

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE
held on 21 JULY 2017 at 9.30 am

¹PRESENT Mr N Hopkins (E); Mr T Jackson (P); Mr G Rake (S); Mr C Wilson (E).

In attendance: Mr P Daniel, Head of Student Support (minutes 77 to 79)
Miss C Duffy (Student Governor)
Mrs C James, Dean of Higher Education (minutes 50 to 55)
Mr M Simmons, Deputy Principal
Mrs S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES & MEMBERSHIP

44. Apologies were received from Dr Palmer and Miss Robbins.
45. The Committee welcomed Mr Wilson, who had been appointed as a member of the Committee for this meeting only, and Mr Rake to his first meeting of the Committee as Staff Governor.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

46. There were no interests to declare.

MINUTES

47. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

WAMedu (ref. minute 15/157)

48. The Deputy Principal explained that the company behind WAMedu had been taken over but that the new company had committed to continuing to provide a free service for the next year. Management believed WAMedu continued to offer a safe and effective social media platform for communications with students, while recognising that some students had issues with the data storage required on their mobile devices.

HE Teaching Excellence Framework (ref. minute 29/17)

49. The College had been awarded a Silver under the HE provision Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

50. The Committee had received the report of the Head of Faculty – Higher Education on in-year HE performance, including current progress of HE learners and plans for in-year monitor and improvement of the learner experience.
51. The Committee noted that current levels of retention were lower than the previous year but still exceeded 90% and that the retention was linked to a range of social and personal factors, including health and mental health issues. Responding to the Committee Chair's question as to whether comparative data was available at course level with other

¹ (C) = Co-opted; (E) = External; (P) = Principal; (S) = Staff; (St) = Student

- colleges, the Dean of HE explained that published data was not available but that she would explore informally. Members discussed some of the reasons behind withdrawals and how students were helped before enrolment to assess whether the course was suitable.
52. The initial exam board results demonstrated high levels of achievement, with full analysis to be presented to the next meeting of the Committee. Responding to a Member's question about degree results, second attempts and unit repeats, the Dean of HE confirmed the College used the University of Portsmouth's system and that this was tested at the Board of Students and scrutinised for each individual student.
 53. The Committee noted the headlines regarding student engagement, including the learner survey and Student Council, and the range of external and internal quality review activities. The Committee Chair had attended both the Board of Studies and the ASQER review meetings as an observer and another Committee Member had attended the HE Poster Day.
 54. The Dean of HE reported that the College had undergone a complex audit in relation to DSA (Disabled Student's Allowances). The Deputy Principal explained the challenges for the College in resourcing support for residential disabled students and the questions around the discretion to not offer accommodation where reasonable adjustments could not be made.
 55. The Committee agreed that the developments and risks in this area be highlighted to the Board and asked the Principal and Deputy Principal to consider whether the situation was sufficiently reflected in the College's Risk Management Plan.

FURTHER EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

FE and Apprenticeships In-Year Performance

56. The Committee had received the report of the Director of Quality & Performance on FE and apprenticeship learners, including an update on delivery of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2016/17.
57. The Committee noted the initial predictions of management for there to be a small improvement in achievement rates for main programmes, and potentially for the College's FE provision as a whole. The QIP indicated some early interventions planned for the 2017/18 academic year which would be augmented by additional actions arising from the self-assessment process during August and September.
58. Members discussed the report, raising a number of questions in relation to the analysis presented and the predictions for English and Maths. The Director of Quality & Performance reported improvements to the quality of teaching of English and Maths, where the College had worked with an external coach. It was hoped that there would be an improvement in Maths performance but, common with the school sector, it was difficult to predict English under the new GCSE grades.
59. Members sought more information about the improvements of quality of provision in the curriculum areas which had been the areas of greatest concern at the start of the year. The Deputy Principal reported that recruiting and retaining teaching staff in Construction remained a challenge. The Staff Governor queried some of the performance data for areas of the curriculum at Andover College and the Director of Quality & Performance explained the data included small cohorts of students and students on more than one course and that there were no significant concerns to report.

60. The Committee also noted the Equality & Diversity Impact Measure (EDIM) data for FE courses (excluding English and Maths) and retention was general good. The Deputy Principal pointed out that the head count figure for free meals seemed low and noted the challenge in getting students and their families to disclose their eligibility for free meals.
61. Asked whether the reported reduction in student attendance, which did not appear to be reflected in learner performance or satisfaction rates, could be related to student transport, the Director of Quality & Performance explained that there was no difference in total retention between students with or without college transport and that further analysis would be undertaken.
62. In relation to apprenticeship performance data, the Committee noted that the assessment that apprenticeship performance remained generally good and the small number of areas where there were specific reasons for lower performance.

Curriculum Delivery & Quality Improvement Strategy

63. The Committee had received the revised Curriculum Delivery & Quality Improvement Strategy. The Director of Quality & Performance summarised the key points within the Strategy and noted the updates which reflected changes in roles, principally the transfer of curriculum delivery from the former role of Vice Principal - Curriculum to the Deputy Principal.
64. The Committee discussed the developments, including the revised approach to observation and support of teachers which aimed to increase consistency and to intervene faster where any major underperformance was identified.
65. In response to a Member's question seeking assurance that the observations being "ungraded" did not mean that they were "unjudged", the Director of Quality & Performance confirmed that observations were assessed against a matrix of teaching components, including the impact on the learner, which enabled targeted quality improvement activity. The Committee also sought assurance that the new observation procedures did not allow for any member of staff to have a long period of teaching without observation. The Director of Quality & Performance confirmed that this would not happen and that teaching staff would be observed at least once a term, but that formal assessment and documentation would be targeted at new staff, new areas of the curriculum or where previous performance issues had been identified.
66. **Resolved** – that the Curriculum Delivery & Quality Improvement Strategy be approved.

COLLEGE POLICIES

67. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal on the outcome of reviews of the FE Learner Performance Management Policy, Learner/Student Conduct Policy, Complaints (and other Feedback) Management Policy and Guidelines, and the SEND Policy. The Board of Governors had delegated authority to the Committee to review and approve these policies.
68. The Deputy Principal explained that the SEND Policy was a new policy, which brought together and updated information in previous policies, and was informed by the College's responsibilities under the Children and Family Act (2014). The Committee had also received for background information the management guidelines for implementing the SEND Policy.

69. The Committee noted the key changes to the revised FE Learner Performance Policy and discussed the wording on pages 4 and 5 in relation to review meetings.
70. The Committee discussed the examples given as reasons for a serious conduct review in the Learner/Student Conduct Policy and whether these should be expanded to include additional specific examples or a general statement about offences concerning safeguarding or illegality. The Committee asked the Deputy Principal to reflect on the points raised and to decide to revise the list.
71. **Resolved** – that the following policies be approved, with the discretion for the Deputy Principal to make any final revisions as discussed by the Committee:
 - Policy and Procedures for Promoting Effective Learner Performance for students on Further Education Programmes
 - Policy and Procedures for Managing Learner/Student Conduct
 - Complaints (and other Feedback) Management Policy and Guidelines
 - SEND Policy

LEARNER EXPERIENCE

72. The Committee had received the annual report of the Deputy Principal on Complaints, Comments and Compliments and an overview of the College's disciplinary processes.
73. The Committee noted management's assessment that there was no evidence from the complaints received to suggest any structural disadvantage or systemic weaknesses within the College. The Committee Chair asked for further information in relation to the reported complaints in Animal Management in order that the Committee could be satisfied there were no serious quality issues.
74. The Deputy Principal assured the Committee that the number of complaints in this area was relatively small in proportion to the number of students, giving some examples of the complaints received, and the Committee was content no further investigation was required.
75. The Committee noted the under reporting of positive feedback where, for example, the College received cards or emails from parents which were not being recorded centrally as a compliment. It was agreed that it was important to capture and celebrate positive feedback. The Staff Governor suggested that the number of compliments logged would increase if there was a quick and easy process for staff to report them.
76. The Director of Quality & Performance agreed to issue a reminder to staff about how to log a compliment with the Quality team when the revised Complaints Management Policy was launched.

STUDENT SERVICES

77. The Head of Student Services gave a verbal report on the development of the services for supporting students over the seven years since he had joined the College, explaining the journey the College had gone on and recognising that the College had developed a culture which put students first and sought to meet the increasing demand for additional support for students. The student centred approach included managing nearly 200 EHCPs (Education Health and Care Plans) in the previous year, strengthening the management of conduct and performance and taking into account the impact on other learners during the enrolment assessment process.

78. The Deputy Principal reported the significant contribution made to the experience of students at the College by the work led by the Head of Student Services and his team.
79. On behalf of the Board of Governors, the Chair of the Committee thanked the Head of Students for his care and commitment to the student community.

HEALTHCHECK REPORT

80. Members did not have any comments on any matters in Healthcheck report (no 06/2017) which had not already been covered on the agenda.
81. The Committee had also received a working draft of a new report on Quality key performance indicators (for FE and Apprenticeships) which was proposed to be circulated to all members of the Board monthly in order to provide more detailed, regular narrative on the QIP and on progress against actions identified in the previous Ofsted report, supported by detailed data which would be available to the Board online.
82. It was noted that this would replace the FE and apprenticeships quality performance sections of the current Healthcheck report. The report would be scrutinised in advance of circulation to the Board by the College's Curriculum Leadership Group.
83. Members endorsed the introduction of the new report, agreeing with the aim of further enhancing the reporting of quality performance measures to the Board, and discussed the proposed format of the report. A number of points were made about the terminology and ratings used and the Director of Quality & Performance undertook to further refine these.
84. Members agreed that the information provided in the narrative was most useful and that the provision of supporting data online would provide an opportunity for governors to interrogate the headlines further where they wished to do so.
85. The Staff Governor reflected on the relationship between the high level quality strategy and performance reporting and the training and experience of teachers in the classroom, The Deputy Principal agreed that there were variations in the ways that information was presented at different levels within the College and noted that it was the role of the SLT to ensure that key messages were reaching staff and that development activities were designed to support the College's commitment to excellence. Members went on to discuss with management examples of CPD and other activities to support individual staff's development.

COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

86. The Committee had received the report of the Clerk providing background information and a series of questions to prompt members in discussing the Committee's performance in 2016/17. The report included the proposed plan of business for 2017/18.
87. Members were satisfied that the Committee had functioned effectively overall in carrying out its terms of reference and supporting the Board to ensure the quality of the College's FE, apprenticeships and HE offers. The Committee Chair emphasised the need to review the membership of the Committee and to bring in another external governor and/or a co-opted member.
88. **Resolved** – that Board of Governors be recommended to review the membership of the Committee and, if possible, to appoint an additional member.
89. The meeting concluded at 12.30 pm.