

**MINUTES of the Standards Committee held on Monday 15th November 2021 at 5pm
in Conference Room 2, Broadway**

Members Present: Katharine Clough
Mollie-Amelia Hehir (via Microsoft Teams)
Suhail Rana
Neil Thomas
David Whatton (Chair)
Andrew Woodford

In attendance: Rachel Corns (Assistant Principal)
Gill Darwood (Director of Corporate Governance) (DCG)
Diana Martin (Vice Principal)
Sukhninder Panesar (Observer)
Dean Price (Standards & Performance Manager)
Carl Riding (Vice Principal Curriculum & Performance)

1 Confirmation of quorum and apologies for absence

1.1 There were no apologies for absence and the DCG confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Appointment of Vice Chair for 2021/22

3.1 It was noted that due to the resignation of Katharine Clough at the end of November, a new Vice Chair would be required for the committee and it was agreed that the appointment of the Vice Chair be deferred to the next meeting, following the commencement of Sukhninder Panesar's term of office on 1st December.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th May 2021

4.1 The minutes were confirmed as a true record for signature by the Chair.

5 Matters arising

5.1 There were no matters arising other than those covered on the agenda.

6 Terms of reference 2021/22

6.1 The DCG advised that it was considered good practice for Corporation committees to undertake a periodic review of their terms of reference. The terms of reference for the Standards Committee had been reviewed with the proposed amendments highlighted through tracked changes. The main changes to the document were:

- Inclusion of reference to the committee's role in considering compliments, complaints and suggestions reports.
- Inclusion of reference to the committee's role in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and monitoring progress against impact measures.
- Strengthened point on safeguarding and Prevent.

- Inclusion of reference to the committee's role in monitoring allocated risks and their mitigation.

6.2 **It was resolved** To recommend the terms of reference for 2021/22 were for approval at the Corporation meeting held 7th December 2021.

7 **Standards Committee's Annual Report for 2020/21**

7.1 The DCG presented the report which summarised the work undertaken by the Standards Committee in 2020/21. K Clough suggested that it would be helpful to [include reference to the value the committee had placed on the opportunity to meet with students and staff through the governor strategic link activities undertaken during the past year.](#)

7.2 **It was resolved** Subject to the proposed amendment, to approve the annual report of the Standards Committee for 2020/21.

8 **Data dashboard review**

8.1 The CE&P presented an update on the data dashboard focusing on the enrolments and attendance for each key client group for the year to date:

8.2 - Apprenticeships

- Enrolments were now increasing each week showing evidence of a recovery from the impact of Covid during the last year. The financial impact of the enrolment position would be reported through the management accounts and Finance and Estates Committee. In response to a question from the Chair, the CE and P noted that the dashboard represented all students currently in learning, rather than enrolments in the year, and agreed that the wording of the dashboard would be clarified in this respect.
- Attendance – continued to be very high for apprenticeships at 91%.

8.3 - 16-18 learners

- Enrolments were very close to the same point last year, but represented an under-performance compared to predictions for the year. The CE and P noted that this was seen across the sector, with more learners staying on in their school sixth forms or going into low paid work opportunities. This had an impact on finances which would be considered at the next Finance and Estates Committee.
- Attendance was impacted by continuing effects of Covid, at 88.6% compared to 90% this time last year. In response to a question from S Panesar, D Martin explained that Covid related absence would be tracked through the register system by a specific code. Members agreed that it would be helpful to report on any significant variances in attendance which were non Covid related.

8.4 - A level learners

- Enrolments were in line with the previous year.
- Attendance, as with the 16-18 cohort, was down on the previous year due to the Covid impact at 94.4%.

8.5 - Adults

- Enrolments were considerably higher than this point last year but against a higher target, so there would be some further activity to achieve targets, including a January campaign focused on areas where there had been underperformance.

- Attendance was at 85.4% compared to 90% in the previous year.

8.6 - Higher skills

- Enrolments for traditional HE programmes (HNC/HND) were slightly behind what would normally be expected at this point in the year, although most learners were opting for an apprenticeship route rather than traditional HE. This data did not include level 4 Apprenticeships or level 4 programmes delivered through the WMCA adult fun
Members agreed that it would be appropriate to revise the reporting of the dashboard for this key client group to provide a more holistic view of higher education provision.
- Attendance for this cohort was 1% below the previous year at 90.4%.

8.7 S Panesar commended the College for the Data Dashboard as being open and transparent.

8.8 In response to a question from A Woodward, the CE and P confirmed that the Dudley College Worldwide key client group would be removed from the dashboard and may be replaced with a section to provide information on partnerships.

8.9 **It was resolved** To note the Data Dashboard update and endorse the proposed revisions to the dashboard.

9 Operational Development Planning:

9.1 Outcome of task and finish groups 2020/21

9.1.1 C Riding reminded members of the seven Task and Finish Groups which had been established in the previous academic year whose remit was to review, plan and implement actions to address strategic and operational objectives, particularly in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic. The final progress reports from the seven groups, which had each been led by a member of the Senior Leadership Group, were considered. It was noted that the majority of actions for each group had been noted as fully completed in year, with some of the work of these groups becoming more long term projects which were ongoing.

9.1.2 In response to a question from K Clough, C Riding explained that the actions were tracked through the Pentana action management database. The system provided automatic triggers to named staff to flag milestones and deadlines and each group had met regularly to monitor progress against the actions.

9.1.3 **It was resolved** To note the update on the Task and Finish Groups 2020/21.

9.2 Proposed structure for ODPs for 2021/22

9.2.1 The CE and P noted that, as members would be aware, during the pandemic the College had made the decision to move away from College Operational Development Plans in favour of Task & Finish Group Action Plans. This had allowed focus on the pressing matters in hand to deal with the impact of the pandemic. The College was now proposing to move back to a more traditional College Operational Development Plan structure. The paper provided a summary of the proposed way forward for members discussion and approval.

9.2.2 The proposal included a return to CODPs structured under the eleven areas of the Strategic Plan, to run from January 2022 for a calendar year. They would pick up actions from the Strategic Plan, Annual Strategic Impact Assessment and other College

developments. Members would receive reports on progress at each meeting throughout the year.

- 9.2.3 **It was resolved** To approve the structure for Operational Development Plans for 2021/22.

10 Annual Strategic Impact Assessment 2020/21

10.1 The CE and P introduced the update on the production of the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment (ASIA) for 2020/21. He reminded members of the structure of the report, which included a series of dashboards by key client group with a balanced score card and an overall assessment of either 'meeting expectations', 'exceeding expectations' or 'below expectations'.

10.2 D Martin and C Riding presented the initial assessments for each key client group as follows:

16-18 learners

- Participation – 4,909 learners (exceeds expectations)
- Diversity – 29.2% BAME, 27.4% declared a disability, no significant differences in achievement rates of any groups (exceeds expectations)
- Achievement - core programmes 87.3%, all levels remain above last published national rates (meets expectations)
- Satisfaction – overall satisfaction remains marginally above ODP benchmark (meets expectations)
- Destinations - 9/10 learners had a positive destination (exceeds expectations)
- Regional Impact – 48% STEM subjects (meets expectations)
- Financial – continued growth income and remains largest most stable income line (exceeds expectations)
- Overall judgement of 'meets expectations'.

10.3 Members agreed with this assessment in relation to the 16-18 key client group.

A level learners

- Participation – 537 learners (meets expectations)
- Diversity – 32% BAME, 19.4% declared a disability, black students and those declaring a disability achieve at a lower rate (meets expectations)
- Achievement - overall 88.3% full linear in line with last published national rate (meets expectations)
- Satisfaction – overall satisfaction remains marginally above ODP benchmark (meets expectations)
- Distance Travelled – continue trend of improving high grades performance. Internally produced ALPs grade 3 (exceeds expectations)
- Destinations - 96.6% known positive destinations. 77.3% progression to Higher Education (meets expectations)
- Regional Impact – 48% STEM subjects (meets expectations)
- Financial – continue to meet recruitment targets and income (meets expectations)
- Overall judgement of 'meets expectations'.

10.5 Members discussed whether the grade for destinations might be increased to 'exceeds expectations' should there be further data to support this assessment, which could then potentially move to 'exceeds expectations' overall.

- 10.6 In response to a question from Mollie Hehir, who asked if the causes for underachievement by black learners were known, D Martin advised that this was not a typical pattern and so would need further investigation. She advised that further detail on this would be provided in the narrative within the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment.
- 10.7 *Apprenticeships (Direct college delivery only)*
- 2020-21 participation – 2,546 direct-college apprentices (below expectations)
 - Diversity – 11% BAME (below expectation) and lower achievement for Asian ethnic origin (mixed for other ethnic minorities), male/female achievement gaps reduced and above average achievement and participation from apprentices with a declared disability (meets expectations).
 - Achievement - overall 60.9%, 0.7% improvement despite Covid-19 impact and standards over frameworks (meets expectations).
 - Satisfaction – overall satisfaction 69% remains at QDP benchmark (meets expectations).
 - Regional Impact – 59% STEM subjects (4 year improvement) (exceeds expectations).
 - Financial – income impacted by Covid-19 (meets expectations).
 - Overall judgement of ‘meets expectations’.
- 10.8 C Riding reminded members that the College was on a three year strategy to reduce partnership activity to focus on high quality provision in sectors which were identified as areas of skills shortage and which were not currently met by the College.
- 10.9 Members considered the need to make reasonable adjustments to the assessment to take account of Covid which was a sector wide issue. Members noted that the absence of comparative data also impacted the ability to make an accurate judgement in relation to achievement rates. Members confirmed their agreement to this assessment of performance.
- 10.10 *Apprenticeships (partnerships only)*
- 2020-21 participation – 846 partnership apprentices (meets expectations)
 - Diversity – 20% BAME, lower achievement females compared to males, and mixed achievement by ethnicity. Lower take up of learning support and lower numbers with a self-declared disability (meets expectations).
 - Achievement - overall 34.9%, below minimum levels of performance for several partners. Low achievement on apprenticeship standards (below expectations).
 - Financial – income impacted by Covid-19 and low retention and achievement on apprenticeship standards (below expectations).
 - Overall judgement of ‘below expectations’.
- 10.11 Members agreed with this assessment of performance. The Chair noted that as discussed at the recent Corporation meeting, [it would be helpful to clarify which areas of provision might be lost as a result of withdrawing from partnership activity.](#)
- 10.12 *Adults*
- Participation - 2653 learners (below expectations)
 - Diversity – 44.4% BAME, 18.8% declared a disability. No significant difference in achievement rates between groups (meets expectations).
 - Achievement - overall 88.7% in line with last published national rate (meets expectations).
 - Satisfaction – overall satisfaction remains significantly above QDP benchmark (exceeds expectations).

- Destinations - 67.3% positive destinations. Increase in unemployed destinations. (below expectations).
- Regional Impact – 37% STEM subjects increase against previous year (meets expectations).
- Financial – Below income target and allocation (below expectations).
- Overall judgement of meets expectations.

10.13 Members agreed with this assessment of performance.

10.14 *Higher education*

- 2020-21 participation – Increase in L4 classroom, offset by decrease in traditional HNC/D programmes. Overall increase. (meets expectations)
- Diversity – 23% BAME, 17% learning difficulty / disability, good split between male and female. (meets expectations)
- Achievement - very high for a number of years (exceeds expectations).
- Satisfaction – well above national benchmark (exceeds expectations).
- Regional Impact – reduction in percentage studying STEM provision due to introduction of new courses in Arts, Management and Accounting – currently 27% including higher apprenticeships (meets expectations).
- Financial – Some underperformance due to pandemic (below expectations).
- Overall judgement of meets expectations.

10.15 Members agreed with this assessment of performance.

10.16 The CE and P advised that the draft version of the Annual Strategic Assessment Report would be brought to the December Corporation meeting with further clarification provided at that time on the points raised.

10.17 D Martin provided an update on the College's proposed revised strategy on mathematics and English, reminding members of the history of the delivery of English and mathematics in the College. She noted that pre-pandemic the College had strong and improving achievement rates in Functional Skills for learners on full-time programmes of study. The College policy had been to use Functional Skills as a stepping-stone qualification for those not achieving a grade 3 in GCSE.

10.18 In September 2019, it had been decided that all new learners enrolling would be studying the new reformed Functional Skills. The reforms saw the functional skills qualifications become more challenging for example the introduction of a non-calculator paper in mathematics making up 25% of the overall mark. However, in March 2020, the College had closed in response to national lockdown and learning went online. Lockdown had had a significant impact on Functional Skills learners due to their basic skills needs. In summer 2020, Functional Skills learners were awarded Centre Assessed Grade (CAGs), ie no examinations were taken.

10.19 From September 2020, the College had been observing class bubbles and so the decision had been taken to deliver English and mathematics online for term 1 to avoid the need for class groups to mix. This was followed in January 2021, by an extended period of national lockdown so all learning remained online. In summer 2021, Functional Skills learners were required to sit examinations unlike those studying GCSE. As a result, many learners did not sit or failed due to missed learning and lack of examination experience, resulting in an overall achievement rate for functional skills falling from 77.6% in 2019/20 to 38.3% in 2020/21.

10.20 D Martin outlined the proposed revised strategy as follows:

- Learners with a GCSE Grade U or Grade 1 on entry to be enrolled on a two year entry 3 English and/or mathematics course, followed by a GCSE stepping stone qualification. Catch up funding would be used to support the most disadvantaged and disengaged learners.
- Learners with a GCSE Grade 2 on entry would be enrolled on a two year GCSE resit programme. Catch up funding would be used for delivery of underpinning skills development.
- Learners with a GCSE Grade 3 on entry would be enrolled on a two year GCSE programme, with a mock examination in January to identify any 'high flyers' who would be entered for examination at the end of year 1. Catch up funding would be used to help prepare these learners for examination.

10.21 **It was resolved** To note the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment update and endorse the revised approach to English and mathematics delivery.

II Teaching and Learning Matters

II.1 Teaching and learning update

II.1.1 D Price presented the paper which provided a summary of teaching and learning activity. The report identified how the college had adapted its strategies over the past 18 months and had continued to deliver high standards of educational delivery. The report highlighted key implementations within teaching and learning including:

- The implementation of the new induction passport and feedback analysis.
- The return to classroom teaching and learning and the implementation of a new teaching and learning strategy model in response to this with new processes in place.
- The introduction of the new MyPIP on-line resources available to support learners around digital upskilling, mental health and careers and progression.
- Continuous training for curriculum managers and leaders delivered in weekly sessions including Power BI, quality assurance, walk throughs and Ofsted preparation.
- The re-launch of curriculum triangles to involve members of the senior leadership group.
- College staff conference had taken place in October with a digital theme.
- The next conference in April 2022 would have a theme of Keeping Children Safe in Dudley and would be a joint conference with staff members of Dudley Academies Trust.

II.1.2 In response to a question from K Clough on the financial implications of the implementation of the Digital Strategy, the CE and P explained that the majority of this expenditure would be managed from existing budgets with some options for additional expenditure which would be presented for consideration by the Finance and Estates Committee.

II.1.3 **It was resolved** To note the update on teaching and learning.

12 **Safeguarding and Student Conduct Matters**

12.1 **Safeguarding and Learner Conduct Report**

12.1.1 D Martin presented the report which provided a summary of safeguarding arrangements in the College as well as updates in developments across the College. A number of points from the report were highlighted as follows:

12.1.2 *Staff*

The College had recruited 27 new staff during this reporting period, of which 24 had already completed safeguarding and prevent training within the 6 weeks of their start date. Diana Martin had delivered update sessions for Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) covering the key changes from September 2021. Staff had been briefed about the use of CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) and this had been launched across College. Currently there were some issues with the reporting function and these were being resolved to ensure the data purely reported on safeguarding matters only.

12.1.3 *Safeguarding*

- 53 learners were Children in Care (CiC)
- 10 learners were Children in Need (CiN)
- 15 learners supported through the Early Help/Team Around the Family (an increase of 8)
- 16 learners were on a Child Protection Plan (CPP)
- 3 learners identified as "at risk" of exploitation

12.1.4 *Discipline - Code of Conduct*

- There had been 10 suspensions for this period (September – November)
- There had been one exclusion linked to a safeguarding issue (harassment)

12.1.5 *Counselling*

- 149 referrals this period which was an increase of 40 compared to this period last year and a large proportion were from the 16-18 age group. The service had seen an increase in learners who were anxious about returning to College.
- There were a higher number of referrals this reporting period in particular from the Creative Studies areas. Drop-in sessions had also increased this year.

12.1.6 D Martin reported that, following the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education September 21 which included sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges a peer review had been carried out. Four concerns were identified which would fall into this new category and as a result of the new guidance students now had a reporting tool on MyDay to share any concerns they may have.

12.1.7 She confirmed that all four identified cases had been reviewed and it had been confirmed that they had been taken seriously and fully investigated with the involvement of parents where appropriate. Where necessary, alleged perpetrators had also been supported around healthy relationships and supporting their mental health through the investigation process.

12.1.8 D Martin advised that any reports under this category would be incorporated into the safeguarding report to the committee going forward.

12.1.9 In response to a question from the Chair, D Martin advised that the College had a clear protocol on informing parents. She explained that permission must be obtained from all learners over 18 (unless they had an EHCP which allowed for direct parent contact for

learners up to the age of 24). For over 18s, each case was considered on a case by case basis and learners encouraged to involve parents where this was felt appropriate.

12.1.10 The Chair clarified that the designated safeguarding lead was not linked to the Vice Chair role but was currently a separate member of the Corporation.

12.1.11 **It was resolved** To note the safeguarding and student conduct update.

13 Compliments and complaints analysis 2020/21

13.1 D Price presented the report which provided an overview of the college's compliments and complaints from the previous meeting to 11 October 2021. A breakdown was provided, in addition to the nature, outcome and action taken. He confirmed that all complaints had been investigated and closed down. It was noted that the number of compliments outnumbered the complaints received during this period.

13.2 **It was resolved** To note the update on compliments and complaints.

14 Higher Education matters

14.1 Office for Students reportable events update

14.1.1 R Corns advised that OfS had run a consultation on reportable events from December 2020 to February 2021. Following on from this they had revised the definition of a reportable event in the OfS's regulatory framework and published revised guidance to help providers understand and meet their reporting obligations.

14.1.2 A reportable event was any event or matter that, in the reasonable judgement of the OfS, negatively affected or could negatively affect:

- The provider's eligibility for registration with the OfS.
- The provider's ability to comply with its conditions of registration.
- The provider's eligibility for degree awarding powers, or its ability to comply with the criteria for degree awarding powers, where the provider:
 - holds degree awarding powers; or
 - had submitted an application for degree awarding powers to the OfS, and for which the OfS had yet to reach a final decision.

14.1.3 In interpreting 'the reasonable judgement of the OfS', the OfS would, as a matter of policy, consider whether a reasonable provider intent on complying with all of its conditions of registration and acting in the interests of students and taxpayers (rather than in its own commercial, reputational or other interests), would consider the event or matter to be material.

14.1.4 These revised requirements were with effect from 1 January 2022. It was noted that the table provided a non-exhaustive, illustrative list of reportable events.

14.1.5 **It was resolved** To note the OfS update on reportable events.

14.2 Office for Students – updated calendar of submissions

14.2.1 R Corns presented the report which provided an updated calendar of all actions required for OfS compliance. She confirmed that the College had met all required deadlines to date and would continue to monitor this closely to ensure compliance.

14.2.2 **It was resolved** To note the OfS updated calendar of submissions

14.3 Outcomes of NSS satisfaction survey

14.3.1 R Corns presented the outcomes of the National Student Survey which was an independent survey of HE student satisfaction conducted externally. Whilst only a small number of the College's HE students were eligible to complete this survey, the results from the most recent survey were positive. She explained that the survey results were fed into the Subject Area Impact Assessment process for picking up any relevant actions.

14.3.2 **It was resolved** To note the outcomes of the NSS student satisfaction survey.

14.4 Pathways to HE

14.4.1 R Corns reported that a review of the recruitment/enrolment trend for the past three years on the current HE provision across the college had been concluded and the main findings were:

- Students predominantly staying at the College for one year.
- 3-year recruitment/enrolment decline in some curriculum areas.
- Inconsistent model across college (contribution, staffing, student experience).

14.4.2 To address the final point, a minimum cohort number had been set for this academic year and the teaching hours given to HE courses had been standardised.

14.4.3 Moving forwards the intention would be to work closely with a small number of HE Institutions to offer a more collaborative approach to HE courses through a transition delivery approach. This was the model for the Institute of Technology, which it was hoped could be rolled out to a number of curriculum areas. The report as presented showed the progress to date in identifying areas to develop collaborative HE delivery models. It was anticipated that these conversations would take place this academic year with a view to implementation.

14.4.4 K Clough endorsed this approach which would remove barriers to learners and make the learner journey as simple as possible. She also suggested that, mindful of the student satisfaction feedback on infrastructure issues, the ability to offer College learners access to HE Institutions' facilities and resources would be a helpful point to include in conversations with any potential future partners.

14.4.5 **It was resolved** To note the update on pathways to higher education.

15 Date of Next Meeting

15.1 8th February 2022, at 5.00pm.

16 Any Other Business

16.1 The Chair noted that this was K Clough's final meeting and expressed thanks to her for her valuable contribution to the work of the Standards Committee. Members expressed their good wishes for the future and her new role.

There were no further matters of business.

The meeting closed at 19.10 hours.

Approved by the committee at the meeting held on 8th February 2022.