

**Minutes of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 4pm**

Present:	Stephen Sawbridge, Chair Denise Brown, Principal and CEO Julie Obada Sue Blake		
In Attendance:	Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation Nicky Birch, Executive Director of Adults, HE and Curriculum Support Heather Marks, Executive Director Quality of Education Anth Brannen, Director of Campus Cauldon Ryan Johnson, Director of Campus Burslem Sibgha Amin, Governor		
<b>Min. No.</b>		<b>Action By Whom</b>	<b>Action By When</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>		
	The Chair reminded those present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. Standing declarations were noted.		
<b>2</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>		
	Apologies for absence were received from Rob Fisher and Jo Mountney. The Clerk advised that Rob Fisher will be stepping down from this Committee but will continue to be invited as an attendee, rather than a member. She confirmed that new Governor interviews had taken place earlier in the day and it is envisaged that new Governors to be appointed will be able to add to the capacity and skills of this Committee.		
<b>3</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019</b>		
	The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.  AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2019.  There were no matters arising.		

<b>4</b>	<b>ACTION PROGRESS REPORT</b>		
	<p>The Committee considered the short update provided and it was noted that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line 1 – an update in relation to the Maths and English strategy is on the agenda.</li> <li>• Line 2 – a focus on the 2020/21 start of year arrangements – there is detail to be discussed later in the meeting and it was confirmed that this Committee will keep a ‘watching brief’ throughout the year.</li> <li>• Line 3 – growth plans – there will continue to be a series of reports between now and June 2020, as things come on stream. There is a specific opportunity to be discussed later in the meeting.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted curriculum planning presentations are in the diary and will start on Thursday of this week. Members of the Committee have been invited so as to gain assurance regarding the process. Each Head of Learning will come with their outline vision for the next year, with some areas anticipating more change than others. The Principal confirmed that curriculum plans are being aligned with LMI, progression and employer expectations. Trends will be analysed and it is anticipated that the presentations will be both an opportunity to challenge and also to enter in to constructive dialogue. It was also confirmed that a curriculum working group has been established, which includes Governors.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>5</b>	<b>PLANNING FOR GROWTH</b>		
	<p>It was agreed that discussions on this item would be recorded on a confidential basis given commercial sensitivity.</p>		
<b>6</b>	<b>EVALUATION OF THE 2019/20 START OF YEAR ARRANGEMENTS</b>		
	<p>The Committee Chair explained that he had asked for this to be scheduled on the agenda, as Governors need to know what went wrong, so that the same things can be avoided in the future. All acknowledged that the closedown of the 2019/20 year is critically important.</p> <p>The Executive Director of Quality of Education presented her detailed report and explained the issues that arose and actions taken to prevent a similar set of circumstances for 2020/21. The Committees attention was drawn to a number of key matters;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The end of the 2018/19 academic year was not effectively or wholly closed down prior to the summer</li> </ul>		

	<p>shutdown period/summer annual leave. This led to staff completing shutdown actions in August and September, which resulted in a loss of focus on enrolment and planning time for the 2019/20 year. To address this, she explained that the team have now created closedown sheets, which are required to be submitted before the summer. This ensures compliance, standardisation and prevents any one person holding all of the data. She confirmed that there is a really clear flow chart in place which articulates expectations. She confirmed that finishing off and completing the 2019/20 students will be a key step in ensuring that staff have time to prepare for the new year. A challenge from the Committee was that MIS and data underpins everything that the College does and therefore the senior team have to ensure that it is correct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The enrolment process was not effectively co-ordinated and managed to ensure that all learners and stakeholders received a good standard of service. Consequently, learners were not enrolled accurately or in a timely manner and they received conflicting information regarding the start of their course. This resulted in dissatisfaction and confusion with timetabling, which led to poor attendance and high standards not being upheld. To address this, she confirmed that an 'enrolment group' has been established and a key focus will be enrolling progressing learners before September, to get ahead of the busy period. The Committee questioned whether enrolment is available at both sites. It was confirmed that this is usually the case; however, last year it was only at Cauldon because of the restructure. Staff believe that enrolling progressing learners early will really be helpful in terms of capacity and focus in September. The Committee were advised that it is important that the College is really clear in terms of staff roles in the enrolment process, so that they can be properly trained. She advised that the College is taking a call centre type of approach, which would be much slicker. The intention is to have staff doing the same things constantly to ensure consistency, rather than being deployed to different tasks at different parts of the day. A challenge from the Committee was that there needs to be as few barriers as possible for the learners who are enrolling. It was explained that the change in a number of staff roles over the summer of 2019 had a negative impact, as there was a lack of certainty, focus etc. It was explained that enrolments usually take place around the GCSE results day.</li> <li>• The planned 2-day induction programme was not</li> </ul>		
--	--	--	--

	<p>sufficient enough to effectively induct all learners at the same time. This led to induction feeling rushed and understaffed, which resulted in groups being merged. Therefore, the quality of the first interaction with learners was not of a high standard.</p> <p>The Committee asked whether there were any 'critical pinch points'? The Executive Director of Quality of Education confirmed that these were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having Markbook in place,</li> <li>• Course file and course code structure,</li> <li>• English and maths groups - it is important that these are accurate and solid from day 1, and</li> <li>• MIS role in checking timetables.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee asked whether the critical path could be presented diagrammatically, so that all staff and Governors understand what needs to be done and when. A challenge from the Committee was that there needs to be significant QA processes in place to ensure success. A challenge from the Committee was that they would wish to see some risk analysis around the plan at the April 2020 meeting.</p> <p>The Committee asked whether students are involved in the enrolment process. It was confirmed that they are through the Student Ambassador group. A challenge from the Committee was to utilise students effectively, as they are an essential part of the process. The Committee challenged in terms of the keep warm activities, marketing etc and expressed the view that they all need to seamlessly link together, so as to reduce any barriers that learners may experience.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>	<p>Executive Director of Quality</p> <p>Executive Director of Quality</p>	<p>February 2020</p> <p>April 2020</p>
<b>7</b>	<b>QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND PACE OF CHANGE</b>		
	<p>The Executive Director of Quality of Education and the Principal introduced this item and a number of matters were considered;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1) <u>Maths and English focus</u></p> <p>The Committees' attention was drawn to the data dashboard and a number of key matters were noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff still have concerns regarding the data on the system,</li> <li>• Attendance remains a concern,</li> <li>• Staffing remains a concern,</li> <li>• A high number of learning walks have been undertaken this week, which has given an accurate view of provision,</li> <li>• Learners are on campus in many cases but just not in</li> </ul>		

	<p>class,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance, particularly in English sessions, is a significant concern in Construction.</li> </ul> <p>A challenge from the Committee was that, whatever the College has been doing isn't working, and therefore the position now needs to escalate. They agreed that it was important to hold all students to account. Staff gave the view that students are 'out of the habit' of attending maths and English and this needs to be addressed.</p> <p>The Committee were given the highlights from the visit to Nelson and Colne College and two key aspects were noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nelson and Colne College do not teach GCSE until week three, which ensures that students really get engaged with their vocational area before having to re-visit maths and English.</li> <li>Vocational staff really own maths and English and it is not seen as something separate.</li> </ul> <p>A challenge from the Committee was that the College is approaching a tipping point and that, if attendance is so low, then students cannot catch up. The Committee challenged in terms of the fact that the College was running out of time and therefore needs to look at offering learners something different, if they are not attending and not just GCSE. The Principal confirmed that this was the focus of a review and all agreed that there should not be a 'one size fits all'.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that there was a need to focus on the here and now, and that this is important, as it will impact on the Colleges ability to predict. The Principal expressed the view that, for some students, stepping stone qualifications are more important and appropriate.</p> <p>A challenge from the Committee was that they would expect to see a maths and English cross-college approach and they asked that a plan be presented on this for 2021.</p> <p>The Committee asked what is different/done differently at Newcastle under Lyme and the Sixth Form College. It was explained that their students are closer to a GCSE grade 4, although it was acknowledged that the Sixth Form already offers stepping stone qualifications. A challenge from the Committee was the need to put ourselves in the learner's shoes and be clear in terms of their experience. All agreed that there was merit in looking at bitesize provision for maths and English. The Principal confirmed that the curriculum can be packaged in a different way and that this is the subject of consideration now. A challenge from the Committee was that the College needs to 'crack this' for next year. They would like to see action planning properly undertaken, which is</p>	Executive Director of Quality	April 2020
--	---	-------------------------------	------------

	<p>similar to what has been done for the start of the year arrangements.</p> <p>2) <u>Quality Improvement Plan</u></p> <p>The Executive Director of Quality of Education presented the detailed QIP and a number of matters were specifically brought to the Committees attention;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The College is making progress in relation to staff utilisation,</li> <li>• CPD is now all captured on the Power BI tool and the College is starting to see some positive teaching and learning impact,</li> <li>• Staff now have a better understanding of curriculum intent,</li> <li>• Staff undertake a self-assessment process following CPD to ensure learning is embedded.</li> </ul> <p>A challenge from the Committee was to ensure that there is pace regarding improvements on the ground.</p> <p>A question and challenge from the Committee was in terms of the Quality Improvement Plan presented to Governors. They felt that, what was presented at the meeting, was too detailed and that what they would like to see is a link to the five pillars and the strategic targets. The Committee all agreed that the Board needs to have wider sight of the College and not just actions agreed for Ofsted, it being the case that a response to Ofsted is not the whole piece in terms of moving the College forward. They invited the senior team to reflect on the package of information available to the Curriculum, Quality &amp; Standards Committee and the Board. They made the suggestion that reporting should be by exception but to also have the full Quality Improvement Plan as an appendix. What they want to have better sight of are the 'thorny issues' and the 'mission critical'. The Executive Director confirmed that the critical factors are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English and maths,</li> <li>• Overall attendance,</li> <li>• Pedagogy in teaching for young people</li> </ul> <p>3) <u>Apprenticeships</u></p> <p>The Committees attention was drawn to the data dashboard and key matters noted were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apprentices who were identified as exceeding their planned end date have moved significantly. They are showing as 94 on the system today but the team feel that 50 of these may simply be going through the funding process.</li> <li>• Assessors are now being observed and this includes checking the language used by apprentices and</li> </ul>		
--	---	--	--

	<p>assessors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD is provided bi-weekly</li> <li>• The Canvas platform now houses a range of materials to support assessors with a clearer understanding to ensure that apprentices know specifically the threats posed locally from those with radical or extremist views. This can be accessed on a daily basis. Impact will be monitored through evidence at the deep dive.</li> <li>• The College is now providing really clear direction and communicating expectations</li> </ul> <p>In terms of 'hotspots', these were summarised as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence uploaded by staff to ensure evidence is valid and reliable and demonstrates new knowledge, behaviours and skills achieved by apprentices over time. The audit has identified some inconsistencies in relation to evidence uploaded. Training has been swiftly identified and actions taken to address inconsistencies.</li> <li>• Audits on caseloads have identified staff who have left the business and are still showing on the system.</li> <li>• Time logs (20% off the job) are poor quality – the assessors are not demonstrating new skills and development that their apprentices are learning. This was picked up at the inspection. She provided assurance that the recording of off the job training is a focus.</li> <li>• Reviews are not timely (for example, reviews should take place every 12 weeks and there are instances where apprentices are not having reviews and this is leading to complaints from employers and apprentices due to receiving a poor service).</li> <li>• Content and targets within the reviews are poor in most cases seen.</li> </ul> <p>She described this as a significant risk for the College, as feedback is still not effective and does not develop apprentices skills, behaviours and knowledge as identified at the last full Ofsted inspection. The area of apprenticeships is still not moving at a quick enough pace, despite the significant piece of work undertaken to swiftly resolve the amount of apprentices who have exceeded their planned end dates.</p> <p>The Committee considered the format of the outcomes for apprentices, as shown on the Smart Assessor dashboard. It was explained that there is still a significant amount of red RAG rated items, as there is still some legacy data to be cleansed from the system.</p> <p>A challenge from the Committee was that compliance with Smart Assessor is critical and that visibility and transparency</p>		
--	---	--	--

	<p>is needed. There is still a body of work to do in terms of compliance and it was explained that there are pockets of staff who are resistant. In terms of the out of funded learners, all agreed that they have to be a priority, as they slow down the pipeline of activity.</p> <p>The Committee asked whether the out of funded learners will impact on timely rates. It was confirmed that they will but that the fact that the College is above national rates is masking some issues that need to be tackled. The Committee questioned whether this is being dealt with through HR processes. It was confirmed that they are.</p> <p>A challenge from the Committee was that apprenticeship provision is a key strategic priority and therefore the College needs to get the basic/fundamentals right. They reiterated the need to resolve the off the job training recording and evidencing, with a need for this to be well planned.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>8</b>	<b>SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT</b>		
	<p>The Executive Director of Adults, HE and Curriculum Support drew the Committees attention to her detailed report and confirmed that updated action plans have been created for Safeguarding and Prevent. She confirmed that Prevent sessions, including apprentices, have taken place, including one specifically to address the issues raised by Ofsted in terms of Gangs and Youth Violence.</p> <p>Key matters brought to the Committees attention included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All assessors and other support teams attended a CPD session delivered by Craig Pinkney on Gangs and Youth Violence.</li> <li>• The Regional Co-ordinator for Prevent delivered a session on Understanding Islam</li> <li>• The College is arranging for a guest speaker, Saint Sterling, to come in and do some targeted work with some of the vulnerable groups</li> <li>• The revised lockdown procedure has been shared with the College Management Team. IT screens flash up a lock down message as a plan B, given that the alarm sound for the lockdown is yet to be put in place and is currently on a capital bid request. The Committee expressed the view that the action plan needs to be updated to reflect this. It was confirmed that the new Health and Safety Manager starts shortly and that this will be a priority for him, with some practices taking place.</li> <li>• There are updated procedures in draft for Executive Board approval on Search and Confiscation procedure</li> </ul>		

	<p>and Drugs and Alcohol procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firewall systems will shortly have a new feature that will help to better monitor online activity.</li> <li>• The big tutorial, focussing on Safeguarding Streetwise ran during the last week of January.</li> <li>• There are currently nine risk assessments in place for students with criminal convictions on the new paperwork that was introduced this academic year. The new process is working well and there are no issues with any students with risk assessments and appropriate behaviour and expectation contracts are in place.</li> <li>• HR are in the process of arranging Safer Recruitment training for managers.</li> <li>• The College still has one learner being discussed at Chanel Panel; this was an individual who joined the College already, subject to Chanel review.</li> <li>• To the end of April, there have been 174 Safeguarding referrals. The majority of referrals are from females and at the Burslem campus. There are 42 referrals to date that have been referred to social care. The biggest concern continues to be for mental health referrals. She advised that the College has some additional resource to help manage this; however, it will only be in place for this academic year and therefore the College needs to review what September will look like without the additional resource.</li> <li>• On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January, there was a link Governor visit with the Director of Student Services, followed by a single central record check with a member of the HR team. There were no issues with this.</li> <li>• Actions to be taken are set out in section 4 of the report.</li> </ul> <p>A challenge from the Committee was that it is critically important that staff all know their roles and have appropriate training/CPD, it being acknowledged that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The Committee were advised that there is still a Behaviour Support Officer post to fill at Burslem. A challenge from the Committee was to build in an external review of Safeguarding in the calendar, as this is very much a risk to be mitigated.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>	Executive Director of Adults, HE, and Curriculum Support	2020
<b>9</b>	<b>CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION ADVICE AND GUIDANCE</b>		
	<p>The College strategy and action plan was reviewed. Key matters noted and discussed were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authority and Careers Co-ordinator is continuing in post beyond 2019/20, therefore the College will</li> </ul>		

	<p>continue to get support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The College is making good progress against the Gatsby benchmarks,</li> <li>• There are lots of actions completed and, for many, it is just awaiting evidence of impact. The College is confident that it is on track.</li> </ul> <p>An observation made by the Committee was that the action plan refers to Heads of Faculty when it should now refer to Heads of Learning.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p> <p>In considering the plan, the Committee made the observation that it was good to see the College looking at T Levels in terms of careers. One member of the Committee confirmed that she had recently attended ETF T Level training and that, whilst useful, did cover a lot of the training materials available online for Governors on the ETF website. It was noted that staff training will take place in March 2020. The Committee agreed that T Levels would need to be kept on the radar, even though it was not an immediate priority. In terms of additional Governor training offered by FE Associates, it was agreed to look at this in the next academic year.</p>	Clerk	September 2020
<b>10</b>	<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>		
	<p>The detailed report was reviewed and the monitoring report considered. It was explained that there are currently a lot of amber areas where the college has started work but has not yet seen the evidence of impact. The most significant issue is the availability of data and ensuring it is right. The Committee were advised that, currently, clear oversight of data is a risk.</p> <p>In terms of the monitoring report, a challenge from the Committee was that all actions are to have a specific date rather than being referred to as termly or half-termly. They also asked how, for a number of aspects, actions to be measured to ensure they are embedded. It was explained that making sure Canvas is used in the classroom will go some way to do this.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p> <p>(The Campus Directors left the meeting at 6pm)</p>	Executive Director of Adults, HE and Curriculum Support	February 2020
<b>11</b>	<b>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</b>		
	<p>It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis.</p>		

<b>12</b>	<b>AOB</b>		
	There were no items of additional business.		
<b>13</b>	<b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</b>		
	The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting was 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 3pm.		