

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE
held on 20 June 2019 at 9.30 am

¹PRESENT J Blaber (St); T Jackson (P); A Owen (E); R Palmer (E); C Wilson (E).

In attendance: J Milburn, Deputy Principal - Curriculum
R Price, Head of Learning & Quality
S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES

44. Apologies were received from H Perry.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

45. There were no interests to declare.

MINUTES

46. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Committee Chair.

Safeguarding (min 5/19)

47. The Committee asked if there was a further update to discussions with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to improve the process for identifying ‘looked after’ children on their enrolment at the College in order to support their educational attainment. The Principal confirmed that HCC’s Director of Children’s Services had been provided with a briefing on the support that could be provided for ‘looked after’ children and had met with the Hampshire college principals and discussed the processes which HCC use for obtaining a child’s consent and, if not given, withhold information from a college. The Principal added that it was hoped a solution might be imminent given that he and the Director of Funding & Information understood that this was not in the spirit or the letter of the regulation of the ICO, where the best interests of the child, rather than their expressed preference alone, should be pre-eminent in Children’s Services information sharing with schools and colleges. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum reported that, at this point of the year, the College had identified 34 enrolled learners as ‘looked after’ children.

48. It was also noted that HCC had a Virtual College to support post 16 care leavers as they transitioned into education, employment and training.

HE – Access & Participation (min 23/19)

49. It was noted that the Board of Governors had constituted a HE Governors Working Group to oversee the development and submission of the Access and participation plan to the Office for Students (OfS) on behalf of the Board.

FE – Learner Experience (min 36/19)

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

50. Referring to the actions taken during the year to address incidences of substance misuse by a small number of students, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum confirmed that the student conduct and performance procedures had been updated for 2019-20 to be more specific as to what actions led to a final stage 3 procedure and referred to the proposed introduction of a Stop and Search a Learner Policy. The Principal reassured the Committee that the College took a proactive and transparent approach to preventing and, if necessary, addressing any incidences of drug use and that there were no indications that drug use by students was a widespread problem.

FE – Performance (min 38/19)

51. It was noted that Ofqual had yet to reach a decision regarding the College's complaint about the City & Guilds Level 2 Animal Management exams in 2018 and the Principal continued to follow this up with Ofqual on a regular basis. Asked by a Member about the regulator's powers, the Principal explained that Ofqual could ask an awarding organisation to take a course of action to put right a negative impact if the organisation had not acted correctly. The College had proposed that the exams in question be remarked.
52. The Committee expressed strong dissatisfaction at the length of time taken by Ofqual to provide a finding in relation to the College's complaint.
53. The Principal reported that City & Guilds had responded to feedback from land-based colleges about the issues in relation to synoptic assessments in Animal Management and had established a working group which would include a representative from the College. It was noted that the synoptic assessments presented particular challenges to colleges with large cohorts of students because of the assessment methodology and that this continued to present a risk to learner achievement, despite the actions taken with the College in preparing learners for the assessments. The College was assessing alternative qualifications for animal management, although there were limited options and the College had a good experience with City & Guilds in other areas of the curriculum.

HIGHER EDUCATION

54. The Committee had received the progress report of the Assistant Principal - Higher Education (HE) on current trends in quality, performance and recruitment for Higher Education provision at the College. In the absence of the Assistant Principal - HE, the Principal presented the report.
55. The Committee noted that current levels of retention were better than the previous year and exceeded 90% in all curriculum area, and that attendance was virtually identical year on year. However, Members queried the lower attendance rates for students repeating units in some areas. The Principal assured the Committee that the teams would be doing everything possible to encourage attendance.
56. Referring to the attendance by course tables, the Committee requested that the numbers of students per cohort/course be provided alongside future data to assist Members in assessing the significance of the data reported.
57. The Committee noted that student surveys indicated consistently high levels of satisfaction (94% this year, with 54% completion rate for the summer term). Student feedback continued to contribute significantly to the improvement and development of HE provision, with comments consistently focused on enhancing HE facilities on campus,

but more needed to be done in improving attendance at Student Association meetings in 2019-20.

58. Members highlighted the ongoing student feedback about HE facilities, recognising that there were resource constraints to developing a new HE building but questioning whether there were more feasible alternatives which could be implemented sooner. The Principal and Deputy Principal – Curriculum confirmed that the students' concerns were being taken seriously and reported examples of actions taken to provide 24-hour access to the library for HE students and to make some improvements to the current HE study building. It was also noted that the proposed Animal Health and Welfare Centre would provide more dedicated HE research facilities and that the new Ecotricity funded 'Education Building' would have a predominant HE focus, for research and with classroom 'pods' planned. Members noted that the visibility of new HE facilities could also help inspire FE students to progress to HE.
59. The Committee noted the summary of the Board of Studies and ASQER review in April and welcomed the report that the structure of the Board of Studies would be adjusted in 2019-20 to ensure full review and reflection of programme delivery and development by the whole teaching team, with a more stringent approach to defining actions. Additionally, while late return of work had been negligible this year, an issue had been identified with the first year unit, Academic Skills, which was being addressed.
60. Members sought more information to understand the reported decline in MSc applications and the Principal acknowledged that this was a concern but that management hoped to see a reverse of the decline in future years in Equine with improvements made over the last two years to the delivery of Level 3 FE Equine supporting progression to HE.
61. Asked about the applications for the new HNCs available at Andover College from September 2019, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum gave the Committee the latest numbers, which were over the minimum needed to give the students a positive experience. The Performing Arts HNC had been planned to ensure synergies with other performing arts courses at Andover College to enable, for example, shared productions. A Member noted that local HNC offers could also help to broaden access to HE for a range of local students. A HE study space and classroom had been identified for the HNC students on the Andover College campus.
62. The Committee noted that achievement data and External Examiner feedback was not currently available because the Unit Assessment Board and Exam Board had not yet met. A headline analysis of the results would be provided to the Board of Governors meeting, together with headline data from the NSS survey results due to be published on 3 July, and a full analysis presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

FURTHER EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

FE In-Year Performance

63. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal – Curriculum on in-year performance of FE and Employer Responsive learners in 2018-19 and progress in relation to the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2018-19.

64. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum provided an overview of the key points in relation to performance data, highlighting areas of action and improvement and providing detailed examples.
65. The Committee welcomed the positive progress against the QIP and the evidence that the College was on target to self-assess the standard of education for learners on FE programmes as Good in 2018-19. Although it was early to predict achievement rates, particularly given that results for external assessments were not yet known, improvements in retention and attendance rates year-on-year indicated an increase in overall achievement rates for main programmes. Of particular note was the high retention of ‘looked after’ children and learners qualifying for Free School Meals and for High Needs Funding.
66. The Committee recognised further improvements were being sought in some areas and, where issues had been identified, such as external assessment requirements and timetabling management in Animal Management and retention in Apprenticeships, actions had been identified and implemented to address these going forward.
67. Responding to questions from Members, the Head of Learning & Quality provided more information about the actions in Construction and Hair and Beauty at Andover to revise the curriculum offer and support improvements in delivery, the use of internal formal assessments in the first year of A Levels to support the student’s progress and focus on value added measures, and confirmation that the BTEC L3 Applied Science sampling had been resolved and released. Members also discussed with management the Horticulture offer and options for the future, in particular in relation to RHS qualifications and the impact on 19+ achievement rates of students electing not to take the exams.
68. The Committee welcomed the review of TALO (teaching and learning observations) and the focus on a new TALO process for 2019-20 to provide more timely and effective in-year feedback and support for the Assistant Principals and to increase focus on higher risk areas. This would include a role for structured discussion of key areas with student focus groups.
69. The Committee endorsed the clarity of the report and the evidence that College management had a clear and effective plan of continuing improvement based on detailed analysis of available information.

FE Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Strategy

70. The Committee had received from the Deputy Principal – Curriculum the FE Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Strategy for 2019-20. The Committee noted that section 3.2 on study programmes would be updated to add L2 functional skills as an alternative target alongside GCSE English and mathematics, following a change in government policy.
71. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained the context of the updated strategy, noting the continued focus on further quality improvements and recognition of challenges in terms of the manageability of staff workload. The 2018-19 SAR and the new QIP actions would follow Ofsted’s new Education Inspection Framework (EIF), with staff trained on this ahead of the new academic year.
72. Members reviewed and discussed the changes to the TALO procedures, including questioning how the assessment of lesson criteria (such as ‘beyond expected’) would be standardised. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained the involvement of both

quality specialists and curriculum/faculty experts in the TALOs and that TALO team members brought additional objectivity to the process through their experiences as external quality reviewers for other colleges.

73. The Committee Chair welcomed the evidence of enhanced rigor and focus in the TALO process, while reflecting on the need for a supportive and collegiate culture, with mentoring relationships to help to develop skills; recognising the challenge of teaching at the highest standards and the understanding that staff members had various levels of confidence and experience.
74. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum concurred that TALOs should provide a support and development mechanism and noted that there would be a notice period of 3 days before a TALO and consultation with the relevant Assistant Principal to understand any special circumstances for rescheduling a TALO of an individual member of staff. Additionally, the Head of Learning & Quality reported the development of Create Hubs on each campus, where he would be based along with the Teaching Improvement Manager and the ILT team to provide advice, share good practice and peer driven resources and practice teaching techniques. This responded to a desire fed back by staff for a separate space.
75. The Principal reported that the new TALO process had been supported by the Curriculum Leadership Group.
76. Asked how governors could assess progress, the Head of Learning & Quality explained that post observational reports would provide analysis and follow-up.
77. Members also discussed with management how the TALO reports would be used and the whether there would be any benefit in introducing some form of comparison between areas, noting that this could have unintended consequences. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum confirmed there were no current plans to rate or compare TALOs in this way.
78. Asked about the planned frequency of documenting in-year learner progress reviews and whether this allowed sufficient time between reviews to make progress, the Head of Learning & Quality detailed the scheduling of the four review points, explaining how these fitted with the teaching and learning schedule and varied in type from an early check in October, to written reports in November and February and focus on next steps and progression in May. Consideration was being given to the processes to avoid an onerous increase to teaching workloads.
79. The Committee also noted the Professional Learner initiative and Ofsted's expectations regarding student behaviour.
80. **Resolved** – that the FE Curriculum Delivery and Quality Improvement Strategy 2019-20 be approved.

STRATEGIC PLAN

81. The Committee had received from the Principal the draft sections of the College's Three Year Strategic Plan which were relevant to the Committee's terms of reference, together with the annual milestones objectives relating to curriculum which had been reviewed by the Curriculum, Employers & Marketing Requirements Committee.
82. Referring to objectives for achievement rates, the Principal noted that performance in 2017-18, as illustrated in the government's national achievement rates tables (NARTs) and compared to other land-based colleges, had not met the College's expectations and was in line with the findings of the College's SAR. Members discussed the reasons behind

the results and the level of improvement required to meet the proposed Annual Milestone Objective to move into the upper half of land-based colleges. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum summarised the analysis, noting that the performance issues had predominantly been at L1 and with 19+ learners and that these were covered by the QIP.

83. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum undertook to provide a report to the Committee analysing the College’s performance in the national achievement rate tables over 3 years, once the 2018-19 data was published in March 2020.
84. The Principal also highlight the Annual Milestone Objective in relation to the industry work placements and the importance of delivering the Study Programme requirements within the curriculum across the College.
85. The Committee noted that the Principal would continue to report to the full Board termly against delivery of the Annual Milestone Objectives.
86. **Resolved** – that Objective 1--6 and the related Annual Milestone Objectives be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval.

COLLEGE POLICIES

87. The Committee had received from the Deputy Principal – Curriculum proposed new learner related policies – a Missing from Education Policy and a Stop and Search a Student Policy.
88. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained that the Hampshire Safeguarding Children’s annual audit included reference to a Missing from Education Policy and that, although this was only compulsory for schools, management considered it good practice for the College to have a policy on how to work effectively with external partners and agencies to safeguard children at risk. The policy included a clear list of circumstances when a referral to Children’s Services and/or the police should be made.
89. The Committee noted that the reference to the Children Act in section 7.3 would be updated to include 2004 and agreed that the original proposed title “Missing and Absent in Education” be revised to “Missing from Education” for clarity.
90. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained it was proposed to introduce a Stop and Search a Student Policy so that there were clear procedures available if needed. Although the College was much less at risk from concerns such as knife crime as some colleges located in large cities, the policy covered a range of prohibited items. Training was being put in place for managers to undertake stop and searches, if required, and the policy was designed to avoid putting staff at risk. The policy was also clear that a student’s consent was required and the alternative actions that could be taken if consent was not given.
91. The Committee agreed that section 4.1 be revised to allow for any member of the SLT to give permission to a particular member of staff to undertake a search in the absence of a manager. Asked about the basis in law for the policy, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum referred to authority under the Education Act 1996 explained at section 1.1.
92. Responding to a Member’s concerns about how reasonable grounds for a search would be decided, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum undertook to check the Student Code of Conduct covered false accusations by students.

93. Challenged by a Member as to the appropriateness of the procedure for searches at 4.2, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum agreed to reference to gender.
94. **Resolved** – that the Missing from Education Policy and Stop and Search a Student Policy be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval, as amended.

COMPLAINTS

95. The Committee had received the annual report of the Deputy Principal - Curriculum on Complaints, Comments and Compliments.
96. The Committee noted that the Complaints (and other Feedback) Management Policy continued to provide the framework for handling complaints. The total number of complaints was similar to the previous year with the majority relating to disciplinary matters in curriculum areas or to transport matters. The Committee discussed the analysis, noting the steps which had been taken to address issues relating to course organisation in Animal Studies and the commitment to reinforcing behavioural expectations from the start of the Autumn term.
97. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained that only a low number of compliments were reported as they currently tended not to be logged centrally with the Quality team.

HEALTHCHECK REPORT

98. The Committee received the most recent College Healthcheck report received by governors (2019/05), including key performance indicators for quality.
99. Responding to a question about attendance rates, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained that the English and Maths data was now incorporated within main curriculum areas to support a culture of shared responsibility. It was noted, for example, that attendance for English and Maths in the Motor Vehicle area had improved through the innovative and proactive approach by the Curriculum Leader in finding ways to motivate individual learners and this type of good practice would be shared with other areas.

COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE

100. 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 2018-19, together with proposed revisions to the Committee's terms of reference.
101. The Clerk reported that the revised terms of reference reflected the requirements of the OfS regulatory framework for HE and would be further reviewed in light of Ofsted's EIF before being presented to the Board of Governors for approval.
102. There were no matters of concern identified regarding the membership, attendance or schedule, agendas and reporting to the Committee and Members endorsed the continuation of R Palmer as the Committee Chair in 2019-20, subject to the approval of the Board.
103. The meeting concluded at 12.40 pm.