

Preston's College

Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting held on 24th November 2016 at 5:30pm in the Board Room at Preston's College

Present:

Dr A Jones (Chair)
Cllr R Boswell
Ms D Hemsley
Mrs A Markland
Cllr J Morgan
Mr T Readett

In attendance:

Mr S Fell (Clerk to the Corporation)
Mr P McMellon (Assistant to the Clerk)
Mr M Noblett (Assistant Principal - Excellence and Learning)
Mrs M Haworth (Assistant Principal - Excellence and Learning)
Mrs A Humphreys (Learning & Development Manager)
Mrs L Turner (Assistant Head of Learner Experience - A&P)
Ms D Ireland (Head of Division)

48. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies had been received from Ms L Hornsby, Dr E H Smith and Mr J Wilson.

49. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

50. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th October 2016

Resolved: That the Minutes be agreed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

51. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

52. Governor Feedback and Quality Improvement Plan Update

The Chair reminded the Committee that it had been agreed (at the last meeting) that Committee members would scrutinise the One College Continuous Improvement Framework documentation which had been presented for consideration. The documentation had also been placed on the Governor Portal and an invitation for comments had been extended to all Board members. The

Chair advised that, having reviewed the documentation herself, she would shortly forward her comments to the College. However, in broad terms, she considered that the format and contents of the 2015/16 documentation were appropriate.

The Committee agreed with the Chair's assessment of the documentation. It provided a thorough and fair assessment of performance in 2015/16.

Mr M Noblett reminded the Committee about the subsequent use and distribution of the final approved document, including internal availability and distribution to external stakeholders. He explained that the College intended to make a number of changes to the format of the final version of the document and to develop a concise summary document. In short there was a feeling that aspects of the reporting could be made more user friendly.

53. College Dashboard : Early Indicators & Destinations

In line with the Committee's previously expressed preference, Mr M Noblett's presentation concentrated upon topical features of the dashboard, on this occasion the Learner Attendance and the Learner Attrition displays.

(i) Learner Attendance

Improving learner attendance rates continued to be a key challenge, but a trend of broad improvement (REDACTED) was now evident. Variations in performances between teaching areas was noted.

Mr Noblett explained that the College had made a number of interventions which had proved productive in attaining the in-year improvements evident in 2015/16.

(ii) Learner Attrition

The Committee noted the improvement (REDACTED) and endorsed the various tactics and strategies (included new measures introduced at the learner enrolment stage) which lay behind the reported improvement.

Resolved: That the presentation and the contents of the College Dashboard in general be noted.

54. Target Setting 2016/17

Mrs M Haworth presented the proposed targets for 2016/17 for Learner retention, pass and achievement rates.

The Committee examined each line/target, noting the comparisons with national averages (where available). The non-availability of national averages for Attendance and Punctuality was unhelpful. The use of the term 'timely' was discussed and noted and the reason for a proposed target below national average for 'Retention Functional Skills all ages' noted.

The Committee concluded that the proposed targets were challenging yet realistic.

Resolved: That the proposed targets for 2016/17 be approved.

55. English & Maths in Focus

Mrs Haworth reminded the Committee about discussions at previous meetings. She drew attention to the detailed report covering the College's recent performance at GCSE English and maths, including the various challenges and issues affecting the College and elsewhere in the sector.

Perhaps the most striking factor was the continuing growth in learners. The 964 learners in the current year was well above the 600 in the previous year and some 200 more than the target intake. This had presented staffing challenges but the College considered that these had been effectively managed.

Raising the higher grades success rate stood out as the most obvious challenge, but the same issue affected colleges across the sector.

The Committee discussed the impending introduction of a new curriculum and the inevitable challenges which that would bring. There was also consideration of the factors which probably accounted for relatively poorer performance in maths (compared to English) when qualifications already gained were taken into account. The likely benefits from better integration of maths and English into other elements of study were recognised but not always readily achievable. The Student Members' views on student preferences and expectations were noted.

Finally, the Committee reflected upon the College's commitment to offer an inclusive curriculum, serving all levels of learners, and, whilst reaffirming this commitment, recognised that other more selective institutions would inevitably perform better in 'league table' terms.

Resolved : That the report be noted.

56. Higher Skills Update

Mrs A Humphreys presented her report on the recent changes to the quality assurance arrangements affecting the College's higher education provision. The Higher Education Review (HER) will now be replaced by the Annual Provider Review (APR).

The Committee examined the new process and noted that a higher degree of governor involvement was now called for. Whereas previously the College's overarching self-assessment processes had covered H.E., separate arrangements would henceforth be operated.

It was recognised that the top-level approval arrangements now to be operated necessitated changes to the College's governance arrangements and

specifically to the Committee's role and terms of reference. In order that the necessary adjustments might be introduced without failure to the meeting of the 1st December 2016 submission deadline, it was agreed that a Written Resolution exercise (to secure the necessary approvals to procedural changes) should be conducted as a matter of urgency.

Finally, in congratulating Mrs Humphreys and her team on the impressive outcomes from the H.E. review earlier in the year, the Chair thanked her for her ongoing endeavours.

Resolved: That

- (i) The Higher Skills Report, including the changes in the HE Quality processes from September 2016 be noted;**
- (ii) The Higher Education Review report and action plan be accepted as 2016/17 evidence of continuous improvement;**
- (iii) That HE reports be provide to the Committee on a twice yearly basis (providing updates on action plans/improvements) ;**
- (iv) That a report be presented to the Board as a matter or urgency via the written resolution procedure to enable the Board to agree to authorise the Annual Quality Assessment Return set out at Annex B and therefore enable the Principal/Chief Executive to execute the document in her capacity as Accounting Officer on behalf of the Board.**

**57. Teaching, Learning & Assessment Update
Learner Experience Profile and Markbook**

Mr Noblett presented the TLA Update (November 2016) covering a number of matters including the College's arrangements for assessing the quality of classroom delivery. He reminded the Committee about the Ofsted Framework for inspection.

Mr Noblett reported that, in the final year (2015/16) of the Learner Observation system, 94% of observations were at Grades 1 or 2. The new Learner Experience Profile now in operation offered a considerably broader and more useful range of indicators of teacher performance. He used a live example from the on-line system to demonstrate this point. The Committee discussed how the data thus gathered was monitored and how more rounded judgements of teaching quality would follow, allowing closer alignment between student performance and teaching quality. The new system was not significantly more onerous to operate.

The Committee noted Mr Noblett's comments on ProMonitor Markbook and on the Enterprise Learning Strategy Review. Mr Noblett confirmed that students were directly involved in the Strategy Review.

The Chair thanked Mr Noblett for this very positive report on developments.

Resolved : That the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Report (November 2016) be noted.

58. Student Induction Survey

Ms D Hemsley and Cllr J Morgan (Student Members) provided a report on the results of the survey of learners joining the College in September 2016. Satisfaction levels were generally very reassuring, “with the results considerably higher than last year for every single question”. Particularly pleasing were the extremely high ratings relating to how safe students felt at the College, how good they felt the teaching was and the level of respect shown to them by staff.

The Committee agreed that the participation of around 900 learners (15% of the total learner population) represented a very acceptable turnout.

The Student Members also updated the Committee on the commencement of the Learner review Week, encompassing all learners on 16-18 study programmes and all adult learners on full-time courses. The Student Members commented on the 16-18 Student Managers impact on learner attendance, punctuality, personal behaviour etc. Finally, the Committee was advised of the Student Council meetings in February (to which all Board Members are invited) and a ‘Question Time’ event planned for the new year.

59. Any Other Business

(i) College Provision for Refugees

Cllr Boswell reported that he had helped to provide assistance to a group of refugees who required transportation to the College. Mrs M Haworth reported on the College’s involvement in this area and provided basic details of associated funding/budgeting.

60. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place at 5.30pm on Thursday, 2nd March 2017.