

Extraordinary Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee
Thursday 10 February 2022 18:00-20:00 Teams

Draft minutes

Committee	Mike Sutcliffe (Chair); Sue Kingman (VC, Board); Ian Valvona; Vincent Neate; Cait Orton; Jason Jones (Acting CEO & Principal)
In Attendance	Susanne Davies (Interim Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality); Chidi Okolo (Director Quality and Compliance); Sheila Fraser-Whyte (Executive Director Business Development & Innovation); Chris Dearnley (ESFA); Sarah Connerty (interim governance advisor) Heads of School (Caroline Ludbrook – Head of Sixth form centre; Sijul Miah - Business and Service Industries; Toni Whitehouse - Healthcare, Early Years and Supported Learning; Lee Roberts – Computing and Science; Anna O'Flaherty – Construction and Engineering; Marc Dodi – Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Media)
Apologies	Caroline Ludbrook; Vincent Neate

Agenda item	Item Description	Action
1	Welcome, introductions and apologies The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting and thanked the HoS for attending and for all the groundwork. Colleagues introduced themselves. Apologies were received from Vincent Neate and Caroline Ludbrook. The student governors have not been invited to this meeting because of the content. The Chair apologised for the lateness of papers. The pack contains extracts from the minutes of the last meeting in November as a reminder to committee members of why an extraordinary CQS is taking place.	
2	Declarations of interest There were no declarations received.	
3	Curriculum and Quality Recovery Termly SARs produced by the Heads of School and College Recovery and Quality Improvement Plan SD noted that Lois Vassell produced the paper and JJ and SD have updated it. The paper explains the process for the predicted achievement reports through the year. This is the late January update. The document provides a brief reference to the governor's responsibilities followed by the data. SD asked colleagues to look at an additional spreadsheet that has been circulated to the Committee. The Chair noted that there is significant overlap between the two papers. SD reported that achievement last year was 73% measured against 84% from the previous year. SD talked through the data, which is a best guess of how the students are performing against their target grade, and assignment work/mocks/assessments completed to date. It is a complex process. This explains why there are large gaps between the best- and worst-case	

rates. MIS have been asked to provide a mid-grade that brings a mid-point achievement of 81%. The Chair asked if the midpoint is the most probable scenario. SD noted that it is the midpoint between the worst and best case scenario. The Chair noted that it does not present the most probable outcome. SD confirmed that it is a prediction based as accurately as it can be. The midpoint is 3% off last year's national average.

HoS are working on these mid points to move students up towards the best case. All efforts will go into cohorts that are performing relatively strongly. The hope is to bring achievement up to last year's target of 84%.

The College is already predicting a 7% national increase, which is significant. That is still below the national average benchmark from last year. The Chair congratulated the HoS for a significant increase.

SK noted that the number that jumps out is the English worst and best case that has an enormous range. SD noted that there are several things going on which the College is focusing on. English is never a good area, but it is significantly below the national average. There were timetabling problems at the start of the year. The College has worked hard to address this but there are a minority of students still affected which combined with student's dissatisfaction with having to retake the subject makes this difficult. The amount of staff off with Covid is putting terrific pressure on the College. The students are reluctant to go to the English and maths classes. Extra support is being provided by Rose Turner; the 16-19 tuition fund is being used to provide English students falling behind with additional support; students have access to the yipiyap online platform for support (<https://yipiyap.co.uk/>).

The second biggest risk is attendance. It is monitored all the time and the HoS relentlessly work on this. It is currently 79.1%. There is usually a drop off in January but it should be picking up now. There is a chance with the work with English and maths students that attendance will increase and HoS are hopeful it will improve.

SD noted that the data speaks for itself and the HoS will provide context to their data and the interventions in place.

The Chair noted that in December there is a 90% retention and pass of 182. January has a 9% drop in retention but more people passing in Engineering. SD reported that the HoS was speaking to MIS about this. AoF reported that there was a change in the figures. At the moment there are starts of 327 across Engineering and Construction and the College has lost seven students. [confidential item]

The Chair noted that the HoS have been asked to present against the QRP and to show how well the interventions are working. CQS colleagues need to leave the meeting with a sense of what the data is saying and to get assurance on an identified weakness in the system. At the last meeting Lois Vassell reported *that lots is being implemented around quality recovery and there will be differences seen by Christmas. There will be a termly SAR and data verified by the end of term and Lois will be looking at the impact of externals coming in and working with staff. Lois understood the Board's anxiety and wanting to be a bit more hands on but felt governors needed to have a bit of confidence in where the College is. The QIP is reviewed weekly and updated monthly and Lois will review on a daily basis. Governors will be able to see that, and that data will be verified and will be meaningful.*

Lois confirmed she had 100% confidence for the extraordinary CQS meeting in January 2022 and would bring the data and QRP to this meeting.

IV noted that there is SLT confidence in this data but agreed with the Chair that given what happened last year Board confidence is critical.

SK asked when the next point is for refreshed data. SD explained that it is continuous process going forward and it would be continually updated and can come to CQS on the 9 March and

SD

the Board on the 30 March. There are plans and strategies in place to improve things. SK hoped the gap between best and worst case gets smaller.

HoS presented on their schools work on interventions, worst and best case predicted achievement data and attendance. Key points raised included:

Computing

- Worst case 80% and best case 94%
- Students have just had exams across Level 2 and 3 there was 99% attendance
- The success rate will go up
- Learning walks have shown good progress

Science

- Worst case 85% and best case 94%
- Students are being kept as high risk to keep pressure on for succeeding
- Overall attendance is not good at 94% and interventions include extra tuition sessions, sending work home, speaking to parents
- Tutorials are being looked at and it has been a work in progress to get tutors to update targets
- There are very few cases of poor teaching
- All teachers are focusing on one unit at a time which helps the students to focus
- MarkBook is being updated
- Students are engaging and the focus has been on getting the work out of the students

Business and Service Industries

Business

Worst case 68% and best case 89%

Hospitality

Worst case 80% and best case 94%

Sport and travel

Worst case 77% and best case 93%.

- The worst-case achievements are better than the previous year's achievement and the midpoint is 84%, which is 1% below the national average
- Retention is higher and there are more rigorous processes in place
- At the beginning the year there were more rigorous course performance reviews, standardising processes such as MarkBook, turnitin for submission of assignments, Teams as the standard platform, ProMonitor to set SMART targets, change of the sequencing of units so all exam units are delivered first and looking at the mock results in term one to validate achievement
- The majority of learners will get a pass or above
- There were 12 exams in January with 99% attendance with those not attending testing positive for Covid
- In observations 3 out of 4 areas are good and one requires support and that is being developed. Lesson observations focused on the quality of teaching and learning
- Attendance data does vary with Business at 71% and 90 and 91% for the others
- Triangulating data shows students are predicted to achieve midpoint or higher
- There has been a positive impact from the additional members of staff that have come in and this has given a boost to the HoS own effectiveness and productivity
- Alison de Lord arranged mentoring support that was very useful and it would be beneficial if this could continue. The Chair asked if all the HoS received this support and this was confirmed. The Chair noted that it is good to see movement in the right direction.

Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Media

- Worst case 94% and best case 97%
- The termly SAR is now self-assessed in each area
- The achievement rate last year was 94% because of high retention and 100% pass rate and it is hoped to maintain that this year. This is above national average
- There has been a greater focus on key assessment point data with four through the year working with staff to provide accurate data. The number of formative units are passed or referred and changed to an indicative final grade which helps work out how far a student is from their minimum expected grade
- Working with curriculum leads in preparation for students who are one or below meeting their final target grade
- Highlighting at risk learners on ProMonitor who are in need of intervention. Currently there are 17 high risk learners who have an intervention plan, SMART targets and parental intervention
- This time last year the school did not have any curriculum leads and now there are four in role who are developing in leadership and management to allow them to be data centric so they can be more autonomous in dealing with students at risk
- Regulating how support notices are used has been useful with stage 1 issued by the tutor with SMART targets, stage 2 issued by the curriculum lead and involving the parent and student and stage 3 with MD. There have been three stage 3s so far
- The school continues to maintain an ethos that every learner counts.

The Chair noted the overall pass from 218 to 366. MD explained that is from the training around the at risk learners which is working with staff. It is about recognising when a student is in serious danger of not achieving. This is not just because they haven't completed their homework but are in need of help and intervention.

IV noted that it is interesting to hear the HoS talk because there are quite different approaches to validating learners and asked if there is scope for peer support challenge and review between HoS. There appear to be different professional approaches for the same aim which is to be welcomed but sharing could be really important. MD echoed that and explained that there was an internal CPD session on Friday to share good practice on systems and processes and he had learnt a lot from that session and there is value in sharing good practice and that will continue in HoS meeting and CPD sessions. SD noted that is done informally in HoS meetings. Some areas of the College are stronger than others and have varying gaps to bridge. The College is under immense strain in terms of covering classes. In English the HoS and Assistant HoS and four staff have been off since Christmas.

The Chair noted that there has been a lot of stress on staff and they have really risen to the challenge. Governors are very conscious of that. There is challenge but the Board are supportive.

The Chair suggested compiling best practice.

COk reported that the Quality team are pulling together all the best practice and selling it across HoS. The Chair noted that it is great to see this and different things are working in different places.

SM reported that in relation to the disciplinary processes a lot of work was done last term and if widely used across the College it would have an impact.

The HoS are working collaboratively. These are inherited challenges, but it is moving forward and there is clarity. SD reported that she had been working as interim VP at Stanmore College and all the colleges are struggling to come to terms with staff being off and staff being under the weather.

The Chair noted that on the ground the HoS and SD are confident improvements are taking place. There is a focus on retaining at risk students and getting them through the door.

The Committee noted the effect of Covid on staff and student absences and mental health.

[confidential item]

Construction and Engineering

Construction

Worst case 70% and best case 77%

Engineering

Worst case 72% and best case 80%

- Overall, this is a mid-point range of 74% against a national average of 84%.
- On the ground there have been several meetings with the school and a whole school meeting yesterday
- Long-term sickness and long term Covid have been an issue. The school is actively recruiting and have managed to get a person in Engineering and a carpenter
- The school is proactive in contacting absent students and covering for each other
- Work experience and themed learning visits have identified good practice in teaching
- Staff are more optimistic to do better, there is a lot of work that can be done and with a full capacity of staff they can work harder with the attendance to get people on track

The Chair noted that a lot of work has been done on the data to give a more realistic view of where students are. AoF noted that the students were looked at individually and staff unpicked where there were issues and where students needed support. There are great services at the College to support students to get them back on track. It is a lengthy but a worthwhile process. [confidential item]

The staff are on board with this and feel like they can move forward as a team.

Healthcare, Early Years and Supported Learning

Worst case 73% and best case 84%

- Staff are working really hard to address some of the issues
- The biggest issue continues to be staffing and there have been seven rounds of recruitment with an Assistant HoS appointed
- There are three solid curriculum leads who are standardising practices in place
- There is difficulty for the Level 2 group but two new teachers are working steadily together and targeting attendance with parents on board
- There is a realigned structure around disciplinaries and escalation
- Staff are praising where praise is due and letting student know how attendance impacts on achievement
- 100% of Early Years first and second years are out in industry to give a more realistic understanding of the course
- There is a strong portfolio of placements in place which are linking into the classroom
- 121 meetings take place with learners who are not achieving
- The Chair noted that the data has not moved from December to January which suggests no change and no evidence of impact. TW explained that the data was calculated at the end of December and early January due to capacity issues and impact will be seen in the next round.

The Chair passed on his thanks to the HoS for all the work.

Sixth form and English and Maths

SD reported on behalf of CL.

- SD noted that there is not much difference between the figures and there is an incorrect figure in the retained number which will be checked and updated
- The overall school achievement last year was 77%, against a national average of 88% and there is a best case mid-point of 87% for this year
- The January data retention figure for the Sixth form is much lower than E&M and this data is incorrect as E&M is always worst and sixth form is best. The E&M team have had a lot of staff absences and it has been very difficult to recruit. The school is

hopeful to get 50% of the staffing need replaced soon. There is an anomaly with A levels at 86% retention but that might be because of the TAGs

[confidential item]

SD added that the other issue is that good T&L is being hampered by the teaching contracts and CPD is the way out of this. Teachers need a six-week support plan and then competency if there is no improvement. To do this staff need the hours to be developed and the combination of the current contracts and staff being off sick is not allowing this to take place. A focused intervention is needed in the Sixth form to deal with a systemic issue. The same is the case in Business. There is a real urgent need that needs to be dealt with sooner rather than later. SD noted that there are many issues that need dealing with and the team is focusing on the five or six that will make the biggest difference.

SD noted that there are long-standing culture changes coming off the back of two years of Covid. The latter is every college not just RuTC.

SD reported that there has been a change in management with Lois Vassell departing and SD re joining the College. This has been an efficient swap. Work is constantly shifting and the College is recruiting a new T&L coordinator. In the meantime two of the T&L advocates have resigned and one has broken a collar bone. The team is doing its best to comply with everything on time but it needs to be quite creative.

JJ noted that the College is working with Pauline Hagen from the FEC team and she has looked at the QRP/QIP and has given detailed feedback to tighten it up further. There is a meeting with Pauline tomorrow that the Chair of CQS will join.

There is a lot of amber largely because the actions have taken place but the impact will not be seen until the end of the academic year. There is one particular red area around attendance, it is the Achilles heel every year and remains a stubborn position which cannot just be attributed to Covid.

The Chair noted that attendance really needs to be looked at in terms of what other interventions are required. Compliance has improved but it is not where it needs to be and there needs to be an awareness that this needs to be ramped up. JJ reported that there is a phase shift for next year and the team are looking at this. COk noted that on the actions against attendance one thing missing is to do with register and register audits and asked whether including register compliance would move the RAG rating to amber.

COk noted that the College has now got 100% register completion. It has been a slow journey. The data comes every Monday and the Friday before data admin send out a list of all registers that need to be completed. Week on week this has improved and the team now know that what they are looking at is real. CO noted that this is wonderful to hear and suggested this is reflected on the recovery plan.

COk reported that in terms of quality this has been divided between compliance assurance improvement and risk and there are four principles. Measuring of all the initiatives is required and there are various ways of doing that and this is being audited behind the scenes. It is about assurance. There are quality performance reviews, every other week there are meetings with the HoS to measure the impact together and this is looking at students, ProMonitor and MarkBook. The key question is how do we know that what we are looking at is real. There are a set of students who are tracked all through the year and a lot of these are at risk students.

The other area is risk and asking if we don't do this what is the risk to the student experience. This is worked through on the risk register.

This is a more holistic approach to quality assurance and quality management. Before it felt quite academic rather than on the ground and this is more about getting things done.

SD noted that issues are being dealt with, but it takes a lot of time to change behaviour and attitude and to willingly engage with staff development and it is a battle. SD noted that she was confident it is on the right road but it does feel like a time pressure.

The Chair explained that the key thing for the Board is that this work is balanced so the learners receive good quality teaching and learning and student experience and that the

	<p>quality of the outcomes improves. SD confirmed that is the focus and what the College is trying to do.</p> <p>[Officers and HoS depart 20.11]</p> <p>IV noted that strong challenge on the data is appropriate. The Committee has listened to all the points being made about Covid, absence and fatigue of staff. Curriculum and quality is so important and it is disappointing to hear that HoS are having a bit of a battle bringing in interventions because it is absolutely on behalf of our students and it is all staff pulling together. If helpful this message should go out to staff from the Board that expectations are very high and the Board are not deaf to the environment but this is the expectation. IV noted that at this time of the academic year he would expect data to be correct.</p>	
4	<p>Student Support and Disciplinary Policy</p> <p>JJ reported that the policy would ordinarily be an SLT approved policy but a proposed option for immediate exclusion in section 3.4.5. in extreme circumstances brings in Board involvement. A student would always have the right to appeal but because the exclusion would be authorised by the Principal an appeal would need to go up to the Board.</p> <p>At IV's request, JJ had asked Rachel Scarborough to look at the sector and RS had reported back on eight other colleges and four have this option.</p> <p>The Chair asked what the advantage is of an immediate exclusion as opposed to a suspension and SFW confirmed it is to avoid the student coming back into the College if there is a threat of violence to staff or students.</p> <p>CO suggested that an appendix is included which details who is responsible for what around an exclusion and JJ and CO agreed to take this forward offline.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Committee approved the Student Support and Disciplinary Policy</p>	JJ/CO
5	<p>Any other business</p> <p>The Chair thanked all colleagues for their time and contributions noting that it is great to see the differences beginning to come through.</p>	
6	<p>Meeting dates for 2021-22:</p> <p>9 March 2022 [after note: it was agreed to move this meeting to the 29 March 2022]; 21 June 2022</p> <p>All 18.00 start</p>	

Meeting closed: 20:18