

BARNSELEY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 APRIL 2017

PRESENT	N Bowen	Governor (Chair)
	S Burkinshaw	Governor (Student)
	C Moss	Governor
	D Shepherd	Governor
	R Hooley	Governor
IN ATTENDANCE	A J Oaks	Clerk to the Board
	P Briscoe	VP Quality and Student Experience
	L Leek	Principal, SFC

APOLOGIES

17.23 Apologies were received from C Webb and T Abbott.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

17.24 The Chair reminded members of the requirement to declare any financial or personal interests in any agenda items. Members reserved the right to declare any interests should any arise during the course of the meeting.

MINUTES

17.25 The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

17.26 The Committee received a list of actions arising from previous meetings. L Leek reported that the High Fliers programme was being rebadged to provide support across college, not just the Sixth Form College and that the College was seeking additional funding. With regard to the HE lesson observation process the Dean of UCB commented that the College adhered to the QAA and UKHEA professional observation standards. The Deputy Principal stated that he would discuss the approach with link governors at their next meeting.

HE SELF EVALUATION DOCUMENT

17.28 The Committee received the SED 2015/16 for approval. The Dean of UCB explained that the SED provided an overview of the College in terms of quality and standards and its relationships with degree awarding bodies. The document described the College's approach to providing assurance over the academic standards and quality of HE provision, and to demonstrate its effectiveness in meeting the Quality Code.

17.29 The Committee were informed that the SED had been reviewed by a panel of HE staff agreed by the HE Teaching and Learning Quality Committee following which it had been presented to the senior management team. The Dean provided a comprehensive report of the process, referring to the specific areas within the report for Governors' information and to demonstrate the rigour applied. Governors raised several questions, particularly in relation to the enhancement of teaching practices and learning opportunities, and work based and placement learning, where it was recognised that lack of placements would impact on employability. Further to discussion the Committee was assured by management's response that processes were becoming further embedded.

RESOLVED 17.30 To recommend approval of the SED to the Board.

UPDATE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 17.31 The Committee received a report summarising activities to support secure and monitor improvements in teaching, learning and assessment across college. Details were provided of OWLS, themed learning walks and paired observations that had taken place, with 219 peer practices reported to have been carried out by 182 individual staff. 93% of graded lesson observations were good or better, with 49% outstanding. The paper highlighted the action taken by management following observations graded satisfactory or inadequate and the number of staff involved in the re-observation process. The VP Quality and Student Experience commented that he was confident about the data, however he was looking at the way percentages were currently generated with a view to aligning the process with how it would be judged by external agencies.
- 17.32 The Chair commented that it was pleasing to see the rigour applied to observations graded 3 and 4, and asked about timescales for improvement. The VP explained the process, stating that re-observations took place fairly quickly, subject to the support required. L Leek reiterated the rigorous approach, which was intensive and led by Advanced Practitioners. Governors sought to understand how the profile might impact on the grade at inspection, and discussed the current approach to bringing about improvements. The VP Quality & SE confirmed that he reviewed the schedule of observations regularly to ensure any below a 2 were prioritised for re-observation.

The Report was received.

ENGLISH AND MATHS PERFORMANCE

- 17.33 The Committee received a report for discussion relating to classroom based English and maths provision across the College. Overall predicted GCSE achievement was based on mean averaging in-year progress test results to date and provided the overall percentage of learners for 2016/17 and 2017/18 hybrid year. In English the overall achievement rate was 80.1% with maths at 84%. Predicted high grades were 28.9% and 28% respectively, both above national benchmarks.
- 17.34 A table highlighting high grades within each department had been provided to inform discussion. Results in childcare, construction and foundation were below 5% of the average. The VP Q&SE explained the actions currently being taken by management to improve the consistency of TLA to outstanding, through weekly CPD and ongoing walkthroughs and observations. In addition, outstanding practitioners had been allocated in the weakest areas. 1-1 and follow up with HODs to monitor attendance was in place, with intervention workshops set up daily for those progressing poorly and non attending learners. Attendance for functional skills in English and maths and GCSE remained a concern, which Governors noted was significantly below expectations. In response to Governors' questions, the VP explained the actions being taken to improve matters, including new timetabling, better teachers and targeted revision support. The Chair was keen to know of the position in Construction, and the Committee were given an update on the recent performance review meeting which had been challenging for the Head of the Department. Whilst still of some concern for management, the HoD was seeking the appropriate support to bring about improvements.

The Report was noted and received.

APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

- 17.35 The report indicated the College to be consistently one of the highest performing in England – consistently above national benchmark (NB) which was 71.1% success and 56% timely. The college currently had 1,859 apprentices compared to 1,790 at the same period in 2015/16. At period 7 the forecast was 85.7% and 81.9% respectively, based on all achieving in a timely manner. A 90% best case scenario had also been provided, which showed both forecasts to remain above the national benchmark.

- 17.36 Whilst the success rates remained above national average (NA), overall success and timely success had reduced by 0.1% and 2% respectively from 2014/15 to 2015/16. A slight increase in 2016/17 was expected. The Deputy Principal's report provided detailed information of areas for improvement in each department and the action being taken to bring about improvement. Governors sought further information with regard to retention of apprentices, which compared to the sector as a whole, with employers often letting apprentices go, an issue beyond the college's control. The Deputy Principal described the approach being taken by the Recruitment department to ensure the College remained on track. Considerable discussion took place around staffing, employers' ability to respond to the new standards and need to ring fence growth in this area.

The Report was noted and received.

ATTENDANCE

- 17.37 The Committee received a report on attendance and punctuality which excluded attendance in English and maths, as this had been reported on earlier in the meeting. The VP FD&C summarised the data, stating it was comparative to the previous year.

The Report was noted and received.

RETENTION

- 17.38 The Committee received a report on retention at March 2017 which included English and maths. At level 1 and 3, retention continued to be substantially above college and national average as reported previously. At Level 2, it was slightly below NA due to withdrawals from English and maths, reported to committee at previous meetings. Adult retention was above NA and college target at Level 1, but was below at Level 2 due to withdrawals from GCSE English and maths. Level 3 was above NA. The VP Q&SE stated that profile of retention was changing and that there was a level of concern in respect of the ability to achieve outstanding at Ofsted. In HE, the target for the current year was 92% of students enrolling to complete a year of study. As reported previously, the number of students had decreased by ten between January and February 2017 bringing the total withdrawals to 23 since October 2016. Current retention was 96.41% compared to 96.21% at the same time in previous year. Work continued to improve retention and the VP was confident of achieving the target of 92%.

HEFCE ANNUAL PROVIDER REVIEW

- 17.39 The Committee received a report from the Dean of UCB which detailed the College's response to the preliminary assessment of the HEFCE Annual Provider Review Group. The Committee had been apprised of the revised operating model for quality assessment in 2016, which was now the core mechanism used to assess quality in HE Providers. On 1 February 2017, the College was notified that HEFCE had identified an area of concern that could (but would not necessarily) lead to a negative APR outcome. This was related to quality and standards matters, specifically metrics for student satisfaction and retention for full time students showing performance significantly below benchmark, and for retention, a downward trend. The College had been asked to respond, setting out its action plan to and timescale in which improvements could be expected.
- 17.40 The Committee received a copy of the response made by the College to the HEFCE APR group, which was detailed and comprehensive and covered timelines of improvements from 2012/13 to date, quality assurance and student satisfaction and steps taken to improve retention. The Dean of UCB explained that the outcome of HEFCE's assessment, which was expected at end of April, would be to either state it had concerns following its preliminary assessment, or that it did not. Five key points were set out in the report explaining the reasons for the decline. Governors were aware that the decline in retention was historical and related to the transfer in 2012/13 and had noted this when considering the NSS survey results at previous meetings. Significant improvements in the NSS 2014/15 v 2015/16 had been noted. Out of 29 questions in the NSS, 22 had improved; 3 remain unchanged and 4

remained between 1% and 3% below the 2014/15 result. The College had a proactive approach to raising awareness of the NSS which had received a 75% response rate and the Dean was confident that improvements would continue.

- 17.41 In response to questions from Governors, the Dean commented that the next scheduled QAA visit was due in 2018/19, however a negative response to the APR could trigger a QAA visit much sooner, which she would welcome to demonstrate the progress made. D Shepherd referred to the webinar he had attended which had focused on the importance of Governors' understanding their role in respect of APR and stated that the report was excellent, and the delivery and presentation extremely helpful. The Committee discussed whether HEFCE would consider progress had been rapid enough and sought to understand the implications of receiving a negative response from HEFCE and what more the Board could do.
- 17.42 Governors recognised that significant improvements had been made, and were clearly addressed within the report, and agreed that it would not be favourable to receive a negative response. Considerable discussion took place with regard to supporting students into employability alongside growing HE in a competitive market. C Moss believed it was a constant challenge to ensure it was built into the journey and that he and P Jagger as link governors for this particularly strategic priority could drive this forward. The Chair thanked the Dean for a thorough and comprehensive report and said he was confident that appropriate actions were in place to demonstrate continual improvement.

The Report was noted and received.

COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS

- 17.43 The Committee received a report highlighting complaints received to date since the last meeting. A significant reduction in the number of complaints comparative to the previous year was noted.

ANALYSIS OF EV REPORTS

- 17.44 The Committee received a report which showed that 10 external verification reports had been received since the last meeting, seven of which had required an action plan. Full details were provided for information.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 17.45 The next meeting would be held on 27 June 2017 at 4.00 pm.

Signed _____ Chair

Date _____