

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE
held on 19 July 2018 at 9.30 am

¹PRESENT J Blaber (St); N Hopkins (E); T Jackson (P); R Palmer (E); H Perry (St);
C Wilson (E).

In attendance: N Bull, Quality Manager
C James, Dean of Higher Education
J Milburn, Deputy Principal, Curriculum
M Simmons, Deputy Principal
B Stokes, Head of Centre, Andover College
S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

48. J Blaber reported that his mother was employed at Eastleigh College. The Committee noted that this would be updated on his annual declaration of interests.

MINUTES

49. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Committee Chair.

Higher Education (min 20/18)

50. The Committee congratulated the HE teams on the award of a TEF “Gold” (Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework).

Use of Reasonable Force Policy (min 37/18)

51. The Deputy Principal confirmed that provision of appropriate training for those staff who might encounter the exceptional circumstances when some use of force might be required for safety reasons would kept under review by the new Deputy Principal, Curriculum and by the Head of Support Services. In discussion, Members suggested that training used for skills required for interventions at special schools could be relevant.

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

52. The Committee had received the progress report of the Dean of Higher Education on HE learner performance and the learner experience.

53. The Committee had received the report of the Dean of Higher Education on the current progress of HE learners and the in-year monitoring and improvement of the learner experience. (The Dean of Higher Education corrected the date for the performance data in Section 2 as “at 6 July 2018”.)

54. Discussing the performance indicators, the Committee noted that current levels of attendance and retention were slightly lower than at the same point last year (86%

¹ (C) = Co-opted; (E) = External; (P) = Principal; (S) = Staff; (St) = Student

average attendance for undergraduates and retention just over 90%) and that the analysis of withdrawals indicated that these were almost entirely first year students due to a range of social and personal factors.

55. Members sought more information about the types of issues for students, in particularly in relation to students accessing DSA (Disability Support Allowance). The Dean of Higher Education set out the challenges faced by students under the new DSA system and the support which College staff were providing students in applying for DSA and giving interim support.
56. In terms of overall retention, the Dean of Higher Education confirmed that the times at which students left were spread across the year, though with a greater number in the period immediately after December which was possibly linked to the fees schedule. This was echoed by the Student Governor from his observations.
57. Vet Nursing retention had previously been discussed by the Committee and the Dean of Higher Education reported that there had been an improvement in Vet Nursing retention this year following a change to the course structure to move work placements until later in the year when students were more established and confident on the course.
58. The Committee noted that the initial exam board results demonstrated high levels of achievement, with some data still to be completed, and the Dean of Higher Education confirmed the results were similar to last year.
59. The Committee also noted that student feedback continued to contribute significantly to improve HE provision and discussed the results of the Summer Term Learner Survey, seeking more information about two courses which had performed less well and the actions being taken by management.
60. In terms of external quality review, in addition to the TEF Gold Award already noted, the Committee noted that the application for registration with the Office for Students (OfS) had been submitted by the OfS deadline and that the Dean of Higher Education had responded to some queries from the OfS on the Access and Participation Plan, with the outcome expected in early September. The Annual Provider Review had been deferred until the implementation of the OfS regulatory framework was complete.
61. The Dean of Higher Education summarised the verbal feedback had been received from the External Examiner at the June 2018 Unit Assessment Board, with formal written reports pending. The Committee also noted the summary of the Board of Studies and ASQER review in March and July which had been attended by the current Committee Chair and the Committee Chair designate respectively.
62. The Deputy Principal commended the creation of the HE Faculty and the differentiation of University Centre Sparsholt in delivering the teaching excellent recognised by the TEF Gold. The Dean of Higher Education agreed that it had improved the consistency of experience for the HE students, while noting that connections remained with Further Education provision.
63. The Dean of Higher Education reported the disappointing decline in applications year on year despite student achievement and TEF recognition, although there had been a growth in Masters applications. The Staff Governor explained that excellent specialist

post graduate study at an HE institution was often also a positive indicator for prospective undergraduates.

64. The Committee noted that the marketing plans for HE had been discussed in detail at the Curriculum, Employers & Market Requirements Committee meeting and the Principal reported new HE signage being installed at the campus over the summer.

FURTHER EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

65. The Committee had received the progress report of the Deputy Principal on FE and Apprenticeships in-year performance indicators and progression against the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Committee had also received the latest Quality Healthcheck report (July 2018).
66. The Deputy Principal explained that while the Ofsted inspection in February 2018 (“Good”) had provided a very solid base for the College to further develop and improve outcomes for all learners, current data and outcomes of recent internal Quality Reviews indicated a likely decrease in overall achievement rates for learners, primarily due to a declining retention rate but also with some poor examination achievement in Animal Management, and this would impact league tables. The Deputy Principal reported that the headline retention and indicative pass data provided would be analysed further and reported together with the A Level results in more detail to the Committee, alongside the Self-Assessment Report, in November 2018. The new Deputy Principal Curriculum would be working closely with the Quality Manager on scrutiny of in-year performance data.
67. The Committee discussed the performance indicators, seeking further information on the decline in retention. While recognising that anxiety and other student mental health concerns remained challenging, the Deputy Principal believed that leadership to ensure delivery of quality teaching and learning could make a difference for most learners. The Deputy Principal gave examples of curriculum areas which had previously been discussed with the Committee as requiring some improved and the outcomes of the actions taken.
68. In terms of exam achievement, the Deputy Principal explained some of the complexities beneath the achievement rates with the main issue being the unexpected difficulties with the Synoptic assessment at level 2 and 3 in Animal Management. There had been lessons learnt in the delivery and preparedness for synoptic assessments and the Faculty was assisting progress from level 2 to level 3. The Deputy Principal noted, however, that pass rates had been better in some other curriculum areas. The Committee discussed the actions being taken by management and external comparisons where available.
69. The Committee noted that the overall quality of teaching and learning continued to be assessed internally as good, with further work around the strength of planning and integration of diversity and personal development concepts, as well as literacy and numeracy skills, in teaching in more technical areas needed for the College to be judged outstanding.
70. Responding to a question from the Staff Governor about the use of learning coaches, the Head of Centre, Andover College explained how the best practitioners were being used to share practice in the areas where it was most needed.
71. The Committee noted that Sparsholt College apprenticeship performance had remained stable overall, and was set to improve at Andover College, despite significant changes and

challenges within the apprenticeships policy and funding landscape during the academic year. It was also noted that associate apprenticeship performance had improved slightly overall and that actions had been taken with the three associates previously identified as problematic to ensure the majority of learners completed their learning by the end of the academic year.

72. The Committee noted the latest data in the Quality Performance Healthcheck, commending the very high attendance figures English and Maths GCSE exams.
73. The Deputy Principal explained that the format had been designed around tracking progress against the 2014 Ofsted report and that the Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality Manager would be updating the format for future reports.

CURRICULUM DELIVERY & LEARNER INVOLVEMENT

74. The Committee had received the updated Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Policy, which was presented for approval under authority delegated by the Board of Governors, and the updated Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Strategy.
75. The Committee noted the intention for a future review to consider further the relationship between the two documents and report back to the Committee the following year.
76. The Deputy Principal noted that the previous stand-alone Learner Involvement Strategy, as regards Further Education, had been updated and incorporated into the Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Policy. HE student involvement would be covered in separate HE policies.
77. The Committee discussed the role of the FE Student Councils on the Sparsholt and Andover campuses, noting that these provided one of the opportunities for the student voice to contribute to the development of College strategies and policies. Another was feedback via student surveys and the Deputy Principal, Curriculum reported that the Curriculum Leadership Groups was discussing actions to increase participation in student surveys.
78. Asked about the selection process for student governors, the Clerk to the Corporation explained the role of the Student Councils and the Committee agreed that it would be clearer to refer to “selection”, rather than “election”, in the policy as elections were not required in the case of a single nomination.
79. **Resolved** – that the Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Policy be approved with the further amendment of the description of the selection of student governors.
80. The Deputy Principal summarised the strategic approach for quality improvement in 2018-2019 which had been discussed with the Curriculum Leadership Group.
81. The Committee discussed the proposed inclusion of an attendance target of 93%, which the Deputy Principal explained would be challenging but provided an aspiration for staff. Members recognised the correlation between attendance and achievement and the value in setting a high target while also understanding where there were reasons for the target not being achieved.

82. The Committee discussed the overall set of proposed objectives, noting that the text largely provided statements of intent rather than quantifiable objectives. The Deputy Principal was resistant to adding specific measures to the College-wide objectives, noting that the quality performance reports provided detailed reporting of data to both management and governors, and the Committee was satisfied to agree the proposed approach on the basis that it would support College leaders in delivering quality improvement activity with their teams. It was suggested that the Section be retitled “Strategy Focus” and that the bullet points under 3.1 be re-ordered.
83. The Deputy Principal explained the thinking behind the proposed cultural and values message of “Be Identified, Participate and Respect others and the community” (IPR), complementing the Prevent and Safeguarding agendas.
84. The Staff Governors raised a number of questions about the section on Teaching and Learning Observations (TALO) and the wording of the Action Plan, suggesting more differentiation between informal and formal observations and a more positive approach to description actions in relation to “minor issues”. The Deputy Principal agreed this be revised.
85. The Quality Manager reported the development of TALO training for CPD over the summer and the Deputy Principal noted the ambition to hold a teaching and learning conference for all academic staff the following year.
86. Members welcomed the inclusion of External Quality Reviews and the role definitions.
87. **Resolved** – that the Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Strategy be approved on the basis that the Deputy Principal, Curriculum was delegated to make final changes to address the points agreed during the discussion.

COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK

88. The Committee had received the annual report of the Deputy Principal on Complaints, Comments and Compliments.
89. Asked by the Committee Chair how the number of complaints compared to the previous year, the Deputy Principal reported that the numbers were similar year on year at 100, split evenly across the curriculum and other corporate services. Compliments received and recorded had increased year on year.
90. The Committee noted the assessment of the Deputy Principal that the new policy of dealing with complaints had been effective. Updated FE and HE complaints policies had been approved by the Board of Governors on 12 July 2018.
91. The Committee also noted the Deputy Principal’s conclusion that analysis of the complaints received suggested that there were no trends which suggested any structural disadvantage or systematic failure, and that all managers were in the process of undertaking training on responding to complaints to further increase the College’s effectiveness in handling any complaints.

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

92. The Committee had received Ofsted' report on its inspection of the College's residential provision under the social care common inspection framework in May 2018 which had concluded the provision was "outstanding" in all categories.
93. The Committee discussed the Ofsted report and commended College teams on the outstanding findings, including in relation to safeguarding of the residential students.
94. The Safeguarding Lead Governor reported his impressions from speaking to residential and student support team members during his recent visit to the College's residential areas, including in relation to staffing changes, noting that there had been no suggestion that members of staff were complacent about the need to maintain outstanding standards of care.
95. The Deputy Principal confirmed that management was taking action in relation to the two minor areas for development identified by Ofsted.
96. Referring to a reference in the report to the programme of activities and social events, the Principal explained that the duties of the Activity Officer going forward would include attendance at evening activities. Additionally, the Principal explained that, while not covered by the report, management had decided to introduce an electronic system for students to register when they left campus.

COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE

97. The Committee had received the report of the Clerk providing background information and a series of questions to prompt members in discussing the Committee's performance in 2017-18.
98. Although attendance had been high during 2017-18, the Committee agreed to keep under review whether there might be a need to increase the number of members, for example through co-opting a new member, during the course of the next academic year either to bring in particular external experience or to ensure sufficient members were present at each meeting for the Committee to continue to perform effectively.
99. The Committee discussed a number of the duties set out in the terms of reference and were satisfied the terms of reference continued to be relevant and were supported by the cycle of reporting from management during the year.
100. The Committee noted the progress made to date in reporting "value added" measures to the Committee and the Principal explained that changes to the City and Guilds qualifications would enable value added analysis of the results in two years' time. There was a commitment to extend value added reporting via Landex or ALPs once the value added measures were in place through the changes to the City and Guilds reporting of grading.
101. It was noted that systems for safeguarding learners, including in relation to Prevent, were also covered by the Wellbeing Committee and by reports direct to the Board of Governors. The Deputy Principal reported that the College had completed a Prevent audit for Hampshire County Council and that this would be reported to the Committee at its meeting in November.

102. This was the final meeting of the Committee attended by the Deputy Principal before he left the College and the Committee Chair noted the gratitude expressed by the Chairman and the Board of Governors meeting for the Deputy Principal's considerable contribution to the College and thanked him in particular for this role in supporting the Quality & Standards Committee.
103. The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.