

**Minutes of the  
Quality, Standards and Achievement Committee  
Wednesday 5 June 2019  
Tower Board Room, Cauldwell Street, Bedford**

**Present:** Allan Schofield (ASch)  
Noel Gray  
Mark Lawson (ML)  
Ian Pryce (IP)  
Shaun Wilson (SW)

**In attendance:** Georgina Ager (Vice Principal)  
Sarah Baxter (Director of Sales and Marketing)  
Debbie Houghton (Director of Apprenticeships)  
Em Lowe (Vice Principal)  
Rachel Nicol (Director of Governance & Clerk to the Corporation)  
Petra Williams (Director of Quality, Learning, Teaching and Assessment)

**Action**

**QSA/18/19**

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Dimpleby, Sheila Selwood.

The student governor has been non contactable for some time and did not attend.

**QSA/19/19**

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations relevant to the matters on the agenda.

The Chair declared that he has been asked to be Chair of the North Bedfordshire Art Society but this was not considered to conflict with his role on the Committee.

**QSA/20/19**

**Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**QSA/21/19**

### **Academic Risk**

EL provided a verbal update on the academic risk profile. The Committee noted that there had not been any significant changes in the risk profile since the last meeting.

It was highlighted that structural changes at BSF to increase vocational leadership had reduced the risks in that area and challenges were being managed.

It was highlighted that two independent audits have been carried out on apprenticeships. The reports will be available early in July and the Executive provided some commentary on early findings. The Committee understood that risks identified in those audits will be reflected in the Risk Register in due course.

The Chair asked that future reports contain an express statement that there has been no movement where that is the case.

**The report was noted.**

**QSA/22/19**

### **Quality Dashboard**

The Committee received an updated quality dashboard summarising academic performance against agreed KPIs.

The Director of Quality explained that the report only covers areas which are the subject of change. Attendance and the impact on achievement has been considered. There is evidence of impact in English and maths in particular with research identified that higher attendance in Maths and English leads to achievement of higher grades. The Quality department is working with other colleges to ascertain an appropriate attendance target (currently the College uses 92% as a positive indicator for attendance although aims for 100%) with a gap of less than 5% between attendance on main programmes and on Maths and English.

The Committee discussed;

- Whether there is any pattern by site or

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subject area. Tresham attendance was noted to be lower than at Bedford currently and is being reviewed by the Director of Quality. It is recognised that attendance is more consistent across main qualifications.

- Definition of attendance. The Committee discussed the difference between definitions for data and from a quality perspective. The College is working towards consistency across the College. Assurance was given on the reliability and use of data
- The new education inspection framework and impact on reporting.

The Committee was content that the data presented is broadly consistent with the current understanding of performance against current targets.

The Committee was satisfied with the management action being taken to address the issues raised.

**The report was noted.**

## **QSA/23/19**

### **Student non-continuation**

The Committee received a paper setting out proposed management actions to address the unexpectedly high levels of non-continuation reported to the last board meeting.

The Director of Sales and Marketing and the Director of Apprenticeships attended to present the report.

The Director of Sales and Marketing highlighted her review, findings and planned actions;

- Students who had been enrolled but not attended, significant increase on previous years. There is no available feedback from those individuals and no robust data to provide reasons for the increase. The College has established a working group to ensure data is collected in the future and provides sufficient information to address issues
- Those leaving in the first six weeks, the trend is going down. This was attributed to progress made on provision of advice and

guidance. The Committee asked whether any data was available from other Colleges.

- A mapping exercise has been carried out based on a paper “Reasons for Early Leaving from FE and Work-based Learning Courses”.
- Forecasting of student numbers with curriculum areas has been carried out. Students who are not continuing will be followed up to ascertain the reasons in the future.
- The focus on obtaining meaningful data to assist in supporting students to ensure they are on the right learning journey

The Committee discussed;

- The likelihood of students having found work as an alternative to attending college. It was considered that due to the ages most are required to be in education or training.
- Timing of work to capture data. Students not progressing will be called in June to ascertain reasons.
- Analysis available by age of learner, subject area etc. No significant patterns have been identified although work is being done with areas with higher numbers of leavers in first 6 weeks.
- Whether there is any anecdotal evidence from other students. The intended destinations information available on Pro monitor has been referenced.
- Potential for early intervention after the welcome days. Students will be asked to confirm attendance. Those who don't respond will be contacted by staff qualified in providing information, advice and guidance. Those who attend welcome day but miss enrolment will also be contacted.
- Competitive nature of the market with demographics for 16-18 year olds.
- Potential to provide information for students to simplify the process for students and give contact details.
- Whether there is information on the impact on viability of particular programmes. It was confirmed that costs are managed at a departmental rather than programme level.
- The extent to which those leaving after 6

weeks are making a decision based on student satisfaction. Perception surveys are being carried out which will provide an indicator on community views. In depth research is required to ascertain information on complex issues.

- Conversion rate at the Sixth Form

Further assurance was given that this year's figures have been projected based on predicted non-continuation rates.

### **Apprenticeships**

The report was presented by the Director of Apprenticeships and highlights given;

- Number of withdrawals (Before and after first 6 weeks)
- Presentation of data
- Comparison between 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 and impact of subcontractor arrangements
- New standards in 2018-2019 requiring new recruitment processes.
- Apprenticeship feedback positive in respect of standards verses frameworks.
- Review of induction process to streamline it.
- Rise in progress review meetings.
- Recognition of need to look at quality reviews.
- Employer awareness of role in respect of apprenticeships.
- Changes around withdrawal process, structured intervention flow and impact on re engagement of apprentices.
- Maths and English - changes to model to increase central and intense delivery. Further analysis is being carried out on the ongoing appropriateness of this model.
- Need for intervention strategies to ensure early identification of issues for apprentices, a working group has been established.

The Committee asked about the preliminary findings on the apprenticeships audit and impact on non-continuation.

It was confirmed that with reference to the current report further work is being carried out to

processes to ensure the identification of an appropriate apprenticeship and on the pre enrolment skills scan for candidates.

It was confirmed that job descriptions will be requested as part of the apprenticeship sign up process.

The Committee further discussed;

- Balance between customer focus on employer and students.
- The financial impact in the future if non-continuation rates are not tackled.

It was agreed that a further report will be brought in the next academic year. The Committee was however satisfied with the assurance provided around the identification of the issues and the actions being taken.

**The report was noted.**

The Director of Sales and Marketing and Director of Apprenticeships left the meeting.

## **QSA/24/19**

### **Curriculum Planning**

The Committee received a summary of developments in curriculum planning and the following were highlighted;

- Development in HE provision
- Reduction in subcontracting with the exception of management of devolved budgets where activity has been subcontracted to Profound and Learning Curve.
- Launch of teaching apprenticeships and business standards
- Sustainability of hospitality provision at Bedford and decision to cease provision from next year due to lack of demand in the community but with provision continuing in Northamptonshire.

The Committee discussed;

- Role of QSA and the data received in respect of quality; in particular to assess any quality impact in decisions to close

- provision.
- Role of the Corporation in strategic decisions and potential review of process and communication. The starting point was recognised to be the community demand for provision. Assurance was given that the sensitivity around jobs and timeliness of communication will be considered in any future process to be established.
  - Relationship between curriculum management and curriculum determination.
  - Assurance around the impact on quality of the size of cohorts.

It was suggested that programmes at risk are flagged up to the Committee and it was agreed that this can be covered in reports on intervention etc.

The Committee questioned and received assurance around the number of student impacted by the decision to close the hospitality provision and support provided. It was confirmed that they had received one to one support and guidance in respect of joining hospitality at another site or with an alternative provider.

It was agreed that a paper on Devolution of Skills budgets will be brought to the next meeting.

An update was requested and given on the Learning Partnership activity. Work is being carried out to review the brand value and recognition within the community network and a further report will be brought in the next academic year.

The Committee questioned the work being done with employers to support and promote apprenticeships. Work was outlined across different departments.

The risks in terms of external assurance were considered. It was understood that areas have mitigated the risks by provision of qualifications alongside training.

The Committee was satisfied with management action in relation to all developments set out in the paper.

**The report was noted.**

**QSA/25/19**

### **External assurance**

The new Education Inspection Framework has now been published. The Vice Principal and Director of Quality are attending a further briefing event. A summary will then be provided of the major changes and areas briefed. The increased focus on the curriculum and impact on the students was highlighted.

The external assurance plan will be updated with new questions inserted in the SAR.

The Augar report was referenced. IP will circulate an AOC summary.

### **The update was noted**

**QSA/26/19**

### **QIP**

The Committee received a regular update on progress in implementing the QIP and received assurance that planned actions were being taken and that no major issues had been identified.

The Committee discussed;

- Reference to the attendance gap between the main programme and Maths and English. Staff delivering main programmes are supporting students to attend Maths and English.
- Programme areas where students do not attend English and maths.
- Staff satisfaction and how the impact on communication is being measured. The Executive are reviewing the nature of questions and the specific information required to determine the actions and accountability.
- HE QIP and intention to review it to emphasise the outcomes and impact rather than the actions.
- Positive progress on HE, focus groups have indicated improved student satisfaction but further work is being carried out.
- Low attendance rates for some provision in HE and any links with quality. Context was given on the small nature of the groups concerned.



- Additional work being done to bring teams together to share planning, standardise programmes and encourage engagement in competitions, live briefs and the impact of work done.

The Committee noted the progress made in respect of the plan.

**The report was noted.**

**QSA/27/19**

### **Academic Progress**

The Director of Quality presented the report and highlighted the work and analysis carried out;

- Predicted achievement rate, relationship with national rates and work being carried out with areas to support learners to achieve
- Predicted achievement and relationship with retention rates by different areas including; 16-18 study programmes and adults.
- Different areas such as high needs, English and maths, Higher Education and timely achievement for apprenticeships.
- The impact of a progress measure score to predict the value added results. It was confirmed that it is a new process and the calculation and application will be reflected on in due course

The Committee discussed;

- Expected rise in overall average achievement but with inconsistencies in some areas.
- 16-18 achievement, levels 1 and 3 predicted to be 2% below national rates and planned management action in the QIP to address it.
- Increase in HE achievement from previous year due to effectiveness of management actions.

**The Committee noted the assurance received and the report.**

## Student Satisfaction

The Committee received a report on the student spring survey and student conference. The results of the survey were noted to be broadly consistent with the earlier first impressions survey.

The following were highlighted;

- The areas of assurance and actions planned.
- The positive trajectory in terms of student satisfaction but also work being done in respect of the target.
- Consistency of data across the Group.
- Students grading of the College at the Student Voice Conference positively under the new inspection criteria.

The Committee discussed how the College deals with bullying issues and how it has been rated. The College is now monitoring the recording of bullying. Awareness is being raised across The Group with additional work being done to enhance resilience. Areas identifying as feeling less safe were explored.

It was clarified that some of the feelings are believed to relate to the views of society rather than the College. These issues are being further explored to ensure appropriate support is in place. Bullying is also being reviewed by the Safeguarding and Equality Diversity and Inclusion committees.

The Executive are looking at initiatives to support those identified as bullying as well as the victims. The timeline for actions will be reviewed and the VP responsible for Safeguarding will discuss the College's response with the Director of Student Services.

The appropriate report on the impact on achievement will be brought to QSA in due course and updates on bullying will be provided to the Board through the updates on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Safeguarding.

The Committee discussed the need to focus in reports on the key issues, impact and actions and

highlight whether there are key issues between campuses. Longer documents can be placed on the portal where it is considered they may be of interest.

The Committee further discussed;

- Statistics provided by the spring survey. Need for clarity on how the survey is worded, use of 5 point model rather than agree or disagree. The Committee requested that future reports include a brief explanation of the methodology.
- The statistical significance of the data. Assurance was given that Marketing check the validity of statistics presented.
- The importance of the likelihood to recommend question and how it might be impacted by individual circumstances.
- The relationship between internal reviews and external verification. All 16-18 students are offered a one to one review with careers but will not necessarily take it up.
- Need for consideration of external reference points.
- Evidence in respect of the need for structure and discipline verses popularity.
- Need for increased direct student engagement with the Committee. Consideration will be given to inviting a lead from the Student Executive to attend the Committee when it considers student voice issues.

The Committee noted that measures to further enhance student satisfaction are included in the SAR and QIP. It also identified the need for a more sophisticated understanding of how student survey information might be interpreted. A paper will be brought to a future meeting.

**The Committee was satisfied with the assurance received and noted the report.**

Georgina Ager (Vice Principal) left the meeting

## QSA/29/19

### Destinations

The Committee received the annual student destinations report and noted that 88.8% of students progressed into positive destinations. They also noted that the strategic aim of less than 7% of full time learners being unemployed on leaving had been met and had reduced significantly on the previous year.

Further highlights were given including;

- 40% of learners moving to HE, an increase on previous reports.
- Average earnings more than previous years but difficulty comparing like for like due to the different calculations by the research agency.
- Destinations by ethnicity.

The Committee discussed;

- Presentation of data limited to binary gender and progress towards broader reporting. Additional questions being developed for 2020 but with consideration of data protection legislation.
- Relationship between education and earning ability.
- Relevance of qualifications to destinations.

**The Committee noted the report and the assurance received.**

## QSA/30/19

### Professional Development

The Committee received an update on the implementation of the Professional Development Policy. Heads of Department have received significant training with a positive impact on line management.

The Committee was pleased to note the range and number of activities being undertaken in line with the commitment to achieve the 3 percent of income target devoted to such development.

It was noted that focus on learning, teaching and assessment has positively impacted on the students learning experience.

Two governors had attended a learning lunch and had found the experience positive. Both confirmed they would be happy to support future events. Further invites will be forwarded with a briefing on what is involved.

The department recognises the need to measure the impact of staff development and will carry out an impact assessment at the end of the academic year and report further next year.

**The Committee noted the assurance received and the report.**

### **QSA/31/19**

#### **Review of QSA**

The Chair led a review of the Committee's work during the year. The introduction of Rag rated assurance reports and the methodology was agreed as a positive.

The front sheets and more focussed reports were also viewed as a positive with the Committee having a better understanding of the rationale for agenda items.

It was agreed that in the forthcoming year the Committee will review priority areas and focus on data reliability. Particular areas highlighted for review include;

Finance HR data  
Apprenticeships  
BSF  
Data

Members were invited to provide direct feedback to the Director of Governance & Clerk on the work plan.

### **QSA/32/19**

#### **Minutes**

The Director of Governance & Clerk highlighted a change to the details of those present.

Subject to that amendment the minutes of the meeting on 12 March 2019 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

**Meeting closed.**

Chair approved 27 June 2019

