

**CHELMSFORD COLLEGE  
QUALITY & LEARNERS COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023 AT 2.00 PM  
At Moulsham Street Campus, Chelmsford  
(via MS Teams by exception)**

**PRESENT:** Sarah Noble (Chair)  
Paddy Reilly  
David Warnes (Principal)  
Barbara Vohmann  
Christian Norman (via Teams)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Alison Davies (Director of Learner Experience & Progression)  
Mark Emerson (Director of Information Services)  
Simon Drane (Director of Curriculum, Princes Road)  
Jo Styles (Director of Curriculum – Moulsham Street)  
Fiona Chalk (Governance Advisor)  
Sunny Bamra (Curriculum Transformation Officer)  
Dan Spacagna (Head of Department: Extended Learning)

**FORMAL MATTERS**

**887. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Susan Hughes, Amanda Montague, Debs Hurst (staff), Paolo Chaffey, Debbie Garroway (staff), and Jon Selvage.

**888. DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND TO NOTIFY ANY CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

No new declarations to add.

**889. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record of the meeting. Alison Davies job title was noted as Director of Learner Experience and Progression.

**890. MATTERS ARISING**

Curriculum Managers – Impact of Development.

Governors noted that as a result of the Middle Manager training programme, some new initiatives have been put in place. An example of

this is a Middle Manager presenting to the EDI committee and that has led to new work in this area.

## **TO DISCUSS AND RECOMMEND**

### **891. PRESENTATION ON SEND PROVISION**

A copy of the presentation is filed with these minutes.

The college has 228 students with EHCPs and 87 of these are High Needs Learners. These are present in Extended Learning, Special Provision, Cross College provision.

There are statutory requirements on staff to be responsible and accountable for their learners, including those receiving additional support.

Retention is good, apart from Access to FE, which is 76%. Mental Health is the most common reason for loss of students. Staffing was not stable in this programme area at the start of the programme but is now stable.

The Ofsted requirements for teaching and learning of staff for students with High Needs was noted. This is primarily about preparing students for adult life. The college is bringing in coaches instead of learning support assistants, to help SEND students improve their communication skills.

The college provides specialist support including speech and language, behaviour management, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. There is also much collaboration work with different agencies, which is a strength of the college. There is significant collaboration with approximately 40 different groups in the community to support activity with students.

Staff have been trained in a lot of support areas specific to the needs of learners. There are accreditation routes to support learners into employment and to take active part in their communities.

Actions being taken to support this work includes:

Retention – closer monitoring and a plan to mitigate this including working with the Council to support this.

Transitions – more work to manage students coming to the college as well as out of support learning into cross college programmes.

ALS Team – bringing in coaches to support students and a behaviour specialist, to support staff on communicating with students.

Target monitoring – to monitor progress against targets in a timely way.

Staff training – on setting and monitoring of SMART targets for students to achieve.

Assistive technology – needs strengthening, and it is likely some technical expertise will be brought in to support development in this area.

There are supported internships in place to support students into employment and the community.

Governors asked how the retention on Access to FE will be improved. The college has brought in new staff who are skilled in dealing with mental health. It is also looking at different accreditation routes that are more flexible, enabling students to move more readily between levels.

AD advised on the review of the ALS Team following on from a staff resignation.

## **892. TEACHING LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

SB advised he is currently filling Penny Petch's role (Director of Teaching, Learning and Quality), as she is off on sick leave.

- **Lesson observation update**

92 observations have taken place to date (from a teaching population of c130) with 76% meeting all five key expectations - this is on a par with 21/22. It is anticipated that the College will achieve 85% in all five key expectations, its target for the year-end.

Developments include increased use of the HOW2 platform; further professional development days; continuing to work collaboratively with other colleges and adopt an outward approach involving external specialist support and resources.

Following an evaluation of Learning, Teaching and Assessment, there is a need to re-align the observation process against the College strategic intent – strong teaching and learner profile which will impact on quality, retention, achievement. This will allow the college to meet its excellence in teaching, learning and assessment (College Value 1). The key five expectations will also be more clearly defined. A working party is being set up to take forward the development of the observation process to support those undertaking the observation, as well as those being observed, to ensure the focus is on whether the learning is taking place and whether it has impacted the learner.

Governors asked if the impact of observations would be more tangible to see, even when targets are met. SB advised that the feedback currently is not developmental enough and a greater understanding of expectations will enable the process to be better embraced by staff and lead to improved student outcomes. This will be implemented from September next year, although this could be phased in. This will be decided when the findings of the current review of the observation process is finalised.

Governors stated that it would be good to see that where there are weaknesses in the college, the impact of interventions following lessons observations, is more visible through improved student outcomes.

Governors were advised that due to staff shortages where other staff are covering, must be taken into account - the pressure on teachers to perform optimally whilst managing the current staffing challenges, is considerable.

Next steps to ensure continued progress were noted as:

- Review the TaLOS process, as it is not meeting all its aims as outlined within the Observation policy.
- An initial consultation is planned for Mid-May – Open Forum. Current observers and teachers will be given the opportunity to share/voice their experience of the process,
- Suggested feedback will form part of a working group, so that we have a robust and purposeful observation process in readiness for the new academic year 23/24.
- **Projected achievement rates 2022/23**

The National Achievement Rates show a very positive picture for the college, with only Level 2 showing a negative comparison. These are the first national rates published since pre Covid-19.

Projected achievement rate for 16-18, all qualifications, is 82.1%, this is 0.1 percentage points below the outturn for 2021-2022 and 1.9 percentage points below the College target. Compared to the revised national rate the projected achievement is 1.4 percentage points above the national average.

At levels entry and 1 the projected achievement rates are 75.9% (435) and 82.4% (2572). Entry level is above last year's outturn by 3.7 percentage points, Level 1 is 2.9 percentage points below. This is mostly impacted by low predictions in Functional Skills and poor retention in Level 1 Diploma in Electrical Installations, Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy.

At level 2 the projected achievement rate is 79.5% (1310), this is below the college target by 3.5 percentage points and 2.3 percentage points above the outturn for 2021/22. This remains the biggest challenge for the College. Maths and English is a large number of students and contributes to this.

At level 3 the projected achievement rate is 86.7% (1187), this is above last academic year's outturn by 2.7 percentage point, and 0.7 percentage point above the College target. Curriculum area projected achievement

rates vary, ranging from 90.6% to 74.8%, with 8 of the 12 Curriculum areas forecasting an increase. Progress of learners varies between learners aged 16-18 and 19+. With 48.9% of 16–18-year-olds and 60.2% of 19+ learners making at least the progress expected of them.

Apprenticeships overall provision is currently 61.1%, projected achievement to date is 2.1% below the predicated achievement in May 22. This is mostly linked to apprentices on Electrical programmes who are behind in their programme. Although it is noted that this prediction is still 7.7% above the national rate of 53.4%, and above for all ages and the highest performing in Essex.

Governors challenged staff on the achievement at Level 2, remaining poor. Staff have responded to this through changing accreditation programmes to ensure flexibility to meet student's needs, such as bringing in a Level 1 programme to support progression and achievement at Level 2, and secure Maths and English.

- **Retention, progression, and attendance**

Governors asked about attendance, which is lower than pre-Covid. Staff explained that students post Covid have different challenges and some of the interventions need to be different in order to retain them and improve their attendance. Work is taking place with learners to explore the issue. There will be more external stakeholder engagement, including parental involvement, to support attendance and help the parents and carers to support their students' mental health and anxiety.

The cost-of-living crisis is also impacting attendance as some students are having to work to support their household.

Retention for 16-18, all qualifications is 88.2%; this is 3 percentage point below the retention rate published in May 2022.

Retention for 19+, all qualifications is 95.2%; this is a 1 percentage points increase on the retention rate published in May 2022. Projected achievement for 19+, all qualifications is 85.4%; this is 5.6 percentage points below the college target and below last year's outturn by 4 percentage points.

Attendance continues to be a challenge for learners aged 16-18, particularly learners studying for qualifications at levels entry, 1 and 2. These attendance rates will be adversely influenced by teacher shortages, and disruption in learning. Rewards are being given to students with high levels of attendance, as one mechanism for improving attendance rates.

Progress of learners varies significantly between learners aged 16-18 years old. The area of particular concern is at level 2 with only 47.7% of learners making the progress expected of them. Many opportunities for learners to attend catch up workshops/sessions have been implemented.

Governors stated that the improvements from the action plans are not showing sufficient impact and asked that future reports to the committee show the progress from term 1 to term 2, as is not currently clear. Staff advised that the lack of progress is largely due to poor attendance.

**ACTIONS: Reporting to the February and May committees 2024 to include demonstrable impact of interventions, and whether this is being sustained over the long-term.**

### **893. ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS UPDATE**

This area is in intervention. There is some long-term sickness in this area which has had an impact.

Currently:

37% achievement of Level 1 Maths.

54% achievement for entry level Maths.

Attendance for Maths is at 90% and attendance for English is at 75%.

47% achievement for entry level English.

There is a greater ownership of English & Maths in cross-college work, and a new initiative to support this has been rolled out to support Curriculum Managers.

Governors noted that the drive on attendance is intended to support greater achievement, although it is not yet known where the grade lines will be drawn by the awarding bodies for the current year.

The Level 1 students are being placed on GCSE preparation programmes ahead of their progression in September.

### **894. STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

- **Learner experience 2023/24**

The strategy is now working well, and the Learner Progress Tutorials are being improved with an enhanced parent induction.

Personal Development Programme Delivery of the PDP programme has been revisited for the summer term in response to targeted classroom visits undertaken in March that showed the quality was inconsistent. A recent health check undertaken by Scrutton Bland was very positive in

relation to the intent of the PDP programme. Work is also progressing with Unloc.

Curriculum delivery and business support sees the college work continuing with the Skills Builder Partnership to help equip learners with highly transferable essential skills which will be of benefit both in the classroom and in future progression.

The Enrichment Programme is being enhanced from September and work with the community safety officer and other community groups has resulted in funding for a 'Ready, Respect, Safe' week in October. The expectations for students (including apprenticeships and part-timers) and parents and carers will be made clear before this starts.

Work readiness – for those for whom it is compulsory, 64% have started with only 12% having no plans in place. This is an improving picture daily across all students. A Matrix Accreditation has taken place, which gave a very positive result for this area of work.

- **Learner Voice**

Students are engaging with the All-Parliamentary Group to talk about impact of cost-of-living crisis.

Governors noted the student survey and where there are some negative variations. There has been a 45% drop in completion of the survey, which is disappointing. Each Curriculum Area Manager has been sent the detailed breakdown of the survey results for their area.

Governors asked to have the breakdown in curriculum area. This will be added to the Governors' Portal.

**ACTION: AD to add Student Survey curriculum area breakdown to the Governors' Portal**

Learner Voice meeting – A governor to attend on 16<sup>th</sup> June. The informal afternoon tea meeting with governors received a positive response from students, so more of this will be planned.

## **895. CURRICULUM PLANNING**

- **Curriculum plan 2023/24**

DW advised that this is the operational version of the Accountability Statement, looking at the Intent, Implementation, and Impact.

The LSIP priority areas were noted, and the 8 of the 10 areas that the college is aligning its curriculum areas to.

The process of the curriculum planning was noted, and how insights and LMI has shaped the curriculum, including through the stakeholder knowledge exchange meetings between staff and employers.

Governors asked when the formal LSIP will be made available. It will be published by the end of May 2023. The sign-up process for apprenticeships was noted as becoming more complicated, involving a sequence of events including sign up for the employer, the student, compliance with funding rules, etc. There is a tight window to sign everyone up on the same day following publication of results for 16-18s. The process has been revised this year to solve some of the issues this process threw up last year.

- **Enrolment targets and learner recruitment 2023/24**

The high-level overview of projected recruitment figures was noted. The 16-18 current projected numbers are indicating an increase of 114 learners, with applications up by 200 on this time last year. Conversion, enrolment, and retention processes are being planned for maximum effectiveness. There have been some changes to curriculum which have resulted in lower recruitment in some areas this year. Lower numbers are spread across several areas, rather than in any one particular area.

AEB numbers are shown to deliver 110% of target for next year, whilst reducing the sub-contracted provision. AEB is seeing some online delivery to support targets, some of which is in-house within existing programmes, and some is commercial delivery. The aspects of the Business Unit work done to support this provision is being reported to the Board on a regular basis.

## **896. SELF-ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT**

- **CIP monitoring report 2022/23**

Governors noted the rag-rated 31 actions, 18 are green (action and impacted are reported), 13 are orange (actioned but impact not recorded yet), and none are red (not action).

Priority 1 – has seen reasonable progress made

Priority 2 – has seen reasonable progress made

Priority 3 – has seen substantial progress made

Priority 4 – has seen reasonable progress made

Priority 5 – has seen good progress made



This report will be revised for next year for more impact focused reporting – it needs to support the college moving forward rather than being reflective.

The actions taken to move the orange rag-rated issue forward, were noted. The progress reviews and stakeholder events in college are informing the Intent part of the curriculum planning. The stakeholder events are also being used to show case the college's curriculum offer.

Next steps to ensure continued progress were noted by governors.

## **TO RECEIVE AND NOTE**

### **897. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- **Risk report and dashboard**

The committee noted the report.

- **Key performance indicators 2022/23 (progress)**

Progress against KPIs was noted, with many having been discussed as part of earlier conversations in this meeting.

Slightly higher levels of short and long-term staff sickness are having an impact, as discussed earlier in the meeting.

Governors asked how many students have been lost since September. There have been 456 students withdrawn over the period. The reasons were queried by governors. The reasons are closely linked with those for attendance, such as cost of living crisis, staffing challenges, attraction of apprenticeships, and mental health issues of learners particularly at Level 1. Some of the mitigations have been discussed in this meeting.

### **898. SAFEGUARING**

- **Termly safeguarding report**

The college currently has 133 open safeguarding reports of which 14 are classified as 'at risk'. In addition, there are 957 non live reports, the majority of which are transfer of records that have been reviewed, recorded on the system and considered not to be categorised as 'active' or 'monitor'. In 2021/22 there were a total of 990 safeguarding reports over the academic year and 6 at the nursery.

There are on average 2 safeguarding reports each day, which is a large workload for staff. Social Services are also overwhelmed with the growing demand for their services.

The most significant number this year were noted in relation to the following categories.

- Refusing to follow instructions – 43
- Bullying and Harassment – 29
- Violence/abuse – 55

Staff training, including supervision training, has been put in place to support staff welfare for those who are dealing with safeguarding issues.

A recent AoC report has shown there is a sector trend on increased safeguarding issues.

### **899. COMMITTEE MATTERS**

- **Meeting dates and schedule of business 2023/24**
- **Review of terms of reference**
- **Agree a self-assessment of the committee's performance**

These were all noted by governors.

It was asked that the impact of Employer Engagement along with reporting on management responses to Governor Champion visits, to be added to the schedule of business.

The self-assessment will be circulated over the summer for reporting on to the next committee.

The amendment to the Terms of Reference to include reference to supporting the Board on Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 which places a duty on governing bodies of institutions in the further education sector to review how well the education or training provided by the institution meets local needs and consider what action might be taken in order to meet those needs better. This amendment was agreed.

**ACTIONS: Committee members to complete the self-assessment**  
**The Schedule of Business to be updated**  
**The Terms of Reference to be updated and published on the Governors' portal.**  
**Employer Engagement along with reporting on management responses to Governor Champion visits, to be added to the schedule of business.**

- **900. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**  
None. The meeting closed at 4.30 pm

### **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **901. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 2pm**