



TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 2020

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 February 2020
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Present: David Mitchell (Chair)
Chris Toon (Acting Principal)
Sarah Stewart

In attendance: John Gray
Andrew Robson
Deni Chambers
Kevin Marston
Richard Ward
Sally Cooper (Clerk)
Suzanne Clark (Minutes)

T/298 Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Suzanne Slater.

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

T/299 Minutes of the last meeting dated Wednesday 27 November 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

T/300 Matters Arising

The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance reported that in relation to T/278, the annual assurance statement for HE was no longer a requirement. He had been informed that following the introduction of the Office for Students (OfS) it was no longer required. The Chair asked whether there were any requirements that governors needed to be aware of in relation to OfS. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance indicated that there are many requirements and conditions as part of the College's OfS registration, some of which are governance related. Conditions need to be met and the OfS needs to be notified of any

reportable events i.e. change of Chair of the Board and change of Principal which have both recently been reported. Members were made aware that there is a group in place in College which monitors compliance with OfS requirements.

T/301 Ofsted – Provisional Outcomes

The report was presented by the Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance.

The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance reported that published inspection reports are now very short and the report presented gives more detail than what will be included in the final report from Ofsted.

In response to a question from a member, the Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance confirmed that the report comprised of his notes taken during the verbal inspection feedback meeting and that nothing formal had been received in writing at the point of creating the report. Members were advised that since the report was produced the College had since received a copy of the draft inspection report which will be published on Friday 14 February 2020. The draft report was very much a reflection of the information within the report being presented.

A member questioned the reported inconsistencies in behaviour and attitudes. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance confirmed that a level 2 programme in sport was selected as part of the 'deep-dive' review which is known to be a weaker programme. Some learners were not displaying particular behaviours and were showing low level disruption. The Acting Principal added that an inspector had spent 2 days with one group which gave a very small sample size. He acknowledged that some practice was not up to the College's high standards and assured members that issues are being addressed. In response to a further question from the member, the Acting Principal indicated that inspectors would consider the size of the provision, College self assessment and performance data to decide on the areas which would be subject to 'deep dive' review.

The Acting Principal reported that there is nothing in the final report that is not already covered in the report presented. The Director of Student Experience indicated that it was pleasing to see that the report had included that the College is an inclusive environment. The Chair commented that overall, he was pleased with the report. There are some excellent grades which are very pleasing and the Chair felt that the grades related to teaching were a fantastic result for staff and learners. The Chair thanked the Acting Principal for his contribution and recognised the role of the Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance as the College's nominee during the inspection. He also asked that his appreciation of the staff team be formally recorded.

The Chair asked for clarification on the methodology used to determine the final grade. He was of the view that had a grade 3 not been awarded for leadership and management the College would have been awarded a grade 2, good with elements of outstanding. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance confirmed that this is in line with feedback received throughout the inspection. The vast majority of feedback was focused on strengths during the inspection. The focus on leadership and management was towards the end of the inspection and this is when the less positive messages started to come through. The Chair felt it very disappointing that the overall grade is based, in part, on what might happen in the future in terms of potential impact of the financial deficit on education provision. He felt it extremely important to celebrate the positives. Another member commented also that to grade the College on potential future impact was very disappointing, although understood that the current financial challenges may have clouded the view of inspectors. The Acting Principal reported that the College would likely be inspected again within 12 – 14 months. There will be a progress monitoring visit in around 6 - 7 months and the College will be pushing at this point for re-inspection as soon as possible thereafter. If levels of improvement can be demonstrated this will be very much a priority. Members were advised

that required actions are based particularly on the current financial situation. The Acting Principal felt that the College was in a strong position to get a very good outcome in 12 months' time, although noted that receiving an 'outstanding' grade could never be guaranteed as this would depend on what inspectors saw on the day. A member commented that it was important not to work only on the specific items included in the action plan as this could detract from other important activity. The Acting Principal acknowledged this and stressed that the College will continue to provide great outcomes and will consider areas for improvement as part of the self assessment process.

The Chair reflected back on the November 2019 meeting where the self assessment report was graded as outstanding with the exception of apprenticeship activity (which was assessed as good) and asked why the grades were different to those which will be reported by Ofsted. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance indicated that an Ofsted inspection is a snapshot in time and regardless of performance, there could never be a guarantee of an outstanding judgement. There were two specific areas of outstanding practice during inspection. There were some issues in relation to personal development and behaviours but they were not significant and strengths reported were all very close to outstanding. He felt that it would be reasonable for grades to differ slightly. The team recognised the challenge in terms of apprenticeship activity and indicated that they had felt that they were further on in the journey to increase oversight in this area. The inspection result showed that some of the improvements being implemented were not yet fully embedded. Members were advised that the new methodology focuses more on impact and that leadership and management is not an area of focus in terms of self assessment. The Acting Principal added that the College's outcomes year on year are exceptional and Ofsted's inspection does not specifically take account of the outcome data. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance highlighted that had the inspection team had any concerns in relation to self assessment and its accuracy it would have been specifically commented on and challenged as part of the inspection. The Head of Quality Improvement added that the College had also been inspected against a completely new framework. A member questioned the nature of self assessment and asked whether an additional stream should be included which focuses on learners and learner voice, to reflect the Ofsted methodology. The Chair expressed his view that activity should not be about pleasing Ofsted. Activity should be about meeting the needs of young people, their parents and employers. The Acting Principal reported that a new learner journey review had been recently introduced, prior to knowing exactly what deep dive inspection would focus on. This has been implemented in all curriculum areas and will give a much richer evidence base. It will also provide more learner voice information than that which has been available before. He added that excellent feedback was provided in response to the Ofsted survey with high levels of students, parents, employers and staff happy to recommend the College. The Acting Principal referred to a particular group of learners and described some of the intensive work that is taking place to support them to make progress and provide an environment where they thrive.

The Chair concluded that the College had always been self critical and would always strive to be better. He felt it important to continue with this and to learn from the report. The Acting Principal confirmed that the report will be published on Friday and indicated that he would ensure the report was shared with governors. In response to a question from a member, the Acting Principal confirmed that a strategy was in place for external communications. He was hopeful that local stakeholders will be supportive adding that there was a perceived injustice in the sector. The team felt that the report will clearly evidence the quality of education at the College. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance added that there are many positive messages within the draft report that can be used in any press release. The Chair indicated that it was great to get a report which recognises the many strengths and that the College is a well performing college in the current circumstances. The Chair asked that the final report and action plan be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

The report was noted.

T/302 2019/20 Performance (year-to-date)

The report was presented by the Head of Quality Improvement.

The Head of Quality Improvement reported that the achievement data is provisional at this point. It has been produced earlier in the year than it normally would be. For this reason, the report contains both best and worst case scenario predictions.

The Chair questioned the worst case forecasted achievement for 16-18 programmes. This was showing an improvement of 4% which he felt was an incredible shift. The Head of Quality Improvement indicated that figures are provisional at this point. It was reported that retention of 16 -18 learners is currently very high which should then show an increase in achievement. The Acting Principal indicated that this methodology has been very close to the final position in previous years. A member commented that she felt very encouraged by the data presented.

In relation to performance against target, the Head of Quality Improvement explained that at this point in the year, learners would be expected to be performing below target. The Committee was advised that work in the next term should see a significant increase in this score. Progress updates will be given at future meetings. There is a very joined up approach across curriculum areas and with Assistant Principals and managers to stretch and challenge learners. In response to a question from a member, the Acting Principal explained that the total numbers are for enrolments and not individual learners explaining how the methodology is applied to full-time learners, meaning one learner could be enrolled on more than one course. It was stressed that the report includes learners on level 3 graded programmes. The Chair commented that he was encouraged that the team have recognised that performance is slightly lower than in previous years and there are targeted actions in place to address this. A member felt that the report was a very useful reminder of the work currently taking place with learners in College. The Head of Quality Improvement added that there were other factors that would impact on PAT scores including the number of grades that can be applied to different programmes, following the College's change in awarding body.

The report was noted.

T/303 Apprenticeships

The report was presented by the Acting Principal.

The Acting Principal reported that there is an intention to move towards a different presentation of data which will give an overview of the types of qualification and any variances based on delivery types and models. This will be presented to a future Committee meeting and members were advised that it will be easier to identify any inconsistencies, similar to the data available for 16-18 learners. It will give much more robust data and a clearer understanding of the areas of work in relation to apprenticeship activity.

The Committee was advised that CPD has been arranged for both College staff and those working for subcontractors in relation to improvements needed for reviews and careers guidance. A member asked whether there was an expectation that all developments will be in place in the current year. The Acting Principal confirmed this to be the case. The College is in a fortunate position in that it has a team of in-house developers who are working on the new apprenticeship portal. The College had previously used market leading software but recognised this doesn't give the required level of oversight. The software development has been informed by what is available on the College's Ontrack system which is used for full-time learners and works particularly well. The new software should enable the College to identify and address some of the challenges identified by Ofsted.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Acting Principal indicated that he was confident in relation to timely achievement of apprenticeships. Results are currently 15.2% above the national rate and he felt confident that the College will be achieving over 70%, at around 75%, in the next year. Previous issues were with legacy provision and the Committee was advised that there are only 3 learners currently active from this group. The Acting Principal explained that timely achievement is based on passing within a specific timeframe that is agreed in advance which gives an element of difficulty. There is a need to ensure that timely achievement is as close to overall achievement as possible. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance advised that the national rate is currently around 60%. The College is currently performing well above this. The new monitoring system will give much better visibility and allow challenge.

The report was noted.

T/304 Teaching and Learning Quadrant KPIs

The report was presented by the Acting Principal.

The Acting Principal confirmed that the report included KPIs which he proposed be shared with the Board to give members assurance and oversight in relation to the performance of this quadrant.

In response to member questions in relation to attendance, the Acting Principal advised that in his view a target of 90% for attendance was low and indicated that the target is higher in schools. Members were advised that despite this personal view, this target was felt to be high in the sector. There is no national rate available for attendance and the Acting Principal added that he felt other organisations may not want to share this data. Members were assured that the College is very strict on recording attendance in relation to absence and what would be considered to be an authorised absence. Key areas of lower attendance are in maths and English which is currently around 80%. Although this is below the target, it is still higher than the sector. There are a proportion of learners in maths and English who are difficult to engage with. Managers have an expectation of 100% attendance.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance confirmed that some observations did take place as part of the recent inspection but graded observations did not happen as they had previously. Paired observations took place in some areas. Observations are less of a focus during inspection under the new framework and activity is centered around asking learners about their experiences, asking them to recall information and determining levels of understanding and consistency in understanding. The Director of Student Experience commented that there were also significantly fewer meetings with staff than in previous inspections. In response to a question from the Chair, the Acting Principal confirmed that the Committee had previously agreed the KPIs confirming that they would be presented to the Board in their current format. The Acting Principal felt there was a need more regular reporting of quadrant performance to the Board.

The report was noted.

T/305 Any Other Business

There was none.

T/306 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 29 April 2020.