

**Minutes of the
Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee
held on Tuesday 9 December 2014 at 8.00am
in Room 814 at the Matthew Boulton Campus**

Present:

Ian Oakes (Chair)
Veronica Docherty (VD)
Jenni Ord (JO)
Dagen Thompson (Staff Member) (DT)
Gala Albas (Student Member) (GA)

Apologies:

In Attendance:

Andrew Cleaves (Principal and Chief Executive)
Louise Jones (Chief Operating Officer) (LJ)
Julie Nugent (Chief Operating Officer) (JN)
Mukesh Kumar (Chief Operating Officer) (MK)
Liam Nevin (Senior Clerk) LN

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of Interest

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

Item 1 - Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 26 June 2014

It was noted that on page 3 of the minutes the reference to "VJ" should be "VD", and with that amendment having been made the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

LJ advised that the HE data requested by the Committee was not yet complete and would therefore be brought forward to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was noted that data on retention and attendance by faculty had previously been circulated and it was agreed that this information would be re-issued.

It was further noted that other actions identified in the minutes had either been addressed or were included in the present agenda for consideration.

Item 2 – Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

LJ introduced the report and explained that the content reflected the Common Inspection Handbook and was therefore consistent with Ofsted inspection criterion.

She further explained the process by which the SAR had been compiled and advised the Committee that this had involved team assessments, external review by a lead inspector, consideration by some of the College's own governors and a review by Bedford College.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the overall grades in respect of the areas measured and it was noted that with the exception of Safeguarding, which was assessed as good, the judgement was "Requires improvement" and that Overall Effectiveness was assessed as "Requires improvement." The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressed each area and set out the measures being taken to drive improvements. Updates would be provided to the Committee to support their assessment of progress.

The Principal further advised that whilst the SAR had been prepared in accordance with Ofsted requirements, the intention was that the improvement plan would quickly move the College from an overall 3 to an overall 2.

VD noted that the SAR was reflective of a point in time and it was agreed that this should be emphasised given the improvement measures already being implemented. LJ also advised that the SAR would be updated in January or February.

JO asked about the extent of engagement of the faculties in arriving at the grades and the extent to which the QIP was embedded across the College. LJ and MK assured the Committee that each member of the Executive owned sections of the QIP and that the faculties had been engaged through various measures. This would continue through the process of refreshing the document.

The Principal advised that a key task for the Executive had been to build the process for engagement of the faculties, and to reinvigorate the role of the Programme Management Boards in contributing to the SAR and QIP.

It was further noted that governors would need additional briefing on specific areas such as the assessment of Leadership and Management, in order to prepare for an Ofsted inspection.

The Chairman then invited the Committee to consider the QIP noting that a key issue for the Committee was to determine whether the plan addressed the correct priorities in light of the findings of the SAR. He invited the Executive to comment on the main changes implemented to address weaknesses in Apprenticeships.

LJ advised that the Executive had undertaken a complete review of the apprentice "journey." This had resulted in improved monitoring and reporting processes giving better visibility of progress of the apprentices. This was acknowledged as a work in progress and further detail could be provided in due course.

JO questioned how progress with the implementation of the QIP would be communicated and LJ advised that the intention was to ensure that there were strong links with the faculty QIPs. The Principal further advised that each Faculty Director would present their QIP at the PMBs.

JO asked whether any courses had been removed from the curriculum offer and JN advised that a small number of courses had been removed and there were others now subject to close scrutiny to determine whether sufficient improvements were being made to justify their continuation. JO requested an analysis of this issue in order to inform the 15-16 curriculum offer.

The Chairman questioned the role of teacher and learner coaches and was advised by MK that there were 17 aligned to directorates. They were seconded for 6 hours a week and primarily

focused on intervention strategies for grades 3 and 4. Progress in improvement rates was promising.

DT advised the Committee that the SAR and QIP now felt more closely connected with his practical experience. There was an acknowledgement of some difficult issues and a clear plan to deal with them.

GA advised that more communication with students around the detail of what their apprenticeship programme involves was still needed.

JO questioned how the College would address the need for consistent performance across the campuses. LJ advised that performance reporting by campus was now occurring, with locally targeted actions where necessary.

The Chair questioned whether student attendance had now improved. JN advised that this was still too low in some areas but that there were now effective tools for early intervention and these were being used.

The Principal advised that since the Corporation had endorsed the strategic targets the Executive had worked on developing the performance dashboard. This would be concluded shortly and would incorporate measures for retention and attendance.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

(i) That the Self- Assessment Report and the Quality Improvement Plan be recommended to the Corporation

Item 3 – Annual Report on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

LJ introduced this report and advised the Committee that there had been 32 referrals in 2013-14.

Safeguarding had been assessed as “good” and this had been endorsed by external review. This would be reinforced by a plan to roll out training to students, and through work with Prevent and the City Council. It was further noted that an incident log was being created to deal with cases of violence and aggression at College and these would be reviewed by the Executive.

The Chair noted that the statistics indicated a preponderance of female and Asian-British-Pakistani students and questioned whether support services were being targeted at these groups .LJ advised that the cases informed personal tutor training and induction materials, but each case presented individual factors and it was difficult to draw general conclusions.

JO questioned whether support and monitoring continued to be provided once a case had been referred to Social Services and LJ assured that it was.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

(i) That the Committee note the report and that it be referred to the Corporation for consideration.

Item 4 – Annual Summary of Complaints

LJ introduced this report and advised the Committee that there had been 215 complaints in 2013/14. The Executive had introduced a different approach to complaints management which was a departure from historical practice in the College that had emphasised local and informal resolution. All complaints were now recorded and dealt with as official complaints and the Executive examined the complaints and the action taken on a weekly basis. This was leading to more effective outcomes.

It was noted that most complaints were related to staffing or management issues and the source was usually parents or students themselves, although some complaints had been received from partners.

The Committee debated the information provided and the processes in use. It was agreed that:

- The analysis should be strengthened to provide details of the source of complaints and also an analysis of complaints as a proportion of students at the relevant campus and by curriculum area.
- Alternative reporting mechanisms should be considered including text messaging and IT links
- Comparative information on staff complaints should also be available for governors
- Compliments and endorsements of the College's services should also be captured.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

(i) That the Executive address the improvements identified by the Committee in the pre-amble to this minute and that the report be noted.

Item 5 – Capturing the Learner Voice and Structure for Learner Walks

MK delivered a presentation addressing teaching learning and assessment and campus life and experience, both within the context of the steps being taken to improve integration of the Learner Voice within the College.

The presentation also addressed the timing of all of the Learner Voice surveys over the course of the academic year and presented the results of the Induction Survey, which was the first major survey of the academic year.

The Induction Survey had been undertaken for three years and is externally benchmarked. It was of note that the College was demonstrating continuous improvement in the results such that it was now predominantly in the upper two quartiles in the areas assessed and in addition the number of participants in the survey had also risen considerably. Notwithstanding these generally positive results there were areas for improvement particularly in relation to the percentage of students who perceived their initial experience of College as welcoming and enjoyable.

It was further noted that improvements in the provision of information prior to enrolment could help raise satisfaction levels in these areas.

MK then led a discussion on the opportunities for governor involvement in Learner Walks which would assist governors in assessing learner experience and the quality of delivery.

The process would require governors to initially be briefed and accompanied by the Director of Quality, although subsequently governors would be free to carry out unaccompanied visits. The Principal emphasised that it was important for governors to have the ability to review what they feel is appropriate and to make judgements based on what they see.

The Principal and the Senior Clerk advised that adoption of this approach would involve governors in regulated activity and DBS checks would have to be carried out.

The Committee then debated the nature of the assessment that governors would make and it was agreed that this should be informed by the Ofsted guidance that Governors monitor the quality of the experience provided for learners and their outcomes.

An example of a Learning Feedback card was circulated and it was agreed that Governors would have the option of utilising this or a summary sheet to express fuller views.

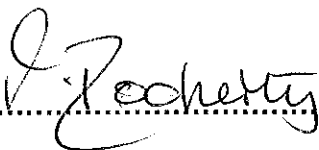
The Principal summarised the Committee's support for the following:

- Initial briefings for governors with the Director of Quality would be mandatory
- Governors would initially be accompanied on Learner Walks but thereafter would be accompanied at their discretion
- DBS checks for governors would be carried out or renewed as necessary
- Governors feedback would be collated and reported to the Board

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Date of the next meeting – Tuesday 3 March 2014

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

Dated:.....3/3/2015.....

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