

## Curriculum & Quality Committee

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### Approved Minutes

Minutes of a Meeting of the Committee held on Monday 5 November 2018 at the Thurrock Campus at 6.00 pm.

Present: Ms M West (Chair)  
Mr P Griffiths  
Mr T Knight  
Ms A O'Donoghue CBE  
Mr D O'Halloran  
Ms E Rodriguez Ponce  
Mrs G Williams

In Attendance: Ms S Lane (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality)  
Ms D Garroway (Assistant Principal, Teaching & Learning)  
Ms N Kelly (Assistant Principal, Learner Progress)  
Ms K Mulvey (Vice Principal, Student Services)  
Mr M Twitchett (Assistant Principal, Learning & Standards)  
Mr R I Millea FCA (Clerk to the Corporation)

### 1. Presentation on Pro Monitor

Matt Twitchett and Nicki Kelly gave a Presentation on the Pro Monitor system focusing on the access to individual student data by drilling down into the system.

Matt and Nicki spoke about the key features of the system used in Department Reviews and on an ongoing basis throughout the year to monitor student progress.

Understanding of the system will support governors when they attend Reviews to show how staff access and interpret the information in the system regarding individual students.

For each student, the system identifies Risk Indicators identified including punctuality, attendance and behaviour based on a set of criteria, and students are RAG rated – red, amber, green, blue where blue indicates 100% attendance.

Students are also RAG rated according to course performance and if they are below target, to keep all staff aware of the intervention required to meet student need.

The system is an on line document which is regularly updated.

Specific Support Needs are identified on the system and teacher assistance to be provided is highlighted.

Each student has a Learner ILP with targets. This can be updated through review with tutors including progress and setting new targets as the learner progresses.

Parents have access to the system for their children.

The system provides consistent information storage. It is accessible to all staff and tutors so information does not get lost or forgotten which was a weakness of paper based records. It also helps consistency of record keeping and assessment.

The Committee **THANKED** Matt and Nicki for their presentation, which they found to be most helpful and informative.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Jo McGee.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

Members confirmed that they had no declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.

The Clerk notified his interest as Clerk to Chelmsford College and Company Secretary of Essex Shared Services Limited.

## **4. Election of Vice Chair 2018/19**

The only nomination for Vice Chair of the Committee for 2018/19 was Mr T Knight, who was duly elected unopposed.

## **5. Welcome to new Committee Member**

The Chair welcomed Ms Estrella Rodriguez Ponce (HE Student Governor), recently appointed to the Board, as a Member of this Committee.

## **6. Urgent Business**

*This was deemed to be a Confidential Item under the Instrument & Articles of Government and a separate minute has been prepared and is attached to these Minutes.*

## **7. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 14 May 2018**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 14 May 2018 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

## **8. Matters Arising**

The Clerk **REPORTED** that the Board had approved the following documents at its Meeting on 9 July 2018:

- OfS Submission for Registration Document
- Alternative Provision from September 2018 at TLC

## 9. Strategic Developments in South Essex

*This was deemed to be a Confidential Item under the Instrument & Articles of Government and a separate minute has been prepared and is attached to these Minutes.*

## 10. Final Learner Performance for 2017-18 (Paper CQC.18.15)

The Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality **PRESENTED** this Report giving details of the final outturn on achievement by students for 2017-18. There are no outstanding results.

The key points of the Report were as follows:

- College Overall Achievement Rate (82%) including English & maths continues to rise (last year 78%) by 4pp
- Poor achievement in Access (73%) and Basic Skills (54.5%) provision has negatively impacted College overall achievement – Access is 6.5pp below NR and Basic Skills is 13pp below NR
- A Levels remain at 14pp below NR despite significant intervention and improvement
- GCSE English and maths achievement (78%) has improved over last year and closer to NR of 81% English and 80% maths, despite introduction of the new grading methodology and specification
- Overall and timely Apprenticeship achievement is below NR due to the poor performance of some partners but College delivered Apprenticeships remain above NR for both overall and timely completions

The VP, C&Q highlighted the improvement in the College's Value Added scores for BTEC qualifications, which places the College in the top 30% of Colleges in the country.

However, A Levels performed poorly as to achievement and Value Added, which is in the bottom 25% of the country, although two subject areas – Fine Art and Photography performed well.

The PCE indicated that the College may receive an Improvement Notice in respect of its A Level provision given the poor achievement, which is significantly below National Rates (77.3% against NR of 91.6%). Such a notice would not be received until February 2019, if issued.

### Governor observations and questions

David O'Halloran asked whether the College will continue A Level provision in the future. Achievement has been poor for a few years now and the cohort is relatively small in the overall context of College enrolments.

The VP, C&Q informed the Committee that A Level provision is under review at present and a decision for the future will be taken early in 2019.

**ACTION: VP, C&Q**

Terry Knight asked in future, that qualification statistics for all types include the numbers of students in each provision type, include Apprenticeships.

Terry Knight also observed that in respect of the eleven qualification types, College performance, whilst generally improving, is nevertheless below National Rate in seven areas and over the National Rate in four areas. Further work is clearly needed to keep on an upward path.

The PCE made the point that the GCSE rates quoted in the statistics are national rates for all providers, including schools. It is not specific just to Colleges. A breakdown will be available when the National Rates are updated in early 2019 for the 2017-18 year. This will enable better comparison to be made.

Terry Knight was concerned that the apprenticeship achievement by partners for both timely and overall is below what the College achieved last year, but acknowledged that the College numbers were quite small in comparison.

The VP, C&Q confirmed that partners are monitored very closely and that it is the College's plan to reduce the number of outside providers in the future, by bringing delivery of this work in house.

The PCE said the College outcomes on Apprenticeships were affected by the takeover of SLIC learners, following that organisation going into liquidation. David O'Halloran asked for the data to establish the effect of this matter.

**ACTION: VP, C&Q**

David O'Halloran was concerned that achievement of College timely Apprenticeships are not that good (although in the past a small cohort) and how would we do better by taking over the partners' share in the future. The PCE said that carry ins have affected our figures but in the future we have a broadened curriculum whereas we were affected in the past by construction which was not good.

Terry Knight asked about the rapid intervention process referred to in the paper. It was explained that it is a three month intervention with six review meetings looking at progress during the three months.

The VP, C&Q said that rapid intervention is taking place in a number of areas – Music Technology, Games, Science, A Levels, Access, Animal Care and AAT. The intervention includes development for the future to promote improvement.

The Committee requested that Reports to Governors at this Committee in future include progress in designated intervention areas and how that progress is internally reviewed, evidenced and monitored.

**ACTION: VP, C&Q**

The Report was **NOTED**.

### **11. Current Learner Performance – Retention/Attendance/Learner Numbers 2018/19** (Paper CQC.18.16)

The Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality **PRESENTED** an up to date Report on progress to date. Members were reminded that the 16-19 learner number target for 2018/19 is 5010.

#### Retention

The target for 2018-19 is set at 93%, up 1pp on last year.

There have been 256 withdrawals since the start of the academic year which is about one third less than last year. These are not part of the college retention statistics as they have not completed the first 42 days.

Gwynn Williams asked about the reasons for the reduction in withdrawals compared to last year. The VP, C&Q said that the College has paid greater attention to this risk but there is no evidence that it is to do with course choice. Many students have gone into work and Apprenticeships rather than undertake a College course.

Estrella Ponce asked about follow up with students who have withdrawn. This is done by personal contact with the student/parent of student to encourage them, if possible, to reconsider but it is the case that students do not always say why they have left.

#### Attendance

The target for 2018-19 is set at 90% and currently attendance is running at 87.4% with punctuality at 97.3%.

#### Learner Numbers

HE enrolments are currently 708 against a target of 723, but as there are more full time students, the budget for HE income will be met. There are plans to grow further for next year. The move to full time students should increase income by £150,000.

The College has 343 apprentices on programme at 8 October 2018 with 74 new enrolments this year against a target of 103.

David O'Halloran asked if there is potentially scope to increase this and the VP, C&Q felt there were positive signs with better marketing.

The VP, C&Q stated that 16-19 learner numbers are currently 4607 on the ILR system. This takes into account the 256 withdrawals noted above.

When sub-contracted learners and 14-16 learners are added, the total rises to 4850. PROCAT have over recruitment against allocation by approximately 100. The ILR figures from both colleges will be combined for 2019/20, leaving us about 60 short of target. This will lead to a reduction in income in 2019/20 of approximately £250,000.

The Committee were informed that steps will be taken for a short re-engagement programme focusing on employability skills in early 2019 to narrow the shortfall on learner numbers.

The PCE said it remains disappointing that we have not met the learner number allocation again this year although the numbers are close. In answer to a question from Estrella Ponce, the PCE explained that there continues to be a lot of competition especially from schools and the local age demographic still flat for next year. It is expected to rise from 2020-21 onwards.

Terry Knight asked about the effectiveness this year of early enrolment for progressing students. The VP, C&Q felt it was beneficial and it will be continued in the future.

The VP, C&Q informed the Committee that planning is in place to implement an enhanced curriculum offer next year to meet the needs of a wider range of learners and ensure that the learner numbers allocation for 2019/20 is met.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

## **12. Academic Performance Targets 2018-19 (Paper CQC.18.17)**

The Principal & Chief Executive and the Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality jointly submitted a paper outlining the proposed academic targets for the College for 2018-19, together with headline achievement against the key targets set for 2017-18.

Members carefully reviewed the performance for the year just ended, noting the movements over the previous year, and the proposals for this year proposed by the Senior Leadership Team, focusing on whether the targets are both realistic and aspirational.

In framing these targets, Members were conscious that National Rates for 2017-18 will not be available until February/March 2019 and judgements as to the Targets for 2017-18 draw on the National Rates for 2016-17.

The proposed overall College retention target for 2018/19 is 93% and the Attendance Target is 90% (2017/18 actuals: retention 92.6% and attendance 80.6%). These targets are challenging, especially for attendance where attendance at English & Maths remains a significant issue.

In answer to a question from Terry Knight, the College position is to promote 100% attendance and this is the responsibility of the VP, C&Q. It is counter productive to promote the target of 90% as this will detract from the aim which is 100%.

Gwynn Williams asked about the National Rate for Attendance and was advised that no NR for Attendance is published. Anecdotally, the College believes our Rate is not abnormal.

The Overall Achievement Target for 2018/19 was set at 84%, up 2pp on this year's outturn. This breaks down as to 80% for 16-19 learners and 89% for 19+ learners.

These targets are all combined SEC/PROCAT Group targets. They would have to be amended if the merger does not proceed.

The PCE advised, in answer to a question from Gwynn Williams, that PROCAT's achievement was not good last year and below SEC's outturn so this has affected the judgement of what can be achieved as a merged College in this year. Furthermore, our influence on PROCAT cannot occur until after merger date on 1 February 2019.

The National Rates quoted in the paper are for 2016/17 – the figures for 2017/18 will not be available until early 2019.

Terry Knight requested that the learner numbers in each provision area be included in future on the schedule.

**ACTION: VP, C&Q**

Terry Knight observed that it is disappointing that attendance is below target so early in the year (87% against 90%) but the VP, C&Q said that the figures to date include the impact of student departures in the 42 days initial period.

The Committee **NOTED** the performance against targets for 2017/18 and **RECOMMENDED** the targets proposed for 2018/19 be approved by the Board at its Meeting on 3 December 2018.

**ACTION: CLERK**

### **13. Findings from Departmental Reviews (Paper CQC.18.18)**

The Clerk to the Corporation **REPORTED** verbally on Department Reviews which took place recently as part of the College Quality Improvement cycle. A number of governors have provided written feedback on their visits and this feedback has been passed to the PCE and the VP, C&Q for information and, if required, action.

The Meetings included review of teacher practice and provided evidence of performance management and specific target setting for immediate short term improvement. Tracking of learner progress, work placements, target setting and SEN progress were all discussed and evidenced.

The Clerk mentioned some of the positive outcomes from the brief Reports from a number of governors, summarised as follows:

- Good plans for future activities and enthusiastic involvement of staff
- Would benefit from 'live' data which governors can access remotely (**see presentation minuted in 1 above**)
- Ability to meet students and enthusiasm from students
- Good strategy and plans for English & Maths recognising the challenge involved and clear progress being made
- Continuing priority to achieve consistency of good teaching
- Some domestic issues reported – timetabling, marking
- Closure time of library felt too early by some students at 5 pm (A Level students)
- Students feel safe

Terry Knight posed the question - Do governors meet with students enough? The Committee felt that more opportunities for meeting with students be explored.

The Board **NOTED** the Report.

**ACTION: CLERK**

### **14.14-16 Programmes 2018/19 (Paper CQC.18.19)**

Kathy Mulvey **PRESENTED** a Paper outlining the College's arrangements for alternative 14-16 provision this year at the Thurrock Learning Campus. This initiative has previously been discussed by this Committee and the Board has approved the provision's development.

There are two strands:

- Home educated students
- Excluded students from mainstream schools

With regard to **Home educated students**, a pilot was established last year at Thurrock and for 2018-19 provision is being offered at all main campuses (Southend, Basildon and Thurrock) with, currently, 28 students enrolled. The target number this year for this group is 45 and it is managed by the Curriculum Manager, Foundation Learning as part of the Department of Health and Science.

The group are funded as home educated students and all referrals come through the local authorities – the students are not full time and are not counted as part of the College's 14-16 directly funded learners. All learners follow a set curriculum comprising a Level 1 Certificate in Progression and Functional Skills. In due course, these students will engage with functional skills and transfer onto GCSE after progression to College study programmes in 2019.

These students often have anxiety and mental health issues and may not have engaged with regular education for some years.

**Alternative Provision** is planned at TLC this year as a small pilot from November 2018. Appropriate accommodation has been established as these students (usually previously excluded from mainstream education) have significant needs and present significant challenges. The provision is line managed by the Head of Student Services. Full funding, including Pupil Premium, can be claimed through the school system. Longer term, it is hoped to open the provision at Southend.

The Provision has a positive emphasis for these students on three characteristics for prospective students – bold, determined and courageous.

The staffing is important as control and care for such students is very challenging. Kathy Mulvey said that recruitment is producing some fine candidates with lots of experience.

The College intends to put in a tender to Essex Local Authority for Alternative Education as it must follow an acceptable format and the College has to commit for at least two years. This will be done shortly. The hope is therefore that formal provision will be offered from 2019-20 onwards. Approval has been received from the ESFA to offer this provision now that the College's Notice of Financial Concern has been lifted.

The Committee **NOTED** the position and **SUPPORTED** this initiative, particularly its emphasis on investing in the local community and forging closer links with local schools and the Local Authority.

## **15. Presentation: Ofsted Update**

The Assistant Principal, Learning & Standards **GAVE** a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee outlining the changes to the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework, which will apply from 1 September 2019.

Members were provided with copies of Matt's slides for information. Key points:

- Common Inspection Framework changes to the Education Inspection Framework
- Leadership & Management remains a key assessment area
- Curriculum will be at the core and the wider development of the learner
- Judgement Measures will change to Leadership and Management, Quality of Education, Personal Development and Behaviour and Attitudes (previously L&M, TLA, PDBW & Outcomes)
- Flexibility in applying judgements in the provider (e.g. contrast schools and FE)
- Safeguarding still strongly emphasized
- Reduced focus on data
- No change to current four point grading scale
- Campus level reporting and grading being considered
- Rationalisation of number of provision types

It is hard to believe that outcomes in terms of achievement rates etc will not feature strongly in inspections, even though it is not going to be a separate judgement category. Further, it is not clear how 'reduced focus on data' will change inspection criteria and judgements.

Consultation is planned for Spring 2019 and the intention is to publish final framework and go live from September 2019.

The Committee **THANKED** Matt for this informative presentation.

#### **16. HE Matters** (Paper CQC.18.20)

The PCE advised the Committee that Governors need to confirm to Office for Students that it has received and discussed a Report and accompanying Action Plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. They also need to confirm that the methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic performance and student outcomes are, to the best of their knowledge, robust and appropriate.

The Committee **AGREED** that they were content to provide this Assurance and **AUTHORISED** the PCE, as accountable officer, to sign the OfS Annual Assurance Statement for the year ended 31 July 2018 for submission to the OfS by 3 December 2018.

The Board will be informed of the provision of this Assurance at its next Meeting on 3 December 2018.

**ACTION: CLERK**

#### **17. Committee Matters** (Paper CQC.17.15)

##### Terms of Reference

The Clerk **PRESENTED** the Committee Terms of Reference for review by the Committee. Some amendments, to give increased emphasis to HE matters, were proposed and the Committee asked that the term achievement rates replace success rates and the suggested revised Terms were **RECOMMENDED** for approval at the Board Meeting on 3 December 2018.

**ACTION: CLERK**

The Clerk also **PRESENTED** a document demonstrating compliance by the Committee with its own Terms of Reference during 2017/18.

Committee Self-Assessment

The Committee were **REMINDED** to return their completed Self-Assessment forms for 2017/18 to the Clerk, so that a Report can be provided to the Committee at its next Meeting and the Assistant Clerk will send follow up emails.

The Clerk will report back at the next Meeting.

Report on Academic Board

The Academic Board last met on 11 May 2018 and **NOTES** of the Meeting were presented to the Committee for information.

**ACTION: CLERK**

**18. Forthcoming Events** (Paper CQC.18.21)

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided by the Clerk relating to forthcoming events.

**19. Dates of Next Meetings**

Monday 25 February 2019 – Southend Campus at 6.00 pm.

Monday 13 May 2019 – Basildon Campus at 6.00 pm.

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 8.15 pm.

Signed.....Dated.....