

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE
held on 13 February 2020 at 9.30 am

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

In attendance: Caroline James, Assistant Principal HE (mins 1 to 14)
J Milburn, Deputy Principal - Curriculum
R Price, Head of Learning & Quality
S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

1. There were no interests to declare.

MINUTES

2. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Committee Chair with two amendments:
 - a) Minute 107: the addition of “and the appeals process exhausted” after “if the appeal was unsuccessful...”;
 - b) Minute 113: “80%” revised to “89%”.

FE Learner Performance (Min 106/19)

3. The Principal reported that the College had not, as yet, responded to Ofqual’s decision not to uphold the College’s complaint about the results of the City & Guilds Animal Care assessments in 2018. Separate to the appeals process, City & Guilds had agreed to remark the examination scripts in question and the College expected to hear the outcome shortly.

Self Assessment Report (Min 133/19)

4. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum confirmed that the 2018-19 Self Assessment Report (SAR) had been submitted to Ofsted in January.
5. There were no other matters arising not covered by items on the agenda.

HIGHER EDUCATION

6. The Committee had received the progress report of the Assistant Principal - Higher Education (HE) on current progress of HE students and the in-year monitoring and improvement of the student experience, including attendance and retention data.
7. The Committee noted that current levels of retention and attendance indicated that the performance of the HE curriculum was not at risk and that student feedback continued to be a major influence to improve and develop HE provision. However, attendance levels in all but one subject area were lower than at the same time last year, with poorer

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

attendance amongst the first year cohort and students who were repeating units. The Assistant Principal HE explained that the underlying issues were understood and that a range of actions and interventions were in place, recognising the correlation between attendance and achievement and the increased challenges relating to widening access and participation. It was also noted that, in all subject areas, residential students had better attendance rates than non-residential students.

8. Members welcomed the focus on attendance and discussed with the Assistant Principal HE in some detail the challenges for students stepping up from FE to HE and the actions being taken to support them, including related behavioural patterns such as the last minute submission of assignments and resilience. The Assistant Principal HE noted that there might be a need to consider additional staffing resources, such as the use of specialist tutors focused on attendance as in FE. The Staff Governor shared examples of actions being taken at Andover College to shape the delivery of the first year of the A Level curriculum to increase the early engagement of new students and to build their resilience during the year.
9. The Committee noted the completion rate for the autumn survey of new students (94%), with an overall satisfaction level of 96% (equal to that of the previous year), and the summary of feedback from the Student Association meetings. The Assistant Principal – HE also highlighted that the response rate for the National Student Survey (NSS) has reached 74% so far and met the minimum threshold. In general, student feedback continued to be a major influence in improving and developing HE provision.
10. Responding to Members' question about acknowledging student feedback and disseminating responses to student queries, the Assistant Principal – HE gave some examples on actions being taken and the balance to be achieved between meaningful feedback and over-communicating.
11. The Committee welcomed the MSc exam board outcomes and the positive report of the External Examiner and the good progress in relation to the ASQER actions, noting the feedback from the University partner in his annual Report. The Committee also noted the Periodic Review with the University of Portsmouth scheduled for March to review and revalidate all the degree programmes and that preparations were in place for a re-accreditation event with the RCVS for Vet Nursing provision in May. It was also noted that the new FdSc and BSc Agriculture had received Stage 1 validation, with the full validation event due in May.
12. The Assistant Principal – HE reported the work under way in relation to the Access and Participation Plan (APP) to embed data collection and share best practice and teaching strategies with Landex members. Members recognised the challenges and commended the approach to collaborating with other colleges.
13. The Assistant Principal HE highlighted the lower full-time applicant numbers year-on-year and the continued strategic focus on marketing and internal progression as a priority for the College. The most substantial decrease was in applications for Vet Nursing and the Principal reported that the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) had reviewed this and had not identified any reputational issues in relation to the College's offer. There had, however, been some press coverage in the Autumn about the relatively low pay of vet nurses which it was speculated might have been taken into account by schools' careers advisors.

14. The Committee also noted that increased regulation, meeting the requirements of the validating partner and statutory body requirements placed a continuing emphasis on the development and maintenance of robust procedures and processes.

FURTHER EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

15. The Committee had the report of the Deputy Principal – Curriculum and Head of Learning & Quality on FE and Apprenticeship in-year performance indicators, including progress against the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2019-20.
16. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum introduced the report, highlighting key points, including in relation to retention and attendance at Sparsholt College and Andover College, including the achievement rates for Looked After Children, and Learner Satisfaction data.
17. The Committee Chair commended the clear evidence of triangulation between the data, the background explanations provided and the focus of management actions.
18. *Action* - In response to the Committee's request, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum undertook to also add the cohort size to the data retention and attendance data tables in future reports so that members could more easily assessed the relative significance of the data reported.
19. Members questioned the Learner Satisfaction data in relation to Foundation (English and Maths) at Sparsholt College and Andover College and to Pathways learners. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum gave some specific examples of some the challenges in relation to the expectations and behaviours of some of the Pathways learners and how the College sought to support them and to ensure the safety and quality of education for other learners.
20. The Head of Learning & Quality provided a detailed progress report on the TALO (teaching and learning observations) for 2019-20, noting that the internal quality review (IQRs) now mirrored Ofsted's 'deep dive' inspection process. These provided a clear picture and enabled more intervention and support to be put in place. It was also noted that, as part of CPD, College Teaching Projects had been launched with the plan for curriculum areas to share their project, its implementation and the impact on teaching and learning (including learner feedback) at a CPD conference in June.
21. Asked about how the post TALO summary reports were used with the teaching teams, the Head of Learning and Quality explained the reports were disseminated to Curriculum Leaders and used in one-to-ones and at team meetings. Staff whose teaching had been observed were also given immediate feedback cards and there was largely positive feedback to the new TALO processes. This was supported by the Staff Governor.
22. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum also reported that proposals were being costed to be considered by the SLT in the summer term to give remission time for experienced staff to be released from some teaching responsibilities to coach other staff.
23. Members welcomed the clarity and transparency of the reporting on TALOs, and the evidence of the TALOs being used to inform good practice and address areas requiring future development, commending the overall improvement in the approach to FE quality performance management.

24. The Principal proposed that the TALO summaries appendix of the report be annexed to the minutes of the Committee circulated to the next meeting of the Board of Governors for information.
25. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum highlighted key points from the progress report on the QIP, in particular in relation to the synoptic assessments where there was a considerable logistical challenge in animal management.
26. The Committee noted the positive progress towards fulfilling the targets identified in the QIP and that there was continued monitoring and support of the animal management department in order to improve performance.
27. The Committee agreed that the evidence reported underlined that the College was demonstrating a standard equating to Ofsted's 'Good' as a provider of education, learning and skills and that management continued to have in place a clear and effective plan of continuing improvement based on detailed analysis of available information.

Operational Action Plan

28. The Committee had also received the report of the Deputy Principal – Curriculum and accompanying quality operational action plan for Humanities (Andover College Sixth).
29. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum noted that the actions were intended to improve outcomes for learners in Humanities and that quantitative and qualitative analysis, including external quality review (EQR) of some subjects, indicated in-year improvements in the quality of education.
30. The Committee noted the actions being taken by College management and agreed that the performance issues appeared to be understood and were being addressed as a priority.

Healthcheck Report

31. The Committee had received and reviewed the Quality section of the latest College Healthcheck report, including TALO data.
32. Responding to a Member's question about the report of TALO re-observations for a small number of staff, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained the processes in place for new staff during their nine-month probationary period and confirmed that, were any significant issues identified, immediate and appropriate action would be taken in the interests of the learners.
33. The meeting concluded at 12.05 pm.