

Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on Thursday 5th May 2022 at 5pm

GOVERNORS Angela Newton-Soanes, Chair
PRESENT: Kate Truscott
Andrew Cropley, Principal/CEO
Andrew Spencer
Spencer Moore (from 5.30pm)
Steve Sutton (from 5.45pm)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance
Matt Vaughan, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communication Engagement and Student Experience
Diane Booth, Assistant Principal: Quality and Standards
Nikki Slack, Assistant Principal: Health, Education and Service Industries
Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies
Phil Clark, Assistant Principal: Construction & Engineering

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>		
	The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.		
2	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>		
	Apologies for absence were received from Ben Owen and John Winfield.		
3	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND MARCH 2022</u>		
	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 2 nd March 2022.		
	There were no matters arising.		

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The committee were happy to note the content of the update provided, acknowledging that the vast majority of aspects would be considered through agenda items planned.

5 **BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND ANNUAL KPIS 2021/22**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality introduced this item and confirmed that the report for this meeting focuses on maths and English attendance, it being the case that this is the one red RAG-rated area. Key matters highlighted were:

- Attendance has increased slightly for maths; however, it has declined for English.
- Omicron closures during the year have impacted upon delivery and attendance.
- Students are predominantly study programme learners who take English and maths alongside vocational qualifications.
- The longer Easter break this year for siblings in different parts of the region has also been a negative factor.
- However, a 6.3% increase on the prior year position is positive.
- Attendance at the February 2022 mock exams was positive at 82% and 83.5%.
- Concerns throughout the year have triggered a number of actions, including:
 - Greater focus for attendance coaches and youth workers
 - Re-introduction of incentivisation schemes
 - Immediate flags regarding any non-attendance so that this can be tackled quickly.These have helped to arrest the decline.
- The big success story of the year is English, with it being assessed as a strong good. The college is assured by the fact that teaching and learning is getting better, and this will help to improve attendance.
- With all that has been done this year, the expectation is that attendance for next year will be in the high 80%.

The committee asked whether there were any blended learning opportunities offered for those who could not attend, e.g. if they were self-isolating. It was confirmed that students were given an opportunity to check in online, but very few did. In addition, 'mop-up sessions' were offered; however, with hindsight, it is felt that the college could have done more. In the autumn term the college will be running 'express classes' for resits. These will be really focused, and it is envisaged that they will reduce the number of students having to study English and maths all the way throughout the year.

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The committee asked whether there had been any lessons learned this year, and staff confirmed that there were. One example given was that, for next year, learners will be given a number of opportunities to study the same modules at different points in the week, to take account of shift patterns, caring responsibilities, etc. The committee were advised that the October break will be for a two-week period again and, therefore, the intention is to use one of the weeks for progress meetings and staff development so that there is a minimal impact on attendance.

The committee, in reviewing the information provided, acknowledged that it is really clear to see the level of effort that is being put into improving attendance, and they asked whether there is a core group of non-attendees. The committee were advised that this is not necessarily the case now in terms of the different sites; however, there are some issues at Derby Road. The fact that it is a large estate sometimes makes it easier for students to 'disappear' and avoid classes. Particular areas to focus on are sport, Create, and Level 1 hair. The committee were advised that staff are now more tuned in to attendance monitoring, which does mitigate the position. In addition, maths and English rooms have been moved to try to address known issues. A challenge from the committee was to try to ensure that students know that they can't get away with nonattending. Staff confirmed that this is the case, given the razor focus on this.

The committee discussed the fact that GCSEs are generally more challenging than Functional Skills and that not taking the Functional Skills option for maths and English shows ambition for this college and learners.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 QIAP UPDATE – WITH A FOCUS ON APPRENTICESHIPS AND LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The vice Principal: curriculum and quality introduced this item, and updates were provided in a number of areas.

- 1) Apprenticeship provision – key matters highlighted were:
 - The college is still assessing this area of provision as 'requires improvement'.
 - In terms of reporting to this committee, there has been a change in focus to highlight the areas of strength and weakness more clearly. These are reported in section 3.
 - In terms of key strengths, these include:
 - A good part of provision is 'good'.
 - There has been an increase in the first-time pass rate in relation to Functional Skills.
 - Overall achievement has improved.

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- Section 3.6 shows that, in 2020/21, 52.6% of learners on Standards achieved, which should be compared with a national rate of 51.8%.
- 61% of all apprentices last year were on Standards – the position for this year is 75%. Standards tend to be more challenging than Frameworks.
- The CEO personally leads the apprenticeship improvement board, which gives it the required level of focus/priority.
- Section 3.8 details retention and, at 73.7%, is way above the national rate.
- In terms of weaknesses, these include:
 - Too many learners are past their end date and out of funding. This has a lot to do with the pandemic. In addition, the college was very reluctant to offer breaks in learning and did all it could to ensure that learning continued. Examples were given.
 - Timely achievement – COVID delays have meant that there are more learners in the pipeline; however, they are working through the system.

A challenge from the committee was that it is really important to explain and articulate what the college did to mitigate COVID, it being the case that it was clearly not used as an excuse. The committee all acknowledged that it was clear to see the progress made.

The committee asked for a summary of the quality of work placements/employed experience for apprentices. The VP: CESE indicated that, on the whole and with the vast majority of employers it is a good experience. The college has worked hard in relation to employer commitment and understanding and is not simply chasing numbers. The college drew a line in the sand at February 2019 and changed its recruitment processes and focus to ensure a quality experience. The committee were given assurance that, if an apprentice does raise a concern regarding their employer, this is treated very, very seriously. One member asked how the college would evidence this. The VP: CESE indicated that this would be in a number of ways, including:

- Information logged on OneFile by assessors.
- Checks on OneFile that apprentices are being released for off-the-job training and are attending college.
- Statistics show that 30% of apprentices have employment progression, which is really positive.
- Of those apprentices who withdrew, 82% stayed with their employer, which shows that they are still adding value.
- The college has also looked at apprentices who have not stayed with their employer, and this review has indicated a need to focus on employability skills.

As an overview, staff expressed the view that the college has had a real

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drive and has been dynamic to address known issues since 2019. This has been a real team effort, and the data is now starting to show the progress following all the hard work.

- 2) Leadership and management – key matters highlighted were:
- Leadership and management is strong at both an operational and a strategic level.
 - College has self-assessed as ‘good’ on the basis of expected ‘pent up’ improvements which materialised in the autumn and meant that the college could self-assess teaching and learning as ‘good’ too.
 - There are four areas that are still assessed as requires improvement, and the college has a focus on these. They include:
 - 1) Health and social care – improvements include:
 - Stable staffing now in place
 - Great simulated ward experience
 - Staff have great sector experience.
 - 2) Engineering – there have been some positive staff changes made.
 - 3) Construction – at the last deep dive, it was almost judged as a ‘good’; however, there are still some legacy issues impacting upon this. The staffing position has improved and there is strong CPD in place.
 - 4) Maths – it has improved but it is still not where it needs to be. A new head of department has been in post since September 2021 and is starting to make a real difference.

The committee were reminded that, whilst areas that require improvement are a focus, the vast majority of teaching is good or better. The college has really effective underpinning CPD, and there is confidence that the college will get to ‘outstanding’.

The committee acknowledged that the college has travelled a huge distance in three years, in terms of both performance and staffing. They agreed that leadership at every level is really, really strong. An observation made by the staff governor was that leadership is now much more open than was the case prior to 2019. The committee also acknowledged that the college’s standing in the local community has changed exponentially, which is really positive. All agreed there was a really powerful story, with it being clear that the college is leading and not simply responding. The committee acknowledged that senior staff have a harshly self-critical approach, with the aim being to relentlessly achieve high standards. The CEO expressed the aim and intention that the college will be self-assessing as ‘outstanding’ at the end of 2022/23. The committee acknowledged that middle managers and heads of department are critical and that they are doing a really fantastic job.

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AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7

PERFORMANCE REPORT – DATA ON A PAGE 21/22

The assistant principal presented her data report and confirmed that it provides a comparison with the prior committee report. The information provided is at period 9, and the arrows included within the table show the direction of travel.

The committee were then given a summary of the comparison with the same point in the prior year, including:

1) Young people

- Overall retention is lower
- Overall progression is the same
- English attendance has improved, as has maths
- In terms of progress, the mocks this year were undertaken under JCQ exam conditions and, therefore, will give a good indicator of likely outcomes.

2) Adult

- Direct delivery
 - Attendance is the same
 - Retention has improved
 - Progress has improved.
- Subcontracting
 - Retention has declined by 2%. It was explained that this relates to two partners, particularly one which has longer programmes. The committee were given assurance that there are regular partner meetings and that deep dives have been undertaken with all partners save for one.

3) Community

- Retention is the same
- Achievement is lower.

4) Apprenticeship provision

- Retention has declined by 2%; however, this should be compared with the national rate, which has shown a decline of 10%
- Achievement is broadly the same.
- OneFile:
 - 1) Recording of off the job has stayed the same at 21% and the focus now is on the consistency of quality.
 - 2) Timeliness of reviews has improved significantly: it was 76.5% but is now 92%. Governors were really pleased to see this improvement and acknowledged that it will have involved a lot of hard work. All agreed that the challenge now is to maintain this.

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- 5) High needs
 - Attendance is broadly the same
 - Retention has improved.
- 6) Disadvantaged
 - Attendance is lower
 - Retention is lower.
- 7) Deep dives
 - The college has completed more this year, with 56% being good or better.
 - More subcontractor deep dives have also been undertaken, and the college is on track to cover all areas before the end of the year.

In considering the report, the committee were reminded that the current position is compared with 2019 and that it is known that rates nationally will reduce.

In terms of the subcontractor deep dives, the committee asked which organisation is still to receive its deep dive. It was confirmed that this is ATFE and that this is on the basis of a risk approach. All subcontractors were RAG-rated at the beginning of the year and, on the basis of the prior year's deep dive, it was agreed that ATFE would be subject to a deep dive later in the year. The committee were advised that subcontractor deep dives have been graded differently so that there can be a really targeted approach in terms of support and CPD.

The committee asked for an update on the Inspire and Achieve Foundation. The VP: C&Q indicated that he met with them yesterday to discuss concerns, and the intention is to present a report to the full board later in the month. The committee were advised that, whilst they have had a lot of college support, there are still concerns.

VP C&Q

19.05.22

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY (STUDENTS) REPORT

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience drew the committee's attention to her detailed report. Matters highlighted were:

- There have been 21 complaints in relation to homophobic bullying, which is an increase of six on the last report. The vast majority of these are at Derby Road, including learners in art and design, hair and beauty, and animal care.
- 2 students have been excluded from sport and public services.
- There have been 10 racist abuse complaints, seven of which

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have been highlighted via the Smoothwall system and predominantly relate to language used on gaming sites. Campus spread in relation to these is broad. One victim has volunteered to share her experiences at the last learner conference of the year, which is really brave.

- Paragraph 7 outlines where the college currently is in relation to key KPIs.
- In relation to the BAME gap, both indicators show that the college is on track.
- Progress for males has slipped. This has been analysed by curriculum area, and progress in construction has been identified as an issue. Construction staff have been working to support these students, and they envisage that the gap will narrow.
- In terms of progression for students, there are 31 students with no identified destination; however, this number is slowly being reduced.
- The college is now able to undertake some really detailed analysis regarding the higher/improved level of destinations. 107 have applied for courses in different curriculum areas, and the college is currently reviewing these as it is likely to mean a repeat of level. It was agreed that an update on this would be provided to the next meeting.
- Appendix 1 gives an action plan update.
- In relation to the action regarding quiet spaces, it is unlikely that the college will hit target given space challenges this year. Staff confirmed that there is a need to review how this can be achieved for next year.

VP CESE

29.06.22

In general discussion, the committee asked whether, out of the 107 who have applied for a course in a different curriculum area, there is a way of assessing what skills can be transferred. The VP: CESE indicated that, at this stage, a systematic approach is not taken and it tends to be on a case-by-case basis.

The committee all agreed that it was clear to see the movement on the action plan, and it is definitely the case that staff know what else needs to be a focus.

The committee were then given an update in relation to the rainbow flag application, and it was explained that the college has managed to get past the first stage and is now submitting information in relation to the second and third stage.

As an overview, staff confirmed that there is confidence that any issues are being tackled quickly and that it is a small minority who are not behaving in the expected ways. An example given was a recent meeting that the CEO had, where the vast majority of learners reported really positive experiences.

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9

RISK REPORT

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented this item and explained that very little had changed since the previous report. Key matters highlighted were:

- Section 3 shows that the college continues to self-assess as a 'good' for overall effectiveness.
- Section 3.5 summarises the deep dives completed. At the time of the report, this was 31 and is now 32. Eighteen areas were assessed as 'good' or better. In relation to the thirteen RI areas, twelve were in relation to apprenticeship provision. It was acknowledged that this had been discussed earlier, and the committee were again given assurance that the college is on the right trajectory in relation to these. One area was music, which goes toward the decision to discontinue provision. Two subcontractors were below 'good', with one being 'inadequate'. It was explained that this was influenced by the size of the organisation/provision and the fact that the college was only able to observe one trainer. The college is in ongoing dialogue as they have a great curriculum offer; however, the training was not up to scratch on the day of the deep dive, which has skewed the position. The committee were given assurance that, of the twelve, all are nearly at 'good' and that, whilst the risk remains, it is diminishing as time moves on.
- Section 3.11 shows that 82% of learners at Levels 2 and 3 have work experience planned, and this was described as really meaningful work experience. Level 1 students are immersed in different types of experience.
- 439 students are still to undertake work experience, and assurance was given that this is a focus. It was explained that there is a 'COVID tail', with employers not as prepared to have students on site. 25% of regular employers have just not been prepared to offer work experience this year.
- The expectation is that 93% of students will have work experience by the yearend, and there is a narrative in relation to the other 7%.

A question and challenge from the committee was to better document and explain what more is planned in relation to the 439. The committee were advised that the largest numbers are in plumbing, electrical, and engineering and that, to try to address this, the college is looking at employer-related projects. The committee acknowledged that the work done by learning companies was also incredibly valuable work experience.

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The link governor for health and social care provided feedback on a recent visit, which she described as very positive. In particular, they had had a real success in terms of work experience. In September 2021, there were very few placements secured, but staff have had a real drive and focus. She felt that congratulations needed to be passed on to the team as they had even been able to even secure a placement with East Midlands Ambulance Service, which is not to be underestimated.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

10

SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT – EXCEPTIONS REPORT 21/22

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her detailed report, and key matters highlighted were:

- Paragraph 2 shows that the college is continuing to see an increase in the incidents recorded on CPOMS.
- A significant increase in incidents raised regarding attendance, which is positive and shows staff focus.
- The college needs to be cautious in terms of prior year comparisons because of the COVID lockdowns.
- 39 sexual peer-on-peer incidents, which is an increase of eight from the prior year. There are 23 separate incidents. Since the prior report, there have been two further incidents reported, one of which is a rape allegation.
- In terms of harmful sexual behaviours, there are two learners open to social care. These relate to behaviours outside college, and there are no issues in college.
- 20 incidents of sharing of nudes/semi nudes, with one learner being excluded.
- 22 students closed to Children in Need plans, which is high.
- 34 concerns regarding serious attempts on life: all are separate students.
- In relation to the Smoothwall system, there are 235 referrals. On the whole, they are 'low-level silliness'. Many students suggest that it wasn't their activity which is a concern, having left their computer unlocked; therefore, there is awareness training to be provided at the start of the next academic year to ensure that all students understand that they are responsible for everything on the computer allocated to them.
- There have been more Prevent referrals this year at nine, which should be compared to three last year. There has been one recent referral which is likely to be picked up by the police team and relates to quite a vulnerable learner.

The vice principal then drew governors' attention to the safeguarding audit outcomes and summarised the areas of focus. She provided assurance that urgent issues have been picked up and are being/have been addressed, including:

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- The need to challenge any individual who is not wearing a lanyard. There is a need to improve this given the limited challenge evident in the audit process, and all staff are being encouraged in relation to this, irrespective of the seniority of the individual involved.

The safeguarding link governor, who participated in the audit, took the opportunity to give feedback on the Station Park site and confirmed that he had been impressed with the improvements seen in the environment.

Other urgent issues identified related to:

- Unlocked classrooms – this has now been addressed.
- Fire door – again, this has been addressed.
- Facility to take photographs at Chesterfield Road – equipment has been ordered.

The committee were advised that the college has reviewed all partner providers and that details are all now included on the single central register. The intention is also to complete on-site reviews as part of the deep dive process next academic year.

The committee acknowledged that the audit had been a really thorough process and took the opportunity to thank governors involved as this provides an opportunity for triangulation and also to ensure consistency.

The committee discussed the reference to 'silliness and banter' incidents and questioned what the consequences are, i.e. how they are dealt with. The VP: CESE indicated that, where they are repeat offenders, there are very stern conversations, particularly in terms of putting any comments into context (i.e. what would happen if the same thing occurred in an employed environment). If it is a particular group and not individuals, this will be followed up in tutorials. It was explained that they are dealt with on a case-by-case basis as required. The vice principal: curriculum and quality reminded that issues like bullying, language, etc. are also key tutorial areas of focus throughout the year.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11

T LEVELS

The committee were provided with the materials circulated to all governors as part of the strategy review day on 24th March 2022 and were reminded that the college has been approved to deliver four T Level lines in 23/24. These are digital, construction, early years, and engineering. The college will have an implementation group in place for all four lines, which will include employers. Two will offer transition routes at Level 2.

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The committee were advised that the college is taking a very careful approach and that it will be small cohort numbers at first. The intention is to dovetail this work with the employer engagement strategy, which is being led by the VP: CESE. The intention is that employer advisory panels will focus on the four key lines at first.

The committee advised that the aim is to go live with the engineering advisory panel this year and that the college is already working on a sports advisory board, even though there is no T Level planned yet. Following this will be construction and engineering and then early years.

Spencer Moore, who is to sit on the sports advisory board, was able to confirm that the first meeting is scheduled for 21st June 2022. There are twelve members, and a chair has been agreed.

Staff advised that they were learning lessons from colleges who are already delivering T Levels, which has been really helpful.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

12 CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE COMPLIANCE CHECKLISTS

The director of governance presented these for the sections titled:

- Teaching and learning
- Equality and diversity
- Safeguarding students and the student voice

She reminded that the board adopted the updated code in the autumn term, and the intention of reviewing now is so that any gaps or any additional actions identified can be taken before yearend. In terms of gathering governor feedback, it was agreed that the Word documents would be circulated so that governors could annotate and then return, with responses then collated. It was agreed that a deadline date would be the end of May 2022 so that any actions could be fed into the next meeting, which is the final for the year.

Governors May 2022

13 AOB

There were no items of additional business.

14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

This was confirmed as Wednesday 29th June 2022 at 5pm.

Meeting closed at 6.55pm.

Signed : Angela Newton-Sims Chair

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