



## **HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE**

### **MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023**

**Meeting Commenced: 4.30pm**

**Meeting Ended: 6.15pm**

**Attendance: 55%**

**Quorum 3**

#### **Governors Present:**

Clive Reid (External Member / Acting Chair), Julia Heap (Principal & Chief Executive), Susan Ayers, Leon Al Asade (Student Governor), Ricardo Pedrosa Taylor (Student Governor)

#### **In Attendance:**

Liz Duncan Assistant Principal (Quality)

Greg Scully Assistant Principal (Curriculum)

Joanne Taylor Executive Director Business Development, Apprenticeships & Future Skills)

Fatema Hussein Clerk to the Corporation

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Gill Banks, Helen Barton, Jenny Worsdale, Jason Lancaster and Andrea Murphy.

#### **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 – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

Agreed that: the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 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 3 of the actions were not yet due and one had been completed.

#### **5. Student Governor Feedback**

The following update was provided by the Student Governors:

- Students were happy with the improvements that had been made to the re-

stocking of the vending machines, the cleanliness of the classrooms and the provision of table football

- There were issues with connecting to the Wi-Fi and a lack of eating space in the Refectory
- Female students had suggested that it would be better to have individual shower cubicles in the female changing areas
- The condition of the male toilets had also been highlighted

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Was the Wi-Fi speed having an impact on learning?

**A.** It was slowing things down for students

The Principal advised that:

- The suggestion regarding the shower cubicles had been raised at PQT meetings before and would be addressed over the medium to longer term
- College had been trying to increase the speed of the Wi-Fi and improvements had been made recently
- The male toilets were being vandalised on a regular basis and College was having to spend a lot of money on undertaking repairs
- Students needed to take some accountability for this, and the monies being spent on repairs could then be spent on the items that students had suggested
- College was considering re-instating CCTV in the toilets but there were some privacy issues to address

## **6. Teaching, Learning & Assessment Reports**

### **6.1. Deputy Principal Report**

#### **6.1.1 BTEC Qualifications and Funding Update**

The following update was provided regarding the reform of the BTEC qualifications:

- The Department for Education (DfE) had released their updated guidance on qualification reform in January
- The proposal was to phase out many of the traditional Applied General Qualifications (AGQs), such as BTECs, as T levels routes became available
- There would also be some new small Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAGs) made available
- These changes were due to be implemented in 3 phases
- The Academic Route would now consist of the following options at Level 3:
  - A/AS Levels
  - Small qualifications (equivalent to 1 A level) such as AAQs
  - Large qualifications (equivalent to up to 3 A levels) such as BTECs that are not represented by T levels.
- The Technical Route would now consist of 2 main options at level 3:
  - T Level
  - Apprenticeships
- Colleges offering only technical and vocational qualifications were very concerned about the impact of these reforms on social mobility and the future financial viability of the College
- These reforms would remove rungs on the ladder of opportunity that learners currently had access to
- 69% of Hopwood Hall learners were from a deprived background, and although



College had very high levels of internal progression (85%), some of these learners have low prior attainment and a preference for a practical element of learning based on continuous assessment rather than a timed examination

- The Principal had written to Robert Halfon MP (Minister of State for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education) to express concerns regarding these reforms
- College was also concerned about the capacity in Greater Manchester for the 45-day Industrial Placements (IPs), that were currently part of the T level requirement
- Whilst all of the College's T level learners were currently enjoying high quality placements, there was concern, should BTECs be withdrawn, that the capacity for these placements could not meet demand
- This was because there were 8 other Further Education Colleges in the Greater Manchester area alongside a Sixth Form College and School Sixth Forms, some of which were also offering T levels

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Were Colleges working together to try and influence a change in policy?

**A.** There were Colleges similar to Hopwood Hall that were opposing the proposals and 70 Colleges had written to the minister

## **6.2 Apprenticeship Report**

The Executive Director Business Development, Apprenticeships & Future Skills reported that:

- Total number of starts this year was not likely to exceed 260, and the 320 target would not be reached
- The target was missed by a significant margin in the following areas; Early years educator Level 3, Veterinary nurse Level 3 and Hair professional Level 2
- Some planned courses could not go ahead due to the delayed opening of the Tech Centre
- The carry in from the previous year was however much higher
- Although the starts target would be missed, the funding target of £2.1m would therefore be met
- In terms of planning for next year's starts, a plan was in place to better use Marketing, LMI, external data and intelligence from employers
- College was planning to offer the following new standards for 23/24:
  - Maintenance Operations Engineering Technician (MOET) L3
  - Veterinary Nursing L3
  - Construction Site Supervisor L4
  - Carpentry & Joinery L3
  - Gas Engineering Operatives L3
- The Apprenticeships Team were engaging with a number of new large employers in the borough
- Discussions were on-going, but initial thoughts were that these employers would support the College's strategy for growth, new provision and high-level apprenticeships in the future
- A tender for a skills Boot camp had also been submitted
- A root and branch review of apprenticeship processes was being undertaken and the intention was to improve the current monitoring and tracking systems for employers
- This would help to provide clarity to all parties who were involved with apprenticeships, and strengthen controls

- The Link Governor for Apprenticeships was now meeting with the Executive Director on a monthly basis
- The maximum possible achievement rate was currently 73%
- It was hoped at this stage that the final outturn would be 60% for this year
- In order to achieve this, at least 115 of the 184 Apprentices would need to pass their EPA before the end of July
- In terms of the Apprenticeships Accountability Dashboard, a 60% outturn would be judged as 'Green' – no intervention required by ESFA
- Achievement rates for apprenticeship providers would be published in March 23 for the first time since the pandemic (18/19)
- Projections across the sector suggested that achievement rates may have fallen as low as 57%
- Next year's target was being discussed at the moment

### **6.3. Report from the Assistant Principal Quality**

The following update was provided by the Assistant Principal:

#### **6.3.1 Quality Assurance & Improvement**

- Departments graded as a requires improvement received a department review, and the following reviews had taken place this term; Business and Information Technology, Maths and Training@hopwood (Apprenticeships)
- The outcome of the reviews had matched the self-assessment grades awarded as part of SAR validation
- A number of recommendations had been made and an action plan was in place
- The Assistant Principal Quality and Assistant Principal Curriculum chaired monthly Support, Challenge and Intervention Panels (SCI) to ensure requires improvement departments were making swift progress

#### Maths and English

- A significant number of learners were re-sitting Maths this year
- A number of recommendations had been made regarding attendance and punctuality
- There had been an improvement in attendance since January
- The Programme Manager for Maths was no longer in post

#### Governor Questions

**Q.** Was there a likelihood that the volumes of learners re-sitting English and Maths next academic year would be just as high and create the same issues/ problems for the College?

**A.** Teacher Assessed (TAGS) and Centre Assessed Grades had compounded the problem and College was expecting 3 years of high volumes

**Q.** Had College shared its views on the Government proposal for learners to be take English and Maths up to the age of 18?

**A.** An Advisor from the DfE was visiting the College on 18<sup>th</sup> April for an immersion visit and this would be raised with them

#### **6.3.2 Learner Survey Results**

- The First Term Learner Survey was completed in December
- The survey had targeted 3211 learners (16-18 study programme)
- 2371 surveys were completed (74% return rate).
- The survey focused on the induction process at the start of the academic year, the support learners were provided in term 1 (personal development) and the standard of teaching and learning
- All questions had strong positive agree, with the majority exceeding 90% agreement
- Only 2 questions, "I know who my Learner Rep is" and "Things have got better because of Learner Views", fell below 90% agreement
- Although below the 90% threshold internally, these exceed external benchmarks

The Student Governors reported that:

- Many learners were unclear about the role of the Learner Reps
- The Learner Reps did not have an allocated time slot to speak with learners about their role and get feedback
- It would be useful for the Reps to be given a 10-minute slot on the PACE sessions to enable them to collect feedback

A Governor suggested that photographs of all the Learner Reps were displayed in prominent areas so that students had a greater awareness of who they were

#### **ACTION:**

SLT to implement

#### **6.3.3 Value Added Report**

- At this stage in the year, it was still difficult to make accurate predictions as there were exam grades to be entered and many units that would come in at the end of the year
- Based on the data uploads to date, key improvement areas for value added were
  - Ext Dip Health & Social Care
  - UAL Ext Dip Performing and Production Arts
  - Ext Dip Applied Science
  - Ext Dip Engineering
- The key regression area was the Extended Diploma in Business

#### **6.4.4 H.E / Access Report**

##### **Access**

- Access to HE Retention was currently 92%
- Attendance on Access programs was at 91% overall and had improved over the last half term
- The Mid-Year compliance review with Open Awards had taken place on 7<sup>th</sup> March with all moderation requests met so far this year

##### **HE**

- HE retention was currently at 97% and attendance was at 89% overall
- The College was due to meet with Open University to complete the contract negotiations on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March so that the development of the new HTQ Foundation Degree in Health and Case could begin



- The SDF (Strategic Development Fund) project that had been run as part of the GMCG (Greater Manchester Colleges Group) has had its lifecycle extended to June 2023
- All the capital purchases for this short course project had been ordered and College was awaiting installation of new renewable technologies in the TECH Centre
- These resources would also tie into the new HTQ HNC in Construction Management that would be launching in September
- The College had made the strategic decision to begin the process of compiling an Access and Participation plan once the new rules and requirements were released by the OfS in March
- Once approved, this would commit the College to further widening participation in HE for local residents as well as allowing the College to adjust HE tuition fees

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Had the issues with the University of Bolton been resolved?

**A.** There had been no further progress but the College was continuing to work with them

### **6.5.5 Careers Update\***

- National Careers week had taken place week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> March
- The Careers Team had planned a week of activities, including sessions with HSBC bank on managing money
- The Growth Company were providing support for learners on how to set up a business
- The College would be undertaking a full matrix review next week to demonstrate the high quality IAG (Information, Advice, Guidance) services it provided
- It was a condition of funding that College passed and received the Matrix accreditation
- The industry placement figure was currently 198, an increase from 121 in term 1 and work placements had increased from 486 to 730 across 142 employers.
- 12 learners were commencing face to face work experience with Zen, which had taken 2 years to set up

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Will the one Gatsby benchmark that hasn't been met have an impact on the Matrix assessment

**A.** It was anticipated that it would not

**Q.** Why had the placements with Zen taken so long to set up?

**A.** The College had been working on this for a long time. Zen were now keen to get more females interested in a career in IT and wanted to work with the College on this

### **6.6.6 QIP Update**

The Committee was provided with an update on the Quality Improvement Plan and the progress that had been made to date.

### **6.4. Report from the Assistant Principal Curriculum**

The following update was provided by the Assistant Principal:

#### **6.4.1 Attendance & Retention Update**

- College attendance was currently 86% for all courses and all ages
- Since the January report, adult attendance had increased by 1% and 16-18 attendance had remained static at 85%
- Attendance for 16-18 learners had taken a significant dip in January and there had been several interventions made in line with the attendance policy
- The impact of these interventions had been to stabilise attendance for 16-18 at 85%
- Overall, college retention was 95.3% and compared favourably with both the position last year which was 94.0% and the College KPI (Key Performance Indicator) which was 94.0%.
- The main area of concern was UPS (Uniformed Public Services)
- Current retention on level 3 year 1 from the academic year 2021/22 was significantly below previous performance and was now reflected in the retention data
- This year the level 3, year 1 retention was currently at 100%.
- Several year 1 students, as in previous years, will be looking to leave college over the summer period to join the armed forces
- These learners had been specifically enrolled onto a one-year level programme to effectively align with their career aspirations

#### **6.4.2 Destinations Report**

- The College had engaged J<sup>2</sup> research to undertake data capture and analysis of destinations for 2021/22 learners.
- Against all metrics, there has been an improvement in positive destinations against the College performance in 2020/21
- The data for adults was on a three-year improving trend
- Data for 16-19 shows an improvement from the dip in 2020/21 but has still not recovered to the levels achieved in 2019/20

#### **6.4.3 English & Maths GCSE & Functional Skills**

- The planning for GCSE examinations was continuing but with some challenges
- College was currently planning to accommodate 1100 learners sitting GCSE English and 1400 sitting GCSE Maths
- Attendance in Maths and English has improved in the last 4 weeks following interventions
- A re-engagement strategy had been re-introduced to increase attendance in English & Maths, and 39 learners had been referred so far

#### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** How will the College accommodate the increased number of learners taking English and Maths exams?

**A.** An external venue will have to be used as physical capacity was becoming an issue

#### **6.4.4 T Level Update**

- There had been no changes in the T level enrolment numbers since the January

report, and the total number of T-level students remained at 111

- The Beauty therapy, Barbering and Hairdressing T Levels had been deferred by the DfE and would not be offered in September 2023
- Any student affected by a potential closure of the T level would still have a two-year offer that would take them to completion of a level 3 qualification
- A decision to run the Maintenance and Installation route had also been deferred to September
- Current level 3 offers on alternative provision will be offered, depending on GCSE results

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Did the students know that the deferral of the T Levels was beyond the College's control?

**A.** College would make the students aware of this

### **6.4.5 TEC Centre Build Update**

- The build continued to make timely progress
- Works in the annex had been completed with the remaining snagging issues affecting carpentry to be addressed
- All staff had now been relocated to their new staffrooms within the annex
- Work on the Refectory had also commenced and this would provide a bigger space that learners could make use of during lunch and break times
- The additional space would also be used for enrichment activities outside of lunch times
- Additional benches were to be made available in the outdoor spaces

### **7. KPI (Key Performance Indicators) Update\***

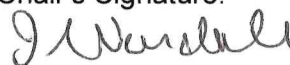
An update had been included within the Deputy and Assistant Principals' reports.

### **8. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 at 4.30pm

\*Standing Item

Chair's Signature:



Date: 22/6/23