

BARNSELEY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 21ST JUNE 2018

PRESENT

N Bowen Chair
R Hooley
D Shepherd
C Webb

IN ATTENDANCE

Yiannis Koursis – Deputy Principal
Phil Briscoe – Vice Principal Quality & Student Experience
Denise Jelly
Kurt Taylor

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

18.45 Apologies for absence were received from C Moss, S Perryman, E Hodgson and L Leek.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

MINUTES

18.47 The minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair. It was agreed that Ross Hooley should be added to the list of Governors present for this meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

18.48 The Committee reviewed the schedule of actions presented and it was confirmed

- Line 1 – the link visit proposed has now taken place and feedback provided to the Board
- Line 2 – the direction of travel arrow requested has now been included
- Line 3 – it was confirmed that the College is now moving from Delhe to Graduate Outcomes and the first results of which will be known in February/March 2019.
- Line 4 – it was confirmed that a HE Task and Finish Group has now been established with three meetings scheduled in June/July. The first meeting has taken place. QAA visit has also taken place and the college currently awaits feedback. The Principal explained that no feedback at all was provided at the end of the onsite visit.
- Line 5 – this has now been concluded

QUALITY STRATEGIC PILLAR AND BALANCED SCORE CARD

18.49 The Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience introduced this report and reminded the Committee that the strategic pillar for quality includes 7 goals. At the current point in time 3 are RAG rated as green, 3 amber and 1 red.

In relation to the three goals RAG rated as green, updates were provided as follows:

- 1) Maintain Ofsted Outstanding status – the Committee were reminded that the College was last fully inspected in November 2010 and judged to be outstanding. Every year that goes by is another that Ofsted have deemed it not necessary to inspect the College. If the college is inspected in 2018/19 the reason is likely to be because Ofsted thinks that potentially the organisation is no longer outstanding so that puts everyone on the back foot immediately.

He advised that the rest of the sector is catching up as national averages creep up for most headline achievement rates and, the challenge for the College, is to maintain and improve upon its outstanding outcomes. He indicated that whilst the College continues to be strong there is a decreasing lead when compared to 'the rest of the pack'.

- 2) Consistently deliver whole college outstanding teaching, learning and assessment

The Committee were advised that the percentage of good and better lesson observations is very high again this year. This should however be seen within the context that the lesson observation policy gives teaching staff one week of notice and specifies the session that will be observed. This is backed up by walkthroughs conducted by departmental managers that focus on the consistency of classroom delivery. He explained that this policy does generate some high percentages in terms of good and outstanding observations.

If and when the College is inspected it is clear that the inspectors will go in to sessions of their choosing and other than knowing the week staff will not know which sessions will be visited. The challenge therefore becomes one of consistency. The College undoubtedly has significant amounts of outstanding practice but the focus of the inspection judgement will be on the overall quality of teaching and learning and the effect that this has on all learners.

The challenge from the Committee is that the lesson observation grades have to be intrinsically linked to outcomes and therefore it is important to continually triangulate. The steer from the Committee was not to simply focus on teaching and learning but instead to focus on assessments as it is believed that this will lead to strong outcomes. The Committee indicated that at some point in the next academic year they would wish to receive a report and undertake some analysis on assessments carried out across the College.

- 3) Provide outstanding information, advice and guidance to students

The committee were reminded that from January 2018 there was an amendment to the Common Inspection Framework meaning that inspectors have to make a specific judgement about the quality of a providers' initial advice and guidance. The College is well prepared for this therefore it does not present an additional risk. One area of further improvement is the consistent guidance provided for learners as they transition to the next year of study in the College, Higher Education or employment.

The Committee were reminded that there are separate papers prepared in relation to the three goals that have been RAG rated as amber as well as the goal RAG rated as red; which is to deliver sector leading English and Maths outcomes. In relation to this latter goal it was explained that the RAG rating has moved from an amber to a red.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

QUALITY STRATEGIC GOAL – DELIVER SECTOR LEADING ENGLISH AND MATHS OUTCOMES

- 18.50 The committees' attention was drawn to the detailed report provided and a number of key matters were noted:

- Attendance rates remain a concern, however overall attendance in 17/18 shows an upward trend compared to 16/17. Attendance at GCSE English is 78.7% which is +3.7% compared to the prior year. GCSE Maths is 77.3% which is +2.9% compared to

the prior year. He advised that the College is still not where it wants to be in relation to these statistics but it is an improving picture. The Committee questioned how attendance compares with other colleges. The view expressed by the Principal is that the college is doing better than most but still not where it wants to be. The committee were advised that there is no national data available specifically on this area so more detailed analysis is not possible.

- The College has recently made the strategic decision to protect Level 2 overall achievement rates and as a result the two year GCSE model has reverted to a one year model. This has had a positive impact on English and Maths retention rates (+7%) but will have an anticipated negative impact on 4-9/A-C achievements. The Committee were advised that this is an action that needed to happen and strategically the college has made the decision to protect the Level 2 retention and achievement rates. This decision will not negatively affect progress measures as they are calculated on students' highest achievement on leaving the College, however it is still anticipated that 1-9 achievement rates will be below target as the increased retention rate is still below target.
- Because of the introduction of the new 1-9 grading structure the College is taking the opportunity to modify its essential skills policy. Students with prior attainment of grade 1-2 have been enrolled to Functional Skills and with a grade 3 to GCSE. This has effectively split out the previous grade E learners so only the top 50% are undertaking a resit. As a consequence the College has a cohort of learners retaking GCSE English and Maths from a stronger starting point.
- Weekly reporting of attendance at English and Maths classes is received by the senior management team. This leads to targeted interventions and actions to resolve issues as well as the identification and sharing of best practice in securing high levels of attendance.
- Due to ongoing concerns over performance the Assistant Principal with responsibility for English and Maths has recently left the College
- From September 2018 the deployment of staff from the central function in to curriculum departments will change. This will mean staff will be seen more as part of the curriculum team and build better working relationships leading to more targeted support for students. This was described as a preferable model when compared to central deployment.

In terms of the departure of the Assistant Principal for English and Maths the Committee questioned whether it was the person or the post that was an issue. The Principal indicated that Maths and English is incredibly hard to manage and that it was a combination of issues, one of which was cultural fit for the organisation.

The Committee questioned what the leadership and management plans are now in relation to English and Maths. The Principal advised that it was not the intention to replace the Assistant Principal who has departed but instead responsibilities will be split between three individuals, these are Bridget Baker who will be responsible for classroom provision, Jackie Brown who will be responsible for access to learning and 14-18 and Yvonne Malpass who will be responsible for apprenticeships plus work based learning. He advised that the requirement for them to also operate as heads of department has been removed so that they have sufficient time to focus on their new roles.

The Committee were reminded that the report presented today solely focuses on GCSEs and it was acknowledged that Functional Skills is still outstanding at the College and well above national averages. GCSE English and Maths will continue to be a challenge given government policy. It was noted that attendance at Functional Skills is much better than GCSEs. All acknowledged that there was some really impressive work happening in relation to Functional Skills and this is within the context of having Maths and English within the departments. The Committee all agreed that moving Maths and English delivery back in to the departments, rather than a central model, was the right direction of travel. The Principal indicated that departments now have to really engage with delivering Maths and English. He

confirmed that there have been a number of lessons learned which is why changes are being made.

The Committee were advised that a Maths and English action plan will be developed once the summer results are known. It was agreed that the Committee Chair would work with the Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience over the next term, which will include a deep dive on behalf of the Board.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

QUALITY STRATEGIC GOAL – TO DELIVER AN OUTSTANDING SIXTH FORM

18.51 The Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience drew members attention to the written report and it was agreed that Denise Jelly would talk through the paper. Key information provided included:

- Whilst the Sixth Form is making progress in improving Year 13 ALPS, the summer outturn is expected to be a grade 5 and therefore will not achieve the target of a grade 3. Alongside of this is the target to achieve a grade 4 for gifted and talented students. This is defined as prior achievement of 6.44 and above. In general discussion she provided assurance that progress has been made with individual students that is not reflected within the data. She confirmed that there was close work with Connect and in particular the marginal gains are a real focus.
- The changes to A Levels study programme to a two year linear course requires effective management of students progression to ensure that retention across all courses remains above the target grade. A minimum aim of 80% progression in to year 2 of A Levels, and ideally the remaining 20% to elsewhere in the College. She indicated that the current position is 84%. It was explained that because of the linear course requirements there needs to be a change in the quality calendar. At this stage the College believes that the percentage of withdrawals will be minimal.
- Year 2 geography students have been impacted by staffing issues since September, this could limit the potential achievement and therefore meeting entry requirements to chosen universities. The priority is to ensure that all students who study geography and have applied to university are successful in their progression and therefore minimise the impact on the colleges reputation. The committee were reminded that the ALPS forecast was 7 back in March but assurance was given that since that time extra support has been provided and there is the expectation that geography outcomes will be better than forecast. To look to mitigate the risk to students all Universities, where students have an intended destination, have been contacted to explain the Colleges challenges this year.

The committee, in considering the update provided for Geography, indicated that they and the Board need assurance that the College will not be in a position of having to ask universities for special dispensation next year. It was explained that this is not envisaged as an occurrence happening again given that it was due to specific challenges within the department this year. Denise Jelly agreed that there was a piece of work to be done regarding succession planning, particularly in minority subjects. She also indicated that there is more to do in terms of monitoring what is being covered on the programme throughout the year. She provided assurance that management arrangements are being reviewed to ensure this situation does not occur again.

- Teachers are more confident with using ALPS connect to understand the marginal gains that can be made. However significant progress is required in a number of subject areas to raise the expectations of staff and therefore the students. There is still a mind set of 'students are doing well considering'. Assurance was given that work is ongoing to change the culture.

In relation to the ALPS predictions it was noted by the Committee that the College was not going to hit its target and therefore they questioned whether this would move the RAG rating. It was explained that if the summer results are a 5 then it would be appropriate to keep the RAG rating as amber, if however the summer results are a 6 then the RAG rating would move to a red. It was accepted that the target grade of a 3 was challenging and aspirational. The Principal indicated that the current predictions for the first year A Level students is a 3 and it is the year 13s that are predicted a 5 (which was down at a 7 in December). He indicated that the College seems to be able to do well with its first year students but then this positive position does not flow through to the second year and that this is something to be investigated further.

The Committee expressed a view that it is key to get forecasting accurate. Staff confirmed that there were plans to work differently with A Level students next year which would include a whole package of support with no assumptions made regarding their base knowledge and abilities. The Principal confirmed that if progress moves to a 3 then the College will see a significant jump in attainment.

The Committee were advised that 39% of the current cohort are forecast to obtain high grades overall. It was agreed that closer tracking of students from day one will be helpful with a much more holistic approach.

The Committee Chairman indicated that he and the HE student Governor had had a really productive link visit and one observation made by the HE Student Governor was that results in some areas were 'simply not good enough'. He expressed the view that there are some subjects that need to be challenged more in relation to their performance and that it is important, when the summer results are known, to hold certain departments to account. Assurance was given that this is an area of focus and that there are plans in place to reorganise the departments with a switch from focussing on pass rates to progress.

The Principal made the observation that the goal to deliver an outstanding sixth form is not being retained as a goal for the next academic year and therefore the Board will need to consider how areas, which are not a goal, are monitored. It was suggested that it is important to retain link visits in these areas with governors having an opportunity to meet a broader range of staff rather than simply being linked with a member of SMT. It was felt that regular two hour slots need to be arranged and that these could be scheduled throughout the 18/19 academic year.

The Principal made an observation regarding the impact of link visits generally and his view is that their format, in a number of areas, needs to be reviewed. He considers the Sixth Form link visits as an example of good practice, however does not feel that this is replicated in all link areas. He feels that the link governor initiative is an opportunity for governors to get under the surface without senior leaders being present and that they would be really helpful if they were aligned to the strategic priorities which has been the case in the past.

The final observation from the Committee was that it is important for the senior management team to address and challenge staff who are 'cruising and coasting'.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

QUALITY STRATEGIC GOAL – APPRENTICESHIP OUTCOMES TO BE WITHIN THE TOP 5% OF PROVIDERS NATIONALLY

18.52 The comprehensive written report was reviewed and then presented by Kurt Taylor. Key matters noted were

- During the summer of 16/17 the strategic decision was made to devolve the management of the apprenticeship provision from a central team to individual

curriculum areas to allow for greater levels of ownership and responsibility by curriculum teams.

- Central application procedures were introduced to integrate recruitment processes in to the central MIS system/admissions procedures. This has enabled timely application through to enrolment and consistency of tracking apprentices throughout the learning journey. This is a much more focused approach.
- Overall monitoring of department apprenticeship performance is carried out at quality reviews and performance reviews supported by monthly reports to SMT
- Assistant Principal apprentices meets with HODs on a monthly basis to discuss framework and timely achievements. At these meetings improvement strategies are discussed with HODs to ensure that targets are met. Regular reports are sent to HODs highlighting targeted apprentices who are due to complete their programme, actions are identified to support those at risk of not achieving.
- Assessors feedback is monitored by managers to ensure that feedback is helpful and detailed so apprentices know what they need to do next and how to improve the standard of their work. In addition the compliance team carry out quality audits.
- Visits from City and Guilds relating to apprenticeship reforms have taken place during the academic year with HODs to enable them to update their teams on curriculum changes and individual department teams have attended workshops. City and Guilds have also held a development day at the College in November 2017 to update HODs on end point assessments.
- The College has invested in a new online tracking system called One File.
- An apprenticeship conference is to be held on the college development day of July 5th. This will include updating staff on the end point assessment, 20% off the job training, ALS and Pro Achieve to encourage staff to understand and check their own data at programme level.
- Good practice in some departments has been identified and shared and rolled out across the College. In particular this has focused on a delivery culture that ensures the vast majority of learners achieve within planned end dates and the additional 90 days are only to be used in an exceptional number of small circumstances. It was explained that this involves a change in culture regarding the 90 days and what is and isn't acceptable.
- Interventions have been put in place in departments where there are still large numbers of unclaimed frameworks.

In terms of an overall position it was explained that the College will improve on the prior year but will not get to the target set. The target set is 86% which is very much aspirational and the college expects to be around the 80% mark. By comparison the national average is 67%.

The committee questioned how far the College currently is away from target. Against a target of 86% the current best case is 80.4%, this will be an improvement on last year and +20% up on national. Timely target is 79% and currently forecast as the best case is 74.3%, this is 2.3% better than last year and 14% + on national.

The Committee were reminded that this is an area that the college does incredibly well in at and is well above national averages and it should be acknowledged that the target set has been extremely stretching. There is confidence that achievement and retention will be improved on the prior year.

The Committee questioned whether there were any financial implications associated with not hitting target. The Committee were advised that the College will lose some income as a result of early leavers and not hitting target, however assurance was given that the number of early leavers has been reduced.

In terms of the format and content of this report the Committee expressed the view that it should have more closely been linked to the apprenticeship percentage targets and where the College currently is in relation to this. In terms of not hitting the achievement rates the

Principal advised that there were some specific factors sitting behind this. Specifically one partners performance is effecting the rates in health and social care, this should also be combined with the general concerns regarding performance for engineering and construction.

The Principal expressed the view that the scorecard which is currently used leads to a risk of setting floor targets rather than aspirational targets. He indicated that he would not wish to see him and the senior team driven to a risk avert approach regarding target setting. He reiterated that apprenticeship provision is not an underperforming area and that it is instead an area that is not achieving aspirational targets. It was noted that for the 18/19 year targets set have included a level of weighting and tolerance levels and are not a scientific calculation. If this is not something that the Board wants to see then there needs to be a quick review.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

QUALITY STRATEEGIC GOAL – ENCHANCE THE QUALITY OF HE PROVISION

- 18.53 The Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience introduced this item and explained that this goal continues to be amber and is likely to be the case until the results of QAA review and the next NSS scores are known in July 2019. He provided assurance that the HE teams are all working towards improving the NSS scores.

The Committee considered the report provided and a number of matters were noted:

- The latest learner voice questionnaire that took place in March 2018 saw a welcome increase in satisfaction levels when compared to the December 2017 results. Overall department satisfaction rates increased, varying between an 11%+ and a 30%+.
- The NSS public data set will now be published at the same time that providers are able to access their own data, this is at 9.30am on Friday 27th July 2018.
- The HE quality review document has been significantly amended to provide more challenge and scrutiny to departments. Also the HE quality review meeting has been brought in line with the FE meeting. This means that that SLT review of HE performance will be undertaken quarterly with all departments. This document will be further enhanced next academic year to include analysis at individual module performance.
- The new HE Director of Quality, Dr Andrea Clark has now started full time with the College. Andrea's experience and knowledge has had an immediate positive impact.

The Committee discussed the QAA quality review visit which took place between 5th and 7th June, it was described as rigorous and demanding. They have a different approach to Ofsted with Ofsted taking a snapshot. By comparison QAA is a judgement on the Colleges plans and the HE review demonstrates what governors are doing in terms of HE.

The Committee questioned what the expected outcome is. The Principal indicated that at this point in time it is simply not known. He explained that from the final meeting there were a number of emerging themes the reviewers were still pursuing that could have implications in the final report (and potentially judgements) these were:

- a) The use of the name 'University Campus Barnsley'
- b) The outcomes of the current HE review – they questioned why the review was commissioned and the likely outputs.

The draft report is due to be sent to the College on or by 22nd June 2018.

The Committee questioned what the implications are for a 'worst case outcome'. The Principal indicated that he has reviewed the HE handbook and the potential impact is quite ambiguous. QAA will do a report to the Office for Students, however the handbook does not set out whether there will be any consequences thereafter. He indicated that there could be a criticism of mis-selling in terms of the College using the brand 'University Campus', although in his view all students are clearly aware that they are enrolled with Barnsley College. He indicated that for staff the 'University Campus' is the building and not an organisational

entity. The Committee questioned whether there are steps that can be taken to rectify the position if 'university campus' becomes an issue. The Principal advised that it would be relatively easy to rebrand to deal with this. The Principal indicated that he does not believe that the brand is impacting upon the quality of academic standards and therefore if this becomes an issue it can be addressed.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

CURRICULUM REPORTS

- 18.54 In the absence of the Vice Principal Curriculum the Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience provided an update on two areas a) Vocational & b) 14-16.

He indicated that the report provides a general update on the curriculum this year and that on pages 31+ there is information provided by departments on curriculum developments. Members' attention was specifically drawn to page 34 and the update given on Technical Levels. He explained that the College has become successful in its bid to become one of the 52 pilot deliverers for the T Levels in construction, digital and Education and Childcare. The College will begin delivery in 2020 and will spend the 18/19 and 19/20 academic years planning and developing capacity and expertise. These courses are intended to be the vocational alternatives to A Levels. Consultation on proposed content is currently underway. Key known differences to existing vocational provision includes the increased volume of delivery hours (probably 50) and a substantial work placement (as distinct from work experience). The College is also currently one of the pilot work placement deliverers. In terms of this as a development, it was explained that it is constantly changing in terms of the requirements, however all agreed that being part of the pilot will position the College well for the future. The Committee all agreed that they were really pleased that the College has been successful in its bid and that this was something to be proud of both for the College and Barnsley.

In terms of the 14-16 report there were a number of key matters noted:

- The College continues to maintain excellent 14-16 partnerships with the secondary schools in Barnsley and the wider community.
- outcomes for learners are showing an improving trend

The Committee were advised that there is a significant strategic decision to be made in terms of direct entry provision. It was explained that plans are currently being developed which will then lead to a formal report to the Board for discussion and approval. The intention is that 14-16 direct entry provision will be introduced in September 2019 in response to the high levels of permanent and fixed term exclusions in the borough, where students at risk will be transferred to the College and removed from the school role. Schools will contribute to the funding of these places. It was explained that the College, in looking at this change, is responding to the need of the borough and students will come to college through referral from the schools.

The introduction of the junior apprenticeship programme will lead to an increased number of 14-16 learners enrolled at the College as a direct result of the offer of Progress 8 qualifications. All learners who successfully complete the junior apprenticeship programme will be offered a place at College as a 16-18 year old which will increase the number of full time 16-18 learners in the College. The learners are expected to predominantly be EHC and Foundation Learners.

In terms of key risks, the introduction of junior apprenticeships and direct entry provision will lead to an increased number of 14-16 year old learners accessing the College which will increase the potential safeguarding risk. This risk will be mitigated by rigorous risk assessments and appropriate staffing and support. The introduction of the Direct Entry programme will lead to an Ofsted monitoring visit within 12 months.

The Committee Chair took the opportunity to confirm that Head Teachers within the borough are really happy with the new provision to be offered and the Colleges decision on direct entry. Jacquie Brown is really well respected by the Heads and there is certainly increased confidence in her and the offer, particularly as these can be really challenging students. It was acknowledged that there are potential reputational risks to be managed and in addition there could be property and capital implications.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS TO DATE

- 18.55 The Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience introduced this report and explained that there are no real surprises. The number of complaints has risen and entirely related to construction and Engineering. He confirmed that the two departments have underperformed and caused concern against a number of progress measures throughout the current and previous academic year. To address this the College management have put in place a number of actions that will ultimately see both departments being managed by one head of department, recently appointed to the College, and the two previous managers recently pursuing their careers outside the college. The senior leadership team are confident that these measures will lead to improved performance in the two departments and increase levels of satisfaction.

It was explained that throughout last year and this year there have been a series of flags raised in relation construction and engineering and that this has led to a full review, particularly because of the potential impact for the College because of its apprenticeship provision and T Levels.

In terms of the reports to the Committee this meeting, the Governors questioned whether there are any wider HR issues for the Board to be aware of in terms of staff turnover. The Principal indicated that the turnover in relation to HODs is the same as in previous years. In terms of senior managers there was high turnover last summer and the Board undertook a review on this. In 17/18 there has been just one senior manager change. The Committee expressed the view that successful recruitment is inexplicably linked to quality and they were concerned that 'churn' would have an impact on quality and be a diversion to resources.

The Principal expressed the view that cultural change needs to start at the top and inevitably leads to staff change on a tiered basis with some migration mirrored within the layers. It was acknowledged that change is not necessarily a negative and it has been noted that there have been no strikes or union unrest in the last 3 years.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

Meeting closed at 5.55pm.

Signed _____ Chair Dated _____