

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2022, 1700 HRS, via Teams (Hybrid)

Present:

Natalie Wigman (Chair)
Colin O'Donoghue
Paul Cox (Chief Executive and Principal)
Fiona Stilwell
Ashley Barnes
Cassidy Fieldsend
Nicholas Hewitt
Karen Stanton

In attendance:

Peter Jodrell, Deputy Principal (Curriculum and Digital)
Paul Stannard, Vice Principal, (Quality)
Fiona Chalk, Governance Advisor

SS.01.22 GOVERNORS' MEETING TIME WITHOUT SMT

No items

SS.02.22 COMMITTEE MATTERS

i Apologies

There were apologies from Karen Stanton.

ii Declaration of interests

Governors were reminded that it was their duty to declare any interests financial or otherwise on any of the agenda items. AB declared an interest as an employee of an Awarding body used by the college.

iii Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

iv Matters arising

All the actions from the previous meeting had been completed or would be considered elsewhere within the agenda.

PS advised an update on Scenario 5. The table with the grade profiles of all apprenticeships that the college had for EPAs this year, will be extended, and reported slightly differently to Standards committee in June.

There were no other matters arising from the previous minutes.

SS.03.22 GOVERNORS' MONTHLY REPORT (October 2021)

i Matters arising

PJ asked if there were any questions regarding the Governors' Monthly Report for January 2022.

Governors queried risks relating to cyber-attack/systems outage - the language of the risk described, the risks remain quite high after mitigation, and whether mitigations and preparations are sufficiently represented in the risk score. Management advised that despite all preparations, including staff training, there is still a high risk.

Governors thanked management for the new dashboard, which is much clearer to read and understand.

There were no other questions raised by the Committee or matters arising from the Governors monthly report January 2022 not already covered or discussed elsewhere in the agenda.

TO RECEIVE

SS.04.22 Teaching & Learning termly report

Learning walks and the key areas of learning – 90% of observations were undertaken in term 1. The focus for term 2 is to work through actions resulting from term 1 learning observations, and that will also be followed up in their appraisal activity.

Minimum expectations have been re-iterated to staff. External exams are coming up, so student preparation and the staff tracking of student progress are also a key focus this term, allowing staff to clearly see where every learner is in terms of their progress and the learner can see their progress as well. Oversight of student work experience is also taking place, with about a third of students having this in place to date.

Governors asked:

- Is 15-20 minutes rather than a full lesson for observation sufficient? Previously, staff got 1 full lesson observation a year if there were no issues arising from the first observation. Learning walks of 15 minutes allows observation to take place up to 4 times a year, facilitating prompt following up on previous actions and putting in earlier intervention when required. CDP can now be targeted based on the findings of term 1.
- Peer to peer observations is currently utilised. Is there any independent observations from external input? The college is a member of the External Quality Review (EQR) scheme of 13 colleges where other college colleagues will come in to do external reviews in areas where there may be more benefit to be gained from this. This happens 3 times a year. Staff from Eastleigh travel to other colleges to reciprocate the service. There are also a couple of external consultants that are being brought in this year. Plumbing and Gas, and Hair and Beauty are likely to be supported as their self-assessment grade for the last couple of years has been a grade three. There is an opportunity to get to Grade two, so that external support will come in and validate that the right decisions are being made around the support being put in place, as well as looking at the processes in place.
- How do staff appraise the use of digital technology – what does good look like? ETF & JISC are trying to support this as an area of positive practice, but it is also identified through the learning walks, as an area for development. Staff are considering the questions around appraisal of the use of digital technology, is it being used, and if so, how and what was the impact i.e., in moving the student on its learning/giving an enhanced perspective of learning? All staff are encouraged to embrace digital technology i.e., through the use of Google Classroom, online submissions, and apprenticeship portfolios are all now online. Recruiting a staff member to support this area has not been successful, so there will be more digital champions trained and engaged in the college for both teaching and non-teaching staff. The college is looking to recruit some teaching and learning coaches with digital competency and the Heads role will have more training too.

SS.05.22 Sub-contractor performance report

See Confidential Minute

SS.06.22 2020/21 F/T and P/T destinations report

Intended destination is recorded by tutors in year, usually March time, when students are asked what their intended destination is as part of their progress review. Once the

learner has finished, the actual destination is recorded. Where there are no responses, these are taken as a negative. The actual destinations are measured against the intended destination, and clearly show these two are very similar, giving some integrity to the data collected.

Positive destinations increased to 90.5% for full-time students (up 3.5% on last year) and 92.75% (up 3.75% on last year) for part-time students. Governors asked how this compares to the national benchmark? There isn't a national benchmark.

Governors challenged on the robustness of the intended destination data. Management advised that this data is a key Ofsted driver – what does the qualification deliver for the student? The college uses destination data as the driver for saying how well the product we offer at the college is working, because our destination shows us this. The fact that the actual destination is closely matched to the intended destination, suggests that the intended data is pretty robust.

Governors asked if there needs to be another level of data in table 2 to show more detail of what progression there has been, perhaps showing a link/cross reference between the course and the job to see how relevant one was for the other and further detail on the progression destination i.e., into a graduate scheme, so the role is captured, not just the sector. The actual destination survey doesn't drill down to that level of detail and isn't captured currently. Where the 'other' option is ticked by a majority of students, governors suggested a revision the question to have more appropriate answers.

PJ to review questions with Jess Munday

SS.07.22 Induction survey report

Governors noted the results of the QDP survey, a process that a lot of colleges use which gives benchmarking opportunities, and that the full-time student responses succeeded the KPI, and the part-time responses fell short of the KPI.

A key finding was that enrolment induction is a bit long, with students wanting to get into the course sooner. The longer induction had been planned to help students transition back into face-to-face learning after a long absence.

There is much more engagement with potential learners in the new 13 to -1 process. There is a greater consistency in this process than previously, which has resulted in better January starts this year. With better curriculum planning and phased starts, more starts have been introduced so people do not have to wait so long and the information they receive, shows a clear path through to the course.

Governors noted that on the whole, the results are really positive, and a comprehensive induction is essential given what young people have been through in the last couple of years. Governors asked if there is any link between induction and retention or alternatively, can the college capture negative induction feedback and compare it with non-completions/withdrawals? It was acknowledged this would be an interesting piece of work. Surveys are anonymous making any linkage difficult to reliably determine and although the college does capture reasons for leaving in-year, it can be hard to engage students after they have left. The survey is completed early in the year, so any dropouts before survey would not be captured in survey responses.

PS/PJ to consider ways of linking data from induction survey to retention figures

SS.08.22 Quality review report

Governors noted the report and asked:

- About the impact of covid absences – can these be separated out of the data? Management is doing this as there are a separate register marks for self-isolation/covid absence.

- Kickstart attendance improved where other attendance fell off a bit – has it been particularly targeted? It has not but the team are managing the learners effectively, such as bringing them into college and lessons. This is a key progression route for students, so there is a real incentive for them to attend and complete the course.

End Point Assessment (EPA) grades and first-time pass grades will fluctuate month or month and are being tracked and reported closely. Governors stated it was important to celebrate the apprenticeship achievements, such as those seen recently in carpentry.

SS.09.22 Term 1 College Development Plan report term 1

Governors noted the areas with a category of high/very high which show key areas of focus i.e., work-experience, attendance, and adult growth (the priority rating being progress made against the action in the period).

Governors challenged management as to how on target the college is to achieve all 17 targets by year-end. Attendance is below target so is at risk as is phasing of work experience, both having been made difficult due to Covid so are likely to have slippage against the targets; AEB English & Maths income and learner targets are low, so different methods of delivery are being trialled for functional skills English & Maths. All targets are monitored monthly to ensure each is correctly prioritised.

Governors noted that with lots of amber and high/very high with immediate focus or intervention, is there enough staff capacity to address these? Some amber will travel throughout the year i.e., work experience is an immediate focus but also runs throughout the year. Management gave a reassurance that there is enough bandwidth in the team, and everyone is clear as to where their focus needs to be throughout the year.

PS to check the totals figure and review the rating definitions for the next report

SS.10.22 Link Governor Autumn/Spring reports

The Chair stated that there had been very few reports this time around which is disappointing as training and support has been given to governors. More thought needs to be given on how to overcome the barriers to governors participating in link visits. There may be reluctance due to feelings of intimidation or uncertainty of what it involves.

Governors noted that some colleges do not do visits but agreed that they can have value for governors and there is a balance to how governors add value and also gain insights into the college. Governors questioned how a link governor role adds value to the college, when governors may not have the specialist knowledge of an area - value to the college can depend on individual governors' experience. The benefits to governors are that they get to know staff and triangulate information received for senior leaders in meetings. Visits help bring the college to life and give more understanding of how the college works.

Governors stated that they would like to hear from staff about their views on governor engagement and that it would be helpful to understand more from staff's point of view, how they value governor visits.

Governance Advisor to action

It was suggested that the scope of governor visits could be widened to look at values, culture etc. Governors bring value back from visits to the dialogue and decision-making in meetings, based on what they have seen, which in itself, adds value by contributing to improved student outcomes. The scope could look to include other non-curriculum areas such as finance, HR, risk etc.

Clerk to send out reminders to governors at the end of each term to forward their reports with a deadline.

It was suggested that to complement governor visits, deep dive sessions could be held at the start of each board meeting on a particular curriculum area.

SS.11.22 Attendance & retention: Task and finish group

Governors were reminded that 16-18 students withdrawal numbers had started to increase, so the T&F group was set up and meets on a weekly basis to track daily and over-time, attendance, and retention. The group looks at learners at risk as well as recognition for high attendance. Consideration is being given of different modes of delivery for adults to help with engagement. An aspirational trip or event that was specific to progression or linked to a unit on each course, or inspirational speakers, were methods used in January to improve engagement, and they were really well embraced.

SS.12.22 Quality Review Meeting Update

Governors noted that these meetings happen termly or half-termly where intervention is required, as well as having monthly monitoring meetings to proactively catch concerns early. Motor vehicle, engineering, and refrigeration have for a period had interim management due to long term sickness. This has led to some inconsistency in quality due to the manager's absence, and the interim managers have made progress against the actions identified. Recruitment of staff in this area is a real struggle, along with other trade areas. Colleges are finding it hard to compete with industry at the present, so the college is looking at the whole package on offer to staff and how the college can best support them in terms of their teacher qualification and career journey. The marketing team are helping with promotion across social media, in addition to using recruiters and job boards.

Governors asked if the college could collaborate on curriculum offer or staff with other colleges who might also be struggling with staffing issues. The battle for talent is so great, institutions are fighting over the same staff – this is across all sectors, not just FE, but it is worthy of consideration.

Governors asked if there a staff satisfaction survey which might give more insight into staff recruitment and retention. A survey was launched in November under the Best Company survey, for which the results will be available later this month and will be shared with governors.

Results of the staff survey to be shared with governors

SS.13.22 Curriculum Policy

Governors noted that the Policy and strategy are completely interlinked. The policy has been updated in line with FREDIE principles and post 16 education bill and provision of HE etc.

The committee recommended the Curriculum policy to the Board for approval

SS.14.22 Curriculum Strategy

Governors noted how the strategies have been aligned with the overarching college strategy. This reinforces the importance of the college meeting strategic aims and ambition at the end of each curriculum priority. The curriculum strategy is linked to the KPI and KPM targets and to the risk register. Each priority looks at the different aspects of the curriculum. As there is a lot in the document, there is a simple tracking sheet to show progress against those strategic aims within each strategic objective, linked to KPM/KPIs and risk register. The tracking sheet will benchmark progress against achievement of the strategic aims.

Governors thanked PJ for the clear and concise documents.

TO REVIEW

SS.15.22 Standard Committee items on Risk Register

No changes to the risk ratings for any of the risks linked to Standards cttee.

Governors noted the new Risk 15 for Covid, including mental health. It was stated this is a very wide risk and consideration should be given to having a specific risk for mental health. It was agreed to amend the description of the risk with regard to Covid-19 in order to give the risk a shelf-life, and then reassess the risk post Covid and maybe narrow it to a mental health risk that will continue post Covid.

PS to update risk 15 description

SS.16.22 Sub-contracting standard

Governors noted the overview report of initial thinking with regards to the new sub-contracting standard and compliance, showing a recognition of what work is required and proposed actions. A report will come to the June meeting to note progress on it.

PS to provide an update report to the June meeting on sub-contracting standard

TO APPROVE

SS.17.21 College values and FREDIE policy

MB joined the meeting.

Governors noted that the Dignity at Work and EDI policies and being combined and form the new College Values and FREDIE policy and include a new Dignity at Work procedure, which also led to a review of the Grievance procedure. The FREDIE policy will be at the forefront of everything the college does and will better enable impact to be measured.

Governors asked if management had undertaken an exercise to ensure those standalone policies that have been removed have been sufficiently covered in the new FREDIE policy. Assurance was given that such an exercise has been carried out.

Governors asked why the choice was made to use the language Equality over Equity. The work was led by the National Centre of Diversity and this terminology was based on their advice.

The committee resolved to approve the FREDIE policy.

MB left the meeting

SS.18.22 Prevent risk assessment

Governors noted that the Chaplaincy and Safe and Fair use of IT policies required improvement. The college has updated the Communications policy and have added a section on Prevent. The review of the Chaplaincy policy is still in progress to make sure representation reflects our learner population.

The committee resolved to approve the Prevent Risk Assessment.

TO CONSIDER

SS.19.22 Confidential items Subcontractor performance report.

SS.20.22 Date of next meeting 16 June 2022

Governors' Monthly Report – matters arising
Teaching Learning and Assessment policy
Term 2 Quality review outcomes

Term 2 QIP
English & Maths report
Teaching and Learning monthly report
Partner performance report
Costed Curriculum plan 2022-23
Setting Quality metrics 2022-23
Governance matters – appointments/ effectiveness review/ cycle of business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1905 hrs.