

**CHELMSFORD COLLEGE
QUALITY AND LEARNERS COMMITTEE
14 May 2019 – 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: Sarah Noble (Chair)
Susan Hughes
Janet Maynard
Christian Norman
Elaine Oddie
Seena Shah
Andy Sparks (Principal)
Barbara Vohmann

IN ATTENDANCE: Penny Petch (Head of Teaching & Learning)
Caroline Williams (Deputy Principal)
Alison Davies (Director of Curriculum, Moulsham Street)
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)

614. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Debs Hurst (Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Resources) and Ryley Shrimpton (Student Governor).

615. 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 Clerk to South Essex College and Company Secretary of Essex Shared Services Limited. The Clerk also informed the Committee that his wife's cousin is the Clerk to Writtle University College.

Elaine Oddie and Andy Sparks declared their interests as a Director of Essex Shared Services Limited. Andy Sparks also declared his interest as Director of ACER Limited.

Christian Norman declared his interest as an employee of New City College in London on a temporary contract for the rest of this calendar year.

There were no other declarations made.

No confidential items were notified, save as noted in **616** below.

616. URGENT BUSINESS

There was one item of Urgent Business, which was deemed to be a Confidential Item and a separate minute has been prepared for this item and is attached to these minutes.

There were no other items of Urgent Business.

617. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY 2019

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 26 February 2019 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chair, noting one typing correction.

618. 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 2018/19 Sub-Contracting Arrangements by email.

One governor still has to complete the Mental Health & Well-Being Assessment.

The College was successful in its bid for funding to support training for staff in hard to recruit areas in the amount of £54K. This is being allocated as part of a specific recruitment drive in these areas as the conditions for the grant are tightly drawn and it is only payable if successful.

Seena Shah asked if there has been any progress in providing a pedestrian crossing in Moulsham Street near to the College. The Principal said that the Council advised that it does not trigger intervention for a crossing on the grounds of traffic speeds. Seena agreed to report this back to a Learner Voice Meeting.

In response to a governor question, Marco Iciek said that transition arrangements for Level 3 students prior to them starting their course would be impractical due to the volume of students.

It was noted that the Subcontracting provision with Qube was very successful and the values may need to be extended.

All of the other points brought forward are covered in the Agenda of this Meeting.

619. PRESENTATION by Curriculum Area Managers

The Committee **RECEIVED** presentations from two CAMs (Sue Carey: Health, Childcare & Access and Rebecca Leech: Business, Travel & Tourism) with a particular focus on exam based curriculum strategies.

Sue and Rebecca explained the **Reformed Qualification Frameworks:**

- The new structure and specification
- More mandatory units
- Optional units
- More extensive coursework

And then explained the **justification** of the RQF

- Old system was too flexible – there is now a more rigorous approach
- Independent learning is now essential
- Now similar to employment assessments and A Levels
- Importance of work based placements

There are **Challenges arising from the RQFs**

- Scheduling of exams and the resources for students to complete their qualification.
- English and maths retakes are an added pressure
- Retention concerns
- Larger assignments and quality of feedback required for external verification
- Managing assignment work alongside pressure of examinations and placement
- The need to review entry requirements for Level 3

Becky and Sue informed the Committee of results achieved last year, also explained a detailed summary of Progress required and gave Members information regarding their forward planning

There is clear emphasis on learner progression and completion to suitable industry standards

Challenges for the future include careful Exam scheduling, use of controlled assessments as the norm and course calendars for students at start of year to keep them on track.

Governor questions

The Principal asked about learner progression/destination. Sue and Becky said that some students are lost to apprenticeships or to a completely different course. Some take a job. There is no set pattern – unfortunately, they just don't want to finish the course. They said that the data needs to be adjusted to reflect these positive outcomes.

The Chair asked about the preparation in place so that staff training is not just for teaching to exams. Sue and Becky said that they are well prepared. Examinations because are now the norm in the industries concerned, and need to be balanced against delivery of the course generally.

620. TEACHING LEARNING & ASSESSMENT

Penny Petch (Head of Teaching & Learning) **PRESENTED** a Report on the observation of TLA in 2017-18 and a table of actions proposed for the rest of the current year.

The Report also contained an update on the issues of adequacy of planning and of planning for differentiation, which had been raised by the Committee at the last Meeting. The Report included the recent Review of Supported Experiments.

The key points of the Report for this year to date were:

- 195 observations this year.
- 68% of teachers meet all 5KE (target for the year 88%) – in year optimised data demonstrates that 83% of observations meet all 5KE (79% last year).
- Areas of concern at 82% are KE1 for planning and differentiation and KE5 addressing areas for improvement from the previous observation.
- Teachers who have not met the KEs meet with an Advanced Practitioner or mentor for support and development.
- Developments to improve TLA: PDD days and weeks, Advanced Practitioner and mentor support, Pedagogy Pulse, weekly CPD training sessions, Learning Walks and Supported Experiments.

The Committee were provided with details of the outcomes of the observations by CAM area. The main three areas significantly behind target are Construction, Engineering and Electrical and Health and Childcare – explanations were provided to the Committee in respect of these areas along with a note of the development activity being pursued.

The Committee had been informed at their last Meeting that many of the issues arising in areas not meeting targets were related to **evidence of planning and planning for differentiation**. This objective is very important given that the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework now specifically states that inspectors will review schemes of work as evidence of planning for delivery of the curriculum.

The Committee were informed that five curriculum areas have sufficient evidence of planning and planning for differentiation but there is room for improvement in respect of Schemes of Work.

Five areas cannot demonstrate sufficient evidence in these respects at this time.

The Committee also noted that, without a scheme of work, there is no independent learning task for use in the Assessment Centre.

The Committee were aware that the **Supported Experiments** programme is being repeated this year and started in October 2018. Progress has been monitored and activity is maintained through monthly T&L Meetings and the Performance Review Board.

Specific monitoring of progress took place on 23 April during PDD and the SMT reviewed progress then, concluding that the progress was good. The final Supported Experiments will be on display in the PD Week in July 2019.

The Committee were informed that cross-College **Learning Walks** have taken place every month this year with the exception of April but has been deferred whilst apparent union concerns are discussed.

This deferral does not affect Observations at all, nor does it affect Governor Learning Walks, some of which are scheduled for next week.

Governor Questions

Barbara Vohmann observed that the College has recently lost three staff members in Construction. Simon Drane reiterated that this area continues to be a hard to recruit area and it is a real problem. The £54K grant referred to in minute **618** is to help this sort of recruitment.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

621. ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS

Alison Davies (Director of Curriculum, Moulsham Street) **PRESENTED** a recently completed Internal Audit Report on Attendance by Scrutton Bland for information.

The Committee **NOTED** that the Report has not yet been reviewed by the College Audit Committee – this will be done at their next Meeting on 25 June 2019.

Work for the Report took place on 20 March 2019 and its objective was to review the framework in place to increase student attendance on English and maths programmes.

The assurance given was **STRONG** with no recommendations arising from the review. Two value added points were raised.

The Report also provided a comparison on maths and English on **Functional Skills** between April 2019 and April 2018. There are a number of strategies in place to continue to improve the outcomes including additional support sessions, identifying individual students who require encouragement to attend and sit examinations and intervention by both the maths and English teams and the curriculum teams.

The position for the year is looking favourable, with the exception of level 2 mathematics as this has declined from 47% last year to 18% this year.

In response to a governor question, Alison Davies said that it was not yet clear why this decline has taken place and Lisa Houghton (CAM) is investigating.

ACTION: AD

Alison Davies reported that the new Functional Skills reformed qualification is likely to begin at the start of the next academic year having been expected to start in 2020/21. She noted that these reformed qualifications do appear to be more difficult.

The Curriculum Plan 2019/20 (minute **624**) will be amended accordingly.

ACTION: CW

622. LEARNER PROGRESS 2018/19

The Committee **RECEIVED** a Report from Caroline Williams (Deputy Principal) and Mark Emerson (Director of Information Services) giving an overview of retention and projected achievement against targets, outturn

for the academic year 2017/18, 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:

- Outcomes for 16-18 learners have declined at all levels and are below target, but above or close to most recent provider rates, except for level 2 where the projected achievement is 78.5% against NR of 82%.
- Outcomes for 19+ student have also declined, with the greatest decline at levels 2 and 3. Projections for achievement for these two levels are below the most recent national rate (level 2 76.3% against 87% and level 3 78.7% against 81%) and below College target
- Attendance is still a challenge at level 1 for 16-18 learners and at level 2 for learners 19+.
- Learners in receipt of Higher Needs Funding continue to make good progress
- Considerable variation in curriculum area projected achievement rates – e.g. 97.6% for unemployed provision to 69.7% for hair (this rate is reflected nationally)
- Progress of learners also varies significantly between programme areas compared to their target grades

The Paper provided to Members of the Committee expanded on these points and other aspects of English & maths in greater detail. They include the impact of the reformed qualifications, significant increase in mental health issues and other complex needs, higher number of learners who have been out of education prior to joining College and the impact of industrial placements.

Nationally, College students are finding achievement against the reformed qualifications is a real challenge and so the comparison of projected rates against NR is not wholly comparable since the NR are for the previous year and therefore before the reformed qualifications.

The relative decline in predicted achievement in some areas is an emerging risk for the College and the Committee **AGREED** that it needs to appear on the Risk Register as at least an **AMBER** risk.

ACTION: DH

Governor questions

The Chair asked whether the quality of new learners this year has declined and therefore the predicted outcomes. The Deputy Principal said there was no doubt about this caused to a large extent by competition from schools for the students. Essentially, the College gets the students the schools do not want.

Alison Davies stated that the harder qualifications put a lot of pressure on the students who may be less able and resilient. Simon Drane said that work placements are a further significant challenge.

The Principal asked for the reasons for the reduction in retention and attendance, the latter quite significantly – 2 points for 19+ from last year and for 16-18 it is 3% down from last year. The Deputy Principal said that the type of curriculum area affects performance, the level of the qualification, the entry level of the students and the fact that one third of our leavers in year have gone to apprenticeships (mainly level 3) or into employment (levels 2 and 3). All these factors have played their part in affecting retention and attendance. Simon Drane observed that a lot more one to one time is being spent with students on mental health and similar support issues.

The Deputy Principal said that better achievement outcomes are likely if the student has a clear intended destination e.g. University or other set goals, than those who do not. The latter group are much more prone to leave or not achieve. Barbara Vohmann felt that this pointed towards an issue at recruitment.

Alison Davies said, in response to a query from the Chair, that students do get clear induction of what is required of them but they are prone to forget. Marco Iciek said that the first 3-4 weeks of their time in College is critical and plans are in place to try to make further impact on this issue.

Susan Hughes wanted to know of the experience at other Colleges. The Deputy Principal responded by saying that other Colleges are experiencing variable outcomes and have an ongoing engagement strategy as a key element to keep students focused but there is no question that it is a considerable challenge.

The Deputy Principal noted the link in the predicted performance this year and the drop in retention and attendance. These two factors are critical in successful achievement as there is a clear causal link.

The Deputy Principal is satisfied that the quality of Teaching Learning & Assessment is good and staff are performing well in the classroom so the primary challenge rests with the students.

Committee was disappointed to note that progress of students is markedly affected at level 3 for 16-18 and 19+ and is currently regarded as poor.

Janet Maynard observed that many students are going into work before completion of their studies in order to support their family and that, generally financial issues are putting students at risk and that they are unable to afford staying at College.

The Deputy Principal said that a drop in final achievement rates for the year could lead to an earlier notice inspection.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

623. COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2018/19

The Committee **RECEIVED** a Report from the Deputy Principal showing the monitoring of the CIP for the year to date, focusing on intervention areas.

The Committee was informed that the expected pilot Ofsted Inspection this term has been cancelled by Ofsted.

The Deputy Principal reported that good progress is being made against two of the seven College priorities but the other five priorities still constitute a risk (rated AMBER) that the progress will not have sufficient impact on outcomes for learners. There is no question, however, that the actions in the Plan are having considerable impact.

Overall, progress against the priorities is at least 75% in each case. The Committee received a detailed analysis in regard to each priority and the actions taken or in place.

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

624. CURRICULUM PLAN 2019-20

The Deputy Principal **PRESENTED** the draft Plan for next academic year noting that it arises from the College Strategic Plan and is informed by the curriculum plans of each academic department.

The Plan itemises the aspects of the curriculum planning for next year, includes new areas of provision not just next year but over the next two years following next year. The Committee noted its importance in meeting

the needs of the local community and government initiatives to maintain and increase recruitment.

The monitoring of the Plan is managed by the Curriculum and Innovation Steering Group.

The Committee **CONSIDERED** the draft Curriculum Plan for 2019-20 and **RECOMMENDED** that it is approved by the Board at its Meeting on 4 July 2019, subject to necessary minor amendments being made.

625. RISK REGISTER AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services **PRESENTED** the updated **College Risk Register relating to Learning and Quality Improvement**, which was **NOTED**, together with the updated **Dartboard**. The full Risk Register has been uploaded to the governors' portal.

There are 23 risks in total on the full Register, of which 2 are RED, 13 AMBER and 8 GREEN.

The RED risks relate to the revised Ofsted Inspection Framework and achievement of budgeted AEB funding.

A number of risks have been removed from the register as these are no longer relevant or the risks have been mitigated – Apprenticeship levy, drainage and gas issues at Princes Road, Apprenticeship reforms and the disposal of Beacon House.

In addition, four risks have been reduced from AMBER to GREEN – English & maths attendance, completion by 16-18 Apprenticeships, improved financial health (due to Beacon House sale) and staff tribunals.

The Committee also **REVIEWED** KPIs relating to curriculum & quality matters.

626. COMMITTEE MATTERS

Governor Visits (verbal)

The Clerk **REPORTED** that there had not been any visits recently.

The Committee were informed that two governors (Jenny Beaumont and Barbara Vohmann) are undertaking Learning Walks next week. Such Walks by Governors are unaffected by the concerns expressed about Learning Walks by management mentioned earlier in these minutes.

Schedule of Business 2019/20

The Clerk **TABLED** a draft Schedule of Business for the Committee for 2019/20, which was **AGREED**.

Meeting Dates 2019/20

The Clerk **TABLED** a note of the proposed Meeting Dates for the Committee for 2019/20, which was **AGREED**.

627. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters of Any Other Business.

628. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 5 November 2019 at 2 pm

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 4.30pm.

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