

# HART LEARNING GROUP

## QUALITY AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Quality and Innovation Committee took place on Thursday 24 January 2019 in the Council Chamber, the old Town Hall, Letchworth.

### PRESENT

Vernon McClure (Chair)  
Liz Calver  
Lynne Ceeney

Kit Davies (Chief Executive)  
Liz Mitchell

### IN ATTENDANCE

Nadia Hodges (Curriculum Director,  
Stevenage)  
Gary Phillips (Executive Director of Quality,  
Curriculum and Organisational  
Development)  
Kerry Pritchett (Head of Quality)

Sarah Robins (Curriculum Director, Hitchin  
and ECC)  
Lindsey Sherring (Director, Hart Learning &  
Development)  
Robert Dale (Company Secretary)

### ITEM 1A: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Daniel King and Jack Tomlinson.

### ITEM 1B: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- None.

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

- The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2018 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of proceedings, having been recirculated to members after the previous meeting with the suggested amendments highlighted.
- The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2018 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of proceedings.

### ITEM 1D: MATTERS ARISING

- Actions had been completed as below:
  - Include a report on First Impressions survey data as an item on the next agenda. **Action complete.** On the agenda at Item 5.
  - Update the format of reporting to include national comparative data by apprenticeship category. **Action under way.** There is additional analysis by apprenticeship category in the report on the agenda for this meeting at Item 4.
  - Include Adult Programmes on annual schedule of Q&I business. **Action complete.** An update on Adult Programmes has been added to the agenda plan for 2018/19 for the July meeting.

- Include regular reporting to the Board in Curriculum and Quality update.  
**Action under way.** The Board has not met since the last Q&I meeting.

## ITEM 2: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – UPDATE

- As a report on progress early in the academic year, roughly one-third of the target actions are RAG-rated Green, with around 50% of targets not yet due. Key priorities included low achievement at the Engineering and Construction Campus (ECC) and more generally in Maths and English. Overall value-added data showed that in 2017/18, students at the college generally achieved half a grade higher than students at other FE colleges.
- This year's forecast showed a mixed picture, with better achievement forecast at the ECC, but concerns remaining around attendance levels at M&E sessions and some aspects of the teaching and learning. M&E attendance was currently at 72% against a target of 80%; actions were in hand to encourage participation, including M&E week in February, incentives for attendance, and quicker follow-up including telephone calls to parents.
- There had been progress in improving timely outcomes for apprenticeships. It was too soon to be specific about the impact of interventions, but there was an upward trend. This partly reflected the continuing wind-down of apprenticeship sub-contract provision, the last of which was expected to be finished by June 2019. There would continue to be some limited use of sub-contracts in the delivery of Adult Education Budget (AEB) outcomes.
- Curriculum Quality Reviews had recently been completed for Business and Travel and there was evidence of stretch and challenge, more stability on staffing and an overall improvement in forecast outcomes. Learning walks confirmed the self-assessment that this provision was now Good.
- Considerable work had been put into developing staff and middle managers and providing training for regular challenges. Governors were welcome to attend any of the sessions arranged. Work was also under way to consider how to improve the design of programmes at ECC and a visit had been arranged to East Surrey College, which had been assessed as Outstanding for construction subjects.

**Question:** *How did parents respond to phone calls about non-attendance by their children?* There were mixed reactions; some were very supportive of the college, but others were less engaged. Attendance was monitored daily and small improvements were evident – the usual January dip had been much smaller this year.

**Question:** *How was curriculum work ensuring that Maths and English were integrated into learning at the ECC?* Quality staff were working with the vocational and M&E teams to ensure topics were co-ordinated and schemes of learning aligned. Daniel King was working with Claire Cooper to engage students about the importance of completing M&E qualifications.

- Governors recognised that M&E was a challenging target nationally and reflected a failure to see relevance in what was required to be taught. Forecast achievement rates showed progress from 2017/18 and were in line with or above national average data from the FE sector.

**Question:** *To what extent did students with a record of failure in these subjects have the worst attendance records for M&E?* There was a strong correlation.

**Question:** *Was it possible to present analysis so that data – for example, about student attendance – was related to impact?* This was difficult, because a range of factors influenced student performance, not just attendance.

- Governors welcomed the update and commended the Quality team on their activity to monitor and improve standards.

### **ITEM 3: NHC PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

- Governors discussed the update, noting a range of positive indicators of progress. Regular monitoring with Department heads was undertaken which ensured issues were picked up quickly and actions to address them were agreed.
- The areas of focus (ECC and Maths and English) remained key priorities. Forecast achievements at ECC were well above last year's forecast, and progress was being monitored carefully. November resits for Maths and English had seen good results (36% success in Maths and 33% in English), and Adult Education Budget (AEB) programmes were delivering strong outcomes.
- Focus on Maths and English (M&E) continued, with a dedicated week in February during which vocational teams across the college including the ECC would be teaching together with M&E staff to highlight the relevance of the subjects to future employment. The recent CQR for M&E had identified evidence of improved teaching, learning and assessment including better questioning of student and in-class assessment. There was more rapport between students and staff and better planning of lessons.
- The recent CQR for Business and Travel (where there had in the past been issues including poor behaviour) identified significant improvement, reflecting in part a more stable team.

**Question:** *What was the process for carrying out a CQR?* The assessment was carried out in the same manner as an Ofsted inspection, with 48 hours notice given by the quality team, who undertook observations, learning walks and audits of records and data. Peer observations were also used to inform CQR assessments; staff were paired up with appropriate colleagues to develop good practice. The IT department was participating in this arrangement in 2018/19.

**Question:** *Was this approach welcomed by staff?* Yes, most staff were keen to have the chance to work with colleagues and share experiences. It also helped encourage stretch and challenge for the departments.

**Question:** How were the difficulties in finding work experience placements for IT students being overcome? There were no easy solutions. Employers were very reluctant to commit to the 300 hours necessary to achieve a T-level. This would be a key piece of feedback from the pilots.

- Governors noted that the quality team was currently focussing on the quality of feedback/marking given to students and the quality of homework set. They were delighted to hear about an excellent production from the Creative team linked to the centenary of the granting of votes to women in the UK, and the successful participation of catering students in competitions.
- Student Services continued to manage increased demand for support. Some 660 students had engaged with Student Services with a range of issues including mental health concerns and anxiety.

**Question:** *Could information about student concerns be analysed by campus?* Yes, this would be provided after the meeting.

**Action:** Provide breakdown of student concerns by type and campus.

- **Governors accepted** the report.

#### **ITEM 4: HART L&D PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

- The report highlighted improved performance so far this year, with direct delivery including excellent outcomes for some individual cohorts. There was continued need to improve, but it was noted that an element of this year's direct delivery was a group of students taken over from failing sub-contractors, who were hard to re-engage. There were also some areas (adult care/healthcare and engineering) where outcomes were below average. New leadership in these areas was getting to grips with the problems.
- Detailed scrutiny of end to end apprenticeship processes was helping to identify where problems arose. For example, in healthcare, there were three major issues:
  - Some underperforming staff.
  - An inflexible learning and assessment plan which was unable to respond to situations in the workplace not matching planned assessment arrangements.
  - Functional Skills delivery arrangements that did not sufficiently assess applicants at the start of the process and did not pick up gaps quickly enough thereafter.
- Improvements had been made as a result of this review for example by allocating a functional skills tutor to an individual immediately.
- Other areas for scrutiny had included the sales process where the quality of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) had also been considered.

**Question:** *What was the explanation for the drop-out rate from employability programmes?* There was a large drop-out from the first to the second day of the programme and reasons were being explored. The scheme of learning on the first day could be adjusted so that it was less dry and other incentives could be offered (eg breakfast and hot drinks on arrival) to encourage participation. The position was being monitored and would be re-examined in a couple of weeks.

**Question:** *When would the last apprenticeship sub-contract delivery take place?* The last group was expected to have finished by June 2019.

- **Governors accepted** the report.

#### **ITEM 5: FIRST IMPRESSIONS SURVEY ANALYSIS**

- Governors considered the analysis from the survey conducted during the autumn term. No major changes had been made to the question bank this year although there were a couple of new questions.

**Question:** *Were there any areas of concern?* A new question about work experience had given positive responses that fell short of 70%. Students needed to know more about who their work experience co-ordinator was.

- Governors were pleased to see improved feedback about Maths and English. This was consistent with the observations about improved standards of teaching and learning. There was room to improve consistency.
- The Bridge programme was another area of work; students were not yet seeing sufficient value in this yet and more improvements were needed for the new academic year – not least around the quality of delivery.
- The response rate to the equivalent survey of apprentices had been low. However, the delivery method would be reviewed and data validity checked. Those responding had nonetheless been positive and most answers had produced answers that were >80% good. Areas of lower response were being investigated. Employer engagement was key to this work and was better with larger employers. Analysis of data by department and team was being used to target actions.
- Governors recognised that the lower response rate meant that confidence in the data was reduced.
- A new employability survey had also been undertaken. This had included a 'neutral' response option and data was more evenly split between positive and negative responses. Governors suggested that the format of this survey be adjusted to bring it in line with others (which did not allow a 'neutral' response). The response rate had been good and the use of Microsoft Forms appeared to have been well-received. Meetings were under way to improve the survey for the coming year.
- Follow-up actions would be undertaken through existing quality processes.

**Question:** *Could future survey development be trialled with smaller groups to help iron out difficulties?* This was a sensible suggestion. The team would also consider whether two surveys were needed for short courses. Questions should be kept as consistent year-on-year as possible to enable comparability over time.

**Action:** Ensure all future student satisfaction surveys were put together in a consistent manner.

- Governors were pleased with the overall output from these surveys which provided valuable evidence of the impact the college was making on its students.

## **ITEM 6: DEEP DIVE – NEW OFSTED INSPECTION FRAMEWORK, AND RECENT OFSTED CURRICULUM RESEARCH**

- Gary Phillips presented information about the new Ofsted Inspection framework, out for consultation but expected to come into force after 1 September 2019. He also reported on recent research into learning. There were significant developments which were expected to affect assessment of the college's performance in future.
- First, the introduction of T-levels, replacing a range of level 2 qualifications, would in time affect one-third of the college's current delivery, which at present supported good outcomes and progress for students. T-levels posed real challenges for all providers, particularly because of the level of work experience required. Finding employers willing to commit to this level of support was not easy. The rationale for introducing T-levels was that current level 2 qualifications did not provide sufficient content for progression into employment.

- The new Ofsted Inspection Framework defined provision types differently – removing the separate category for students with higher needs (where the college was currently assessed as Outstanding).
- It also placed less emphasis on student outcomes and progress, by including these elements within a broader category called ‘Quality of Education’. This would also consider the relevance of the curriculum to local needs and the quality of teaching. There were new ideas about what defined learning – essentially the extent to which long-term memory changed – so there would be a greater focus upon what students could remember of things they had been taught six months previously. This would mean considering how to deliver teaching and learning to maximise the impact on memory. Ofsted would also look closely at teacher workload and would not expect to see elaborate and repetitive data gathering exercises.
- These changes implied adjustments would be required to a range of current practices, including recruitment and induction, and a continued need for enhanced staff development. The Quality team would review how self-assessment should be conducted this year; the current inspection framework was in place until the end of the academic year and the new one would not come into effect until 2019/20. However, it could be helpful to gain some early understanding of the impact of the new framework on the college’s position.

**Question:** *Could a shadow/pilot assessment using the new criteria be carried out this year on one area?* Potentially; the team would consider what this would mean in terms of resources and effort. Good data remained vital but the efficiency of collection processes should be review to minimise the impact on teachers.

**Question:** *What could governors do to support this?* Governors were welcome to continue to come into college to conduct learning walks and meetings with staff and students.

- Governor agreed that the Board meeting in April should receive a briefing on this matter and the potential actions to address challenges posed by the new framework.

**Action:** Add Ofsted Inspection Framework briefing to the Board’s April agenda.

- **Governors welcomed** the report.

## **ITEM 7: DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- The next scheduled meeting would take place on Wednesday 13 March 2019 starting at 18.30, in the Council Chamber, the Old Town Hall, Letchworth.

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Signed as an accurate record

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Chair

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Date

## ACTION LOG

Item	What	Who	When
3.	Provide breakdown of student concerns by type and campus.	Nadia Hodges/Sarah Robins	06/03/19
5.	Ensure all future student satisfaction surveys were put together in a consistent manner.	Gary Phillips	31/03/19
6.	Add Ofsted Inspection Framework briefing to the Board's April agenda.	Robert Dale	22/02/19