



HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15TH JUNE 2022

Meeting Commenced: 4.30pm

Meeting Ended: 6.30pm

Attendance: 60%

Quorum 3

Governors Present:

Clive Reid (Acting Chair), Julia Heap (Principal & Chief Executive), Jason Lancaster, Susan Ayers, Cathy Berry, Gill Banks, Jennifer Worsdale

In Attendance:

Andrea Murphy Deputy Principal
Liz Duncan Assistant Principal
Greg Scully Assistant Principal
Fatema Hussein Clerk to the Corporation

1. Apologies for Absence

There had been no apologies received.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare any direct, indirect, personal, pecuniary or prejudicial interest on any item on the agenda.

There were no declarations.

3. Approval of the Minutes – 5th April 2022

Agreed that: the minutes of the meeting held on 5th April are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The action progress log was reviewed and it was noted that reports had been provided on the two outstanding actions on the log.

5. Teaching, Learning & Assessment Reports

5.1. Deputy Principal Report

The Deputy Principal presented her report with the following points highlighted to the Committee:

5.1.1 Apprenticeship Achievement Rates

- This year's cohort consisted of 229 apprentices of which 14 apprentices were on Frameworks (6%) and 115 apprentices on Standards (94%)
- The sector now faced new issues impacting on the achievement rates of apprentices
- 21 of the apprentices, due to finish in 2021/22 had withdrawn in the last academic year, with 23 being withdrawing the year before
- A move to standards, from frameworks, had resulted in a dip in achievement rates, with 47% of apprentices on standards not being retained nationally in 2020/21
- It was difficult to say with certainty the reason for this, but there was a correlation between the introduction of End Point Assessments which required apprentices to pass the EPA in order to be successful
- Apprentices have not had to sit an examination for the last 3 years due to Covid and were finding the prospect daunting, despite the practice they were being given
- Covid had impacted on behaviour and there had been an increase in poor behaviour across the sector, with learners having less resilience and more difficulty dealing with the structure of education after the last two years of disruption
- Of the leavers this year, 9 were dismissed in 2020/21 and 7 in 2021/22
- This is something the College had not seen happening before
- With unemployment being extremely low, apprentices were also reluctant to complete a three-to-four-year apprenticeship when they were being offered employment at much better rates of pay
- 8 apprentices left their employer for other work 2020/21, and 6 to date in 2021/22
- Lower than average achievement rates in previous years had been due to quality issues
- College had addressed the previous concerns regarding quality and did not feel that this was an issue any longer. However, due to the increasing number of learners who had been dismissed from their roles the College had overhauled its IAG and induction process for apprentices
- An achievement rate of 58.4% to 62.7% was being predicted and the national achievement rate for standards was 51.8%
- This would give HHC an 8.4% increase on national achievement rates for 20/21

Governor Questions

Q. How did College know that the quality had improved?

A. Deep dives have been undertaken as well as independent external reviews of the provision. There was also a stable team in place now

Q. Which Apprenticeships had high grades?

ACTION:

Include as agenda item for next meeting

Q. Had consideration been given to changing how Information, Advice and Guidance was delivered?

A. Management had been looking at this as well as the induction process and had changed it for next year so it was more robust

Q. Had any practice sessions on EPA's been offered to remove the fear / anxiety for Apprentices?

A. They had been offered and this continued to be a priority in terms of preparing apprentices for their EPAs.

Q. Were any additional qualifications offered?

A. College has a suite of additional qualifications

The Committee suggested that EPA's were highlighted to be a normal part of the process and to place a greater emphasis on destinations data which the College already collected.

5.1.2 Training@ Hopwood – Report / SEND Learners on Apprenticeships

- There were currently 6 apprentices with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- The Apprenticeship team informed the Learning Support team when a potential apprentice with an EHCP was onboarded
- Regardless of whether the apprentice accessed College for their off the job training, the learning support team worked with the learner and their work-based tutors to assess what support was required
- Work-based tutors provided high quality teaching and support to apprenticeships in line with support needs/requirements e.g., modifications and adjustments, and these were shared with the employer
- For apprentices with an EHCP in place, employer representation was invited to the EHC plan review meeting
- A person-centred review was also carried out with the apprentice and involving their family or any other agency involvement

Governor Questions

Q. For learners with an EHCP that declined support, how often did Assessors check that they were making the expected progress?

A. College regularly tracked process via OneFile and through review meetings with the Work Based Tutors

ECO Week

- One of the College's strategic intentions was to act as 'guardians of our environment'
- To deliver this strategic intention the college had divided its Climate Action Group into several sub-committees, one of which concentrated on the curriculum and students' experience
- The College's first ever dedicated 'EcoFest' had been a huge success in terms of impact and engagement with students, staff, businesses and the wider community
- The week-long celebration of sustainability highlighted all of the sustainability initiatives across College
- A programme of green-focused events and activities across both campuses had been held from Tuesday 3rd May to Friday 6th May

The Committee agreed that it was very pleasing to hear that every curriculum area had got involved in the initiative.

5.1.3 Defunding of BTEC qualifications

- The Department for Education (DfE) had set out its intention to remove funding approval for 16–19-year-olds from level 3 qualifications that overlapped with waves 1 and 2 T levels from August 2024
- This was of concern to the College as many learners who currently took level 3 awards had progressed from level 1 and level 2
- Some of those learners would not be able to cope with the academic rigour of a T level, even with a transition year
- Using the current learner numbers to model the impact, 415 learners would be affected as a result of the changes
- Curriculum areas would be introducing transition Programmes to ensure that learners had clear progression opportunities at each level of study

Governors agreed that the proposals were likely to have a subsequent impact on Level 2 and could result in an increase in the number of NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) learners. It was therefore important for curriculum planning and transition to be carefully managed.

5.1.4 Update on AEB

- The College was currently predicted to achieve between 97% and 100% of the contract
- Due to demand, some additional classes had been added in the following curriculum areas:
 - Level 3 Award in Education and Training
 - Level 1 Award in Multi-Skilled
 - Level 1 Award in Construction Skills
- To continue to contribute to the AEB contract, College was also looking at putting on additional sector-based work academies, in conjunction with Job Centre Plus
- Learners would undertake relevant short courses and then be guaranteed a job interview

5.2. Report from the Assistant Principal Quality

5.2.1 Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Reviews (TLARs) – Follow-up Learning Walks

- 168 staff were identified as being in scope for a TLAR learning walk across 17 departments Of the 168 staff, 158 TLAR learning walks were completed (94%), with 86% at or above the expected standard
- 22 staff (14%) had been identified as being below expected standard
- Those staff have had a 'TLAR action plan' which is monitored by both the Programme Manager and Advanced Practitioner

Governor Questions

Q. What were the most common strengths and weaknesses?

A. Questioning and planning were strong. Providing appropriate challenge and managing behaviour were areas for improvement

Q. Have staff found it difficult to support learners with low level behaviour issues?

A. The College had adopted a trauma informed approach and this had helped it to address some of the behavioural issues. Some Level 3 learners were reluctant to

interact in the classroom and this was due to having undertaken online learning during periods of lockdown. The College had also piloted a behavior mark system that would be rolled out in full next academic year

Its Learning

- The College VLE (ItsLearning) had moved forward this year in terms of building opportunities for learners to engage with the system
- A key focus of the Digital Learning Manager (DLM) had been around the VLE being used more effectively
- The Digital Learning Manager had devised a new Student Hub section which provided learners with a central 'page' (point of focus) on the VLE where they could access key College systems and be notified of any key messages
- There had been a commitment to deliver training to staff this year so that they can effectively use the VLE's digital teaching tools to support their learners

Governor Questions

Q. Was the VLE being used by all staff and what impact was it having?

A. All departments used the VLE as this was a compulsory part of the curriculum and timetabled in a Digital Study Time session. Some departments were better at utilizing it than others

Teaching and Learning Champions

- The Teaching and Learning Champions had continued to support teaching and learning in their departments
- This has been through the promotion of the HOW2 platform and encouraging staff to add to the Teaching and Learning Collaboration Boards
- The TLCs and college mentors have also supported new staff across the College

DST (Designated Study Time) and 40-hour Plan 2022/23

- Learners on level 2 and level 3 programs have had a one-hour independent study lesson on their timetable called Designated Study Time (DST)
- For 2022-23, learners will have a four-week DST induction and throughout the year will access eight essential digital skills topics
- To complement the DST program and to meet the additional 40+ hours, L3 learners will have independent access to an additional 1.5 hours of content

Digital Marketplace

- The Quality and Digital Teams, led by the Digital and Blended Learning Champion (DBLC), hosted a Digital Marketplace CPD event on the 5th April 2022 for all staff
- The marketplace was the culmination of the work of the DBLC to fulfil the College's digital framework, in conjunction with the ETF and the Greater Manchester Colleges DBLC Group This framework was a key addition to the strategic focus in the College, to support digital & blended learning, digital skills, practice and innovation

Work Placements

- The College had a target of 281 industrial placements as part of the CDF funding
- It had successfully placed 297 learners with employers on a substantial placement in 21/22 Of those placements 280 would complete the 315 hours that were

expected

- The Careers and Employability team had engaged with 860 employers this academic year to secure work placements.

A Governor suggested that it would be useful to have some further detail on work experience placements

ACTION:

Action / September Committee Agenda

5.2.2 H.E. Update

- Currently retention for all HE courses was at 90%
- Attendance across the HE courses was 90.4%
- Access to HE retention was currently 92% overall
- Access to HE attendance was currently 87% overall

5.2.3 HE Curriculum Planning

- The two proposals for Top-Up level 6 qualifications, Early Years and Zoo Science & Wildlife Conservation, had received initial approval from the respective schools at the University of Bolton and progressed to stage 2 which is approval at strategic management level at the university
- Providing they are approved by the university senior leadership team, the process of writing and validating the degrees could begin
- The intention was to have the degrees validated by December 2022 for first teaching September 2023

5.3. Report from the Assistant Principal Curriculum

5.3.1 GCSE English & Maths & Functional Skills Exams Update

- Analysis of the data had indicated that the expected level of improvement in Functional Skills level 1 Maths would not occur
- The current best-case prediction was 48%
- Whilst this would represent an increase of 27% on the previous academic year, the department expected achievement rates of between 50-60%
- There were 140 learners in Maths who were within 4 marks of meeting the achievement target
- The strategies used for 16-18 functional skills Maths had not had the desired impact despite the extensive support and intervention that had been put in place
- There were a number of pending results for adults and adult learners who had yet to complete the first sitting of some exams
- In-year pass rates supported the conclusion that the data for adults was improving from 2020/21

Governor Questions

Q. What were the reasons for the lower-than-expected achievement rates?

A. Some of it was to do with resilience and many students were also struggling with formal assessments. National achievement rates in this curriculum area were also extremely low.

Q. Had consideration been given to switching to a GCSE grade improvement target

instead?

- A.** This was the intention for the next academic year. Entry and Level 1 Functional skills would only be offered to adults

GCSE

- Paper 1 for both Maths and English had taken place
- The attendance rate for the first paper in English was 91.5% and for the first paper in Maths 90.8%
- These two rates are an improvement on previous examination series (last recorded in summer 2019) when absence rates were more than 10%
- The first GCSE examination, English, coincided with a day of strike action undertaken by UCU (University and College union)
- Potential impact on invigilation was managed effectively by the exams department and prevented any issues with exams starting on time.
- Action undertaken by union members picketing at the Rochdale campus had caused a significant amount of noise and disrupted the examination
- Some learners had expressed concern that they were unable to perform to their best because of the disruption
- The head of exams had contacted the awarding body and would submit an application for special consideration to be applied to those students affected
- Further strike action which was planned to coincide with GCSE examinations taking place on the 7th and 10th June has now been averted due to the settlement of the dispute

5.3.2 Vocational Courses Exams and Assessment Update

The meeting was informed that there was some concern about the final value-added position. The overall grades were strong but the number of high grades was lower than anticipated.

Governor Questions

Q. Did College know why some courses were underperforming?

A. For many subject areas this was the first-time students will have sat exams or lecturers having taught examined units

Q. What was being done to address this?

A. To improve these outcomes the College would now be working with Riverside College on developing further teaching strategies to maximise grade achievement in external examinations. This would also be a focus of CPD next year commencing with the Teaching and Learning Conference at the beginning of the academic year

5.3.3 T Level Delivery Update

- Initial enrolment numbers were 75, and the current position was 68 continuing learners
- New T levels starting in September were:
 - Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacture
 - Management and Administration
- Planning for the next wave of T levels was underway and the College was planning to expand its offer to include the following courses for 2023/24 academic year:
 - Animal Care and Management
 - Hairdressing, Barbering and Beauty Therapy
 - Accounting

- College was also planning to introduce 1 pilot transition programme in digital in 2022/23
- This would link to both the Digital Production, Design and development T level programme and the Digital Support Services T level programme
- Based on the outcomes of the pilot, further transition programmes could be introduced to support the T level offer for the 2023/24 academic year

Governors stated that College needed to be mindful in its curriculum planning that progression pathways were available for students undertaking the courses in 2022/23.

The Assistant Principal Greg Scully stated that acceptance of T Levels by Universities was also of concern.

5.3.4 Attendance & Retention Update

- College attendance was currently 85% for all courses and all ages
- Since April's report, attendance for 16-18, 19+ full time and 19+ part time had dropped by 1%.
- English attendance had dropped by 1% since April's report and Maths by 2%
- In response to the significant drop in adult attendance, the College was considering further investment in attendance monitoring and interventions
- The current proposal was to invest in additional Retention and Improvement Officers to support adult attendance
- They would oversee part time ESOL, English and Maths students as well as full time adult infill students.

Governor Questions

Q. Was student attendance being affected by personal life issues and was support provided by the College to those students?

A. Home and family circumstances did affect attendance and College had a support programme in place for those students

A Governor suggested that it would be useful to highlight the impact of interventions on attendance.

ACTION:

GS to include in next report

5.3.5 Best case/worse case achievement rate predictions by curriculum area

The Committee reviewed the initial forecasts for achievement rates for individual College departments. It was noted that:

- Business and information technology, Sport and Uniformed public services had been affected by Level 3, year 1 lower than trend retention last year
- English was expecting a lower pass rate for GCSE English than last year's TAGs (Teacher Assessed Grades)
- Electrical installation, automotive and security had been affected by external examination of the newly introduced technical qualifications

6. KPI (Key Performance Indicators) Update*

It was noted that an update had been provided on the KPI's as part of the Deputy and Assistant Principals' reports.

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 21st September 2022 at 4.30pm

* Standing Item

Chair's Signature:

Date: