



CURRICULUM AND QUALITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2022

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25 November 2021
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Present: David Mitchell (DM – Chair)
David Alexander (DA – Principal and CEO)
Aneela Ali (AA)
Sarah Stewart (SS)

In attendance: Deni Chambers (DC – Assistant Principal)
Jeremy Cook (JC – Deputy Principal: Finance and Resources)
Tracy Foreman (TF – Assistant Principal)
Darren Heathcote (DH – Head of Student Services and Customer Experience)
Andrew Robson (AR – Assistant Principal)
Chris Toon (CT – Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality)
Richard Ward (RW – Head of Quality Improvement)
Emma Moody (EM – Clerk)

CQ/67 Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest

DM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Carol Davenport. [Aneela Ali attempted to join the meeting virtually but was unable to do so].

There were no conflicts of interest declared. Members were reminded to declare any conflicts that arose during the meeting.

It was agreed that the minutes would remain confidential until the Board had approved the SAR on 15 December and it had been submitted to OFSTED.

CQ/68 Minutes of the last meeting dated 15 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

CQ/69 Matters Arising / Action Log

The action log was noted.

CQ/70 Safeguarding Assurance Framework

The report was presented by DH.

DM asked a question about the targets for training and the difference between targets set in the KPIs. It was confirmed that training generally was discussed at length by People Committee and a piece of work was underway to identify the appropriateness of targets for completion and distinguishing that from compliance. There was work to be done on staff induction such that training in some areas should be completed prior to taking up post/role.

SS confirmed that a recommendation would be taken to the Board to appoint Michael Wood Williams as safeguarding Governor in the place of DM retiring.

EM raised two points on the risk assessment (appendix 2) mechanisms. She felt it would be helpful to add a line regarding the College's response/actions in relation to the situation of the vulnerable child/student (and how College supported the child's needs by virtue of their personal/family situation (rather than a risk created through the College environment)). The second point was whether the risk mitigation column in the strategic risk register (final page) was sufficient to reflect the depth of the College's mitigation strategy employed to mitigate safeguarding risk.

DM asked whether this document would be reviewed again in light of the comments today, and this was confirmed.

Action: DH to consider augmenting the assurance framework in light of the comments at the meeting regarding risk assessments pertaining to individual students.

Action: consider strategic risk register and the mitigation/control column to ensure it was sufficiently reflective of the strength of mitigation.

Action: training targets (as part of KPIs) to be reviewed and agreed in readiness for the next meeting.

Subject to the above the quality assurance framework for safeguarding was approved.

DH left the meeting at 10.20am

CQ/70 Self Assessment Report – Process Overview

CT gave a verbal update on the self-assessment process.

The role of the Committee was to review the proposed gradings, agree them and recommend to the Board for approval.

SS noted that this was an annual plan, but much of what was contained herein extended beyond a one year period. CT said that there was an expectation that this would be submitted to OFSTED annually so presented as an annual plan. Nevertheless, there was nothing to stop College having longer term planning incorporated in the document so that it was reflective of the College's educational journey.

The QIP was a rolling process in any event, and monitored frequently throughout the year. CT also observed that some of the actions/interventions were dynamic in light of the demographic and/or needs of the students in any particular cohort in any one year.

DA commented that the longer term review of curriculum strategy currently being led by CT could be incorporated into the College's overall strategy, in addition to considering teaching and learning through the annual SAR lens/document.

DM asked if it was still possible to incorporate some external validation into the process. CT responded that other colleges do this process at other times in the year, but that informal sharing of judgements was taking place to look at how the College was assessing itself compared with others. The College's relationship with other colleges was positive and growing stronger in this regard. Next year, CT suggested a counterpart from another college be asked to attend this meeting to give a view.

The report was noted.

CQ/71 Education Programmes for Young People

The report was presented by Deni Chambers, Assistant Principal.

DM commended the report, and asked if this could be outstanding, rather than good. CT said that it was a "borderline" area at the last OFSTED visit. SS asked what would shift the grade to outstanding. CT said the key weakness previously was the Prevent and awareness of county lines – whilst students had general awareness of this, the language they used was not the same as used by policy and OFSTED. Further work was being undertaken to educate students.

DM stated that he would wish to see the College continuing its focus on Maths and English, as evidenced here.

The Committee noted the grade 2, good, rating and approved a recommendation for consideration at the Board

CQ/72 Apprenticeships

The report was presented by Deni Chambers, Assistant Principal.

There was still a balance of strengths and weaknesses. There had been a significant journey of improvement in processes and systems, allowing areas/cohorts of challenge to be targeted in order to deliver improvement.

AR reviewed apprenticeship provision and the underlying factors influencing the difference between achievement and predicted achievement. The presentation showed the impact of delivery with **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION**. In previous years that delivery has benefited the College results but this year has had a negative issue as the project comes to an end and withdrawing learners has impacted on figures. CT confirmed that this would be the last year of working together with CIDORI but there will be a run off period impacting on achievement rates.

DM felt this was a fair judgement although a blunt assessment in that it did not truly reflect the overall journey of College improvement work.

CT said that the key risk is the quality of the reviews done by third parties – OFSTED will test this against the key judgements. This was an area where focused improvement work was being undertaken to ensure consistency.

SS asked whether next year there would be a tangible difference in outcomes in this area because of the improvement work, or would there be risks and challenges which may mean that the overall grade remains.

CT felt the greatest risk was in automotive – because work remained to be done in ensuring both skills and wider behaviours match employer needs. Employers were not necessarily focused on behaviours – this was a cultural challenge which impacted on achievement rates because some of the learners who did well at the core element of the actual courses, but were not always performing across all academic and functional areas required.

DC said that the target for this area was "good". This was realistic and the College wanted to ensure it was able to be consistently good.

EM said that the Committee would need to track the improvement work across all areas and ensure appropriate actions to mitigate these key risk areas – especially in relation to apprenticeships as this was an area of focused activity/sector attention. This would be done through the QIP in any event, but was noted specifically for this area and a need for rigour in terms of reporting to the Committee.

Action: ensure new Chair of Committee understands the key risks in this area of business and that reporting to the Committee throughout the year clearly reports on how the improvement/targeted actions are tackling the key weaknesses and risks.

The Committee noted the grade 3, requires improvement, rating and approved a recommendation for consideration at the Board

CQ/73 Provision for Learners with High Needs

The report was presented by CT.

The College tailored its response to the needs of these learners who were particularly challenged as a result of the pandemic.

The College has high internal progression rates in this area, with learners who achieve high levels of qualification in their context. For those on EHCP's, the College will be looking to progress into high outcomes, despite any delays to learning caused by covid. Learners still have good outcomes by progression into work and employment, appropriate to their needs.

The College was supporting a broader range of staff to support those learners with high needs, so they were not reliant on a particular learning support teacher.

The College works with 6 local authority areas, with their own commissioning frameworks. Some can be inflexible and this creates challenges, but the College navigate those areas as this was such an important strength and culturally aligned to the College.

The Committee noted the grade 1, outstanding, rating and approved a recommendation for consideration at the Board

CQ/74 Adult Learning Programmes

The report was presented by CT.

The Committee noted the challenges caused by the pandemic in this regard, this area having been impacted more than others. The reasons were still being interrogated and understood.

The Chair asked whether, with the impact the above had on achievement rates, this area was rightly graded as outstanding. CT said despite the challenges, the College was still above the national average and the College's outcomes were still materially strong in this regard.

DA said that, in comparison with others, the College was above others in the sector when compared to 2019/20 data, and it would be interesting to see what the sector benchmark for 2020/21 would be and whether the College had improved position against this.

SS said that from an AEB perspective, the outstanding grade appeared at odds with the AEB clawback threshold, although appreciated the context/commentary highlighted above.

The Committee noted the grade 1, outstanding, rating and approved a recommendation for consideration at the Board

CQ/75 Quality of Education

The report was presented by AR, Assistant Principal.

RW discussed work undertaken in Teaching, Learning and Assessment, and the key strengths and weaknesses in this area. This was an area where innovation was deployed to improve the learner journey. This area of the College's work was particularly strong.

DM asked if "good" was sufficiently reflective of College activity. AR said there were areas of outstanding, pockets of requires improvement and this balanced out the judgement, which the team felt was an appropriate reflection.

SS said that Governors generally would benefit from an understanding of this area of the College's work.

The Committee noted the grade 2, good, rating and approved a recommendation for consideration at the Board

CQ/76 Behaviour and Attitudes

The report was presented by TF, Assistant Principal.

Jeremy Cook joined the meeting at 12.24pm.

The Chair asked about the support given to females and the College's response to the issue of "consent". DC explained that each of the learners had looked at this as part of their curriculum areas.

TF confirmed that some very rich discussion was going on in this area, and awareness of sensitive topics generally being raised. This was an area to bring forward in a report for a future Committee meeting.

EM mentioned her experience of recent OFSTED inspections focused on harmful sexual behaviours and asking what colleges were doing in response – considering KCSIE Part 5 in particular. The Committee may benefit from some internal audit work in this area going forward, and/or an analysis and understanding of the College's work to support and promote learner's in this regard.

The Committee noted the grade 1, outstanding, rating and approved a recommendation for consideration at the Board

CQ/77 Personal Development

The report was presented by TF, Assistant Principal.

DM asked whether the grading was accurate. CT said that during the pandemic, some enrichment work did not happen and this has impacted on this area for a period of time. The other area of challenge was work experience, and this influenced the grade.

The Committee noted the grade 2, good, rating and approved a recommendation for consideration at the Board

CQ/78 Leadership and Management

The report was presented by CT.

The College's approach to its financial recovery, while not creating any detriment to learners reflects the approach of leaders, managers and governors. The College was well planned in covid and reacted positively and proactively to a changing environment.

The Committee acknowledged the strength of the team approach and the College's journey to recovery.

The Committee noted the grade 2, good, rating and approved a recommendation for consideration at the Board

CQ/79 Grading and recommendation of the Self-Assessment Report to the Board

CT presented to the report.

The Committee noted the overall proposed grade of good and approved a recommendation for consideration at the Board.

CQ/80 Any other business

The Committee received an enrolment update for 2021/22 from CT. This highlighted the 16-19 full-time numbers to be lower than initially predicted. A report was tabled at the meeting outlining the extent and impact of this.

The Committee was informed that this would have an impact on numbers/income for the following year which may be in the region of c£650k but this would be reviewed and incorporated within the October management accounts.

The report also included an update on apprenticeships – an area for which recruitment was positive and higher than forecast.

CT reported that meetings were happening with curriculum teams to understand the reliability of plans and forecasts, and to test trends and expectations. CT said that they were currently predicting a shortfall of (c£500k) in adult skills budget, and this would impact on this year's budget. The team would look to mitigate this so as to improve the year end position.

JC said that for planning purposes, the assumption is that the adult budget deficit will run into next year and year after. This is prudent financial planning, and does not mean the College will not seek to improve on its position.

DA said that planning and forecasting would be reviewed closely so that the College could respond in the event of an increase, as well as a decrease in numbers.

DM thanked the Committee and attendees for all of their hard work, passion and commitment to obtaining the very best for students.

CT acknowledged DM's contribution to the College over the years as its chair, through good times and bad. DM's passion for the College, the region and learners. A personal thanks was given from CT and his team. DM's challenge and scrutiny has helped support improvement work. Members endorsed this.

CQ/81 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 17 February 2022 at 10.00am.