

The Corporation Board of Accrington and Rossendale College

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

Date: 25th November 2014

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
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	Director of Quality & Standards
Mr A Armiger	Clerk to the Corporation

Apologies were received from:

Mr S Cox	Independent Member
Mrs N Tattersall	Minuting Clerk

Draft Minutes Prepared by: AA
Draft Minutes approved by the Chair: SI
Minutes Approved by the Committee:

Date:
31-11-14
01-12-14
03-03-15

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

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting

14/15-1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Stephen Cox and Nicola Tattersall

14/15-1.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

14/15-1.3 Minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2014

Minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2014 were approved as being an accurate record of the meeting

14/15-1.4 Matters Arising

The Clerk advised that there had only been one action required from the meeting on 17th June 2014 that being the recommendation of the College 14-16 Strategy to the Corporation Board for approval (**13/14-3.10**). Mr Armiger confirmed that this had been done and the Board had approved the strategy at its meeting on the 8th July 2014.

14/15-1.5 College Recruitment

The Director of Curriculum Development and delivery presented her report. Miss Atherton began reporting on the key headlines. These included:

- 14-16 students - 133 learners split between the Schools Partnerships Programme and the College Yr 11 Programme.
- 16-18 Learners - 986 against an allocation of 1066 (as at 25-11-14). Although the number of applications had been lower, despite the increased work of the School Liaison team, the conversion rate of applicants to enrolments had risen by 4% compared to 2013-14
- Apprenticeships - Apprenticeship recruitment has begun to rise compared to the two previous years, correlating with the reported upturn in business in the local area
- Adult, Community and Work-based learners - Enrolment on these programmes continues throughout the academic year
- Higher Education - Increased numbers for 2014-15 with over 50 additional learners across HE learners compared to 2013-14

Miss Atherton moved on to look at each stream in more detail reporting that with regard to the new Yr 10 students on the 14-16 Schools Partnership Programme, the cohort had come from six schools but this did not include any Hyndburn Schools which was disappointing. Mrs Taylor noted that this was not easy to explain as relationships were good with the local schools, but they seemed reluctant to send students to the College for vocational programmes. Miss Atherton added that although local schools were not involved, other schools such as Bowland High school in the Ribble Valley and Blessed Trinity RC High School in Burnley were now working with the College on a variety of vocational programmes including L2 Construction programmes. The YR 11

Programme continues to work with a large number of partner schools from Hyndburn, Rossendale and Ribble Valley offering 14 vocational programme areas to those taking part in the programme with Norden School and Oswaldtwistle PRU being the largest users of the programme.

Miss Atherton moved on to advise Members that the largest recruiting programmes of 16 -18 learners this year were Sport, Motor Engineering and Foundations. The 16-18 cohort are comprised of 51% new learners and 49% returning learners which shows a slight increase in new learners.

Members asked why there had been a decrease in returning learners some of which was due to tighter assessment criteria of BTEC programmes and a consistent application of entry criteria required because of the focus on maths and English GCSE.

Miss Atherton informed Members that there had been a pleasing rise in application to enrolments of students from the Hyndburn area and it was hoped that this rise would continue in following years.

Apprenticeships were discussed next with Miss Atherton saying that although initial recruitment to apprenticeship programmes had been down, numbers had continued to rise and subject to another 50 waiting apprentices being signed on the numbers would rise above those this time last year.

With regard to the Colleges Adult, Community and Work-based learners miss Atherton advised that the College continues to recruit substantial 19+ learners on to traditional 16-18 programmes with a total to date of 1640 19+ learners enrolled at College and a further 550 funding their studies through 24+ Learner Loans. The College is working hard to increase numbers using these loans. Miss Atherton concluded this section by saying that the College was on track to hit the full year adult funding allocation.

Miss Atherton then turned to Higher Education numbers and reported that HE numbers were above target and numbers will continue to rise in January. There had been some under recruitment in specific teams, but it was also pleasing to see the number of 16 -18 Sport Students continuing their education at HE level at the College. Teacher Education goes from strength to strength, recruiting above expectations and has is one of the best recruiting programmes (proportionally compared to targets) in the Huddersfield University Consortium.

Looking ahead Miss Atherton discussed with Members the factors which may impact on future recruitment, particularly of 16 -18 year olds. These included a declining cohort, increased competition and, it was thought by the College, there being no A Level offer available to students. This could lead to a reduced funding allocation for this stream as well as the apprenticeship stream. The College and its recruitment

team, Members were assured, were working as hard as possible to maximise numbers on these streams for future years.

Discussion turned to the work currently being done on a “whole College” curriculum strategy for 2015-18. Miss Atherton picked out the main points for discussion with Members leading with Level 2 and 3 provision for 16-19 year olds and talking about Technical Baccalaureate (Tech Bacc) programmes and A level Programmes. She informed Members that Tech Baccs would include Level 3 maths. She also identified the key areas in the strategy regarding the proposed “segments” of FE work saying that the segmentation would ensure the survival of each area independent of the others, making the College stronger and more able to react to market demands.

Members moved on to look at the proposed A Level provision. Mr Ireland asked why this provision was being planned. Miss Atherton explained that it was felt that the College would be able to recruit more 16-18 learners if they were able to access mixed programmes of BTEC programmes and related A levels. There had been overwhelming support for this from parents and potential learners at the last College open evening and applications had now been received for this type of programme. The A Levels listed all had relevance to vocational areas and allowed students to expand their knowledge base and provide challenge for more talented students.

Mr Ireland asked if the College would be able to staff this provision. Miss Atherton explained that the College had existing staff who would be able to teach this provision and work was being carried out with the HR dept. to ensure that new staff recruited to teach on level 3 courses had wherever possible previous A level experience. Miss Atherton advised Members that a final revision of the list of A Levels to be offered would take place in March 2015. Dr Lee asked for confirmation that the planned start of these programmes would be in September 2015. Miss Atherton confirmed that it was.

Mr Grigorjevs asked about recruitment from Hyndburn and was the falling cohort a serious factor. Mrs Taylor said that all that could be done was being done to recruit learners from the area. Relationships were good with the schools and the recruitment team were working as much as possible within the schools and bringing, whenever possible, students from the schools to the College, but it had to be recognised that students had more choice than ever for post 16 education. Mrs Taylor went on to say that the new curriculum strategy would help to address availability of programmes when the school leaver cohort began to rise again.

Mr Grigorjevs asked if the College had seen the benefit of its increased work on Social Media as highlighted at the Development in May 2014. Mrs Taylor said that this was being monitored but there had been instances where the beneficial aspects of using Social Media over more traditional methods of communication had been noted. Mrs Taylor did note the phenomena of school leaver “late shoppers” i.e. those who decided at the very last minute which College to attend and there had even been

instances of students enrolling at two Colleges and choosing after the first week which they would stay at. Mrs Higham said that it was vital for the College to ensure that the first two weeks of College for any learner was as good as it could possibly be to ensure that they would want to remain with the College.

Dr Lee asked about the possible re-introduction of Electrical Engineering as a Tech Bacc curriculum programme and what had made the College re-consider bringing this area back into College. Mrs Taylor said that current LMI research had shown that there could be a demand for his type of programme. Miss Atherton said that the L2 programme was broad and there were considerable options for overlap with existing plumbing programmes and this is how the programmes could, initially, be staffed as there is one current member of staff qualified to teach this type of programme. The College sees a good opportunity with these programmes and there should be a large potential for Full Cost Recovery (FCR) programmes to run alongside the main 16-19 programmes. Dr Lee said that he was happy with the responses, but the College must ensure it recognises the risks of these programmes. Mrs Taylor agreed. After final discussions Mr Ireland suggested that either Miss Atherton or Miss Higgin should present the Curriculum Strategy, when finalised to the full Board to ensure that all Members were aware of the plan and the reasons for it. Members

Resolved

- 14/15-1.5** **i) to note the report, the issues raised and the draft Curriculum Strategy 2015-18 contained in the report.**
ii) that the final draft of the Curriculum Strategy 2015-18 be brought to the Committee for consideration at its March 2015 meeting.

The Chair thanked Miss Atherton for her report

14/15.6 Safeguarding our Learners – Update

The Director of People and Performance (and College Safeguarding Designated Senior Lead- DSL) presented the Safeguarding our Learners update to Members. Mrs Higham began by reminding Members of the 4 tier safeguarding structure designed to ensure that the College learners are at the centre of the process and that safeguarding pervades the whole College. She advised Members that a new Personal Tutor Manager has joined the tier 2 and will work alongside the College's Head of Personal Development on safeguarding issues. This appointment, alongside the re-structure of the Personal Development team will allow the Head of Personal Development to ensure that all safeguarding referrals, pastoral support, disciplinary and bullying issues are dealt with consistently and appropriately.

Mrs Higham moved on to look at safeguarding referrals. Members noted that there had already been 100 referrals to date compared to 34 for the same period in 2103/14 (and a total of 151 for 13/14). Mrs Higham advised that the increase demonstrated both that staff training and learner induction was working in the case of safeguarding and also that College's learners can have many complex issues in their lives.

The Safeguarding team have already dealt this year with increasing numbers of on-line and social media bullying issues, some of which have been reported to the Police and the Lancs. Constabulary Sexual Exploitation Team. Sexual abuse referrals have also been made to this external team. Section 47 referrals have also been made to the Lancashire Childrens' Social Care team on behalf of three College learners.

Mrs Higham reported that the College has 25 learners who are designated Children Looked After (CLA) or Care Leavers. These learners are monitored closely by their personal tutors with monthly reviews of progress, attainment, attendance and enrichment activities engaged in. The Head of Personal Development is the designated lead for CLA and attends all external reviews, contributes to Personal Education Plans and supports the learners progression planning.

Mrs Higham advised Members that the College had had 145 applications to date from learners who had disclosed previous convictions (373 in total in 13/14) and had refused the enrolment of only 2 learners. The College has made an application for funding to support the development of a coherent and co-ordinated referral and assessment process, supported by external agencies enabling the College to manage the learning aspirations of those learners with previous conviction whilst safeguarding all other learners, particularly our 14 - 19 cohorts.

Members were pleased to note that of 600 learners who had taken part in College focus group 97% reported that they felt safe in College and that those learners knew how and to whom to report any concerns to if they did not feel safe or had other problems.

Mrs Higham reported that the College had not been involved in any serious case reviews by the Lancs. Safeguarding Children's Board and that there had been no referrals to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) this academic year.

Moving on Mrs Higham advised that a new Staff Code of Conduct had been issued to all College staff, which they had to verify that they had read and understood. Members noted that a Code of Conduct for Contractors and visitors had also been produced and issued. Members had received a copy of the document prior to the meeting. All College staff had had updated safeguarding training during 2013/14 and that the theme for training in 2014/15 would be 'Safe and Safety', covering health and safety, risk assessment, on-line safety and broader safeguarding issues. It was noted that the 'Prevent' agenda would again be the subject of staff development sessions.

Mr Grigorjevs asked if there had been any incidents of extremism surfacing in College. Mrs Higham replied that there hadn't. Mr Grigorjevs told those present that Hyndburn Borough Council was concerned about the issue particularly as it was currently receiving such a high profile in the media. Mrs Higgin suggested that there was possibly an opportunity for a joint initiative between the College and the Council.

Mr Grigorjevs agreed and said that he would contact Mrs Higgin outside the meeting to discuss. Mrs Taylor said that the College would want to keep awareness about the issue a high level, but at the same time did not want to allow the issue to become all-consuming to the detriment to the College learners. Dr Coyne agreed and added that learners' human rights need to be kept in mind whilst recognising the issue.

Members moved on to discuss the issue of the Board having a designated Safeguarding Member. There were a range of views on this point which included that the creation of this role could mean that other Members would 'back off' from the whole board responsibility to the issue. Other Members expressed the view that a specifically designated member would be able to offer challenge and support to those responsible for the College's safeguarding policies and procedures. It was noted that the role was not an operational one as this would overstep the line between Board member and College Management. The Clerk advised that it would be helpful if a role description could be made available to help Members to make a decision on the topic. Mrs Higham agreed to provide one. Those present came, following further discussion on the matter, to the conclusion that the Full Board should make the final decision.

After final discussions on Mrs Higham's paper Members

Resolved

- 14/15-1.6**
- i) to note the paper and the issues contained within it;**
 - ii) Mrs Higham will provide Members with a role description for a 'Designated Safeguarding Member'**
 - iii) the Corporation Board, at its meeting on the 18th December 2104 will be asked to make a decision regarding the Board having a 'Designated Safeguarding Member'**

The Chair thanked Mrs Higham for presenting her paper

6.25pm Mrs Higham and Mr Grigorjevs left the meeting.

14/15-1.7 Progression and Destinations of Students 2013/14

The Director of Learner Services presented her paper. Mrs Crowther began her report by informing Members that the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) implemented in 2012 had introduced a much greater focus on students' progression on to further study or employment and that low progression would be identified as a key risk point when identifying colleges in scope for inspection. Although data collection is complex the college has made significant developments in collecting and collating the data giving a clear view of the progression of the College's students and contributes to as a measure of success of the College's Employability Strategy and also the College's Information and Guidance (IAG) processes. Mrs Crowther advised that College students need to have access to 'Inspiration', stating that the College was extremely good at this, working with a range of employers and external agencies to provide

master classes, visiting speakers and progression events. Mr Ireland noted that he and other members had been involved in such events.

It is also important that the college is able to demonstrate the progression of learners with severe and complex learning difficulties in to further education, higher education or employment whether it be full, supported or voluntary.

Mrs Crowther moved on the progression results for 2013/14 summarised as follows:

- Entry Level - a continuing upward trend due to focussed progression and IAG work with this group of learners
- Level 1 - a slight decrease in progression to level 2 programmes, but rates still high. Emphasis on early level 2 enrolment following IAG to ensure continued study.
- Level 2 - progression to level 3 remains the lowest for this cohort. this is caused by changes in entry criteria to L3 Next generation programmes and enhanced entry requirements to other advanced level programmes (English and maths)
- Level 3 Year 1 to 2 - very high level of progression 90 % overall with 16 -18 rates at 95%
- Level 3 to HE remains at 16% overall. An action plan is in place to increase for 2014/15
- Apprenticeship to Advanced Apprenticeship - an action plan is in place to increase numbers progressing, but external economic factors do have relevance on progression opportunities.
- Horizontal progression - this cohort is carefully tracked and a clear rationale is recorded for these learners, but the College works hard to ensure there is no 'recycling' of learners. Reasons can include change of curriculum area and programme of where a learner requires more learning at the current level to progress to a higher level

Mrs Crowther then moved on to discuss the destinations of learners leaving the College. She explained to Members that although a more robust reporting process had been developed in 2012/13, data collection requirements had been changed and this had made reporting trends more difficult. The College was for 2012/13 reporting the destinations of 1121 learners. For 2013/14 this had risen to 4483 learners, which included all 16 -18 learners and all substantial part time learners who had attended for more than 5 days. In reporting a negative destination was one that identified learners as not being in employment, education or training, unemployed or not actively seeking work.

Results were summarised for Members as follows:

16 -18 learners - 608 learners. 97.5% positive destination (an increase of 17.5% on the previous year) with 32.1% moving into employment

19+ learners - 98% positive destinations (an increase of 22.4% on the previous year) with 40.5% moving into employment

High Needs Learners (12) - 100% positive progression

Progression to HE - of those learners progressing to HE 36% progressed internally to ACCROSS programmes and 64% progressed to other HEIs (UCLan most popular followed by Edgehill)

Mrs Crowther was also pleased to report that the percentage of unknown destinations has been reduced to 4.1% from 5% the previous year, and 15% in 2011/12.

In conclusion Mrs Crowther outlined action taken against the 2013/14 action plan and identified key specific action being taken for 2014/15 which included the re-structure of the delivery of progression guidance to learners and the introduction of a 'Job Shop' in the College's main reception ensuring that all learners have access to high quality guidance and job seeking skills support.

The Chair said that the members were impressed by the work undertaken to record the destinations of the College's learners and it showed that the College's ethos of vocational education aimed at employment was working. Mr Ireland went on to note the number of Higher Education Institutions and the range and types of programmes learners had progressed on to was a credit to both the students and the staff of the college. Following final discussions members

Resolved

14/15-1.7 to note the report and the progression and destination information contained within it

The Chair thanked Mrs Crowther for her report

14/15-1.8 Success rates and High Level Performance Data for 2103/14

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented her report. Miss Higgin began by explaining to members that the College uses a range of Government statistical reports alongside its own rigorous self-assessment criteria to provide the context of success rates and enable comparison against national rates and those of other providers. These include Qualification Success Rates (QSR), National Success Rates Tables (NSRTs) and Minimum Standards of Performance (MSPs). Miss Higgin advised that key changes were being made and that these included Functional Skills and 24+ Adult Learner Loan funded provision will be incorporated into QSR for the first time, Classroom Based Learning (CBL) success rates will be categorised by qualification type and results for CBL will be calculated by both overall and timely methods and these will be based on leavers, not starts.

Miss Higgin went on to advise that this would mean the College would need to re-align its own internal performance data reports to reflect the new SFA methodologies, 2013/14 national rates and percentiles may reduce due to Functional skills being included and that analysis of success rates and comparison to previous years will be a challenge for the College and Ofsted.

Miss Higgin went to provide a summary of headline performance for 2013/14 which included the following Success Rates:

- Overall - (excluding Functional Skills) 91.7% (KPI 90.2%) placing the College in the top 10% of Colleges nationally
- (including Function Skills) 89.4%
- Overall Long Provision - 89.7% (KPI 89%)
- Overall Short Provision - 93% (KPI 90.5%)
- Overall Apprenticeships - 80.7% (KPI 80%)
- Overall Workplace Learning - 69.3% (KPI 75%)

Following a discussion of the analysis of the result Miss Higgin described the actions to be taken which included:

- undertaking a 'deep dive' analysis of underperforming data lines such as 19+ long qualifications, workplace learning programmes and 16 -18 short programmes and addressing results via the College Quality Improvement process
- updating Headline KPI data with the 2013/14 results
- updating the College SAR for 2013/14.

Dr Lee asked for clarification on the length of short courses. Mrs Higgin advised that they could be as long as 24 weeks at perhaps 1 hour per week or very short at 8 or 9 weeks. Members discussed the report and the information presented.

All members agreed that the results were impressive, but also recognised that the College had some work to do on those areas falling below the KPIs. However, members were keen to note the College Senior Leadership does set very high standards which it wishes to maintain. Members

Resolved

14/15-1.8 to note the report and the College Success Rates contained within it.

The Chair thanked Miss Higgin for her report

Mrs Tootell asked that she be allowed to change the order of her reports. The Chair advised that this was acceptable

14/15-1.10 Curriculum Self Assessment Review 2014/2015 - Current Outcomes (Autumn)

The Director of Quality and Standards presented her report. Mrs Tootell began by giving Members a brief overview of the Curriculum SAR process and was pleased to note that a member of the Board, Miss Landon, was able to attend the recent meeting. Mrs Tootell advised that the scorecard used to grade curriculum teams now had 69 indicators (Members had been provided with copies of the score card prior to the meeting) instead of the 43 used the previous year. The score card had been put

together during the summer so that Curriculum managers would have a clear indication as to the scoring to be used in November.

Following the process the following grades were attained:

- Grade 1 - 11 curriculum teams (10 in 2012/13)
- Grade 2 - 19 curriculum teams (16 in 2012/13)
- Grade 3 - 5 curriculum teams (8 in 2012/13)
- Grade 4 - 2 curriculum teams (2 in 2012/13)

30% of teams Grade 1

81% of teams Grade 2 or better

Miss Higgin noted that some teams who may have been graded at 1 in using last year's review criteria have been graded at 2 because of the additional 26 used this year. Dr Lee suggested that this again showed the high exceptionally standards the College management sets for itself. Other members agreed with this.

Mrs Tootell went on to give examples specific curriculum team improvements including Health and Social Care, Childcare, Media Studies, Computing and Performing Arts and Dance. She then explained the actions being taken to address poorer performance from the Motor Vehicle engineering team, the English and maths teams, the Access to HE teams, Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing teams and the Accounts and Finance teams. Some of these teams are making good progress and it is expected that improvements will be recognised in the next SAR process.

Mrs Tootell concluded by explaining the actions being taken to further improve the Curriculum SAR process which include:

- Introduction of 'progress grades' to provide clarification to teams what actions are required but also to motivate improving teams.
- monitoring of 'cross college' themes in the SAR with team action plans developed by Heads of Faculty and monitored by the Quality Team
- establishing a formal process for sharing outstanding practice
- Recognition and congratulations for all Outstanding teams from the Corporation Board

Mr Ireland asked that the Clerk facilitate the last action. Mr Armiger said that he would see that this was done as soon as possible.

Dr Lee said that he was disappointed to see the Motor vehicle engineering section receiving a grade 3. Mrs Tootell, Miss Higgin and Mrs Taylor outlined a range of reasons for this happening. Dr Coyne said that it was assuring that the leadership team were able to recognise and explain why this had happened to this team and felt sure that they could do it for all the teams. Miss Landon remarked that the SAR event she had attended gave a clear indication of the hard work taking place to ensure that the

quality and standard of the college curriculum was the best it could possibly be and would encourage all members to attend the process. Members

Resolved

13/14-1.10 to note the report

14/15-1.9 Performance Management Process - Current Position

Mrs Tootell presented her final report beginning with a brief reminder of the Special Measures process and then went on to say that 13 teams had been involved in the process in 2013/14. Ten of these teams had been removed mid-year following evidence of improvement. Mrs Tootell reported that 3 of these teams remained in the process going in to 2014/15 and 4 new teams will join them following the November 2014 Curriculum SAR process. She then reported that another 7 teams were undergoing a 'light touch' monitoring process.

Members were updated on the general reasons for specific teams being Special Measures and some of the actions being taken using this supportive process to ensure the teams move out of the process and their current SAR gradings.

Mrs Tootell advised members of additional actions being taken to further improve the process which included:

- increased Numbers of walkabouts and prioritise lesson observations for teams in Special Measures,
- Advanced Practitioners to carry out ' a day in the life of learners' exercise with teams to identify operational aspects of programmes requiring improvement.

Members were also provided with a 'Special measures - Frequently Asked Questions' document which teams identified for including in the process receive to ensure they understand that the experience is a support one and what will be expected from them. Members acknowledged the usefulness of such a document. The Clerk reminded members that they were able to attend Special measures meetings, Mr Ireland stated that he had benefitted from the experience of his attendance at one last year and hoped to be able to attend another this year. After final discussions members

Resolved

14/15.1.9 to note the report and the actions being taken with curriculum teams involved in the Special measures process

Mr Ireland thanked Mrs Tootell for her reports

Mr Ireland went on to thank members of the College Senior leadership team for attending the meeting and presenting their reports adding that there had been a staggering amount of information offered at the meeting which gave assurance to Committee Members that the work of the college and its staff

would continue to produce the excellent standards it was known for, which could only benefit the success and futures of its learners.

14/15-1.11 **Date and Time of Next Meeting**
Tuesday 3rd March 2015 at 5.00pm

The meeting closed at 7.45pm