

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Quality and Innovation Committee took place on Monday 21 November 2016 in Room S102, NHC, Stevenage.

PRESENT

Vernon McClure (Chair)
Lynne Ceeney
Kit Davies (Deputy Principal)
Matt Hamnett (CEO and Principal)

Rob Irving (Vice-chair)
Gary Phillips (Executive Director, Quality
and Innovation)

IN ATTENDANCE

Jennie Condé (Interim Head of Quality)
Stella McManus (Director of Curriculum
Operations)
Lucy Hann (Managing Director, Hart
Learning & Development)

James Sowray (Director of Commercial
Operations, Hart Learning &
Development)
Robert Dale (Company Secretary and
Clerk)

INTRODUCTORY

Since the previous meeting, new staff and student governors had been appointed and had agreed to join the Committee; both had prior commitments which prevented them attending this meeting. Members looked forward to welcoming them in the New Year.

ITEM 1a: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Jo Charles (Staff Governor) and Sam Coath (Student Governor)

ITEM 1b: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

ITEM 1c: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes had been corrected to show Rob Irving as the Vice-chair. There being no other amendments, they were agreed and signed as an accurate record of proceedings.

ITEM 1d: MATTERS ARISING

Actions had been completed, were on the agenda or were outstanding as below:

- Create an induction handbook for Governors. **Action ongoing.** Gary Phillips and Vernon McClure were working together on a draft version.
- The speech made by Vernon McClure at the recent graduation evening was commended.

ITEM 2: UPDATE ON OUR RESPONSE TO OFSTED INSPECTION

The paper gave an overview of progress to date. The Path to Good approach, which linked 10 standards to the three Ps described at the previous meeting, had been well-received, and Hart Learning & Development was creating its own version. The Bridge tutorial programme was going down well with students, and a range of incentives were being deployed to encourage individual and group performance. Students were organising their own events to develop awareness of British Values. Regular feedback to students and parents was helping ensure that targets were understood and progress checked, so that problems could be spotted early. Standardised checks ensure that all students were reviewed. Parental engagement was higher.

In addition, a programme of staff development, including ongoing training and best practice sharing was engaging and raising teacher expectations.

The new head of teaching, learning and student experience was making an impact and members asked that he come to present to a future meeting.

Governors asked:

Question: *Were teachers happier because they had been given a clearer structure?* Extra support available through Sharepoint and from peers was making a difference. There was an expectation that all staff would try some new ideas and report back to colleagues on what had resulted. This best practice material was being shared with Hart L&D. Learning walks would test whether practice on the ground lived up to the plans; was there evidence of a culture of high expectations of staff and students?

Question: *Had stretching targets been set for all students?* Yes, all students knew and understood their targets – and senior staff had been checking this understanding in conversations with a sample of the student body.

Question: *Could the same approach be applied to student understanding of the Prevent strategy?* Yes. A check would be undertaken at the start of the next term to review student understanding of British Values and the issues raised by Prevent. It was suggested that when ‘pass-checking’ a student, additional questions might be asked to confirm (or not) their understanding of other key outcomes.

Question: *How could attendance data not be unduly distorted by students who left programmes early?* Processes to ensure that register data is up-to-date and accurate are in place; students withdrawn before day 42 stay on registers, as we need to maintain accurate records of attendance even after a student has left the college. However, students are withdrawn with effect from the last date of attendance to ensure impact of non-attendance is minimal. IAG and pre-course enrolment processes were also enhanced this year to ensure students were registered on the right programmes (including Maths and English).

Question: *What were the current resource issues?* Current student recruitment would lead to lower EFA income in 2017/18; careful consideration was being given to ensuring our delivery was sustainable, without compromising our path to Good this year. The kind of initiatives being pursued were, nonetheless, likely to be needed in future, though perhaps with a focus on enhancing a Good or Outstanding experience, rather than remedying an unsatisfactory one.

Question: *How were staff responding?* Most were doing well or would get there with support. A small number would need more help.

Question: *Was the SAR process taking place at the right time?* There was a case for starting earlier, and other models for such a process were also being considered.

ITEM 3: MATHS AND ENGLISH UPDATE

The report identified a great deal of work and some encouraging signs in this area. Nevertheless, the recent SAR Panel continued to assess Maths and English as Requires Improvement and pressure to change the culture and performance was being maintained. This aspect of delivery would limit the judgment the College might expect to receive from Ofsted at its next visit. Governors asked:

Question: *How was attendance at Maths and English lessons?* Currently, attendance was running at 82%, which was a big improvement, but not yet good enough. There was evidence from Learning Walks that Heads of Department knew their student cohort, and understood why individuals were missing from particular lessons.

Question: *Why was 19+ students' data analysed separately?* Participation in M&E programmes was not mandatory for older students; it was good practice for them to follow the same programmes as younger students, but not compulsory.

Question: The analysis of weakness in this area was rather broad; how could this be brought to life for the committee? The three areas of weakness – lesson planning, classroom management and stretch and challenge – were all seen as linked. Poor or inconsistent lesson planning contributed to poor student behaviour, and might mean students did not get enough stretch and challenge.

Question: *What sanctions could be applied and how quickly could any process take place?* The disciplinary process had been reviewed and streamlined.

Question: *What evidence was there for improvement?* The Chair confirmed that his Learning Walks showed that M&E was now embedded in the curriculum. Recently completed IV audits showed a much better position than at the same time last year. In summary, there were reasons to believe that the right actions were being taken and that there was evidence of improvement. However, the ultimate test would be next year's examinations.

ITEM 4: GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT WITH TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The paper proposed a three strand process for governor engagement:

- Student Voice
- Learning Walks
- Governor Conversations

The latter assigned a governor to a particular area of focus and asked them to meet the relevant department head three times a year to discuss progress and issues.

The Committee welcomed the proposal, recognising that it would need to be organised and structured, but that it would particularly help governors with limited availability.

Action: Add a paper on this matter to the next Board agenda to seek buy-in from the Corporation as a whole.

