

**CHELMSFORD COLLEGE
QUALITY AND LEARNERS COMMITTEE
20 February 2018 – 2.00 pm**

PRESENT:

Sarah Noble (Chair)
Susan Hughes
Janet Maynard
Elaine Oddie
Jack Pendleton (Student Governor)
Andy Sparks (Principal)
Barbara Vohmann

IN ATTENDANCE:

Doug Zeeman (Governor)
Stuart Hodges (Governor)
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) (from 3.25pm)
Sarah Hamilton (Director of Business Development)
Rob Millea FCA (Clerk to the Corporation)
Joanne Harrington (Assistant Clerk)

The Chair said that the theme for the Meeting is '**How to sustain improvement**' and the Committee looked forward to hearing about the **next steps** for the College.

The Chair congratulated the Senior Management Team on the successful Ofsted inspection and in particular, the Deputy Principal's role as the nominee for the Inspection.

555. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Steve Houghton, who is on leave of absence from the Board, Seena Shah, Michael Lager, Amanda Montague (who were invited to attend) and Debs Hurst (Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services).

556. 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.

There were no other declarations made.

No confidential items were notified.

557. URGENT BUSINESS

The Committee **RECEIVED** a copy of the Ofsted Report, following the inspection visit in December 2017.

There were no other items of Urgent Business.

558. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2017

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 7 November 2017 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chair, after making two minor amendments.

559. MATTERS ARISING

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

In addition, on answer to a Governor question Marco Iciek reported, that PDBW Level 1 qualification has begun to be rolled out to staff and it is intended that all staff will have undertaken the training by the end of this academic year. Governors are invited to attend a training session on this issue in March. Details will be notified.

ACTION: MI

560. PRESENTATION: ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS

Alison Davies (Director of Curriculum) gave a **PRESENTATION** on the new GCSE curriculum for English & Mathematics, which had been requested by the Committee at its last Meeting.

Overview

The Task & Finish Group for English & Maths set up in 2017 was not having the impact expected. It has been disbanded and alternative ways to improve student attendance are being explored e.g. a standing Agenda item at CAM Meetings, identifying and tracking students who are not attending and making contact with parents.

The first new exams for GCSE Maths and English took place in summer 2017 – under the new grading system, the old grade C is now a grade 4. The old B grade sits between 5 and 6.

The College stayed with legacy qualifications for 2016/17.

Under the new framework for **GCSE English**, reading and writing are equally weighted with no tier system so the full range of student abilities is examined. There are 2 exams of 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours comprising 10 questions instead of 7. There are no controlled assessments and SPAG is now worth 20% of marks available.

Alison explained the expectations of the new curriculum are radically different compared to the past. The emphasis on reading has been enhanced and there is a higher focus on grammar but there is not quite same emphasis on speaking and listening.

Overall, the **expectations** for students are to be reading fluently with good understanding and comprehension over a wide range of texts. This is challenging for many students since they either do not habitually read or very rarely read at all.

A Governor asked if there a difference between English Language and English Literature and Alison confirmed this, but the new syllabus does put a greater emphasis on language through reading.

Under the new framework for **GCSE Maths**, there are three exams of 90 minutes each with increased content focusing on application of skills. This includes some items which were covered in A Level in the past. There is no doubt that it is far harder and this is the experience of students so far.

College Response and Actions:

Three hours of delivery for GCSE Maths and English
Further development of link specialist programme with vocational areas.
All staff trained on new specifications
Regular upskilling on a two week cycle
Increased focus on moderation including mock papers
Workshops for identified students to help them achieve with a real focus on attendance.

Outcomes/progress to date

January 2018 English mock results were worse than last year – 8% achieved grade 4 and above and a further 20% gained a high 3.

There is no question that the new grade boundaries are much more demanding. (on the old specifications, students would have achieved 20% grade 4 or above).

The Maths mock examinations are scheduled for next week.

The Functional Skills exam date is 12 March and the expectation is good in comparison to last year. In response to a governor question, Alison said that some of the content has changed from last year but those changes are not significant. On balance, the content may be a bit harder.

In response to a Governor question, Alison explained that students are allocated to GCSE or FS on the same basis as previous years, which is essentially a judgement on individual student needs.

A Governor challenged the SMT on the continuing issue of regular attendance by students. There are still difficulties here and it attracted some comment from Ofsted. The College is well aware that attendance in English & Maths is still not good enough.

A governor then asked 'what can we do?' – given that the Ofsted report highlighted the issue.

There is no substitute for positive action by staff and the CAMs are using all possible means to get students to their lessons. There are some students who have repeated poor attendance and they distort the figures. If these students are excluded from the statistics, then the attendance level is reasonable. Nevertheless, the number of 'cause for concern' meetings have increased with recalcitrant students and the position with individual students is reviewed on a weekly basis.

A change to a more positive approach has been adopted with 'rewards' for students and emphasizing to students the necessity for proficiency in English & Maths to facilitate their future progression in their chosen employment area. The College is looking at industry specialists visiting students to positively reinforce the importance of English & Maths.

There is also a key focus on preparation for examinations and this will include a pilot for Level 3 Maths within Engineering next year. This will be part of the 2018/19 Curriculum Plan.

A Governor asked about the response of students in facing this new GCSE regime. Alison said that it depends on the cohort. Legacy students are finding the jump too great and are struggling. Recent Learning Walks have confirmed this trend.

Alison was **THANKED for** her Presentation, which will be put on the portal.

561. OFSTED DEBRIEF (PART 1)

The Committee **RECEIVED** a Debrief Report on the Ofsted Inspection covering the four Key Judgements made in the Report – Leadership & Management, Teaching Learning & Assessment, PDBW and Outcomes for Learners.

The Report focused on Next Steps and considered questions from governors.

Leadership & Management was covered by the Principal; Teaching, Learning & Assessment by the Head of Teaching & Learning; Personal Development Behaviour & Welfare by the Director of Learner Inclusion & Development; and Outcomes for Learners by the Director of Information Services.

Leadership & Management (AS)

The Principal was very happy with the outcome and comments made which acknowledged the culture of continuous improvement. There is no doubt that the changes (e.g. academic restructuring, Learning Walks, CAMs system etc) have worked and the challenge is to maintain the outcomes of those changes and keep them fresh and vibrant.

There were good comments about Governance, especially the challenge by the Board to SMT and the documentation of that challenge. It is vital that we carry this on. Ofsted were impressed with the dialogue between Governors and CAMs, which has improved over two years ago since the last inspection.

The only negative aspect for L&M was that 'too few adult learners have good understanding of radicalisation'. The College needs to consider how this can be addressed in view of the fact that these learners are only in College for a few hours each week.

The Next Steps are: that there must be a culture of continuing improvement, sustained by drive and energy in the workforce.

The Areas of Intervention have worked well and the positive management of staff has been shown to impact on learners very well.

Ultimately, the goal is to reduce areas of weakness or concern further to improve outcomes, with the aim that the College can achieve an Outstanding grade.

The Principal indicated that in normal circumstances and assuming no down turn in outcomes in the interim, the next Ofsted Inspection would not be for four to six years.

A Governor requested that after reflection on the Inspection Report, it would be helpful for the Governors to hear from the CAMs and other managers their future vision for further improvements in their areas of the College.

This will be arranged at future Meetings.

Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Penny Petch was clear that the reorganisation in the College created the environment in which improvement could and did take place. The changes to the CAMs system had worked well.

She was pleased that the Report recognised the college's progress. This was particularly for improvement in questioning techniques being used by teachers, and how they encouraged students to use and apply higher order thinking skills.

The Inspection Report states that the College has 'high expectations of their leaders, managers, staff and learners' and it is clear that College is fully committed to that.

Most teachers achieved the 5 Key Expectations expected of them in their teaching practice but there is still some inconsistency across the College which needs to be addressed.

Penny felt it was important to reinvigorate staff with new ideas and experimental teaching ways which might sometimes involve taking risks. There is a lot of scope in using more varied and imaginative learning technologies, even though this is currently going well in the College.

Staff will work on this area during forthcoming CPD sessions and the Professional Development Week in July.

Students continue to need instruction and help in making better use of independent learning time. To this end, Penny said she will spend more time in the Assessment Centres and monitor what is happening in these areas during independent learning time.

A Governor asked what Penny felt would aid further progress. She indicated that the use of more Advanced Practitioners to help progress further development would be really valuable. This would facilitate more efficiency and support in delivering of teaching and the related administration. She recognised that there are cost implications for this.

Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare

Marco Iciek said that the Report contained a lot of positive comments and he felt the conclusions from Ofsted fairly reflected the experience of the Inspection Week.

Safeguarding was found to be effective and he recognised that the staff have done well. There is no doubt that learners do understand the College attitude to Safeguarding and feel it is promoted.

Marco responded to the comment in the Report that issues of Radicalisation are not fully recognised by adult students. He commented that such students are often in College only 2 or 3 hours per week so it is harder to get the message to them. It is also the case that the employer has a responsibility in this area although some awareness still needs to be imparted by College to employers.

A Governor commented that there is an existing statutory requirement for employers to have and monitor safeguarding policies. The College needs to engage with employers in this regard.

A list of next steps was provided by Marco, which was noted by the Committee.

The Principal mentioned the visit by Vicky Ford MP for Chelmsford earlier this week.

The Committee also noted: the impact of smart phones around mental health is being reviewed by the Science and Technology Select Committee of Parliament.

In response to Governor questions, Marco commented that the College continues its efforts with students concerning sport and fitness, mental health and developing team building exercises.

Outcomes for Learners

Mark Emerson reported on this area and said that National Rates for 2016/17 will not be available until March 2018.

He said that Ofsted were satisfied with the quality of the College's data and therefore that the SAR information was validated.

He confirmed that Value Added and Higher Grades are a national focus for improvement since the data is currently not as good as it should be. However, Inspectors did comment on the College improvement in the last three years.

They noted that the College's destination data is judged the best in the UK National FE League tables. In particular, it was noted that over 90% of successful learners go into sustained employment and continue on in that employment.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

562. OFSTED DEBRIEF (PART 2)

The Committee **RECEIVED** a Debrief Report on the Ofsted Inspection on the four Provision types delivered by the College – 16-19 Study Programmes (Alison Davies), Adult Learning Programmes (Simon Drane), Apprenticeships (Sarah Hamilton) and High Needs Learners Provision (Janet Maynard).

16-19 Study Programmes

Alison Davies commented on the Inspector's judgement that promotion of employability to learners was clear and validated by the destinations data.

It was observed that some target setting in the Assessment Centre is not as effective as it could be.

An Inspector said that too many learners are making spelling and grammar errors that are not checked and corrected carefully enough. It was also observed that some teaching staff made errors in teaching materials etc given to students.

Adult Learning Programmes

Simon Drane commented that this area was generally good and the SAR judgements were validated by Inspection. There were initial concerns about students not meeting targets but the data evidence was clear that there were no issues.

Apprenticeships

Sarah Hamilton said that this area was a good result given the changes in Apprenticeships over the last year.

On the areas for improvement, the Report noted that not enough apprentices (16-18) complete in the planned timescales, but that strategies and interventions are in place to deal with this issue. This includes the use of smart assessor software in place that tracks student progress, which Ofsted acknowledged. The report noted 'that too few work based tutors encourage apprentices through discussion and target setting to develop their personal skills' and targets set concentrate too much on qualification achievement.

It was noted that the Inspector for this area of provision did not seem to know the difference between frameworks and standards (the latter is not yet in place).

A Governor questioned the comment that managers do not systematically encourage staff to update their vocational skills. Sarah said that there was no evidence available to disprove this but the inspector did not have clear evidence to support it.

The College will develop a better evidence base through CPD records to demonstrate this. There is a process to capture evidence of CPD done internally but not necessarily externally.

Provision for Learners with High Needs

Janet Maynard was happy with the comments in the report regarding achievement of students and promoting personal independent living. She said that it is what the College is there for and work hard to achieve.

She felt there was an error in the report regarding 'strategies and information to support learner needs not being shared adequately with their tutors'. Her view was that this is not correct though the College will upgrade the tracking process so this cannot happen again.

Janet also disagreed with the last comment made in the report 'that targets for learners with complex needs are too broad and not fully understood or challenging' with the suggestion that the College is too qualification driven for these learners.

Mark Emerson made the point that finance received for High Needs Learners does not depend on achievement of qualifications. The funding is the same. Achievement of qualifications is part of the strategy of empowerment of such learners to fulfil their potential and enhance their independence.

Following Inspection, it has been agreed PPRs will be included for these learners so as to identify their needs and strategies to track them effectively will be improved.

Governors gave their feedback on their meeting with the Leadership & Management Inspector

One Governor felt it was a more positive experience than the previous inspection but another was less certain.

Governors talked about their engagement with the College, how informed they are through their regular contact and generally why they had become Governors.

One Governor felt that the Governors anticipated and answered questions positively before they were asked by the Inspector.

Governors were confident in what they were saying and the Inspector felt they had a good grasp of the College and its current position.

In response to the Inspector, Governors said that further improvement will be encouraged through setting more challenging and stretching targets.

Governors said they felt considerable progress had been made since the previous inspection.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

563. COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2017-18

The Plan for 2017/18 was **APPROVED** by the Board at its Meeting on 7 December 2017. The Committee **RECEIVED** a Report from the Deputy Principal on progress against the Plan so far this year and amendments to the Plan following the Ofsted Inspection.

The Committee also **RECEIVED** an update on the two designated intervention areas for 2017/18, namely Health and Social Care (levels 1 and 2) at Moulsham Street and Engineering at Princes Road. The committee noted that there are some concerns concerning Business (level 2 including AATs) and timely completion of apprenticeships at Princes Road.

In Health and Social Care, it is vital to improve staffing and putting stable and consistent teamwork in place is paramount. Level 1 retention is good and achievement is expected for all students. At level 2, retention not quite so good and the target outcome may not be met.

In the Business area, students should achieve above National Rate so the intervention is having an impact. Retention is 93% and projected success is 71%.

In Engineering, the area has been very challenging recently due to staffing problems. Simon Drane has had to step in to do some teaching and change the timetabling to cope with staffing difficulties and shortages.

It has been hard to prevent disruption but recent recruitment to teaching and Manager posts should enable greater stability after Easter. Students have been kept informed through Student Representatives and there is good dialogue going on with them so that students understand the difficulties and what is being done to minimise the effect.

The forecast for all provision types and levels within the 16-19 study programme remain high and close to the stretching targets. Entry Level and Level 1 has been impacted on by lower than predicted Functional Skills achievement. The curriculum areas that are projecting poor success rates at level 3 are: Business, Media, Beauty and Engineering, effectively at AMBER risk.

Governors noted that the forecast for Level 2 learners on a 16-19 study programme is particularly encouraging and reflects the high retention rate.

In addition, the forecast for Apprenticeship provision is below target but above the out turn for last year.

The Plan provides the Committee with the key actions which should drive improvement up still further in the College. Updates on progress will continue to be provided to the Committee and the Board during the remainder of this academic year.

The Deputy Principal reminded Governors that the CIP continues to focus on the seven priorities for the College. Senior Management responsibilities for the various actions in the Plan are defined in the document. Good progress is being made against these priorities.

Nevertheless, the following priorities have been graded as RED for improvement:

- 3. Attendance at English & Maths lessons
- 1. Learner achievement of both functional skills and higher grades in GCSE English and Maths, and implementing the new GCSE specifications

- 7. Effective review of the progress of Apprentices with appropriate target setting and feedback

The Report was **RECEIVED**.

564. RISK REGISTER AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Principal **PRESENTED** the updated (to 31 December 2017) College Risk Register to the Committee, which was **NOTED**, together with the updated Dartboard.

The previous updating to 31 October 2017 was reviewed by the Audit Committee on 21 November 2017 and the Board on 7 December 2017. The Senior Leadership Team reviews the Register weekly. The current detailed Risk Register is placed on the governors' portal.

There are 28 risks in total, of which 3 are RED and 12 AMBER and 13 GREEN.

Two of the RED risks relate to finance and achieving a break even result for 2017/18, which relies on achievement of the budget for the Apprenticeship Levy and Non-Levy income. The other RED risk concerns uncertainties around the redevelopment of Princes Road i.e. both the logistics and the costs involved. There are potential issues around drainage at the site.

The Report detailed the RED and AMBER risks and the current position mitigating/addressing the risks in question.

The Committee noted that the College Self-Assessment Report (which had been considered in draft on 20 October 2017 and approved by the Board on 7 December 2017) graded the College Good – 2 and this risk is believed mitigated.

This was confirmed by achievement of Grade 2 – Good in all respects (Areas of Provision and Overall Judgements) in the recent Ofsted Inspection in December 2017.

The Report was **RECEIVED**.

565. COMMITTEE MATTERS

Governors' Development Day 2/2/18

The Clerk **PRESENTED** a draft Report for information of the Members of the Committee of the Development Day held on 2 February 2018.

An evaluation form will be distributed to all Governors.

Governor Visits (verbal)

Safeguarding Susan Hughes attended a Safeguarding Meeting on 8 February in her capacity as Safeguarding Governor.

Learning Walks

Learning Walks were carried out by Sarah Noble and Barbara Vohmann at the end of January 2018.

Barbara attended at Princes Road on 23 January at Princes Road focusing on English and Employability and she provided a summary of the experience.

Sarah attended at Moulsham Street on embedding of English & Maths. *Her observation notes were shared with Penny Petch and passed on.*

Attendance at two shows:

Sarah Noble gave a short commentary on her attendance at two shows (the Beauty Event at Beacon House and Art Exhibition at the Transition) given by students. Barbara Vohmann and the Principal also attended the Art Exhibition and the Principal also attended the Beauty Event.

566. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Principal reported as follows:

1. Institute of Technology proposal with Writtle – the expression of interest is not to be pursued. Alternatively, the College will be a provider with South Essex College in Engineering and Construction as an Institute of Technology, for which they are bidding.
2. The final Report from Andrew Thomson on collaboration with Writtle University College will be presented to the next Board Meeting on 23 March 2018. There are four additional strands to be pursued – MIS, IT, Human Resources and Estates.
3. Essex Shared Services Limited will be the vehicle for the administration of end point assessments in Essex on behalf of FEDEC Colleges for apprenticeship standards.
4. There will be an 'Ofsted' report article in the Essex Chronicle this Thursday as well as the Enquirer and this will include an 'advertisement' to seek new Governors.

567. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 15 May 2018 at 2 pm

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 5.10 pm.

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