

**MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM
COMMITTEE MEETING**

HELD ON FRIDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2019

Present: Yvonne Bradshaw, Jo Venn (Committee Chair), Ella Lawrenson, Ben Houston, Simon Partington (Principal), Will Sutton, David Grime, Stephen Haycocks

In Attendance: Clare Russell (Deputy Principal), Michelle Brabner (Deputy Principal), Fatema Hussein (Clerk to the Corporation)

Meeting began: 1.30pm

Meeting closed: 3.40pm

Attendance: 100%

1. APOLOGIES

The Co-opted members David Grime and Stephen Haycocks were welcomed and introduced to the meeting.

There were no apologies to receive.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Governors / members were invited to declare any pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interest in any matter on the agenda for the meeting

No interests were declared.

4. PRESENTATION - MEETING THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

(Change in order of agenda)

The Assistant Principal Marie Fairhurst delivered a presentation on the Gatsby benchmarks and the following points were noted:

- Background information on the 2017 careers strategy which set out that every College should use the Gatsby benchmarks to develop and improve their provision
- The benchmarks were not a statutory framework but by adopting them Colleges could be confident that they were complying with the careers guidance requirements
- The requirements and expectations on Colleges in relation to careers guidance
- Meeting the Gatsby benchmarks was a key strategic priority for the College
- Information on each of the benchmarks and progress against them
- Details of the careers programme which required Governor approval

- College had good links with the Careers Enterprise Company which was providing support in relation to meeting the benchmarks
- A level students were not getting as much work experience as those on the Vocational programme
- Encounters with other F.E providers was proving to be problematic as Colleges were having to provide information about their competitors
- Level 6 qualified Advisors were needed to provide personal careers guidance
- Most of the staff were level 4 qualified but were training to become level 6 qualified
- The careers programme had been published on the College website
- A higher Apprenticeship week was being introduced in November
- An action plan was in place for the careers strategy and monitored regularly

Governor Questions

- Q.** What were the reasons for students needing to have an encounter with another F.E provider?
- A.** This was primarily to give information and advice on provision that was not offered by the College, for example plumbing. The standards had been written with Schools rather than Colleges in mind. This was already taking place on an individual basis but the requirement was to engage with other Colleges on a much wider scale

RESOLVED:

Governors approved the Careers programme that had been proposed by the College

Governors thanked the Assistant Principal for a very informative presentation.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 21ST JUNE 2019

3.1 Approval of the Minutes

Agreed that: the minutes are signed as a correct record and authorised for publication

3.2 Matters Arising – Action Progress Log enclosed

The action progress log was presented and reviewed and it was noted that information on Curriculum Changes / Trends in Schools and NEET data had been circulated to the Committee.

Item 12 Teaching, Learning and Support

In response to a question about the L5 apprenticeship, the Deputy Principal Michelle Brabner reported that only two Apprentices had been recruited but a decision had been made to go ahead with the programme in order to build awareness. There would be a reduced cost for delivery and it would still have a classroom based element to it.

GCSE Maths Support

In response to the suggestion that had been made at the September Board meeting, re the use of additional volunteers to support GCSE Maths students; the Deputy Principal Clare Russell reported that:

- This had been raised this at the recent GCSE maths / English meeting and had been welcomed

- At present College had several volunteers in Adult Maths and English courses, but only one in 16-18
- As usual, any potential volunteers would need to be interviewed for suitability and complete all mandatory training
- There were also some methodology issues relating to the teaching of Maths that would also need to be taken into account

It was suggested that Andrew Pratt who had made the suggestion was contacted to ascertain if he could recommend any suitable volunteers.

ACTION:

Deputy Principal Clare Russell

COLLEGE RESULTS & ADDED VALUE 2019

The Committee reviewed and discussed the results for 2019 and the following points were noted:

5.1 A Level

- It was the first year since Curriculum 2000 that there were no progression criteria from Year 1 to Year 2
- Previously, students needed to achieve at least a D-grade at AS in any subject they wanted to continue to A Level
- Now that all courses are linear over 2 years, without AS examinations, there are no progression criteria (aside from normal disciplinary process)
- As a result of the removal of progression criteria; retention increased significantly
- In fact, compared to last year, 137 more students stayed in college for the full 2 years, and completed their A Levels. Instead of 259 students dropping out at some point in the 2 years, there were only 122.
- As a consequence of the removal of progression criteria, high grades and added value (of those completing) decreased.
- High Grades reduced from 67.9% last year to 60.5% this year.
- Aips Added Value reduced from Grade 2 last year to Grade 5 this year
- However the overall proportion of good grades (A*-C) based on those starting A Level courses was the highest in 5 years
- A record-breaking 19 students are going on to study at Oxford or Cambridge universities, following an all-time high of 25 offers.
- (3 of those students in receipt of an offer actually declined it, in preference for another university [Manchester, Lancaster and St Andrews].)
- 31 students are progressing to study medicine, dentistry and vet courses at university, from a record-breaking 47 students with offers.
- New data published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for last year shows that Runshaw students achieve significantly better at university than average students progressing from Sixth Form Colleges or other state schools / colleges.
- It also shows that Runshaw students achieve more First Class degrees than students from Independent Sixth Forms.

Governor Questions

- Q.** Some of the Science results were of concern. Was this an area where a large number of students had remained for the two years?
- A.** More students had progressed to Year two and only a few had failed

5.2 Advanced Vocational

- Headline results for the L3 BTEC Extended Diploma remained very pleasing
- Results for the L3 UAL courses were significantly above national benchmarks, with 100% pass rate, 82% high grades and an achievement rate of 90%
- The achievement rate for the L3 Extended Diploma was 86%, but had been adversely affected by the retention, as the pass rate was 100%
- The achievement rate for the L3 90 Credit Diploma was 88%, and had been adversely affected by the retention, as the pass rate was 100%
- Alps grades were below expectation for Media Production, and the team had made a strategic decision to return to BTEC on the RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework)
- All ungraded courses had achieved a 100% pass rate
- The Child care course had maintained ALPS grade 1 for three consecutive years
- The introduction of the three day timetable had been well received by students but had not had the impact anticipated in relation to attendance and retention

Governor Questions

Q. What was the national benchmark for retention?

A. It was 87% on a two year course

5.3 Pre-Advanced Vocational

- All L2 vocational (BTEC, UAL, Gateway and C&G) courses had secured 100% pass rate
- All level 1 courses had secured 100% pass rate and the achievement rate was 91%
- 100% of students had passed on all FSS and Entry level courses
- FSS had an achievement rate of 100% (National benchmark was 90%)
- High grade achievement on L2 BTEC courses had declined significantly
- The achievement rate on L2 BTEC was 81% and required improvement (retention was the influencing factor).
- The achievement rate on the ungraded level 1 course (L1 Chef Diploma) was 75% and below expectation. This course was no longer offered
- E3 Skills for My Future (now Future Skills) had an achievement rate of 73% which required significant improvement (National benchmark 87%)

Governor Questions

Q. What were the reasons for the low achievement in L2 Business as this was a large cohort?

A. There had been no specific changes to the course that could have impacted on the achievement.

5.4 Sixth Form College GCSE results

- The Grade 3 to 4 conversion had improved significantly in GCSE mathematics this year, from 30.8% to 34.6% this year
- This compared extremely favourably with the national average of 17.4%
- The other GCSE mathematics performance indicators were disappointing, not achieving the PGI or AGI target
- A range of new strategies had been introduced for the coming year, linked to involvement with the "Centre for Excellence"
- Improved advice and guidance at enrolment was being offered by the course team, to ensure students were on the right course (fast track or route 1)

- A new Attendance Clerk had been appointed, to improve attendance to all GCSE Maths and English sessions
- GCSE English results were very strong, with some of the best outcomes in 5 years and demonstrating sustained improvement since 2017

Governor Questions

Q. Did students who took the exam in November perform better than those who did the re-sit in June?

A. The November re-sit students did perform better and this was a voluntary scheme

Q. Were there plans to offer re-sits in November this year?

A. It was confirmed that these would be undertaken

5.5 Higher Education

- The percentage of High Grades (Distinctions and Merits) was the second highest in six years, at 70.8%.
- The pass rate was the highest in six years, at 97.8%.
- The achievement rate targets were 90% for single-year courses and 80% for multi-year courses

Adult FE results

- Pass rates across most Adult FE courses were 100%
- Courses with pass rates below 100% were Level 3 Human Resources, Functional Skills Maths (Level 1 / Level 2), Functional Skills English (Level 1 / Level 2), Level 3 Counselling
- 10 out of 19 students had failed Level 3 AAT Accounting
- A few students were due to take re-sits later this term, which may improve the picture
- There were significant issues with this course last year, and the Head of School was closely monitoring the situation
- The achievement rate target for the coming year was 80%

Governor Questions

Q. Had there been any resits and were the results of these available?

A. College was still waiting for the results of these

Governors requested that their congratulations were passed onto to all staff for another positive set of results.

5.6 Apprenticeships

- Best case overall achievement for all ages was 71.7% against a national benchmark of 60.7%
- Best case timely achievement had improved by 1.3% to 68%
- L2 Business Administration was the largest cohort (31) and best case timely achievement was 84% against a NBM 69%
- L2 Children and Young Peoples Workforce (17 apprentices) had a best case timely achievement of 88% against a national benchmark of 64%
- Best case overall achievement for all ages was 71.7%, and had not improved from the position in 17/18 (72.6%)

- Despite the small improvement in best case timely achievement, it was now below the national benchmark which had increased significantly to 68.7%
- L3 Assistant Accountant (9 apprentices) had a best case timely achievement of 55%
- This was primarily due to issues with the completion of L3 AAT and apprentices leaving the programme after achieving this qualification
- An employer relations manager had been appointed to support employers with the delivery of the apprenticeship
- Measures had been put in place to improve the overall and timely achievement rates

The Co-opted member advised that for both Apprentices and the employer, the qualification was more important than completing the Maths and English element, and some apprentices left once they had achieved their qualification.

5.7 19+ FE

Discussed as part of Item 5.5

5. MONITORING OF KEY ISSUES - ACTUAL PERFORMANCE vs TARGETS

The Committee reviewed the results for the subjects identified as key issues in 2018/19 and it was confirmed that whilst not all of the targets had been met, there had been an improvement in performance on most of the courses on the list.

6. DETERMINATION OF NEW / CONTINUING KEY ISSUES AND CONFIRMATION OF NEXT STEPS

The proposed list of key issues for 2019/20 was presented and the Principal reported that the targets had been agreed with the course teams.

Governor Questions

Q. How accurate were the predictions made by course leaders?

A. They were positive and

Governors reviewed the courses and targets and agreed that they needed to be both aspirational and realistic.

RESOLVED:

Following a discussion, the Committee agreed that:

- Targets for courses on the key issues list should be revised to a 10% increase in the achievement rate or ALPS Grade 5 or higher
- GCSE Maths and English were included as standing items on future Committee agendas
- An updated key issues was circulated to Governors

ACTION:

- Clerk to circulate updated key issues list to the Committee
- Clerk to include GCSE Maths and English on future agendas

7. INTERNAL PROGRESSION REPORTS

8.1 Vocational L1 to L2 / L2 to L3

The Deputy Principal Michelle Brabner presented the report and the following points were noted:

A positive picture overall with E3 progression having increased from 63% to 82%

L2 progression had increased slightly from 71% to 73%

L1 progression had declined from 81% to 71%

A strategic review of the L1 provision was currently underway

Progression to positive destinations was being further supported with a 'Passport to Apprenticeships' and 'Passport to Employment' support plan

Governor Questions

Did the data include learners that would have progressed onto a level 2 Apprenticeship?

A. This information would be included in the destinations report but would be checked

ACTION:

Michelle Brabner to check

8.2 A Level - Year 1 to Year 2

The Deputy Principal Clare Russell presented the report and the following points were noted:

- The move to linear A Levels with no progression criteria between Year 1 and Year 2, had resulted in a much higher proportion of students progressing Year 2
- For the past 2 years, the proportion progressing had been over 8 percentage points higher than previously
- This had however impacted on High Grades and Added Value as a result
- College support and intervention systems were being further reinforced, to ensure that all students made strong progress and achieved well in their final examinations
- Student recruitment data suggested that the 3+1 offer was attractive; as most (67%) chose this option
- Only half of students stuck to their intended +1 option; and this indicated that students were not certain of their subject choices at the enrolment stage

8. STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING REPORTS 2019/2020

The relevant chapters of the Strategic Plan which set out key actions required and indicated progress to date with them were reviewed and the following points were noted:

9.1 Chapter 6 – Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Support

It was noted that most actions were on track to be completed.

In response to a question, the Student Governor reported that there was a greater focus on behaviour and standards in College this year.

9.2 Chapter 7 – Student Support Services

- College had signed up to the AOC mental health charter and a considerable amount of training undertaken by staff
- Further work on mental health was to be undertaken with the Student Council
- Most actions within the plan were on track to be completed

9.3 Chapter 8 – Quality

Governor Questions

- Q. Were the SARs being externally validated and would a Governor be in attendance?
A. An external consultant had been appointed to undertake this and Governors were invited to attend the meeting for the English and Humanities SAR

9. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

10.1 16-19 Bursary Fund and Free College Meals

It was noted that one very minor change had been made to the policy.

Governor Questions

- Q. How many students received the bursary annually?
A. This information had been included in the Student services report

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the bursary and free college meals policy

10.2 Internal Progression Policy

It was noted that one minor amendment had been made to the policy.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the internal progression policy

10. RISK REGISTER

The relevant section of the risk register was reviewed and the key risks noted.

11. GOVERNANCE IMPACT STATEMENT

- Gatsby benchmark presentation - College on track to meet benchmarks
- Identification of key issues and moderation around targets
- Monitoring progress of strategic plan objectives
- Mental health feedback
- Feedback on Apprenticeships from employer and Apprentice
- Functional skills cohort and moving into L1 Maths (Will's feedback re parents)

12. STANDARDS & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

It was agreed that the terms of reference were reviewed and suggestions brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

ACTION:

Clerk

13.1 Committee Self-Assessment / Performance Review

The Committee completed the self-assessment exercise the results of which would be used to assess the Committee's performance and promote continuous improvement.

14. APPROVAL OF RESERVED BUSINESS MINUTES

Agreed that: the minutes are approved as a correct record.

14.1 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Discussed under reserved business.

15. GDPR / CONFIDENTIALITY*

Governors were reminded of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and comply with GDPR regulations.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 13 March 2020 at 1.30pm

* Standing Item