

Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held via MS Teams on Wednesday 25 November 2020 at 3pm

Present: Christine Bampton
 Michelle Brabner (Principal)
 Anita Holt (Associate Governor)
 Suzanne Knowles
 Mo Kundi
 Kathy Passant (Chair)
 Carol Reid
 Katy Robinson

In Attendance: Joanne Platt (Interim Director of Governance)
 Anne-Marie Francis (Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality – for items 6,7,8,12 and 13)
 Jesamine Kelly (Assistant Principal Curriculum & Quality – for item 9)
 Nicola Hurst (Director of Teaching & Learning – for items 10 and 11)

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S.21.15 Item 1: Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Veronica Fell.

The Interim Director of Governance confirmed the meeting was quorate.

S.21.16 Item 2: Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

S.21.17 Item 3: Minutes of the Previous Meeting of 8 September 2020

The minutes of the meeting of 8 September 2020 were accepted as an accurate record.

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020

S.21.18 Item 4: Matters Arising / Actions Summary

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

The Interim Director of Governance presented the Actions Summary from the meeting on 8 September 2020 from which it was noted that all actions were either complete or on the agenda for further discussion at this meeting.

The Committee resolved to accept the report.

S.21.19 Item 5: Confidential Business

None.

S.21.20 Item 6: Assessment Strategy

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the College Assessment Strategy, intended as an overarching strategy aligning approaches to assessment across the wider college. Governors noted that the strategy has been developed collaboratively with all Heads of Departments.

Governors discussed the potential risks associated with political decisions in relation to assessments and it was agreed that this needed to be monitored closely due to the potential impact on students of any change in direction at a national level due to the Pandemic. Although political context is not an existing risk on the College Risk Register, it was related to the external factors risk and could be linked to that.

Governors noted that the initial national consultation on A Level assessment was to be reviewed but that to date no decisions had been made in England on assessments for 2021.

In response to a question from a Governor in relation to the use of Mock examination results in assessments, it was agreed that reference to a standardised approach to the use of Mock examinations should be made clear in the strategy. Governors also noted that reference to timed assessment in relation to A Levels was referenced in the supporting policy but could be appended to the strategy for clarity.

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Governors asked how students achieving distinctions can be asked to improve and it was confirmed that a profile of assessments for each student was built, using pooled intelligence from all relevant teachers to provide a whole student view. Aspirational targets were set even for high achieving students. It was also confirmed that the reference to days in the strategy are working days and that college holidays are taken into account when calculating submission dates for work.

The Committee resolved to note and accept the report.

S.21.21 Item 7: Self-Assessment Report 2019/20 and QDP for 2020/21

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the SAR for 2019/20 and the QDP for 2020/21. This had been pulled together and reviewed by a panel comprising SLT, the Director of Teaching and Learning, a Governor and an External Consultant (an Ofsted inspector) between 2 and 13 November.

The SAR was based on the Ofsted inspection framework to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Although the panel took the impact of the Pandemic into account, it was not used as an excuse. However it was noted that apprenticeships was affected more by the Pandemic and this was reflected in the judgements.

Top level strengths supported by evidence were identified as; safeguarding of students, curriculum design and intent, the inclusive nature of the curriculum and the achievement of learners, support for students at all levels, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, student conduct, positive relationships and celebration of diversity, positive progressions, a curriculum with additional opportunities preparing students for life in modern Britain, governance, professional development of staff, information and guidance, narrowing the gap between learners, destinations and contribution to the community and to the region.

Areas for improvement were identified as; some inconsistency in quality and delivery, apprenticeship planning and delivery and apprenticeship outcomes, Maths and English attendance, Prevent, Level 1 learners' progression, the pace of improvements in areas previously identified, achievement of recruitment targets and the need for Governor self-assessment.

Overall judgements using the Ofsted framework were assigned as follows:

Overall: 2 (Good)

The quality of education: 2 (Good) but 3 for Apprenticeships (Requires Improvement)

Behaviour and attitudes: 2 (Good)

Personal development: 2 (Good)

Leadership and management: 2 (Good)

A 13-point QDP had been developed, including targets, actions and monitoring arrangements, with a focus on making an impact.

In relation to Prevent, it was acknowledged that the College is doing a lot of good work, but it is unclear from speaking to students how they see this as affecting them.

In response to questions from Governors, it was confirmed that whilst attendance at KGV improved initially when online teaching was introduced, this subsequently worsened when it became apparent to students that any work undertaken during lockdown would not count towards their assessments. However, attendance has improved since the College re-opened. Governors noted that there is no evidence that learners prefer online learning and that feedback from Ofsted suggests that learners prefer to be in College.

The Chair confirmed to the Committee that a self-assessment for governors was being developed to provide wider input into the governance section of the SAR. In the meantime, the Chair and Vice Chair had contributed to the SAR which will provide a baseline for future years.

Governors acknowledged the huge amount of work that had gone into the report and thanked everyone involved for their work in developing the most comprehensive SAR done to date.

The Chair invited members of the Committee to feed any further comments back to her by 1 December. Subject to that, the Committee validated the SAR and agreed to recommend it to the Corporation at its December meeting.

The Committee resolved to recommend the SAR for 2019/20 and the QDP for 2020/21 to the Corporation for approval at the December meeting.

S.21.22 Item 8: Curriculum Report

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the Curriculum Report for the first term of 2020/21 and Governors noted that only a small number of courses were not offered in 2020/21, with learners re-directed to alternative provision within the College. It was also noted that some courses had been condensed to maximise group sizes, which has precipitated a review of the curriculum planning process.

Governors noted that the adult offer includes a wide range of online learning opportunities and new courses designed to meet the post COVID demand for re-training and upskilling the workforce. Despite this, it was noted that across the sector, the demand for adult learning is currently behind target. Governors also noted the challenge in Higher Education arising from the national relaxation in relation to university offers.

The Committee acknowledged the challenge in curriculum planning this year and the low numbers on some courses. Whilst the report has assisted in helping Governors to gain an understanding of where the College is at, it was noted that in future curriculum planning would need to align to both local need and the College's need to make savings.

The Committee resolved to note and accept the report.

S.21.23 Item 9: HE Self-Assessment Report 2019/20 and QDP for 2020/21

The Assistant Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the HE Self-Assessment (SAR) for 2019/20 and QDP for 2020/21. The SAR reflects the HE Strategy approved by the Corporation in February 2020 and the Office for Students registration requirements. The report summarises findings from annual monitoring reports, external agencies, examiners and performance data, providing an overview of HE provision at the College in 2019/20 and actions for the year ahead.

The format differs from the SAR for the College and it was agreed that it would be useful to adopt a similar format for the HE SAR in future years with the OfS requirements being added as an appendix.

Key points to note include a decrease in new starts to full time HE programmes in 2019/20 and accordingly, recruitment and sustainability are key areas of focus within the QDP. However, it was noted that continuation to the second year of study (an area for improvement in the previous year's QDP) had improved significantly from the previous year and now stood at 90%.

Other improvements seen since the previous year include the introduction of the ASK Learning Zone supporting the development of higher level study skills.

Governors noted the impact of the Pandemic on the second year cohort of students, although it was also noted that student feedback was very positive with many students saying they feel safe and secure on site. However, student surveys only targeted one in five students due to OfS eligibility criteria which doesn't give a statistically significant view.

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that a more detailed action plan underpinning the QDP identifies key responsibilities and accountability for each action.

Governors commented that the action plan was very thorough and agreed to recommend it to the Corporation for approval at the December meeting. The Chair invited members of the Committee to submit any further comments to her no later than 1 December 2020.

The Committee resolved to recommend the HE SAR for 2019/20 and the QDP for 2020/21 to the Corporation for approval at the December meeting.

S.21.24 Item 10: Teaching and Learning Strategy for 2020/21

The Director of Teaching and Learning presented the Teaching & Learning Strategy for 2020/21 to the Committee for consideration. The aim of the strategy is to develop outstanding teaching and learning through encouraging ownership and autonomy to teachers in developing their own practice and Governors noted that the Teaching and Learning Model shown in Annex 1 to the strategy is fundamental to self-reflection and provides a tool to effectively evaluate teaching, learning and assessment.

The Strategy identifies seven key approaches to further develop excellent teaching and learning in 2020/21 aligned to both internal and external drivers. Key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned to excellence in teaching and learning will be monitored periodically through Academic Standards.

In response to a question from Governors, it was confirmed that whilst there is nothing in the strategy specifically to address another wave of COVID, the strategy does provide for all staff to be proficient with full remote learning in

case that is needed again in the future.

A Governor asked how the College detects under performance early before things start to go wrong now that routine observation is no longer taking place. In response it was confirmed that a range of tools will identify issues early including regular monitoring of KPIs including student attendance, learner satisfaction data and feedback from student focus groups, ad hoc observation (either face to face or online) and Deep Dives.

The Committee resolved to note and accept the report.

S.21.25 Item 11: Student End of Year Survey 2019/20

The Director of Teaching and Learning informed the Committee that there had been no student survey this year due to the Pandemic. Although the College had prepared a short survey, many students stepped back from College when they learned that work undertaken in the Spring Term wouldn't count towards their assessments, so the response rate was very low.

However, since College re-opened in September, student feedback had been sought through the student representatives and Governors noted that a 50-question survey was currently being undertaken, the outcome of which will be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that there was anecdotal evidence that some students prefer face to face learning to online or a blended approach although students' responses to 'live' online teaching was more positive.

The Committee resolved to note the update.

S.21.26 Item 12: Marketing Strategy 2020/21 and Progress Report

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the Marketing Strategy for 2020/21 to the Committee and informed the Committee that a progress report had also been presented to the Resources Committee.

The action plan attached to the strategy shows changes to the way the College conducts its marketing activities largely due to the Pandemic. However, it was noted that the activities now delivered online were very successful with good attendance at virtual events. As a result, applications had increased and were well ahead of applications for entry at the same time last year. Figures will be circulated to the Committee via email after the meeting which confirm the College is showing signs of becoming the provider of choice locally.

Governors noted that whilst marketing activity is intensive in the first term, the Governor Task Group has been actively reviewing current strategies and any changes that are needed. This task group is ongoing. However, it was necessary to begin implementation prior to formal approval, in order to secure applications.

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that there is no evidence that an increase in applications is a national trend and that increased numbers may be an indication that the College is taking market share from its competitors.

Governors asked if there were plans to develop the branding and it was confirmed that this is being discussed in the Governor Task Group as it is a costly piece of work that requires some research to be undertaken.

However, an important part of the strategy is to review the website to make it easier for prospective students to navigate and find what they need.

Governors commented that the strategy is a much more sophisticated document than the previous one, but said that the College's USP (at both College and course level) in terms of its competitors needs to be more clearly articulated.

The Principal advised the Committee that she is to seek the views of Alex Kenny (Independent Governor) due to his expertise in marketing.

The Committee resolved to recommend the Marketing Strategy for 2020/21 to the Corporation for approval at its December meeting.

S.21.27 Item 13: Deep Dives

The Committee considered a report on the outcome of the Deep Dives undertaken in the last year. In Term 1 of 2019/20, Deep Dives focused on Apprenticeship provision, particularly in relation to Health and Social Care and Motor Vehicles. In Term 2, two Deep Dives were undertaken across A Level and Vocational provision in Business, Beauty, Health and Social Care, Sport, English Language (A Level) and GCSE Maths and English. Ofsted had undertaken Deep Dives in A Level Law and Sociology, Adult Access and Adult maths provision, High Needs provision and Apprenticeships (Health and Social Care, Business and Plumbing).

Governors noted that Deep Dives were carried out by Heads of Department with findings being submitted to Academic Standards.

Since the College re-opened after the lockdown, a new process for conducting Deep Dives to quality assure remote and distance learning has been developed.

Governors noted the outcomes of the Deep Dives and the actions taken and asked if any learning had come out of the process. The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) advised the Committee that students were very keen to discuss what is good and not so good but that no other patterns had emerged. Nevertheless, it was noted that even when issues are known, there is still a need to hear from learners to get beneath the data and the process provides better insight than teacher observation.

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that the only feedback from Ofsted in relation to Deep Dives they undertook was the end

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of day feedback on Day 1 of the inspection. There was no particular surprises although Ofsted identified strengths in relation to Adult Provision which the College hadn't highlighted.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) confirmed that feedback on the outcome of Deep Dives had been given to the curriculum areas and had also been used to update the QDP.

Governors asked for an update on Deep Dives and their impact to be provided at every meeting of the Committee.

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The Committee resolved to note and accept the report.

Mo Kundi left the meeting at 4.30pm.

S.21.28 Item 14: Items to be reported to the Corporation

The Chair summarised the actions from the meeting and identified the following items to be reported to the Corporation at its meeting on 14 December 2020:

- SAR 2019/20 and QDP for 2020/21 for approval
- HE SAR 2019/20 and QDP for 2020/21 for approval
- Marketing Strategy 2020/21 for approval
- That the Committee had discussed the Teaching and Learning Strategy and the outcome of the Deep Dives
- Minutes of the meeting

S.21.29 Any other business

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) informed the Committee that the College had received the draft Ofsted letter, which was currently being checking for accuracy before publication.

S.21.30 Item 15: Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 9 February 2021 at 3pm

The meeting ended at 4.35pm.

Minutes approved 10th March 2021