

**CHELMSFORD COLLEGE
QUALITY AND LEARNERS COMMITTEE
25 February 2020 – 2.00 pm**

Minutes

PRESENT: Sarah Noble (Chair)
Susan Hughes
Janet Maynard
Elaine Oddie
Andy Sparks (Principal) – from 2.10pm
Barbara Vohmann

IN ATTENDANCE:

Penny Petch (Director of Teaching, Learning & Quality)
Caroline Williams (Deputy Principal)
Debs Hurst (Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services)
Alison Davies (Director of Curriculum, Moulsham Street – to minute 656)
Marco Iciek (Director of Learner Development & Inclusion)
Mark Emerson (Director of Information Services)
Simon Drane (Director of Curriculum, Princes Road)
Rob Millea FCA (Clerk to the Corporation)
Joanne Harrington (Assistant Clerk)

645. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Christian Norman, Seena Shah and Thomas Pipe (Student Governor).

646. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Barbara Vohmann declared her interest as a staff member at Anglia Ruskin University. The Clerk declared his interest as Company Secretary of Essex Shared Services Limited.

Elaine Oddie and Andy Sparks declared their interests as Directors of Essex Shared Services Limited. Andy Sparks also declared his interest as acting Chair and Director of ACER Limited (dormant).

Debs Hurst informed the Committee that she continues in her role as a Member Representative on the Essex LGPS Advisory Board.

No other declarations made.

No confidential items were notified.

647. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

648. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2019

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 5 November 2019 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chair, subject to one textual amendment on page 8.

649. MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk provided a summary of Action Points from the last Meeting and current status.

The Committee noted that the Board had approved the College Self-Assessment Report 2018-19, the College Improvement Plan 2019-20, the Committee's Terms of Reference and the Curriculum KPIs for 2019-20 at its Meeting on 6 December 2019 on the recommendation of this Committee.

The Principal advised that the Princes Road lockdown alarm has been tested with students present and this was satisfactory.

The Deputy Principal mentioned that the introduction of T Levels is the responsibility of the Curriculum & Innovation Steering Group.

The Deputy Principal advised that T Levels are being moved forward in Curriculum Planning for the future – College is to put in an application for introduction of some T Levels in 2022/23.

It was noted that retention of students and lower achievements in certain areas has been made more explicit in the risk register by rewording Risk 24 (retention) and Risk 10 (inconsistent outcomes).

Governor Champions – this is still a work in progress and it was agreed that a paper would be brought to the Board Meeting on 27 March 2020 suggesting some allocations of governors to curriculum/management areas building on the governor links which already exist.

ACTION: CW

A governor asked if the Mental Health Support Team has been established and is up and running. Marco Iciek said that the Team is being established and will be effectively in place from September 2020 on a three day per week basis. The proposed Team has visited the College to assess the

College's needs and will shortly be given an induction by Elizabeth Tugwell of the College staff.

Other items brought forward have been included on this Agenda (Student Surveys and Presentations by CAMs in Intervention Areas).

650. PRESENTATION: INTERVENTION AREAS

The Deputy Principal and the Director of Curriculum (Moulsham Street) gave a PowerPoint presentation in respect of the two 2019-20 designated Intervention Areas (Health and Social Care and Child Care). Governors were reminded that the two areas are quite distinct.

A governor asked why the CAM for these two areas was not in attendance and the Deputy Principal and Alison Davies of SMT said that they were both now heavily involved in this area.

Key points of the presentation:

- Details of number of students and achievement rates (below National Rates by some margin) and perceived weaknesses requiring attention
- Review of curriculum intent carried out
- Performance management of all staff
- Chair of Q&L Committee has visited and been briefed on actions
- Analysis of Curriculum Impact (retain reformed qualifications, curriculum fit for purpose, staff effectiveness, collective view of challenges and directions, standard of curriculum implementation – which requires improvement)
- Areas have appropriate progression and is up to date with legislative and other requirements
- Real team spirit in achieving improvement
- Review of offer against entry requirements (including comparison with other Essex Colleges) – possibly too generous in the past?
- Consider apprenticeship model for Level 3 learners to respond with student demand
- Meetings with curriculum teams and with another Essex College
- Scrutiny of actions by senior management to ensure objectives being pursued
- Reformed qualification to be introduced at Level 2

Governor questions

Elaine Oddie enquired as to staff turnover in the two areas. Staff levels have been thoroughly reviewed and changes made have been positive particularly in stabilising the group.

The Deputy Principal was clear that the Curriculum Plan for these areas needs further improvement but she felt that the foundations for this have been established. The Chair asked if the two areas are showing real Intent to meet student ambition and higher standards. The Deputy Principal felt it can be managed better particularly the move from level 2 to level 3.

Showcase events are being used to display the offer to potential new students and external people are being invited to explain to students the sort of jobs available. It is imperative that students understand the course and progression before commencement and therefore that there is comprehensive Advice & Guidance.

The Chair asked if student behaviour is an issue and the Deputy Principal said that it was still a work in progress but the position is more positive in terms of general classroom management and specific behaviour management.

Elaine Oddie asked why some students in the two areas are dissatisfied and was told that staffing in the two areas had not been stable last year with the result that their learning was disrupted (level 2 and current Level 3 Year 1).

The College has sought advice and help from Colchester Institute as part of the intervention process, to learn from their experiences.

Susan Hughes enquired whether the selection criteria in each curriculum area have been changed. Alison Davies responded saying that it is correct but it has been a slow change and that the minimum standards are maintained at all times. However, regard is had to ensuring the programmes of study are based on the individual needs of each student and are in compliance with Maths and English national rules (Childcare).

The Deputy Principal said, in response to a governor question, that there are considerable Apprenticeships available in Childcare in the workplace which is attractive for students. They are paid and therefore can cause students to take up this option.

In response to Elaine Oddie, the Deputy Principal said it is quite possible that there may be apprentices only in a couple of years to respond to student and employer needs. However, there may be a need to keep an academic pathway for those students who wish to move to HE and eventually be teachers.

The Principal asked how this helps as these areas have been difficult for some years, and require a great deal of senior management (perhaps too much) involvement to bring about effective change. The Chair asked if the

CAM responsible can achieve the change required and are the staff appropriate for this. It is believed that this can happen.

Susan Hughes (Lead Governor – Safeguarding) observed that safeguarding is very important in recruitment in these areas and mentioned the legislative requirements. Alison Davies said the College is encouraging disclosure by the students (e.g mental health issues) involved to ensure they have every chance to progress and achieve. She noted that there is often a lack of information from schools regarding any such issues and there is often a reluctance by a student to make a disclosure.

The Chair asked about the College’s mechanisms to identify and take action on any curriculum areas where there are deficiencies, either one off issues or more fundamental concerns. The Deputy Principal said that action is taken promptly as soon as a weakness or problem becomes apparent in any curriculum area through the monitoring of the CIP, Pupil Progress Reviews, the College Progress Review Board and similar methods.

Elaine Oddie asked about the Committee reviewing the individual course profiles and maybe do a deep dive to better understand the curriculum offer and its relevance to students. This will be arranged for the next Meeting of the Committee in May 2020.

ACTION: CW

Barbara Vohmann asked about selection of students and the enrolment/application process and was reassured as to the process which takes place in this regard.

The Deputy Principal and the Director of Curriculum, Moulsham Street were **THANKED** for their joint presentation.

651. TEACHING LEARNING & ASSESSMENT

Penny Petch (Director of Teaching, Learning & Quality) **PRESENTED** a Report on classroom observations of TLA in 2019-20 to date and a table of actions proposed for the remainder of the current year.

The key points of the Report for last year were:

- 108 observations this year, slightly less than last year (118) as there was a late start due to changes in policy
- 81% of teachers meet all 5KE (target for the year 86%) – about 8pp above the position at the same time last year
- Teachers not meeting 5KE continue to be supported through the ACE programme and details provided in the paper

- Departments achieving below the College average were Art and Media, Construction, Sport and Public Services and Engineering and Electrical

The Key Actions planned for this year were itemised in the Report and included the following:

- Review of implementation of revised observation process
- Professional Development Days/Weeks
- Continued coaching from Advanced Practitioners and mentor support
- Weekly CPD sessions – staff to attend 2 sessions at least annually
- Observer Training
- Focus on Intent of curriculum area

Penny Petch said that KE 4 (evidence that teachers check understanding, correct misunderstanding and close gaps in knowledge and skills) is the lowest in terms of achievement in phase 1. It is being addressed through CPD sessions, the T&L strategy for the month and in the Teaching Newsletters.

Governors noted that the wording of the 5KEs has been amended to reflect more directly the criteria noted in the revised Education Inspection Framework. Therefore, the statistics to date this year are not directly comparable with the same point last year.

In addition, eleven consistently high performing teachers are not included in the data and some teachers undertaking teacher training (including QTLS) are not to be observed this academic year.

Governor Questions

Barbara Vohmann expressed a concern that teachers might achieve minimum but not further beyond that. Penny Petch said that this a clear risk but management do encourage and expect further improvement even if the expectation for a teacher has been met.

Penny Petch confirmed that the new Ofsted framework has meant teachers have to relate more closely to teaching requirements and whether this has improved their performance, which will only be tested through improving outcomes for students. In this regard, she confirmed that the observation form would include a point about teachers being aware of how to improve.

Penny Petch confirmed, in answer to a governor question, that all staff are observed at some point during the year including Learning Coaches and Advanced Practitioners (scheduled for term 3).

Barbara Vohmann asked if Pedagogy Pulse is used widely. Penny Petch said indications are that it is and it is promoted strongly as a useful reference tool.

Governors asked what metacognition is and were informed that, in simple terms, it is learning about learning and thinking about thinking and translating this into students' expectations and achievement.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

652. LEARNER PROGRESS 2019/20

The Committee **RECEIVED** a Report from the Deputy Principal and the Director of Information Services giving an overview of retention and projected achievement against targets for the current year, outturn for the academic year 2018-19, attendance and the most current national provider rates (2017/18).

The Report included detailed data tables for review – 16-18 students, 19+ students and by department.

Key points:

- Retention has increased for all learners compared to February 2019 as detailed in the Report tables
- Outcomes for 16-18 learners has been maintained at the same rate or better at all levels and is on or above the most recent provider rates, but just below target at levels entry and 1
- Outcomes for 19+ learners has been maintained at the same rate or better at all levels and is on or above the most recent provider rates except for level 2. Levels 2 and 3 are below target
- Attendance remains a challenge for 16-18 learners, especially at levels entry, 1 and 2. The figures have been adversely affected by English and maths attendance
- Learners in receipt of higher Needs Funding continue to make good progress

The Paper provided to Members of the Committee expanded on these points in greater detail. It also provided data regarding learners' progress against their respective Target Achievable Grade, which is reviewed every six weeks. It is noted that TAG progress is quite variable between curriculum areas. The target is 70% for learners to be on or above their TAG.

Four curriculum areas are below the 70% target – Science & IT, Sport & Public Services, Engineering & Electrical and Health and Care – and are

being monitored carefully. However, governors were reminded that being below the TAG target does not necessarily mean those students will not achieve.

It is notable that all retention has risen over last year and this is an extremely positive sign of student engagement and hopefully achievement. However, the outcomes predicted appear to be conservative given the high retention rate.

Governor questions

Elaine Oddie was concerned about students lagging behind the progress expected for them measured by their TAG and this concern was shared by all governors.

Governors considered the table provided to them (page 8 of the Paper) showing, amongst other things, progress in respect of TAG against the target of 70% set for the College. They noted that the picture is not good (i.e. below target) in Science & IT, Sport & Public Services, Health & Care and Engineering & Electrical.

The point was made that the progress to date is based on individual assessments by each Course team and it is, to that extent, subjective. Nevertheless, the Committee expressed concern regarding the data and to know when an improvement will be seen and efforts are in place to achieve that quickly.

It was agreed that an update of the TAG progress data be presented to the Board on 27 March and to the next Meeting of this Committee on 12 May 2020.

ACTION: CLERK

Governors noted that retention was good and is 2pp above last year to date, but still higher than two years ago. The challenge for the College is to ensure good retention translates into student achievement.

The Board **RECEIVED** the Report.

653. ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS

The Committee **RECEIVED** a Report from Alison Davies (Director of Curriculum, Moulsham Street) giving an overview of progress made in relation to English and Mathematics with a focus on attendance. This focuses on Intent, Implementation and impact mirroring the EIF.

Key Points:

- The curriculum is dictated by national policy
- The College meets and exceeds these requirements
- Delivery is well planned and sequenced and staff are appropriately qualified and have good teaching skills
- Outcomes were summarised in the Report with GCSE results at November 2019 resits in both English (59%, same as last year) and maths (69%, up 23pp) increasing from the previous year and are both well above National Rates (34pp and 43pp respectively. With regard to **Functional Skills** English and maths, the outcomes were positive under the new reformed qualifications (hence no comparatives)
- Positive staffing picture (six of whom are examiners, one a lead examiner) – a strong and stable team providing real value added
- Student attendance remains patchy and inconsistent across curriculum areas
- All staff in the department have met all five KE

The Paper provided to Members of the Committee expanded on these points and other aspects of English & maths in greater detail.

Attendance in Business area for English is particularly disappointing, noted by Susan Hughes, as it is 17% below the vocational area equivalent. Alison Davies said that there are a number of consistent poor attenders dragging down the figures.

The Principal said it may be difficult for governors to obtain a clear picture of movements and trends across all curriculum areas if the reporting is only by exception at a particular time. Consideration will be given as to how to report this more effectively in the future to ensure that the intervention areas do not adversely influence understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the overall picture.

ACTION: CW/ME

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

654. LEARNER VOICE AND STUDENT SURVEY REPORT

The Director of Learning Development & Inclusion **PRESENTED** a Report covering **Learner Voice Meetings** and the **Students' Perception of Course Survey (SPOC)** held in early December 2019.

The Report commented on Learner Voice Meeting since the last Meeting of the Committee and the SPOC Survey is the first to be carried out this academic year, as requested by the Committee at the last Meeting of the Committee. The second Survey will be carried out at the start of term 3.

Four **Learner Voice Meetings** have been held this academic year to date, including two since the last Meeting of the Committee.

A wide range of issues were discussed and a summary was provided to the Committee – the Committee noted the clear focus on education and training matters. Some Governors attend Learner Voice Meetings. A number of students also informally met with Governors over lunch during the GDD on 7 February 2020.

In respect of the **SPOC Survey** in December, 1792 learners took part. Only two questions failed to reach an 85% agreement – ‘preparedness to take next step in education/career – 84%’ and ‘the College listen to my views – 83%’.

The overall response rate (to the key question – Overall, I am satisfied with the College’) was positive at 91%, compared to 82% last year, and only 63% in 2016. It would be helpful to see other Colleges’ statistics for comparison.

The next Survey will be held in early May.

In response to Elaine Oddie, it was confirmed that the FE Choices questions cannot be influenced by the College as it is a National Survey.

Susan Hughes asked how successful were Student Mentors at Learner Induction stage and Marco responded by saying they were generally extremely positive in supporting new students in the first six weeks of term.

Governors questioned the lower response (84%) to the question concerning understanding of progression routes and it was suggested that this may be slightly lower than when the question is asked after progression tutorials - at that point it should have improved.

Marco Iciek indicated that Student Mentors have been hugely successful and he believed that they have contributed to the improvement in retention.

The Report was **NOTED**.

655. STUDENT DESTINATIONS REPORT 2018/19

The Director of Learner Development & Inclusion **PRESENTED** a detailed Analysis of the above for the information of the Committee.

The College has maintained its high position on the league table of positive destinations based on the most recent government data.

The data is based on 2002 responses to date and is a 15% increase (303 responses) compared to the previous year.

The Paper pointed out the headline points, the main one of which was that fewer learners progressed in to further and higher education compared to the previous year, but this was largely offset by more students progressing into employment. It was notable that more learners were now NEETs (up 3pp – total of 35 learners).

As in the past few years, the number of learners progressing to apprenticeships with the College continues to be disappointingly low.

Overall, 94% of destinations were to further education or employment (total of 1787 students), compared to last year's percentage of 97%.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

656. SUB-CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS 2019-20

The Director of Information Services **PRESENTED** this Report and reported that the College continues its agreement with Qube Learning to provide provision for the unemployed in conjunction with JobCentre Plus (contract value £100K), following **APPROVAL** by the Board in October 2019.

This contract has gone well and the Board **APPROVED** (on 7 February 2020) a further £100K of subcontracting with Qube (to a total of £200K for the 2019/20 year). Quality assurance processes relating to the work was very successful.

There are no other sub-contracting arrangements for 2019/20.

The Report provides details of monitoring of the provision for the information of the Committee and a summary of the achievement rates achieved by learners for 2018/19 – overall 90.8% - which is very good.

In answer to a governor question, Mark Emerson said that in order to achieve suitable numbers of the unemployed for this provision, it has been necessary to go further afield in Essex/Suffolk.

The Report was **NOTED**.

657. SELF-ASSESSMENT & IMPROVEMENT

The Deputy Principal **PRESENTED** this Report, which showed the monitoring of the CIP for the year to date.

Monitoring of College Improvement Plan 2019-20

The CIP for 2019/20 was **APPROVED** by the Board on 6 December 2019.

The Deputy Principal reminded governors that the CIP continues to focus on the six priorities for the College and senior management responsibilities for the various actions in the Plan are delineated. It provides a summary of the key actions which will continue the drive for improvement.

She reported that good progress is being made against five of the six priorities, but priority 4 (further increase the proportion of learners who are retained, achieve highly and progress to the level of education through the impact of the curriculum) remains of concern as the key actions are challenging for the College and may not have full impact within this academic year. Accordingly, this priority is graded AMBER, with all others graded GREEN.

Of note were three very successful PD days and the introduction of the new Princes Trust programme, together with learners participating in 'Insight into Industry' days (with some governors also attending) which began earlier this month. These latter days achieved really good positive feedback.

Curriculum and Innovation Steering Group – the Chair asked if the Committee should receive reports from this group, which is a management group set up in College. The Clerk said there needs to be care taken to ensure governors do not start delving into management but it is quite appropriate that the way that curriculum planning is developed should be a subject of report to Governors.

The Clerk reminded the Committee that the full Board scrutinises and approves the Curriculum Plan for the next academic year at the July Board Meeting.

It was agreed that, in order that governors can understand the rationale behind the annual Curriculum Plan for the next academic year, which they approve at the July Board Meeting, and planned ideas for the future, they would be informed as to the work and discussions within the CISG.

ACTION: CLERK/CW

The Committee considered the progress made in implementing and monitoring the Plan thus far this academic year as detailed in the Report and further actions deemed necessary to meet the objectives outlined.

The Committee had particular regard for progress in the designated Curriculum Intervention Areas for 2019-20 – Health and Social Care and Child Care – which are also noted in minute **650**.

The Committee were informed that Mental Health and Wellbeing is a priority across College for both students and staff.

The College is engaged in the TRIP project which is being led by Harlow College and it gives a valuable insight into T Levels. Staff are involved in webinars and other training.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report and **APPROVED** the progress to date against the Plan criteria and objectives.

658. RISK REGISTER AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Principal and the Director of Information Services **PRESENTED** the updated (to October 2019) **College Risk Register** in respect of curriculum related issues, together with the overall **College Dartboard**, which was **NOTED**.

The Senior Leadership Team reviews the Register weekly. The current full detailed Risk Register is placed on the governors' portal.

There are two whole College RED risks – HSC intervention and AEB Funding.

In respect of Curriculum issues, there is one RED risk, as noted above.

There are 11 AMBER and GREEN risks:

- Embedding English and maths
- Impact from staff performance intervention
- Statutory safeguarding duty
- PREVENT and adult learners
- Safeguarding Adults
- Student Retention
- Achievement rates
- Intervention Areas (Health and Social Care and Childcare)
- Apprenticeships (Carpentry and Joinery) – new risk
- Local environment/county lines
- Coronavirus – new risk

The Report detailed the AMBER and GREEN risks and the current position mitigating/addressing the risks in question. In particular, it commented that the intent in respect of the Intervention Areas is Good and actions in

Childcare are progressing, but Health and Social Care is proving to be more challenging.

The Director of Information Services reported on progress to date this academic year against the agreed set of **Key Performance Indicators** (approved by the Board on 6 December 2019) relating to curriculum issues (achievement, retention, attendance), which were discussed.

In all respects, progress is either AMBER or GREEN, however, there remains issues of inconsistency between areas in respect of attendance, especially English and maths, as minuted in item **653** above.

Governor questions and challenge

Governors noted the new Risk 29 from the last Meeting and that there continues to be a local area focus on criminal and anti-social activity. The Committee were advised of a recent incident at Writtle and that a number of family members of the affected party are students at the College.

Governors were pleased to note the increase in attendance this year of Looked After Children.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

659. COMMITTEE MATTERS

Governor Visits (verbal)

The Clerk **REPORTED** that there had been a number of visits since those reported at the last Committee Meeting on 5 November 2019 and these are documented on a spread sheet by the Assistant Clerk. The Members were reminded to inform the Assistant Clerk of visits that they make to College.

- 7 February – All governors attended the Governors' Development Day at Princes Road
- 23 January – the Clerk attended an AoC/ETF Governance Professionals Conference in London, which included sessions on T Levels and the new Ofsted EIF in practice

Governors had also attended other events:

- Showcase Event
- Curriculum Visit by the Chair to HS&C area
- Learner Voice Meeting
- Extended Learning Winter Fayre and Christmas Concert

- County Lines – Police Briefing
- Dovedale Fountain Lodge Open Event

660. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters of Any Other Business.

661. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 12 May 2020 at 2 pm

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 4.55 pm.

Signed.....Date.....