

Preston College

Minutes of the Quality and Standards Meeting held on 10 October 2024 at 5.30 pm, Boardroom

Present:

Mrs Laura Mason	Chair
Mrs Helen Curtis	
Mrs Jane Hilton	
Mrs Lynda Mason	
Mr Robert Marshall-Slater	From Minute 12
Mr Simon Nixon	Principal and Chief Executive
Mrs Jen Walters	

In attendance:

Ms Marie Haworth	Vice Principal - Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support
Mr Mick Noblett	Vice Principal - Curriculum Delivery and Planning
Mrs Clare Rayner	Clerk to the Board

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was noted a quorum was present.

2. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

A member highlighted a typographical error in Minute 13. With this amendment, the minutes of the meeting on 20 June 2024 were approved as a correct record.

Resolved: With the amendment, the minutes of the meeting of 20 June 2024 were approved as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

The Committee noted the Matters arising report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Matters arising report.

5. Performance against KPIs with Student Recruitment Target

Mr Mick Noblett, Vice Principal - Curriculum Delivery and Planning, presented the Performance against KPIs with Learner Recruitment Target report. The Executive Leadership Team reported:

- on the start to the new term with excellent recruitment across all main provision, with 16-18 recruitment in particular exceeding target and expectations;
- that a student waiting list was in operation for construction and automotive provision and if students left these courses they could be quickly replaced with new students;

- that adult and apprentice provision had also recruited well;
- that the College's recruitment team had won team of the month;
- on a significant increase in home school students joining the College in such numbers that they were effectively the College's third biggest feeder school;
- on the introduction of Every Lesson Matters in 2023/24;
- that the College had received base line data from some feeder schools on students which would assist staff in supporting students;
- that a new entry level of future skills had been introduced following student assessments;
- that whilst there were always challenges, student behaviour had noticeably improved;
- that a letter from the Principal and Chief Executive would be sent before half term to all students with attendance of less than 90% and congratulation letters would be sent to students with 100% attendance.

The Committee discussed the report with the Executive Leadership Team and in response to comments and questions from members noted:

- how baseline data from schools was being used to support and better understand students and that baseline attendance data was particularly helpful as it could demonstrate a student's progression even if they were not achieving their target attendance level;
- that some students were attending College but not going to some of their lessons and this would be addressed;
- the publication of new Department for Education guidance to schools on monitoring attendance and authorised absences could now be recorded without evidence from parents;
- the increase in the number of students having to re-sit their GCSEs whilst completing their course, might impact on overall attendance;
- that individual student attendance targets would be set after half term;
- a possible cultural shift as an impact of the pandemic, as it was noticeable that people were more likely to stay off work, college or school with colds to avoid infecting others. The cultural shift was likely to have an impact on student attendance.

The Chair summarised that it had been a good start to the academic year and acknowledged that it would take time for an individual approach to student attendance to develop. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair, recorded appreciation to staff and management. The Committee noted the report.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Performance against KPIs with Learner Recruitment Target.

6. Curriculum and Skills Link Governor

Mr Noblett presented the Curriculum and Skills Link Governor report and referred members to the draft protocol at Appendix A and the draft pro forma at Appendix B which had been developed following recommendations following the College's external governance review.

Curriculum and Skills Link Governors welcomed the protocol. The Chair commented that the external reviewers had highlighted a risk that link governors could become overly operational or inspection like. Members discussed that whilst link governors should not be grading or assessing staff, there were links between recruitment, performance and meeting skills needs which could be discussed. Following discussion with management and the Clerk, it was agreed that it would be helpful to amend the protocol to emphasise that discussions on progress, quality, recruitment, progression and destination should relate to meeting local skills needs.

The Clerk explained that the questions at Appendix B would be issued to Curriculum and Skills Link Governors on a proforma in November and June and the responses would be used when drafting Board reports on the SAR and the Accountability Statement.

The Clerk undertook to send further details to all Curriculum and Skills Link Governors on arrangements for 2024/25.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Curriculum and Skills Link Governor report and agreed to recommend to the Search and Governance Committee that the draft protocol should be amended to emphasise that discussions on quality, recruitment, progression and destination should relate to meeting local skills needs.

Action: The Clerk to update the draft protocol.

7. Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy Update and Safeguarding Update

Mrs Haworth, Vice Principal - Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support, presented the proposed changes to the Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy Update and Safeguarding Update. Mrs Haworth reported:

- that most of the updates were a result of changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024 and were shown in track changes at Appendix A;
- that all new staff now met with the College's Safeguarding and Prevent Lead;
- that face to face staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) staff training on Safeguarding and Prevent had taken place during the summer 2024;
- on changes in filtering and monitoring requirements;
- on the safeguarding risks related to students using the internet and social media and the importance of online safety;

- on the introduction of Confide system which enabled staff to report low level concerns and would help management identify potential issues before they escalated.

Members commented positively on the revisions to the policy and recognised the level of detail and work of staff to produce the revised version.

The Safeguarding and Prevent Link Governor, Mrs Lynda Mason, reported on the meeting she had held with Mrs Haworth and Mrs Southworth and her view the policy reflected operational activity at the College.

A staff governor commented positively on the staff Safeguarding CPD sessions which had been held over the summer, highlighting the excellent scenario cases studies which staff had discussed. The staff governor also commented that staff were regularly using Confide.

Mr Noblett highlighted that the College's safeguarding arrangements had scored highly in the recent staff survey.

The Committee agreed to recommend the changes to the Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee approved the changes to the Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy for recommendation to the Board.

8. Access and Participation Statement

Mrs Haworth presented the proposed changes to the Access and Participation Statement which were shown as track changes at Appendix A.

Mrs Haworth explained why the College required an Access and Participation Statement rather than Access and Participation Plan.

The Committee approved the changes to the Access and Participation Statement for recommendation to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee approved the changes to the Access and Participation Statement for recommendation to the Board.

9. Review of Student Governor Role for 2025/26

The Clerk referred members to a report on the Review of Student Governor Role for 2025/26. She reported:

- that the report had been developed following discussions with the Executive Leadership Team on how to enhance the experience for student governors and increase student governor contributions at Board/committee meetings, particularly 16-18 student governors who might find attending meetings intimidating;
- whilst there were advantages and disadvantages to introducing interviews for the 16-18 student governor role, it would ensure that the successful candidate understood the role and had the required level of confidence;

- introducing a two year term would allow the student governor more time to grow in confidence in the role and more time to take advantage of the training offered by the Association of Colleges, Education and Training Foundation and Unloc;
- that the term would need to be advertised as up to two years so as not to disadvantage any students on a one year course;
- that, as the College had not recruited a HE student governor since the role was introduced in 2020, it was proposed that the Adult student governor role would be reintroduced and this would remain as a one year term. The College could then still have up to three student governors for each academic year.

The Committee discussed the proposal with ELT and the Clerk and noted:

- that currently the Clerk provided general support to the student governors during the academic year and that the Executive Leadership Team would meet with a student if support was required on a particular report;
- that interviews would ensure that students fully understood the student governor role and that coaching and support could be provided to all candidates before the interview;
- attending interviews was good experience for all students;
- that the proposals would be helpful as the new student governor 16-18 would have a 'buddy' each year who had acted as the student governor the year before;
- the importance of having stakeholder voices in Board and committee meetings and that the increasing the number of 16-18 student governor would increase the likelihood of student voices at the board meetings;
- that there had been a contested election in 2023/24 for the 16-18 student governor role with six candidates and, whilst there had been more interest in voting this year than previous years, large numbers of students did not participate in elections;
- that if a large number of students applied, students could vote to shortlist the candidates.

The Committee welcomed the proposals for changes to the student governor provisional for 2024/25. The Committee noted that the proposals would be considered at the next meeting of the Search and Governance Committee.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to feedback to the Search and Governance Committee that they welcomed the proposed changes to the Student Governor role for 2024/25.

10. Updated Forward Work Programme 2024/25

The Clerk referred members to the updated Forward Work Programme for 2024/25 at Appendix A which had been updated with the dates approved at the Board on 4 July 2024 and other proposed changes shown as track changes. The Clerk highlighted that the amendments included a proposal to move to an annual review of complaints and compliments which would be a summary report rather than a detailed report on individual complaints.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to add to the programme a mid year review of the Curriculum and Skills Link Governor role in January and a year end review in June.

Following discussion, the Committee approved the Quality and Standards Committee Forward Work Programme 2024/25.

Resolved: With the amendment agreed, the Committee approved the Quality and Standards Committee Forward Work Programme 2024/25.

Action: The Clerk to update the Forward Work Programme 2024/25.

11. Review of Committee Terms of Reference

The Clerk referred members to the proposed changes to the Committee's terms of reference and were shown as track changes at Appendix A. She reported:

- on cosmetic changes or updates to reflect current practice;
- that following the disbanding of the Higher Education Sub Committee in 2020, the terms of reference of the Quality and Standards Sub Committee had been amended to include the remit of the Sub Committee. She explained that this had caused some duplication, and some items had been removed to address this.

In response to a query, the Clerk confirmed the reference to reviewing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in paragraph 21 referred to both FE and HE provision.

The Committee agreed the proposed changes to the Quality and Standards Committee terms of reference and noted that the Search and Governance Committee would review all the proposed changes at its next meeting and make a recommendation to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee reviewed the revised Resources Committee Terms of Reference.

12. Self-Assessment Report (Part 1) – Quality of Education

Ms Haworth delivered the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) presentation. She reported:

- on the emerging strengths and areas for improvement that had been identified during 2023/24;
- that for 2023/24 SAR the grading system of the previous Ofsted inspection framework had been used and the new grading system would be used for the 2024/25 SAR.

Members reviewed the evaluative statements emerging from School SARs and the overall themes for the College's SAR. The Committee noted its role in testing and challenging the College's emerging strengths.

The Committee discussed with ELT:

- whether there was an over emphasis on the College's achievement compared with national benchmarks following a comment that whilst it was encouraging that the College's Apprenticeship achievement rates were above national benchmarks, the national benchmarks were low, and it could be interpreted that the College was prepared to accept achievement rates below College's KPI targets. Mrs Haworth explained how College targets were set using the previous year's outcomes as a baseline rather than national benchmarks;
- it was challenging for students to succeed in maths/English GCSEs at College whilst studying for another course, when they had not previously achieved these GCSEs after eight years at school;

- members' views that there were frequent references to good teaching and high quality teaching, there should be references to exceptional teaching. Members encouraging management not to underplay the College's areas of strength that all areas of excellence at the College should be highlighted in the SAR;
- that where strengths had been referenced in the SAR the description should be reviewed as they did not read as strengths; for example, it was suggested that the language should be revised to be more impactful. Members also suggested using expressions such as nurturing students rather than providing students with personal support;
- that some paragraphs were overly complex should be streamlined or broken down;
- to provide more detail on approaches to addressing student attendance and student experience;
- the new Safeguarding and Prevent Policy referred to risks related to Artificial Intelligence which was not reflected in the SAR;
- a suggestion to include more reference to the staff's work in building resilience in students to prepare them for the future world of work;
- whether the College was being overly ambitious with attendance targets and to consider the success of students that did not attend school regularly but were attending College, albeit lower than the target KPI attendance rate. Members suggested it could be beneficial to provide information on attendance of different cohorts, with different targets, alongside overall attendance;
- a suggestion to include reference to providing certificates for attendance.

Mr Robert Marshall-Slater joined the meeting.

- that at its last meeting, the Board had discussed that the College was performing to exceptionally high standards;
- the importance of the College acknowledging in the SAR how it was changing students' lives and that achievements were in many cases exceptional. Members emphasised the importance of not underestimating the progress the College had made.

A member commented that she had attended the Lancashire Fringe Festival where a former College student's play had been performed by two former students.

Members discussed with management the importance of case studies from alumni students as they demonstrated how colleges had changed lives. Members commented that universities, which had greater resources, were often better at keeping in touch with former students than colleges. ELT reported on activities to engage with College alumni as part of the College's 50th Anniversary Celebrations.

The Chair thanked members and management for their contribution to the discussions.

Resolved: The Committee reviewed the emerging strengths and areas for improvement of the draft SAR 2023/24.

Action: To update the draft SAR in response to the Committee's feedback.

13. Items to raise with the Board

The Committee agreed which items to highlight to the Board.

The Committee discussed the Curriculum and Skills protocol and proforma and agreed it would be beneficial for the Board to consider these documents at its next meeting.

Resolved: The Committee agreed which items to highlight to the Board.

- **the increased number of Level 1 and Level 2 students enrolled at the College in 2024/25 and whether this might impact the strategic direction of the College. The Committee noted that all other provision, including Level 3, had also recruited well;**
- **that the Committee had reviewed the first draft of the College's SAR 2023/24 and was of the view that the College sometimes underplayed its achievements and encouraged management to review the language in the SAR to better highlight the College's strengths and achievements;**
- **that the Committee had been pleased to note that colleges were now receiving base line data from schools on students which would assist the College when assessing learner attendance;**
- **that the Committee had considered proposals for changes to the student governor roles at the College which will be considered by the Board in December.**

14. Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee would take place on 21 November 2024.