **Resolved**

**14/15.3.10      to note the report, the issues reported and the actions being taken to minimise the risks**

#### **14/15-3.11      Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The date and time of the next meeting will be confirmed at the next Corporation Board Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm