

**Minutes of the
Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee
held on Thursday 7 December 2017 at 8.00am
in Room 814 at the Matthew Boulton Campus**

Present:	Apologies:
Veronica Docherty (VD) (Chair)	Dan Zastawny
Keith Horton (KH)	
Andrew Cleaves (AC)	
Mohammed Albukair (MA)	
Sonia Crook Lake (SC)	
In Attendance:	
Louise Jones (LJ)	
Liam Nevin (LN)	
Elaine Bonar (EB)	
Kim Vaughan (KV) (for item 4)	
Gill Coldicott (GC) (for item 5)	
Megan Sadler (MS) (Enrichment Officer) (for item 5)	
Zac Robertson (ZR) (Student Council (for item 5)	
Hazrat Islam (HI) (ESFA Observer)	

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Dan Zastawny

Declarations of Interest

There were none save for those already recorded in the Register of Interests.

Item 1 - Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 20 June 2017

It was noted that on page 4 there was a word omitted and the sentence should read "*whether staff believed this to be the case.*"

With this amendment the minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting

Matters Arising and Action Log

The action log was noted.

VD welcomed HI to the meeting and it was noted that HI was attending as an observer as part of his personal development.

Item 2 – 16-17 Results

LJ delivered a presentation on the final results for 2016-17. The Committee were advised that there had been a 4% improvement in achievement rates for 16-18 year olds and the College was now 1% off last year's national rate. Ofsted had acknowledged this progress in the course

The Principal suggested that it would assist the Committee to see by way of a concise summary, what areas the Executive were focussing on to ensure maximum impact in improvement work.

Thereafter the Committee debated the mix and balance of adult qualifications and LJ suggested that in future the College needed to decide whether when it set the College target it did so by reference to the national achievement rate or whether it decided that a lower target was more appropriate to reflect the view that the mix of qualifications provided by the College made attainment of the national rate unrealistic. It was important that the debate on this fully considered and recorded the rationale for the decision reached.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the 2016-17 results be noted**

Item 3 – Self- Assessment Report (SAR)

EB introduced this item and advised the Committee of the process by which the document had been prepared. This had involved all directors and had drawn on evidence including achievement rates, survey data, complaints, and assessment and feedback from awarding bodies. The combination of this evidence culminated in the setting of grades against key judgements used by Ofsted. The Ofsted inspector supporting the College had stated that the report was self-critical and well evidenced and he had made some constructive suggestions for improvements. The areas for development which emerged from the SAR would be incorporated into the Post- Inspection Action Plan.

EB advised that there were still some challenges evident at the end of June when the assessment was finalised. In particular, learners were still not being challenged enough to reach their full potential. The Committee were advised that the leadership and management grade was now being assessed as good. There were noticeable improvements in English and Maths, some sector areas were above national rates, student satisfaction was improving, there were fewer complaints and better outcomes from awarding body system reviews.

MA noted that there was a strong relationship between the ability of teachers to make students feel at home in the classroom and attendance rates. The pivotal programme was helping with this with teachers greeting students and reminding them of the College's values.

KH referred to the background information in the covering report and noted that the measure "Teachers do not provide sufficient challenge to learners" was RAG rated as green and questioned what the evidence was for that assertion. EB stated that this was an ongoing assessment of progress with evidence constantly being collated in-year. By Christmas she would have a reasonable number of observations to inform further judgements on learner progress to make a judgement on the percentage of students making satisfactory progress. In addition there would be feedback on learner surveys, and indicators of impact through Markbook which would inform the judgement as to how many students were on track to achieve target grades.

EB agreed that the report did not list all evidence sources as it was a summary of the evidence that was available when the College was inspected and was part of an iterative process that involved collating and reviewing additional evidence throughout the academic year.

KH stated that although he understood that the underlying evidence would not be set out in SAR it would help the Committee to understand the evidence source in more detail. This would help the Committee to understand the judgements in context. For example, to ascertain what proportion of teaching and learning was being delivered to high standards.

EB stated that the outcome of the improvement measures could not be known until June, but the PIAP could provide further details on the actions and the evidence for the judgements on progress. The language of the document was consistent with the terminology used in inspection reports and the Ofsted common inspection framework. LJ noted that assurance could be taken from the Ofsted judgement that the document was well evidenced.

VD stated that whilst the interventions were clear it was difficult to gauge what the impact would be and when that would be realised. The difficulty for the Committee was that as the year progressed it had less scope to influence the pace of improvement.

LJ stated that the PIAP was the main tool for assessing progress. This was updated monthly and could be shared with the Committee between meetings.

KH agreed that this would be helpful and stated that learner progress was key for the Committee and he would like to see more focus on this at the meetings. It would help if the monthly PIAP updates were all presented to the Committee to give a more informed view on progress.

The Principal agreed that this would also benefit the Executive and he advised the Committee that lesson observations were being prioritised on a risk basis so the level of progress reported would reflect this focus on areas causing concern.

KH asked whether any of the categories currently rated as 3 were on the cusp of a 2 and EB advised that all categories with the exception of outcomes were close to 2.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee recommend to the Corporation that it approves the content and the grading of the SAR.**

Item 4 – Annual Report on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

KV presented the report and advised the Committee that the College was generally seeing an upward trend in the number of referrals. Thereafter, she advised on the key points set out in the report, in particular noting that there had been two LADO referrals resulting in dismissal in the last twelve months and three CTU referrals.

The College was also now using the VISIGO monitoring system that identified if and when students or staff attempted to access prohibited IT content. This had been successful in facilitating early intervention in cases that raised safeguarding and/or radicalisation concerns.

Following the last Ofsted inspection the College had also been reinforcing Fundamental British Values and Prevent through induction and tutorials and there was now on-line training in safeguarding and Prevent for apprentices.

The Committee were advised that an internal audit of safeguarding had also provided assurance and the only issue of substance identified was the need to ensure that sensitive information was encrypted prior to being emailed. In response to a question from KH on any risk relating to this finding, KV stated that the recommendation had been implemented and that information was in any event anonymised.

KH stated that safeguarding was commendable but was keen to understand whether the growth in referrals was a reflection of more welfare concerns or whether it reflected improved reporting systems. KV stated that both of these were true and that her experience was that some students were experiencing significant issues with poverty.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee note the report and recommend it to the Corporation.**

Item 5 – Student Council Report

GC addressed the Committee, supported by Megan Sadler (MS), the Enrichment Officer and Zac Robertson (ZR), Chair of Stourbridge Student Committee.

The Committee were advised that the Student Council had been developed as a framework for dialogue between students from all BMet Colleges and senior managers, particularly the Heads of College. This year there were 139 students involved in the student council, and there was a formal meeting structure with defined roles for students that would assist with personal development as well as help them to raise matters of interest or concern with the College.

The Enrichment Officers were providing training and the students were now developing their focus on areas of interest. This has included identifying nominated charities, and increasing lunch time clubs and sports activities.

VD asked whether there was any feedback on courses that students were doing and ZR stated that they had secured increased photocopying credits for art students.

MS stated that there was much enthusiasm from students and lots of opinions were expressed at the meetings.

VD explained the work of the Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee and stated that the Committee were pleased to see student representatives and keen to hear how they might feed into the Committee.

KH stated that one of the important issues was whether students felt that lessons were unmissable and whether they were sufficiently challenged in the classroom and asked whether the Student Council could consider how they might offer opinions on this and the student representatives confirmed that they would be happy to do so.

MB stated that he would be visiting the Student Councils and would also listen to their opinions to help inform his contribution to the Corporation.

There being no further discussion, ZR and MS were thanked for attending and it was agreed that feedback from the Student Council would be a standing item for future meetings of the Committee.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the update from the Student Council be noted**

Item 6 – HE Performance Review 16/17

LJ presented the report and advised that it served two purposes. Firstly, it was the evidence base for the annual monitoring return to the Higher Education and Funding Council and secondly it provided an update on the High Level Skills Strategy. The Committee were advised that whilst HE provision and the higher level skills strategy were important to the College, at present the main focus was on ensuring that the College was rapidly progressing to “good.”

Thereafter, LJ referred to the performance of the College against its own targets for the 2016/17 year as set out in the summary of the cover paper. The Committee were asked to note that whilst the target for student satisfaction had been met, on reflection this target was insufficiently challenging and it would therefore be reviewed.

It was noted that recruitment for 17/18 was above last year, but below target. There were some issues with partner universities and it was noted that BCU were competing on a course that was subject to a collaboration agreement with the College. However, it was also true that some courses being offered by the College were not sufficiently attractive to meet target numbers.

VD asked what provision was being considered for Kidderminster Academy and LJ advised that the College was working with partner universities to determine what courses to provide but it was likely to include business and sports. However, this would be reported to the Committee once known.

VD noted that HE provision was an important part of the College’s income target and LJ agreed and advised that the College would not hit its financial target for HE this year, and was likely to be approximately £500k short.

KH stated that page 17 “Expectation B7” did not make reference to any positive findings made by external examiners and it was agreed to amend to address this point.

VD stated that the new HE Teaching and Excellence Framework was a useful form of quality assurance and LJ advised that the College had assessed against the framework but would not apply until next year given the focus on “getting to good.”

EB stated that the process of scrutiny through TRBs was now being applied to HE provision.

The Principal advised that the deadline for submission of the Annual Monitoring Return was 1 December. HEFCE had accepted that the College would submit late given the timing of Corporation but this would need to be considered for next year.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

That the Committee endorse and recommend to the Corporation that the Cross College Annual Monitoring Report for 2016/17 evidences that:

- **The report and action plan relate to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes, and which includes evidence from the provider’s own periodic review processes and which involve students and include external peer or professional review.**
- **The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student experience and student outcomes are robust and appropriate.**

Item 7 – Annual Work Programme

LN introduced the report and advised that the document set out the programmed business of the committee over the rest of the year and also included the business that would now be conducted at the additional meeting in February.

VD asked when the staff survey would be done and the Principal advised that this would be done over the summer, with the results available in the autumn term

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- That the Annual Work Programme be approved

Any Other Business

MA observed that the College's marketing arrangements did not always draw on its strengths. The Principal agreed and stated that whilst there had been big improvements in external communications, the College needed to do better at internal communications and the Executive would be discussing this next week.

Date of the next meeting – TBC for early February 2018

Signed:..........(Chair)

Dated:.....7 Feb 2018.....

