

Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday 8th February 2022 at 5pm via Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Mollie-Amelia Hehir
Sukhninder Panesar
Suhail Rana
David Whatton (Chair)
Andrew Woodford

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

1 **Confirmation of quorum and apologies for absence**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Neil Thomas, and from attendees Louise Jones, Matt Laws and Rachel Corns. 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 resolved:** To appoint Sukhninder Panesar as Vice Chair for 2021/22.

4 **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 November 2021**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2021 were confirmed as a true record for signature by the Chair.

5 **Matters arising**

5.1 Item 7.1 – the DCG confirmed that the additional wording on governor strategic link activity had been added to the committee annual report.

5.2 Item 10.11 – “to clarify which areas of provision might be lost as a result of withdrawing from partnership activity” – [C Riding to present report to next committee meeting.](#)

5.3 There were no other matters arising.

6 **Update on English, mathematics and catch up funding delivery**

6.1 D Martin provided a presentation on the revised approach to the provision of English and mathematics, whereby learners were enrolled on an appropriate pathway to undertake GCSE resits depending on their entry level, with less learners undertaking functional skills due to the changed syllabus as explained at the previous meeting.

6.2 The report noted that:-

- Increased number of learners studying at GCSE with almost 1,000 learners on entry with a grade 2 or 3 in English and almost 1,200 in mathematics.

- A reduction in learners studying functional skills with 87 English and 535 mathematics learners.
- Overall, 86 mathematics groups and 71 English groups each week.
- On going assessment of skills – learners would only be entered when they were ready to undertake examinations.
- Mock examinations taking place in February/March.
- National examinations taking place in May/ June.
- GCSE English comprising two papers and mathematics 3 papers.

6.3 A number of challenges were noted as a result of the pandemic:

- Supporting students with teacher assessed grades on entry, whose grades were not always representative of ability.
- Noticeable drop in skills and confidence.
- Apathy and low levels of attendance.
- Lack of exam experience.

6.4 In response to questions from members, D Martin provided further clarification on points of detail. She advised that learners entered for the summer GCSE examinations would have an opportunity to resit in November, but that learners would only be entered when they were ready and well prepared to do so. The longitudinal approach meant that they may not be entered until year 2 of their programme. College staff had met with members of Dudley Academies Trust leadership team to reignite relationships in order to support learners in transition to college. In response to a question from M Hehir, D Martin advised that diagnostic assessment was undertaken during the first six weeks in order to identify knowledge gaps and ensure that teaching met the needs of the individual learner.

6.5 In response to a question from the Chair, D Martin advised that teaching staff in this area taught across both functional skills and GCSE and so there was flexibility to meet the changed requirements. Any financial impact of examination fees would be known following the mock examinations once the number of entries was confirmed.

6.6 [An update would be provided on the results of mock examinations and further detail of the number of entries to June examinations would be provided at the next meeting.](#)

6.7 D Martin provided a further presentation on the delivery of catch up funding, noting that:

- ESFA funding had been made available to support small group tuition for students aged 16 to 19 in English, mathematics and other subjects that had been disrupted by the pandemic, including vocational, technical and/or academic learning.
- Students aged 19 to 24 who had an education, health and care (EHC) plan were also eligible for support.

6.8 The College had committed to a range of activities which included:

- GCSE mathematics and English bootcamps.
- Functional skills mathematics and English bootcamps.
- Additional Functional Skills mathematics and English classes to ensure students were on target.
- Support for SEND and High Needs students.
- Vocational and/or technical support where assessments were deferred.

- Vocational and/or technical catch-up sessions for knowledge and practical skills development.

6.9 Currently 485 learners (97 groups) were being supported in mathematics and 490 (98 groups) in English. In addition, small cohorts of academic learners in Dudley Sixth were receiving extra-curricular academic support

6.10 In response to a question from the Chair, D Martin advised that it was not yet known if funding would be available for the next academic year and A Woodford advised that the funding allocation would be likely to be confirmed in late spring.

6.11 In response to a question from S Panesar, D Martin explained that a lead English or mathematics specialist teacher would work with facilitators who in turn supported small groups of five learners in undertaking set tasks. These arrangements were being covered from the existing staffing resource from across the College and were proving successful.

6.12 **It was resolved** To note the update on English, mathematics and catch up funding.

7 **Data dashboard review**

7.1 D Martin provided an update on the in-year updates on the Dudley Dashboard which focused on enrolment, attendance and student satisfaction for each key client group:

7.2 *16-18 year old learners*

- Enrolments were slightly down against the previous year by 2%. This was a national picture across FE colleges, thought to be due to many learners staying in their school sixth forms. School liaison staff were addressing this issue as a priority for next academic year.
- Attendance at 89% was less than 1% down on the previous year. Ofsted were reporting a 2% dip in attendance nationally.
- Overall satisfaction was based on the induction survey and was above benchmark overall with some dips in certain areas which were being investigated.

7.3 *A level learners*

- Enrolments were in line with previous years.
- Attendance was strong at 94% and identical to the previous year.
- Overall satisfaction was benchmarked against sixth forms and overall was above benchmark.

7.4 *Apprentices*

- Enrolments overall were slightly down on previous years, due to Covid impact, but with an improving picture based on January starts which were up on the previous year.
- Attendance was strong at 91.2% and slightly up on the previous year.
- Satisfaction was strong for day release apprentices and slightly lower for workplace apprentices.

7.5 *Higher Skills learners*

- Enrolments showed an overall reduction in recruitment as traditional programmes were being replaced with Higher Apprenticeships which were

included in apprenticeship data. Level 4 programmes in the IoT were anticipated to support this position.

- Attendance was strong and higher than the previous year at 92.3%.
- Satisfaction was significantly above benchmark at 20% above national rate overall.

7.6 *Subcontracted apprenticeships*

- Enrolments were showing a current year reduction in line with the strategy to reduce subcontracted, out of area, low value provision which did not meet skills needs and strategic priorities.

7.7 *Adults*

- Enrolments were up against the same point in the previous year, mainly at level 3 and above and enrolments would continue to increase in response to the monthly offer.
- Attendance was slightly down at 87% which was an impact of Covid with many learners having family responsibilities for children who were off school.
- Satisfaction overall was above benchmark.

7.8 The Chair noted that a further discussion on the timeliness of learner satisfaction surveys would arise when considering the teaching and learning report, where the results were included in further detail.

7.9 **It was resolved** To note the update on the Data Dashboard.

8 **Risk Register Update**

8.1 D Martin presented the risk register report which provided the committee with an update on risks relating to curriculum and standards.

8.2 There were seven risks that were relevant to this committee. Two risks had a higher level of risk appetite but a low risk score. This indicated that there may be opportunities connected with these two areas, which the College was not making the most of.

8.3 There were no changes to the net risk score for these seven risks when compared to the report presented to Corporation in December.

8.4 There was one action subject to delay in respect of preparing a half-termly overview report from the findings and recommendations from the outstanding practitioners. This would be achieved shortly. In response to a question from the Chair, D Martin advised that it was not necessary to adjust the timing for this delayed action, which would be in line with the schedule going forward.

8.5 **It was resolved** To note the update on the risk register.

9 **Operational Development Plans 2022**

9.1 D Martin advised that following the completion of the Task and Finish group activity last year the College would now be returning to the standard College Operational Development Plan process for the coming 12 months. This plan identified the key actions from the Strategic Plan or from the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment to provide a clear set of milestones for achievement. The first draft of this plan was

shared briefly at Corporation and was now being presented to Standards Committee for further review before finalisation. Once finalised, this plan would be monitored through the normal College systems and reported to Corporation through Standards Committee. It was proposed that a reporting 'by exception' methodology was used as previously.

9.2 The Chair noted that a number of actions were timed for completion during January and D Martin agreed to ensure that the dates were adjusted to reflect what had been completed to date.

9.3 **It was resolved** To recommend the operational development plans for 2022 to the Corporation for approval.

10 Teaching, Learning and Standards Matters

10.1 Teaching and learning update

10.1.1 D Price presented the teaching and learning update report which highlighted the identified challenges and outlined the College's planned approach to ensuring learners were exposed to the highest quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Key points from this report were noted as:

- 47% staff had completed their teaching triangle.
- Walkthrough observations had taken place in Care and Early Years, Public Services, Science, Animal Management, Hospitality and Catering and at the Institute of Technology (IoT).
- Significant good practice was identified, particularly around the standard of teaching and learning, digital skills, use of technology, links with employers, EHCP awareness and adaptations to learner needs.
- Areas of development would be focussed around target setting, monitoring, Prevent and continuing to build learner aspirations following the pandemic.
- A significant amount of work was underway to ensure staff were working to the new Ofsted framework and understood this fully, including external engagement with partner colleges.
- A specific review of Performance Improvement Programme and target setting had been completed which had highlighted that not all tutors were delivering to the required standard. This would now be a focus of future development, training and a further review later this term.
- A specific piece of work was underway to develop a new induction programme to support staff coming into FE from industry.
- Student satisfaction induction surveys were shared for all key client groups. Whilst survey results were broadly good and above QDP benchmarks, specific actions would be picked up in areas where this was not the case as part of the Quality Improvement Plan process.

10.1.2 It was noted that staff had found it a challenge to get learners into a routine of submitting work on time, and to develop their confidence and skills levels, considering that learners coming into college had not been in full time education since year 9.

10.1.3 In response to a question from the Chair, D Price advised that any non-teaching and learning actions identified from satisfaction surveys were picked up and monitored

through the College's action management database and assigned to a member of staff to follow up and close down.

10.1.4 The College was exploring alternative options for surveying learners, such as more frequent surveys through apps. However the QDP survey provided helpful benchmarking data against comparable colleges. A proposal to review the monitoring of student feedback would be brought back to the committee for further consideration.

10.1.5 S Panesar asked if anything had worked particularly well during online learning that would be retained going forward. D Price noted that one of the positive outcomes had been that the use of technology by staff had improved, particularly with Microsoft Teams, and the development of other technology had been fast tracked.

10.1.6 The Chair requested further clarification in relation to the analysis of the PIP audit and D Price explained that the data included lessons being conducted as expected (graded green), and lessons being conducted but not exactly as per the timetable (graded amber). Lessons which had not been taking place for example due to Covid outbreaks represented the missing percentage from the analysis. It was agreed that future presentations of this analysis would be modified to illustrate this.

10.1.7 **It was resolved** To note the teaching and learning update.

10.2 **Confidential - Compliments and complaints analysis 2021/22 to date**
This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

10.3 **'How Are We Performing' procedure**

10.3.1 D Price presented the 'How Are We Performing?' procedure which had been reviewed to ensure it continued to be fit for purpose. All minor amendments in the document were highlighted through 'tracked changes'. The Chair noted the requirement for a register of complaints to be held by the Chair and the DCG advised that she held such a record of complaints. It was agreed that the procedure would be amended to reflect this prior to submission to the Corporation for approval.

10.3.2 **It was resolved** To recommend the How Are We Performing procedure (following agreed further revision) to the Corporation for approval.

11 **Safeguarding and Learner Conduct Report**

11.1 D Martin presented the safeguarding and learner conduct report which provided an update on arrangements for safeguarding as well as an overview of student conduct activity this academic year. The key points of the report were noted as:

- 42 Children Looked After.
- 20 Child Protection Plans.
- 17 Child in Need.
- 27 Early Help.
- 5 peer on peer abuse allegations.
- 8 learners at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation and 7 learners at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (both classifications were being supported through multi agencies as well as the College team).
- 38 Learners were suspended since September but only 4 permanent exclusions.
- 268 learners and 18 staff supported by the counselling teams.

- 77 learners accessing Togetherall, many of whom had been signposted by the Students' Union.
- Safeguarding update delivered to over 30 delivery partners.
- Report it button on MyDay had received three anonymous reports, two of which were complaints rather than safeguarding concerns. One allegation of harassment had been received which staff were already aware of.
- Radicalisation and extremism – there had been three issues to date which had been followed up through appropriate channels and no further action recommended on any incident.
- Staff training was compliant with requirements.
- Use of CEPOMs was being refined – the data represented the number of reports not individual learners, so looked high compared to previous reports.

11.2 D Price advised that the College Conference for staff on 8th April would focus on safeguarding with a variety of topics under the safeguarding and Prevent agenda. This approach represented a planned move towards themed staff development days.

11.3 The Chair noted that the Corporation's safeguarding lead was not a member of the committee, and [it was agreed that she would be provided with a copy of the safeguarding report prior to submission to the committee, providing her with an opportunity to add any appropriate comments.](#)

11.4 **It was resolved** To note the safeguarding and student conduct report.

12 Higher Education and Office for Students update

12.1 C Riding presented the report which provided members of the committee with an update in relation to higher education matters and Office for Students requirements.

12.2 Key points from the report were noted as:

- An update on all reporting actions for OfS compliance, which confirmed that all actions had been completed to date.
- A reminder that the new requirements for Reportable Events shared at the last committee was now in effect.
- An update to show compliance with a recent request from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, which reported that two complaints had been dealt with under this procedure.
- Three OfS consultations were underway on potential changes to regulating quality and standards. Links to these were provided and a further update on the outcomes of this would be brought to the committee.
- Teaching, learning and assessment continued to be monitored and developed through the existing College processes and in addition to this specific upskilling for higher education staff was delivered at the last staff conference.

12.3 **It was resolved** To note the Higher Education and Office for Students update.

13 **Date of Next Meeting**

13.1 The next meeting of the committee would be held on 5th May 2022 at 5.00pm.

14 **Any Other Business**

14.1 There were no matters of any other business.

The meeting closed at 18.26.

Approved by the Standards Committee at the meeting held 5th May 2022