

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## QUALITY AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Quality and Innovation Committee took place on Thursday 19 January 2017 in Room C103, NHC, Hitchin.

### PRESENT

Vernon McClure (Chair)  
Jo Charles  
Sam Coath  
Kit Davies (Deputy Principal)

Matt Hamnett (CEO and Principal)  
Gary Phillips (Executive Director, Quality  
and Innovation)

### IN ATTENDANCE

Jennie Condé (Head of Quality and  
Student Experience)  
Stella McManus (Director of Curriculum  
Operations)  
James Sowray (Director of Commercial  
Operations, Hart L&D)

Michael Wright (Head of Teaching and  
Learning)  
Robert Dale (Company Secretary/Clerk)

### INTRODUCTORY

Members welcomed Jo Charles and Sam Coath to their first meeting. Michael Wright (Head of Teaching and Learning) was also in attendance.

### ITEM 1a: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Lynne Ceeney and Rob Irving.

### ITEM 1b: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

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

The minutes were agreed and signed as an accurate record of proceedings.

### ITEM 1d: MATTERS ARISING

Actions had been completed as below:

- Create a Governor Induction handbook. **Action ongoing.** Now being finalised.
- Add paper on Governor engagement to the next Board agenda to seek buy-in from the Corporation. **Action complete.** Arrangements were being made for Governor Conversation sessions in March 2017.
- Report to the Committee in 2017 on how the Deal Risk assessment process is working. **Action complete.** Part of future Hart L&D updates.

## **ITEM 2: UPDATE ON OUR TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE**

Attendance was receiving a high priority across all sites. The post-Christmas period was historically when attendance began to drop and considerable effort was being put into mitigating this. Some curriculum areas performed better than others; those at most risk were being targeted. Maths and English attendance was still challenging (though better than at the same period in 2015/16).

Work to support staff development was going well and was making an impact in terms of increased expectations and consistency of approach. Governors asked:

**Question:** *How were students identified as 'at risk' of not achieving being supported?*

Students had already had two progress review meetings with teachers and learning coaches. Staff had used information gained from these meetings to update the Progress Review Tool (PRT) - which made it easier to track student progress and highlight those where interventions were needed. Additional workshops and extra support outside their existing timetable were being provided for those students.

**Question:** *How confident were staff about the quality of data in the systems?* There was more confidence and ownership of student data among Heads of department, and triangulation between systems (PRT) and Proachieve, for example, although staff concentrated on using analysis to improve student performance rather than matching figures. PRT recorded students who were on programme – withdrawn students were removed (and clearly identified as such) – so that the data reflected classroom reality.

**Question:** *How did staff feel about systems and tools used?* Some tools were easier to use and helped staff address student needs. Staff sometimes felt that systems encouraged them to focus on figures rather than on engaging students and parents.

**Question:** *Did systems 'feel' more stable than had been the case in the recent past?* Yes, although some remained especially challenging (Unit-E and Registers continued to be criticised). Not all staff found the time to become familiar with the data systems, although they were important tools for managers and heads and helped give an overview of performance that was essential to help focus effort where it was needed.

## **ITEM 3: MATHS AND ENGLISH UPDATE**

Attendance remained the main area of concern. At 76.5%, it was 9.5% higher than the equivalent period in 2015/16, but not yet good enough. Some areas (Creative, Business and Travel and Hair and Beauty) needed particular support and there were regular meetings with heads in these areas to highlight poor attendance. Heads were following this up with students. Governors asked:

**Question:** *What more could be done to encourage attendance?* Some targeted sanctions/consequences were in place, and a programme of support sessions additional to a student's existing timetable were being provided by the M&E team to improve progress and achievement. Work with the Students Union Executive was an excellent idea and would be pursued; the Bridge Programme leads would also discuss how to promote Maths and English in 2017/18. Employer expectations were higher, and the reduction in apprenticeship frameworks at level 2 meant that for those looking for vocational careers, the entry requirements for Maths and English had risen.

**Action:** Meet the Student Union Executive to discuss how they might contribute to promoting M&E.

Assessment was now improved in terms of consistency and quality. Having a much more stable team made a big contribution, although there was still a need to manage weaker team members. Overall, developmental observations were satisfactory and training continued. Governors asked:

**Question:** *What was the date after which intervention ceased to make a real impact?* Intervention was always worth trying, but there were key dates – for example, relating to the completion of controlled assessments – which made the biggest difference. This year, students were in a better position than at the same time in 2015/16.

**Question:** *What was a 'book look'?* Informal book scrutiny undertaken during regular learning walks. These identified problems such as empty books, deviation from planned curriculum delivery, poor/inconsistent marking and feedback and so on. There was better awareness of these issues this year, which enabled more effective targeting of support. The Curriculum Quality Review programme would also conduct a more structured book scrutiny including for Maths and English. Good records of student progress went a long way towards showing Ofsted that the College was improving.

Members concluded that Managers and curriculum heads were targeting the right activities and setting the right expectations; the issue was whether these would make the right impact. This was also the judgment Ofsted had reached in June 2016. There was increased confidence that actions would make a difference this year, although more could still be done; the Performance Board process was key to stretching performance and expectations at all levels. Staff saw this process as valuable because it was a timetabled opportunity to explore successes, issues and challenges with teams and develop cultures and behaviours for continuous improvement.

**Question:** *Did Performance Boards cover the right ground?* Yes, they addressed all aspects of teaching and learning, including parental engagement, which had been considerably improved. There had been a noticeable increase in parental buy-in for Maths and English and direct involvement of the subject tutors helped focus students on what they needed to do to improve. In some cases, this translated into better attendance. Handovers between staff could be better, as continuity (or the lack of it) was sometimes a factor in lower student performance.

#### **ITEM 4: SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR) 2015/16**

The final version of the 2015/16 SAR was presented for review and approval. Its findings had been shared with the Committee in November and the Board in December 2016. The report showed the detailed assessment for each area, the actions being taken by the college – which made up the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) – and included the supporting data. The one outstanding element was national average data, which should have been published but was not yet available. One bullet point on page 44 appeared to be duplicated further down the same page; this would be amended. Governors asked:

**Question:** *Was the assumption that national averages would be lower for 2015/16 reasonable?* That was the expectation from the sector overall, although vocational rates would probably remain similar to those in 2014/15.

The Committee approved the report for submission.

**Action:** Submit the SAR to Ofsted as required.



## ACTION LOG

Item	What	Who/When
3	Meet the Student Union Executive to discuss how they might contribute to promoting M&E.	Stella McManus/Sam Coath 03/03/17
4	Submit the SAR to Ofsted as required.	Kit Davies 31/01/17
5	With the Student Union Executive, consider how to improve the induction process in 2017/18.	Michael Wright 30/07/17