

CORPORATION BOARD of RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE
Minutes of Curriculum Standards and Quality Committee Meeting
14 March 2016 at 5.30pm

Members Present: Barbara Gilgallon (Chair), Sally Newton, Rob Pope, Cathy Bird (arrived 5.45pm)

In attendance: Clare Thornes, John O’Shea, Theresa Bray, Jeff Lindsay

Apologies: Robin Ghurbhurun

A	Procedural
2	<p>Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items</p> <p>None.</p>
3	<p>Minutes of the CQS Committee Meeting held on 10 February 2016</p> <p>The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p>None.</p>

B	STRATEGIC/RISK ISSUES
1	<p>College KPIs <i>(The College KPIs were circulated in advance, and the Overall College Attendance Report and Withdrawals Report were tabled)</i></p> <p>JOS drew Member’s attention to rows A and B.</p> <p>Retention is now 95% (96.7% in the KPIs) Attendance is now 85.69% (86.6% in the KPIs)</p> <p><i>Q: Does attendance always go down through the course of the academic year?</i> Yes. It tends to drop after Christmas, then stabilises. The figures are better than in 2014/15.</p> <p>The Attendance figures can be broken down as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS – 86.6% (7% higher than last year. The AS Target is 90%. This is probably only achievable in a small sixth form; College is doing well at 86.6%) • A2 – 84.02% (only 1.7% higher than last year – this reflects the success of the new attendance strategy for the current AS students) • Level 3 Vocational – 87.4% (this is very good) • Maths/English – 72.9% (these students are being required to retake E/M because of the funding link; this represents good attendance).

Withdrawals: In total, for 2016/17, 388 students have been withdrawn (218 pre-census and 170 post-census). For 2014/15 the figure was 381 withdrawals (145 pre-census and 236 post-census). Thus this year, a higher proportion of withdrawn students were withdrawn pre-census.

Students in Borough: The number of students from the Borough has reduced from 582 last year to 370 this year. This reflects the construction of new sixth forms at local schools. The College achieved 400 new students in September 2015 from walk-in applicants. The majority are on vocational courses.

The AoC Manifesto for the London Mayor suggests that sixth forms should have a minimum of 250 enrolments. Out of the 8 new local school sixth forms, this would leave only 3 viable ones. JOS noted that RuTC is one of the only FE colleges in Greater London offering A-levels, and it does so in considerable numbers: RuTC has more than 600 A-Level students.

All local schools will have to publish their A2 results this year. Members suggested that college needs to demonstrate 'value added' for RuTC students coming in with lower grades, compared to the students of a similar standard at local sixth forms.

Q: Where do withdrawn students go after leaving RuTC?

Some will enter employment, others will switch to a different college after Christmas.

The Safeguarding Governor noted that some of the withdrawn students have mental health problems.

Action: As withdrawn students must attend an exit interview, JOS to provide a summary of the reasons for their withdrawal.

C	TEACHING AND LEARNING
1	<p>Student Performance <i>(The Mock Exam results were tabled)</i></p> <p>Since the mock exam results, some teachers have lowered their SR forecasts. For example, Biology AS has been reduced from 84% to 66%. The overall forecast for AS is 80%, compared to a 78% forecast for last year. Performance reviews will be conducted next week, and the forecasts will be further interrogated. The improvement in attendance should make a difference to the results, particular in conjunction with more strictly imposed entry requirements.</p> <p>A Member observed that, alongside Attendance and strict entry requirements, the third important strand of quality improvement is pedagogy and T&L. The Students' Liaison Committee recently discussed the mock exams; student observations included insufficient notice of the exams, poor post-exam analysis, and in some cases, no marking schemes. In respect of marking schemes, JL has since spoken to the teachers concerned, and told them to cannibalise old marking schemes to produce something useful for the new-style exams.</p>

	<p>Some members of staff are resistant to the introduction of mock exams, and wanted to trade the time required for marking for some of their student study lessons. Members expressed concern at this, as staff contracts should cover preparation work.</p> <p>Members felt that the mock exams should have been planned into the calendar from the start of the academic year. JOS responded that four assessment points had been set for the 2016/17 year, but the forecasting exercise demonstrated that the assessments had not been uniformly adopted by all departments. Next year, Assessment Point 2 (AP2) will be the mock exams.</p>
3	<p>Quality Improvement Plan <i>(The 'College QIP 2015-16 Progress Report' was circulated in advance)</i> <i>TB made a short presentation (slides attached).</i></p> <p>TB presented the progress report, and explained that the QIP has been updated as a result of the November Ofsted Inspection Report. There are three strands underlying the drive to improve quality; improvement in T&L, E/M Strategy and the Attendance strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 152/170 teacher observations have taken place, and 97% of staff have been appraised. Observations of personal tutors have also been introduced. • Two external quality reviews have taken place, firstly of sociology and psychology (same teachers, new manager), and the second of science. In addition, there has been 32 audits of BTec courses. • CPD was scheduled earlier in the academic year, so that subsequent improvements in T&L can benefit current students. Moreover, the volume of CPD has tripled by participation, and the CPD has been targeted compared to the rather generic nature of CPD in previous years. The T&L Team and Teacher Advocates are working well together. • Two new technologies have been introduced: Padlet (an electronic notepad for use on phones) and Cahoot (quizzes and multiple choice questions). Of course, students need to use pen and paper in exams, but this big push on e-learning is about giving teachers confidence. • In group tutorials, tutors have been focusing around employability skills and progression to HE and Apprenticeships. There are still some variances in the standard of delivery of tutorials and a lot of work is underway to standardise practice ie observations introduced, CPD and sharing of good practice from the 'Outstanding' tutors to those needing to improve. • The focus has been on observing group tutorials, as this maximises opportunities for improvement (individual tutorials are not currently observed; as they often cover individual / sensitive issues, it is hard to draw general improvements from them). Members did not all agree with this approach. TB reassured them that there will be a

	<p>programme of observation of individual tutorials, but the current focus is on group tutorials.</p> <p><i>Q: 152 teaching observations have taken place, out of 170 teaching staff. Is it sufficient to do one teaching observation in a year?</i></p> <p>Teaching observation is not the only source of information available on teachers; the assessors are also conducting Learning Walks, development observations, appraisals and looking at the staff member's Moodle interaction.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>GCSE English and Maths <i>(The 'Embedding English and Mathematics Strategy – Implementation' was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>TB elaborated on the objectives:</p> <p><i>Objective 1 – All students enrolled onto an appropriate programme for Maths and English according to a clear progression policy.</i></p> <p>The aim here is to improve initial diagnostics, and two tools have been employed; (i) Skills builder and (ii) City and Guilds. These provide diagnoses PLUS a study plan.</p> <p><i>Objective 2 – Improve classroom delivery of Maths and English</i></p> <p>This has been a theme in Learning Walks. Attendance for E/M is being reported separately. Reports are being made to teachers.</p> <p><i>Objective 3 – Functional skills maths and English timetabling and delivery model to be improved</i></p> <p>One initiative has been to attach an E/M teacher to a particular area team, which appears to work well. However, this of course has a resourcing implication.</p> <p><i>Objective 4 – GCSE E/M timetabling and delivery model to be improved</i></p> <p>This objective requires more work.</p> <p><i>Objective 5 – Embed E/M skills across the curriculum</i></p> <p>This is being addressed by CPD. JL and Clare Dignum will be visiting other colleges to conduct external reviews. Their experience will be shared with teacher advocates and the Curriculum Manager, E/M - Zoe Baker.</p> <p><i>Objective 6 – 100% of staff to have or to be working towards a Level 2 qualification in E/M</i></p> <p>This is now a requirement for new staff, and is being costed for existing staff.</p> <p><i>Q: How do you motivate E/M teachers? It must be difficult to teach the retake students.</i></p> <p>College is trying to engage vocational level staff. It works best where the E/M teacher is also attached to a curriculum area. Some teachers are also able to teach A Level Maths, which adds variety and reward.</p> <p><i>Q: Is there any strategy to involve the local community?</i></p>

	<p>Past initiatives have not generated much interest.</p> <p><i>Q: Could the college offer courses for parents and children together.</i></p> <p>There are plans to offer sports camps in the school holidays. Not sure yet whether these will extend to classroom learning.</p>
4	Collaborative Provision
5	<p>Curriculum Section of the Financial Recovery Plan <i>(The 'Extract from the Financial Recovery Plan' was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>There has been concern amongst governors that (i) the change in the ratio of academic to vocational courses offered is driven by financial considerations, and that (ii) staff may not be adequately trained to switch their teaching practice to vocational students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JOS responded that academic staff should be able to teach vocational courses in their subject fields. Certainly for science courses, it is straightforward to adapt from one to the other. For some subjects such as Geology and MFL, there is no vocational equivalent. • Recruitment is difficult in engineering and maths. • The local authority is encouraging local sixth forms to start teaching vocational courses. However, save for business / IT / social care, schools do not have the facilities, so this does not represent a significant threat. Additionally, they will not have sufficient student numbers to run the courses efficiently. • JOS said that RuTC will push on with plans to attract more adult students, notwithstanding any potential collaboration with RACC (which has much greater adult provision) • There is a big drive on apprenticeships.
6	<p>Science and Maths</p> <p>The Committee had requested a verbal update on interventions in these two under-performing areas. JOS responded that a detailed Action Plan is in place. Some of the initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JL and Clare Dignum are each spending 2 days per week with the departments. • Janna Perryman is meeting weekly with the Curriculum Manager, Science & Maths L3. • A number of staff have been placed on informal capability • Students with an E or U grade in the mock exam have been given an individual study plan • Performance reviews are scheduled for next week • Two members of staff have been suspended from the Maths department <p><i>Q: Hasn't the College made interventions like this previously? A: It has made numerous interventions and changed the management frequently. These are new interventions under a different SLT.</i></p>
6	Learning Walks

	<p><i>(The Schedule of Learning Walks was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>The Chair noted that Governor participation in the Learning walks is inevitably limited, because of the timing – many governors work. Nevertheless, the Walks have proved really useful and informative to those governors who have been able to attend. It would be helpful if Curriculum Managers could share with the Governor what they are looking for, at the beginning of the Walk.</p> <p>Members discussed what should be done with the reports produced by Governors. TB offered to share the proforma report that staff produce. She also noted that more Learning Walks will be available in the autumn term, when the programme restarts again.</p> <p>To be further discussed at 11th May CQS Meeting.</p>
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D	Other
1	<p>Any other business</p> <p>For the May CQS Agenda:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to challenge students at all levels ○ The move to linear A Level qualification, and how college is adapting to the separate AS qualification (Action: report requested) ○ In year report for 'Value added' (Action: report requested) ○ Learning walks
2	<p>Future CQS Committee Meetings:</p> <p>Wednesday 11 May 2016</p> <p>The meeting closed at 7.20pm.</p>

SIGNED: **Date:**

Barbara Gilgallon, Chair of Curriculum Quality and Standards Committee

Actions

Ref	Agenda Item	Task	Responsible
A	B1	For 11 May - JOS to provide an summary of the reasons for the	JOS

		withdrawal of withdrawn students	
B	D1	For 11 May - Report on the move to linear A Level qualification, and how college is adapting to the separate AS qualification	JOS / TB
C	D1	For 11 May - In year Value-Added Report	JOS / JL