

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## QUALITY AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Quality and Innovation Committee took place on Thursday 28 April 2016 in Room B104, NHC, Hitchin.

### PRESENT

Vernon McClure (Chair)  
Lynne Ceeney (Vice-chair)  
Kit Davies (Deputy Principal)  
Matt Hamnett (CEO and Principal)  
Paul Harrison

Rob Irving  
Gary Phillips (Director, Quality and  
Innovation)  
Karl Scott

### IN ATTENDANCE

Jennie Condé (Interim Head of Quality)  
Steve Lazenby (Interim HR Director, Item  
2 only)  
Stella McManus (Director of Curriculum  
Operations)

James Sowray (Director of Commercial  
Operations)  
Robert Dale (Company Secretary and  
Clerk)

### ITEM 1a: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

### ITEM 1b: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### ITEM 1c: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Agreed and signed as an accurate record of proceedings.

### ITEM 1d: MATTERS ARISING

Actions had been completed or were outstanding as below:

- *Circulating the weekly quality update email.* Lynne Ceeney and Rob Irving have been added to the distribution list.
- *Sharing the Quality Strategy.* To be circulated with this meeting's minutes.
- *Creating an induction handbook for Governors.* In hand; no completion date confirmed yet (**Action carried forward**).
- *Run a "you said, we did" campaign.* The Student Forum met in March; their report had been submitted to the CEO/Principal.
- *Reporting curriculum quality reviews (CQRs) to the committee.* Eight CQR reports were circulated with this agenda.

- *Recording Governor learning walks.* Form to be recirculated.
- *Review the College's staff recruitment process.* Rob Irving and Steve Lazenby had discussed this.
- *Government survey on apprenticeships.* This was circulated to governors.

## **ITEM 5: STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

Responses to the recent staff survey had been analysed; results from one site (Stevenage) might have been distorted because more responses had been received than staff based at the site. Consideration would be given to limiting the potential for multiple completions in future while protecting the anonymity of responses.

Governors regretted that such actions made it harder to gauge staff attitudes reliably. Nonetheless, there were some positive findings as well as general themes about needing to build better staff engagement and development programmes.

Expectations of staff performance were better, clearer and more focused, and to take this to the next level the idea of creating a clear standard for great performance was being considered. This could then be linked to a staff development curriculum which could help colleagues learn more quickly and grow leadership and management skills.

Governors asked what the main recruitment issues were. First was a compelling reason to join NHC – in preference to other employers locally or in the sector. Second was competition for shortage skills (such as Maths teachers). Third was management of recruitment which was not yet as efficient and effective as possible. Outsourcing to a specialist provider was a potential solution for the third being trialled with some vacancies – but might not be best for 'non-standard' requirements.

Sharing a more exciting narrative about how NHC made a difference for students and was different as an employer would help, and marketing collateral was improving. Better (and quicker) leadership communication to limit the rumour mill was also vital.

There were positive themes from the results, including a clearer vision for the future of the Group, the quality of service to students and good employer engagement.

Staff communication on the survey would show where more work was needed, confirm that compromise on quality and performance was not acceptable and highlight plans for better staff development. Engagement with the People Group would inform plans.

**Actions:** Prepare all-staff communication to highlight the survey outcomes and note the impact of multiple responses.

## **ITEM 2: MATHS AND ENGLISH FORECAST SUCCESS RATES**

The paper outlined current expectations of student performance and described the actions taken to deliver the best possible outcomes. Governors recognised the complexity associated with a new GCSE syllabus and government requirements which made Functional Skills qualifications no longer valid for funding purposes.

Getting students to recognise the importance of Maths and English (ME) was a continuing challenge, as they did not always understand why these subjects were as relevant as their vocational qualifications. However, advances had been made, including greater communication with parents. Appointing a new Head of ME had made an immediate impact; she brought energy, enthusiasm and creativity to the team.

Governors could support this by helping to explain the relevance of ME to their careers, speaking to students about why number and communication skills were vital, and demonstrating how seriously the Corporation took this issue. Ensuring teachers were confident about their own skills – especially if they were non-specialists – was vital. Lynne Ceeney volunteered to be lead Governor on ME; she had attended a useful ACER session on innovative teaching approaches.

Governors asked if the new Head of ME was an exemplar for the College? Although a non-specialist, she displayed excellent leadership qualities; the Quality Team was currently providing a 'nursery' for leadership talent.

**Actions:** Governors to use future Learning Walks to explore the promotion of Maths and English with students.

### **ITEM 3: MATHS AND ENGLISH PROPOSED MODEL FOR 2016-17**

To achieve an Outstanding judgment, student achievement in Maths and English (ME) needed to rise in 2016/17. There were two main challenges:

- The requirement for funded learners to achieve at least a Grade C at GCSE was creating bigger cohorts of students, needing more teaching resources;
- Creating the right attitudes in students unenthusiastic about 'academic' study. This meant assessing them properly on entry and setting expectations at once.

Teams had been restructured to emphasise that all teachers were responsible for student success with ME. Vocational teams were embedding ME in their programmes and subject specialists contextualising (as far as possible within the constraints of the GCSE syllabus) teaching to link with vocational elements. Overall accountability would rest with vocational teams. All teachers could access relevant performance and assessment data more easily now. The Head of ME was to be retained and supported by two deputies who would deal with data collection, training and teacher support.

Governor support would be welcomed in helping to set student expectations and communicate the importance of ME to future career paths. Working with parents and the community could also help create a more supportive climate.

Governors asked if parental engagement with the college was monitored? Better support for parents evenings, report cards and positive reinforcement messages about attendance and progress were in place, but there was currently no way of tracking whether parents attended meetings or engaged with childrens' learning.

**Action:** consider ways of engaging parents and the community in promoting and supporting Maths and English.

### **ITEM 4: UPDATE ON APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS**

The paper provided evidence of good performance and progress in this area, which was likely to be ahead of the national average at the year-end. The recent Quality Review had provided good feedback and evidenced substantial progress year-on-year. Work was under way to address inconsistencies in induction.

Governors asked if Traineeships led to the award of a graded qualification. This was not a requirement, but it was Hart Learning & Development practice. Use of the diagnostic and support tool was very useful in identifying where individual interventions would benefit the learner and could be useful for other programmes.

## ITEM 6: NHC QUALITY UPDATE – APRIL 2016

The paper summarised the outcomes of the Curriculum reviews undertaken since the previous meeting, and reported on lesson observation judgements.

There was evidence of good and outstanding practice, including good planning, support for students, high expectations and good behaviours. Areas where more work was needed included the quality and frequency of Smart target setting, student attendance at Maths and English sessions, effective questioning and more diversity.

The lesson observation programme had a developmental focus and was encouraging a supportive and constructive dialogue with staff.

Governors asked why Business and Travel had been selected for 'intensive care' support as data from the CQR was relatively strong. Selection also involved considering other support (for example on assessment processes) needed in the area. For IT, where there was weaker data, there had been substantial changes in the team and external validation suggesting that further intervention was not needed at present.

## ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

## ITEM 8: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 21 July 2016, starting at 16.30, at Stevenage (venue to be confirmed).

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Signed as an accurate record

Chair

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Date

## ACTION LOG

Item	What	Who/When
1d	Create an induction handbook for Governors.	Gary Phillips
5	Prepare all-staff communication to highlight the survey outcomes and note the impact of multiple responses.	Matt Hamnett
2	Governors to use future Learning Walks to explore the promotion of Maths and English with students; recirculate visit forms.	Kit Davies
3	Consider ways of engaging parents and the community in promoting and supporting Maths and English.	Kit Davies