

**Minutes of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee meeting held (by Microsoft Teams) on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 4 pm**

Governors Present:	Stephen Sawbridge, Chair Denise Brown, Principal and CEO Jason Lancaster Sibgha Amin David Rodgers		
In Attendance:	Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation Nicky Birch, Executive Director of Adults, HE and Curriculum Support Heather Marks, Executive Director of Quality of Education Anth Brannen, Director of Campus Caudon Ryan Johnson, Director of Campus Burslem		
<b>Min. No.</b>		<b>Action by Whom</b>	<b>Action by When</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>		
	Apologies for absence were received from Jo Mountney, Julie Obada and Sue Blake.		
<b>2</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>3</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST JULY 2020</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 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020.  The Chair reminded Governors that today was intended to be a short meeting, with the focus being on the start of year arrangements given the challenges that the college has faced in the last few years. With this as the context, it is important for the Board to be satisfied that staff are 'on top of things'		

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	with efficient and effective plans in place. He acknowledged the very difficult circumstances and commended all of the hard work evident. He reminded the Committee that September 2019 saw difficulties regarding completion of the building works and that this had a significantly negative impact on the start of year, despite staff assurances to the Board. He explained that the main purpose of the meeting today is to receive assurance regarding the quality of the learner experience envisaged for this year.		
<b>4</b>	<b>ACTION PROGRESS REPORT</b>		
	<p>The Committee considered the update provided and a number of points were particularly noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Line 2 – the external safeguarding review has been included as part of the internal audit plan for the 20/21 year and the fieldwork will take place circa January 2021.</li> <li>In relation to line 7, this remains outstanding. The Executive Director Quality of Education confirmed that there has been some learner work completed, however it has not been uploaded for Governors. She confirmed that she would do this immediately after the meeting.</li> </ul>	ED Q of E	20.08.20
<b>5</b>	<b>START OF THE YEAR ARRANGEMENTS</b>		
	<p>The Committee asked for an update specifically in relation to the position regarding exams and student recruitment.</p> <p>In relation to exams a number of points were brought to the Committees attention, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The college has had scrutiny panels in place throughout the assessment period. All assessment grades were reviewed before submitting by the deadlines provided. To date the college has not had any challenge from any Awarding Organisations which should give confidence.</li> <li>GCSE exam results were received in today and therefore the college is able to provide these to students tomorrow. There is a great degree of confidence in terms of outcomes, particularly compared to the prior year.</li> <li>The Principal, as the Head of Centre, indicated that she has had one challenge raised regarding functional skills, with the Awarding Organisation seeking justification regarding the change in cohort size and the impact that this would have had on grades. She confirmed that the query has been passed to the MIS team who have responded appropriately.</li> <li>In relation to CACHE, 20 learners have not yet</li> </ul>		

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	<p>received their grades however the Awarding Organisation have indicated that they have been issued. This is not the case, however it is leading to some negative press. It was confirmed that the same issue occurred last year and the college is currently exploring the position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCSE grades for Maths and English will have significantly improved with the level of high grades for English being 30% and for Maths in the early 20%. The overall pass rate is improved on the prior year. The college position will be improved for overall achievement rates for Maths and English however, because none of the grades will be published this year there will be a lot of work for the college to do to explain this within the SAR.</li> <li>• High number of ESOL learners are on a 'break in learning' and will therefore need to come in in the autumn term to finish. As a consequence of this, the outcomes for adults should remain roughly the same as the prior year.</li> <li>• The executive are awaiting an MIS report on the missing data and this will then be chased down, however there is confidence that the college will see improvements in the overall position.</li> </ul> <p>In general discussion the Committee all agreed that this was really good news for the college and reflects the good work done in year, however the challenge now is to sustain the improvements.</p> <p>In relation to the information provided for CACHE results the Committee asked for greater clarification regarding the numbers. It was explained that it impacts upon 20 learners which is roughly a third of the cohort. The real issue is the fact that the lack of results/certification is preventing them from moving on to the next step. Members of the Committee indicated that other providers were also experiencing similar issues with CACHE.</p> <p>One member of the Committee asked whether there were any issues in relation to Pearson and/or BTECs. It was confirmed that there are not.</p> <p>The Committee then went on to consider recruitment and were advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In terms of applications the college is 16 up on the same point in the prior year, with enquiries continuing to coming in</li> <li>• The expectation is that numbers will be at least the same as last year</li> <li>• Because of changes in processes there were 600 students auto enrolled to progress and it is</li> </ul>		
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	<p>critically important for the college to make sure that they turn up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The college is currently at circa 1,000 16-18 year olds and the expectation is that there will be a lot more walk ins than has previously been the case.</li> <li>• Applications are more buoyant and the challenge now is to ensure that the students arrive for induction</li> <li>• The college started enrolling this week with smaller cohorts and has therefore had a 'dry run'. Everything has gone well with only minor operational issues and therefore there is confidence regarding scaling up tomorrow and providing a high quality student experience.</li> <li>• Staff returned to site on Monday and have been provided with full CPD. The executive are still in dialogue with staff regarding suggestions made and are taking everything on board to ensure an exceptional learner experience.</li> <li>• Keeping warm activities are in place and are effective</li> <li>• The increased use of Canvas shows that there are a number of students that haven't yet enrolled but are accessing information so they can see what is on offer.</li> </ul> <p>In general discussion the Committee all agreed that the advice and guidance provided is key, given the position regarding grades this year. The Principal confirmed that the college is looking at a recovery curriculum including the Stoke fit model. The aim is to reengage and then cement the learning which has already taken place. Staff expressed the view that the recovery curriculum will really support the type of learners who come to college and that this, sitting alongside the Stoke fit model, should lead to sustained improvements. Staff have been given flexibility to look at different ways of teaching and learning, particularly the digital strategy. All acknowledged that a key aspect for this academic year is really knowing each and every learner starting point.</p> <p>The Executive Director Quality of Education confirmed that a learner handbook has been created which includes an opportunity to capture aspirations, hopes and dreams. This will then sit aside assessment plans and schemes of work. As an overview, staff feel a lot more organised and template documentation provided to them is completely aligned with the EIF which includes teacher tool kits which give prompts.</p> <p>The Director of Campus Cauldon then provided an update and confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The college has been investing a lot of time in</li> </ul>		
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	<p>planning, particularly remote learning, whilst continuing to develop quality materials to ensure student engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have been reviewing what access students have at home e.g. mobile phones, laptops etc.</li> <li>• Staff are also looking at ways of recording attendance/engagement when students are not in college</li> <li>• He confirmed that staff remain mindful of the vulnerable learners and are putting in place an offer so that they can come in every week and the expectation is that they will complete 'remote learning' on site with support from staff.</li> <li>• Above all, staff appreciate that learning needs to be accessible and of a high quality</li> </ul> <p>The Director of Campus Burslem provided an update and confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have been looking critically at site logistics</li> <li>• Start times have been staggered to avoid congestion</li> <li>• There are no rigid times set for breaks to allow maximum flexibility. This also helps to manage classroom capacity.</li> <li>• Staff are working hard to ensure clarity regarding induction arrangements, which includes a differentiated approach by the levels and smaller groups than has been the case in previous years.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee were advised that a small group tuition funding allocation has been awarded and staff are currently working out how this can be used to support learners. The college has received a £327k allocation. It was explained that conditions of funding have to be met and that the college has to opt in to the scheme by 16<sup>th</sup> September and therefore plans in relation to this will need to be finalised prior to that date.</p> <p>The Committee asked then for an update in relation to information, advice and guidance and specifically how the college will establish the starting point for learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee were advised that there are a really thorough processes and systems in place</li> <li>• Initial assessments are taking place through applications, enrolment and induction</li> <li>• Staff are ensuring that learners take part in activities on Canvas which will give a good idea of starting points</li> <li>• Initial assessments are also taking place in vocational subjects and not just Maths and English.</li> </ul>		
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	<p>This is more specific to the areas they are studying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starting points and assessments are planned at the start of each lesson which will allow staff to continually check the position.</li> </ul> <p>A question from the Committee was in terms of the use of the Canvas system and particularly how complete is the coverage. They indicated that at the next meeting they would like to know the take up statistics.</p> <p>A question and challenge from the Committee was in terms of how the college quality assures the learning resources made available to students. It was explained that the college has a sampling process in place and will continue with this. In addition, the quality team review work scrutiny and feedback. It was confirmed that prior to the summer the college was able to compile packs and pieces of work for scrutiny. This showed that, overall there were some really good areas e.g. sport and public services. The intention is to share these as part of the support package to all staff.</p> <p>A challenge from one member of the Committee was not to constrain staff and to provide a framework within which they are able to respond, adapt and experiment in the new world. They urged all managers to help staff feel unafraid and give them confidence to approach things differently. The Committee were advised that the morale in college is good and in fact staff have welcomed observations just to check where they are, this is part and parcel of the culture change to coaching. A challenge from the Committee was to ensure that there is a rich sense of this within the 2019/20 SAR.</p> <p>A challenge from the Committee was that the college being able to accurately assess all student ability in the first 42 days is critical. Staff confirmed that this is a priority and that they are looking at how to provide Maths and English support even if a student comes with a grade 4, as it could potentially be a weak grade 4. The college is expecting circa 5% more learners arriving with grade 4's and there is a need this year to carefully consider if they can complete their programme of learning i.e. the strength of the grade. The Committee challenged and expressed the view that the college could reconsider the resources available to provide conceptual study seminars. All agreed that the catch up of lost learning is critical.</p> <p>The Committee asked what the colleges approach will be to those learners who arrive and are quite vague in terms of what they want to do and particularly what is the college anticipating in relation to this. It was confirmed that the college is planning a pre-apprenticeship programme where traineeships will be offered for those who are disappointed</p>	ED Q of E	Sept. 2020
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	<p>not to get an apprenticeship. In addition to this, the college has built in a 'swap don't drop week' and are encouraging students to actively think about whether they are on the right courses. It was confirmed that regardless of whoever turns up there is a member of staff who can deal with a query. Signposting correctly is a key aspect for staff with clarity provided at every point in the process. It was confirmed that this will also tie in to social and emotional learning with the aim being to remove any barriers to learning which may include learner mindset as well.</p> <p>The Committee asked whether there were any transport issues envisaged. Staff acknowledged that there needed to be more work done in relation to assessing this but, that said, the college started early in ensuring forms were sent out to students regarding potential financial support required. It was acknowledged that the college needs to do more work with the local bus companies, in particular what they offer and the implications on timetables. The Committee were reminded that the college does not run any transport directly and therefore relies on local bus companies and routes. They confirmed that all staff are communicating and reiterating the government guidance regarding public transport.</p> <p>A challenge from one member of the Committee was to anticipate the risks of schools encouraging students to stay local. Whilst this was acknowledged it is believed that the college is less vulnerable in this area as there is a limited vocational offer in schools in the area. In addition to this, one week on and one week off will be more manageable. It is not expected that transport will impact upon enrolment, however it was confirmed that this needs to be carefully monitored in terms of attendance. Staff confirmed that students will be surveyed to see if transport is a barrier. If any students do not turn up to enrol then staff will investigate whether public transport is the issue. The expectation is to provide some individualised support initially.</p> <p>The Committee asked whether staff have considered the 'what ifs' and how far the college can respond to eventualities. It was confirmed that staff constantly monitor what is happening locally including the infection rates and the local authority's response. All agreed that it was critically important to keep on top of this. Members of the executive all accept that there is a continuing need for dialogue and to collectively come up with ideas and suggestions. Whilst the executive might not have all of the answers it is important to keep an open mind and be aware.</p> <p>A challenge from one member of the Committee was in terms of how rapidly a local flare up can evolve and the need for some contingency planning in relation to this. He expressed</p>		
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	<p>the view that there may be a significant effort to vaccinate and education settings may be brought in to respond rapidly as the NHS staff do not have sufficient capacity.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the colleges ability to track and trace is a concern for the executive and particularly as it relies upon student compliance. The college is putting in extra resources but is predominantly dealing with students who are less concerned regarding their own safety. She indicated that the executive aren't yet completely confident that all aspects are covered in this area.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>6</b>	<b>COMMITTEE REVIEW 2020</b>		
	<p>The Clerk introduced this item and summarised the email feedback received including the suggestion that this committee might benefit from reports being shorter, focused and structured and, where possible, keeping reports to a short length focused on issue, brief description, actions and impact (expected and actual). The Committee all agreed that it was important to save time for staff and there was not the expectation that they would be spending significant amounts of time writing reports that they would not be otherwise producing in any event.</p> <p>The Committee considered the work plan presented and approved in principle, with the addition of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner Progress – being periodically reviewed over the year</li> <li>• Employer Voice – this is critically important over the next months and the college needs to make sure that it is serving the district</li> <li>• Staff Voice</li> <li>• Internal Progression</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that reports should not be prepared specifically for CQ&amp;S and should not be more than is provided for the executive. The Principal confirmed that papers provided for CQ&amp;S do align with what is needed on a day to day basis and expressed the view that there should be more regular reporting in relation to key aspects such as retention and attendance. All agreed that reports should not be prepared for the sake of reports and all agreed that the governance arrangements need to add value and therefore reports should be sharp and focused.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>7</b>	<b>AOB</b>		

	There were no items of additional business.		
<b>8</b>	<b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</b>		
	The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting was 17 <sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 3pm.  Meeting closed at 5.10pm.		

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