

**MINUTES OF QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup>  
MARCH 2019**

<b>Present:</b>	Karen Banks	External Governor
	Tony McDermott	External Governor
	Tom McInerney	External Governor (Chair)
	Jacqui Scott	Staff Governor
<b>In attendance:</b>	Thalia Bell	Deputy Principal
	Alan Brown	Assistant Principal (Quality)
	Helen London	Head of Higher Education & Teacher Education - minutes 60 to 73
	Lesley Venables	Clerk to the Governors

**PART ONE**

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

60 Apologies for absence were received from Michele Bacon (External Governor) and Adam Moore (Student Governor).

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

61 No declarations of interest were received.

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

62 **Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**MATTERS ARISING**

63 The Committee received a list of actions resulting from the previous meeting had been completed.

## **CURRICULUM PRESENTATION – HIGHER EDUCATION & OFFICE FOR STUDENTS REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

64 The Head of Higher Education gave a presentation on the College's HE provision and the requirements of the new Office for Students Regulatory Framework.

65 Governors were advised that a substantial proportion of students were on part-time programmes. Retention, attendance and learner satisfaction levels were high and these were in line with previous academic years. The outcomes from the latest student survey had been highly positive.

66 Applications for 2019/2020 were higher than at the same point in 2018/2019 and it was anticipated that this would increase further.

67 Information was received on the requirements of the OfS, which was responsible for the regulation and monitoring of all higher education provision. Although registration with the OfS was compulsory for institutions offering HE courses, this did not confer any kind of quality assessment on the College's provision.

68 The College's application had been accepted in the approved fee cap category, which meant that it could charge tuition fees above the basic level and that it was part of the Teaching Excellence Framework. As part of this process the College had been required to submit an Access and Participation Plan ( which set out how it would attract learners from areas where participation in higher education was traditionally low) and a Student Protection Plan (which detailed how learners would continue to obtain high quality courses and continue their studies if a key member of staff left the College).

69 All identified targets for curriculum indicators had been met in 2018/2019, with one exception. Governors noted that the College was working towards this figure and that management was confident of it being achieved.

70 Progression to employment was greater than 75% for learners on all programmes, with one exception, which was currently being addressed.

71 Governors commented on the significant achievements made by learners on HE courses, whose backgrounds and previous experience did not follow the traditional pattern. Many of the College's students were mature learners returning to education after a career break to raise a family.

72 In response to questions about the level of debt incurred by students to pay for their courses, the Head of HE reported that loans were available for tuition fees (subject to eligibility) and that these were written off by the Student Loans Company at the age of 50.

73 The fees themselves were set by the College and varied between courses. Management was conscious that any fees needed to be competitive with other local institutions, but also affordable for students, to that funding did not become a barrier to learning. The College's pastoral support mechanisms for this group of learners (as opposed to those of universities), the quality of teaching and learning and the small class sizes were major selling points of HE courses.

**Helen London left the meeting at this point.**

## **CURRICULUM REPORT**

74 The Deputy Principal presented a report on performance against key curriculum indicators.

## **OFSTED'S NEW EDUCATION INSPECTION FRAMEWORK**

75 The Deputy Principal gave a presentation on Ofsted's new Education Inspection Framework (EIF), which would come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. The College had participated in a pilot of the new framework and had provided feedback to Ofsted on its operation in practice.

76 Under the new arrangements, there would be greater focus on classroom activities (including behaviour and well-being) and progress made by learners and a reduction in the reliance on performance data and teaching observations to determine the effectiveness of an organisation.

77 As part of the inspection process a group of governors would be selected to meet with the Leadership and Management inspector. It was agreed that an updated briefing paper would be provided for governors in advance, including examples to support any statements.

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY AND SAFEGUARDING**

78 Governors received the termly monitoring report on how the College was narrowing any gaps in achievement between different groups of learners.

79 The College was continuing to work with local external agencies (such as Halton Borough Council) on improving student mental health and offering support mechanisms for vulnerable learners.

80 Staff were actively participating in the Council's campaign against knife crime within the Borough.

81 There continued to be a high number of safeguarding cases in the current academic year. The College continued to work closely with the Local Safeguarding & Children's Board to ensure that relevant information was shared between relevant authorities.

82 Staff who dealt with safeguarding cases were also given the opportunity to undergo counselling on a regular basis. Governors questioned whether staff caseloads were reasonable and were informed that College management monitored this area very closely to ensure that staff were not overwhelmed, either by the volume of work or the intensity of some of the issues with which they dealt. As learner numbers had grown, the number of safeguarding cases had increased and this had been adversely affected by budget reductions at other external agencies to which students could have been referred in the past.

## **SPECIAL MEASURES REPORT**

83 The Assistant Principal presented a report on the courses that were currently part of the College's Special Measures process, including RAG-ratings to determine the level of progress made. These gradings would be reviewed during the next cycle of monitoring meetings. The headings used in the report aligned to the criteria that would be considered by Ofsted inspectors and reflected the College's own priorities in terms of improvement. Of these, ensuring that the right staff were assigned to curriculum areas had the most significant impact on performance levels.

84 It was noted that the number of programmes in Special Measures had decreased compared to the previous academic year.

## **QAR AND LEAGUE TABLES**

85 The Assistant Principal (Quality) presented a paper that compared the College's internally-generated data from that derived from the QAR published in January 2019. The Committee was reminded that this information would be used by Ofsted during any future visits.

86 It was noted that there was minimal difference between the two sets of data.

87 Information was provided to the Committee on the College's place in the national league tables. For the 5 progress/performance measures that were assessed nationally, the College was in the top 10% of institutions in the country for A Level and Vocational programmes.

## **POLICIES**

88 **Resolved -** That the Board **be RECOMMENDED** to approve a policy on Complaints

## **ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE BOARD**

89 The Committee identified a series of points that the Chair would report back to the March Board meeting:

- Presentations on Higher Education & the Office for Students Regulatory Framework and Ofsted's new Education Inspection Framework
- Report on courses in special measures had enabled the Committee to monitor performance.
- Information received on equality and diversity issues, including gaps between various groups of learners in terms of retention levels.
- Received a detailed report on key curriculum indicators, including performance on higher education and apprenticeship programmes.
- Report on equality, diversity and safeguarding.

- Information on the College's performance in the QAR and national league tables.
- Policy on complaints recommended for approval by the Board

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

25<sup>th</sup> June 2019 5.00 p.m.