



TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2020

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29 April 2020
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Present: David Mitchell (Chair)
Andy Cole (Interim Principal / CEO)
Sarah Stewart
John Hogg
Chris Toon

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

T/307 Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies were received.

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

T/308 Minutes of the last meeting dated 12 February 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

T/309 Matters Arising

A member question whether, in the spirit of openness, the minutes should have fewer confidential marked items. This is something that was highlighted at a recent Board meeting and the member asked whether the same stance should be applied to Committee meetings.

The Chair felt that this was appropriate and asked that minutes from this meeting be made public where possible. The Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality indicated that he was very proud of the College's outcomes and was comfortable in making items public where appropriate, to enable the public to see the College's good work. Members were advised that regulatory bodies already have access to the information. The Chair of the Corporation added that he felt the College should publish all minutes unless they were business sensitive or referred to individuals. The Chair suggested that the minutes from the previous meeting on 12 February 2020 should be available in the public domain to the extent possible and that the minutes from this meeting will be open unless specified otherwise. The Interim Principal / CEO felt this was a good discipline and that minutes should be confidential by exception. The Clerk confirmed that practice will be changing to reflect this discussion.

T/310 Education and Training Provision – Impact of Covid-19

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

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance for his report which he felt showed a very good response to the current situation. It was clear that a lot of thought had gone into the plan in place which has stood the College in good very stead. He felt that there were also some very positive learning experiences which may be very beneficial for the future. Another member endorsed these comments advising that this was a very strong report and he felt that the College needed to continue with this stance as operations could be very different following the current lockdown period, as everyone gets used to a 'new normal'. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance indicated that there had been some very positive reactions to the greater use of technology required by the current lockdown and this was particularly apparent with a number staff who have previously been not so keen to utilise technology. A further member commented that she very much welcomed the clarity of thinking and action detailed within the report. In response to a question from this member, the Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance advised that there was currently a great deal of uncertainty in the sector in terms of how quickly the lockdown might be eased and the impact on face to face learning. The College is planning to be agile as possible as the team currently don't know what the future holds. There may be a need to do some face to face work with learners but this could then need to switch back to remote learning should there be a further increase in the infection rate. The Committee was assured that the College is planning for a range of scenarios, including one for continued social distancing. The team are looking to prioritise practical assessments where they are a specific requirement of the programme. The team are also looking to build the skills and confidence of vulnerable learners. These groups will be prioritised during the summer term. The Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality added that College is required to be open for children of key workers but there has currently been no demand from parents in relation to this. He felt it would be interesting to see whether parents have confidence in sending their children back to school or college in the future as attendance had dropped significantly in the week prior to the current lockdown. The College will need to continue to consider demand. The Chair congratulated those involved in achieving the current position recognising the efforts of all staff.

The report was noted.

T/311 Apprenticeship Provision – Impact of Covid-19

The report was presented by Assistant Principal – Suzanne Slater.

The Chair recognised the fantastic efforts by staff commenting that the report showed a very positive and proactive response to an extremely challenging situation. Another member felt that the report was very helpful and valuable recognising the issues associated with engaging with apprentices. In response to a question from a member, the Assistant Principal advised that a large proportion of apprentices have been furloughed by their employers.

Employers have responded very positively to the College's continued engagement with apprentices. There are a small number of apprentices reporting to be at risk of redundancy. Some apprentices are also having breaks in learning, for example those working in healthcare where the employer does not have capacity at present to engage with the apprenticeship process. There are some concerns around apprentices who have been furloughed as they are likely to be extremely busy on their return to employment which could have an impact on College's ability to engage with them. The Assistant Principal recognised that it is important to continue dialogue with employers to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged as a result of the current situation. The Chair asked whether, as a result of the fortnightly welfare checks taking place, the College had a sense of how apprentices were dealing with any anxiety and worry about their future and how the College is supporting the apprentices. The Assistant Principal indicated that some apprentices are experiencing financial concerns and uncertainty about the future. Staff are working with them individually to signpost support for them. Apprentices are being reassured that they can continue with their learning whilst furloughed. The main concern tends to be what the future holds in terms of their employment and this is known to be a particular issue in the catering sector. The Chair recognised that close attention will need to be given to this as the situation develops. The Assistant Principal assured Committee members that there are support mechanisms in place in College for learners showing signs of anxiety and that this is continuing to be provided remotely. Again, the Chair commended all those involved in responding so positively to the current situation.

The report was noted.

T/312 LDD – Impact of Covid-19

The report was presented by the Assistant Principal – Kevin Marston.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for a very positive report which showed the fantastic support being given to learners. The Chair commented that he would have expected there to have been a demand for vulnerable learners to attend College and asked whether there was confidence in the support in place for learners whilst they are not attending College in person. The Assistant Principal advised that the College had anticipated initially that this specific cohort of learners would require some kind of physical intervention in College. There is one particular learner whose parents are key workers and there was originally an expectation that they would continue to attend however it appears that parents want to keep their children safe at home. A member indicated that he has had discussions with parents of learners and they have concerns that their children would not be able to maintain social distancing so they feel it safer to keep them at home. Regular welfare checks are taking place to ensure that parents and learners are still comfortable with the level support being provided. The Assistant Principal added that parents were reassured that levels of engagement would be high and reiterated that all parents of these learners are receiving regular calls from staff. Learners are continuing to receive the same levels of educational support as they would at College and the different ways the team are responding to this were outlined. In response to a further question from the Chair, the Director of Student Experience advised that the College has a vulnerable learner list and staff are in constant contact with learners, parents and local authorities. This includes learners with mental health issues and learners where there have been previous safeguarding concerns. The Chair asked what arrangements were in place for learners who require additional support and also qualify for free meals. The Committee were advised that the College had taken a different approach to the widely reported free meals initiative and students have continued to receive financial support paid directly into their bank accounts. The College is not aware of any issues in relation to this and the system is working well. Safeguarding concerns continue to be received and the College's safeguarding team are responding to these as quickly as possible. Concerns received to date tend to be adults and in the main are centred around home life issues. The College continues to engage with local authority support services. The Director of Student Experience reported that the

College's safeguarding policies have been updated recently to include a Covid-19 addendum. A set of guidelines / top tips have been produced and shared with staff in relation to virtual learning. Information has also been provided for learners on how to alert the College team remotely to a safeguarding incident. In addition to this, the College's website has information for parents on how to raise a safeguarding concern. The Director of Student Experience confirmed that he was confident that learners are safe. The Chair was assured by this. Another member advised that they also felt very reassured that the College was meeting its duty of care. The member commented that daily contact with 90% of learners was very impressive and a credit to the team. In response to a question from the member, the Assistant Principal advised that there are 159 learners on this provision who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). There are a number of learners in College with other identified issues but the focus of the report is learners with an EHCP. The Assistant Principal confirmed that there have been some interventions as a result of the regular check-ins with parents, carers and individuals. Concerns have been raised and where appropriate these have been shared with the local authority. The Director of Student Experience advised that the College had included a number of learners on the vulnerable learners list, not only those who meet the government's description of vulnerable learners. In total there are approximately 530 learners on the College's list where regular contact is being maintained. The Chair thanked all of those involved for their continued support in relation to these learners.

The report was noted.

T/313 2018/19 Performance Benchmarking

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

The Chair commented that the report gave a very encouraging picture recognising both the fantastic outcomes within the report and the areas identified for improvement. The Chair of the Board indicated that the outcomes for education and training provision were very enviable. He felt that there was a stark difference between the overall and timely achievement rates for apprentices and was interested in what the trajectory was prior to the current lockdown position. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance indicated that the following report, 2019/20 Performance, gives further detail in relation to this. The Committee was advised that apprenticeship achievement has improved and part of the issue in relation to timely achievement was in relation to a number of historic learners who did not complete in a timely manner. It was confirmed that this was a legacy issue. Timely achievement is now much improved and the team are seeing a positive impact from recent activity. There are far fewer apprentices being rolled forward in comparison to previous years. The Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance advised that it is very difficult to predict how Covid-19 will impact on achievement data. It was reported that the College, in common with others, will not be held accountable for 2019/20 performance due to the impact of Covid-19 and this data will not be published as it normally is. The Chair of the Board indicated that the following report did clearly show initial signs of recovery. The Interim Principal / CEO was in agreement that these were exceptional outcomes. He felt that the report showed very impressive performance and the data was presented very well, extremely clear and presented in a very straightforward way. In light of this data, the Interim Principal / CEO felt that the recent Ofsted judgement of 'requiring improvement' in relation to apprenticeship activity did not fully reflect the improving position that can now be demonstrated. He recognised that it can take a significant amount of time to see improvements in relation to apprenticeships. He felt that the reported position was very much testament to the work undertaken by the team and exceptional planning over the last 2 to 3 years. A member commented that the data presented was extremely welcome and they felt that it was very timely in terms of reminding members of the important achievements and outcomes of the College. She felt that this clearly shows the efforts of the College in relation to how well learners are supported to achieve their goals. The Chair very much agreed with

this concluding that the College continues to be one of the best in the country for learner outcomes despite other known issues.

The report was noted.

T/314 2019/20 Performance (year-to-date)

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

In response to a question from a member, the Assistant Principal: Standards and Performance confirmed that although data from 2019/20 will not be published due to coronavirus, the College will maintain the data and will continue to report on performance. The team will also be able to provide comparison to historic data to support this. The Chair commented that it would be wise to continue to have internal focus recognising that the College's focus on looking at individual students has been very important in achieving the results it has had to date. The Interim Principal / CEO recognised that whilst the performance data within the report was excellent the work was also very much a reflection on the focus of staff at so many levels. He felt that the clarity of report was excellent.

The report was noted.

T/315 Post-inspection Action Plan / Quality Improvement Action Plan

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

In response to a question from the Chair, the Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality indicated that under normal circumstances he would have expected Ofsted to undertake a monitoring visit approximately seven months post inspection. It had been his objective to work with Ofsted and for this to happen in September with a view to re-inspection taking place in February 2020. The Committee were advised that due to the current closure all Ofsted inspections were currently cancelled. The Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality shared his concern that there would likely be a delay to the College's re-inspection due to the current situation. The Chair felt that it was disappointing that the College would not be able to demonstrate the distance travelled as quickly as it otherwise would and recognised the need to keep up the excellent work taking place and maintain focus.

The report was noted.

T/316 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The report was presented by the Head of Quality Improvement.

The Chair commented that the report was very exciting with interesting content. He felt it showed significant changes to how teaching and learning is being delivered. A member agreed that the report outlined some very useful and valuable work. The member was encouraged that over 200 members of staff had engaged with the recent CPD day and asked what steps were being taken to reach out to those who did not engage. The Head of Quality Improvement indicated that data showed that 200 staff were interacting directly with College systems but recognised that the figure may actually be higher. The team are reaching out to staff through Lead Practitioners and Lead Assessors. All staff have an individual coach and the coaches are increasing their interactions. Staff who are known to not engage well with technology are being targeted. The team are looking at engaging user-friendly ways to address the fears of those who would normally use more traditional teaching methods. It is known that there are some staff who originally were not very confident in the use of technology but are now engaging well with Google Classroom and Google Meet. The team recognise that for some staff it is a challenge but they are very much looking to engage with them. Tech Champions in each department are also working to support staff where

required. The Interim Principal / CEO commented that there was a real opportunity to capture and build upon the use of technology moving forward into the future. The College must look to build up a suite of resources that can help with any future disruption to activity and to offer a more blended approach to learning more generally. He indicated that he is very much interested in the use of technology in more vocational areas. He also suggested that, outside of the meeting, he would be interested to look at using observation data to build a more holistic view of curriculum teams.

The report was noted.

T/317 Education and Training Provision – Curriculum Blueprint

The report was presented by the Assistant Principal – Deni Chambers.

The Chair commented that he was very interested in this concept and he felt it a very necessary thing to do. He asked whether there was confidence or evidence that staff will welcome and be engaged with the curriculum blueprint. The Assistant Principal advised that this will be the second year that it has been rolled-out to staff. Feedback from 2019/20 was that curriculum teams found it to be a welcome addition. It outlines expectations and this very much appreciated, particularly by some newer team members who very much welcomed the guidance and found it useful. The blueprint will give clear guidance in a number of scenarios ensuring that the core fundamentals of delivery are not forgotten. A member commented that he felt this to be a great initiative which would very much support succession planning. He felt the document was first class and could see it being very effective. The Interim Principal / CEO indicated that he was also very impressed. Other members of the Committee agreed with this view and felt it gave a full insight of all of the different elements of a full-time programme.

The report was noted.

T/318 Any Other Business

The Chair reflected that the meeting had been extremely positive and the Committee felt that it had been a welcome and timely reminder of the excellent work taking place in the College. Another member agreed very much with this statement and felt it reaffirmed the many areas of strength the College is recognised for. He felt that the reports were very reassuring and the presentation of information had been excellent.

T/319 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 24 June 2020 at 4.00pm.

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.