

CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Date	Wednesday 28 th October 2015	Time 2.00pm	FINAL
------	--	-------------	--------------

Venue	The Executive Boardroom, New College Stamford
-------	---

Chair	Alison Grant
-------	--------------

Membership: Alison Grant, Zoe Nash, Andrew Tofts, Allison Sunley and Paul Wingfield.
In attendance: Janet Meenaghan (Principal), Rachel Nicholls (Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality ("VPCQ")) and Sally Brook Shanahan (Clerk to the Corporation).

Apologies: None

Disclosure of Members Interests: There were no disclosures of interests beyond those already declared in the Register of Interests.

	Item	Actions
1.	<p>Welcome Members welcomed Zoe Nash, HE Student Governor, as a Member, and Rachel Nicholls, the newly appointed Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality to their first meeting of the Committee.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the Meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee held on 10th June 2015 Although not at the meeting Rachel Nicholls drew attention to the following factual inaccuracies in the Minutes:</p> <p>Minute 5, Page 3 – Predicted Success Rates – Delete the sentence “It was, however, pointed out that students have to be on long courses in order for them to be funded” as it is inaccurate and there has been no measure as “long” since the 2014-15 academic year.</p> <p>Minute 8, Page 6 – HE Review Preparation and Enhancement Strategy – Replace the sentence “The College will be notified of the areas for improvement within a week after it has taken place” with “ The College will receive written feedback within two weeks after it has been completed.” It was noted that this feedback is not just around areas for improvement.</p> <p>Subject to these corrections the minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee held on 10th June 2015 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3.	<p>Actions Table and Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th June 2015 The Actions Table was received and the following additional points were made:</p>	

From the Meeting held on 10th June 2015

Action No. 2 – Minute 3 – Page 2 – Post Inspection Action Plan – The review of the use of student data systems by Internal Audit will be discussed under the agenda item about the PIAP and so can be taken off the Table.

Action No. 3 – Minute 3 – Page 2 – Post Inspection Action Plan - It was agreed that a speaker from the Business Team will be invited to the Committee's next meeting on 25th November 2015 in order to give reassurance on the improvements being made in that curriculum area as it has been a concern over the past year. It was reported that the Link Governor has changed since last year with David Pennell now taking over in that role.

Action No. 6 – Minute 5 – Page 3 – Predicated Success Rates – A report on Success Rates together with a visual dashboard will be presented to the full Corporation at its next meeting on 4th November 2015 which will close the Action.

Action No. 7 – Minute 6 – Page 4 – Feedback on College Performance Reviews (“CPRs”) – Several Link Governors have attended CPRs and the overall process is moving ahead well. The Action will be left on the Table for the time being as a prompt.

Action No. 8 – Minute 7 – Page 5 – Apprenticeship Quality Improvement Plan – Progress with the development of an Apprenticeship Awards Ceremony will be included in the Executive Director Partnerships, Skills & Commercial Development's Report to the forthcoming Corporation meeting.

Action No. 9 – Minute 11 – Page 6 – English & Mathematics Progress Report – The concerns expressed about the need for English & Maths needing to be relevant to areas of study, particularly vocational ones, is included in Apprenticeship Improvement Plan.

The Head of English & Maths has reported to the Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality that there are no significant changes in the new English & Maths framework. Whilst the College's performance in English & Maths GCSE is excellent the on-going issue is to ensure that literacy and numeracy are embedded. With English & Maths so critical to success and funding Members sought assurance about the procedures at enrolment to ensure students are on the appropriate level. A view was expressed that even students with a grade C may not be fully functional and so the College needs to ensure they are followed through and continue to develop English & Maths. The Principal offered to check that this is happening.

Principal

Action No. 11 – Minute 12 – Page 7 – Self-Assessment – It was confirmed that the Self-Assessment Report template has been revised to reflect the changes in the Common Inspection Framework and re-issued. The Action is closed.

Action No. 12 – Minute 13 – Page 7 – Standards of Learning, Assessment and Teaching Report – The Observations Policy has been revised to include two days' notice of the week in which teaching staff will be observed being given. A discussion about the new SLT's views on observations followed in which it was noted that Ofsted is

	<p>moving away from observations to walk-throughs. Members indicated they were looking for more walk-throughs to take place coupled with observation support. In response to a question about who validates the validators it was stated that dual observations are now occurring which means observations are moderated, including in the way they are written up, with the language standardised as far as possible. The Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality confirmed that she has undertaken a dual observation with the Quality Manager and the grade, areas for improvement and feedback agreed.</p> <p><u>Action No. 13 – Minute 13 – Page 7 – Standards of Learning, Assessment and Teaching Report</u> – It was pointed out that the emphasis should be on Outstanding “Sessions” at a moment in time rather than “Teachers” and confirmed that this data has already been provided. The Action was closed.</p> <p>Discussion followed about the College’s decision to purchase the ALIS system to record students’ progress rather than the ALPS system. Although it may be too late to stop the purchase, this will be checked, as Members supported the Principal to change the decision where the alternative would save time and provide other benefits.</p>	Principal
4.	<p>Curriculum & Quality Update with poster</p> <p>Members received the paper that provided an update and initial findings of the newly appointed Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality. Eleven key areas for focus were highlighted including some issues of concern, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorials and Employability – where there is a need to revise tutorial delivery, the employability offer and work experience • Safeguarding – involving changes to process and personnel, and • Study Programmes – noting that the aim is to support students to get a job. <p>It was confirmed that in order to ensure Members know and understand what is involved in relation to these eleven areas, each matter will be RAG rated on the next occasion they are presented to Members and by which time it is expected many of the items will have been resolved.</p> <p>The Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality explained that these were just her initial findings after a relatively short period of time and therefore were presented in a more narrative way and going forward these would be much more SMART and RAG rated.</p> <p>A discussion followed about the newly launched “Getting to Good “ strategy that includes a particular focus on Safeguarding where the need to revise the referral process and logging of interventions had been highlighted. It was clarified that there was no suggestion that students are at risk of harm but rather that there is the scope for improvement in the management of safeguarding and in particular monitoring impact of intervention and outcomes of those students.</p> <p>In response to an observation about “British Values” it was confirmed that this subject is incorporated as part of the revision of tutorial delivery and cross refers with the section about Equality & Diversity.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the poster that accompanied the Corporation paper had been well received at the Staff Development Day on 23rd October 2015. With comments having</p>	VPC

	<p>been fed back from Link Visits that in the past Behaviours & Values were only given lip service, Members were reassured that that this section had also been positively received by staff. A discussion about the content of the poster followed with a number of comments and suggestions made by Members. These included around Attendance and Punctuality Targets where the consensus was that these should be more stretching. However after clarification was given that the figures used were derived from sector norms it was agreed that they will not be changed for the time being but going forward Members would like to see the College pushing the barrier instead of following the norm.</p> <p>A question was raised about why “Success” was not included in the Targets and the reply given that it has largely been replaced, with “Qualification Achievement Rates” now the preferred measure. In any event, it was noted that the College would not look at Success in-year as Retention is a better indicator of likely Achievement. Comment was also received that by the current time in the academic year the sections about Recruiting and Settling are dated and superseded but after discussion it was acknowledged that they are of continuing relevance as curriculum delivery is rolling.</p> <p>With the poster clarifying the basics it was confirmed that “Behaviours & Values” will be posted up separately in more detail and captured in wider policies and the Study Programme Handbook. A discussion followed about the need to ensure “Behaviours & Values” are not FE specific as they have universal application in the College. A suggestion that HE students should be asked to be role models for the other students was accepted as a good idea and one that would help students to see the step up from FE into HE.</p> <p>Members discussed the use of ProMonitor as in the past issues had been raised about it was being used effectively. Members were update on the progress being made, including the establishment of minimum expectations for use, and the need for the accurate and timely use of the system was emphasised as a critical requirement together with the on-going training to do this.</p> <p>In reply to two final questions it was confirmed that the revised Observation Policy will be adapted for HE and that the quality assurance issues highlighted in relation to sub-contractors are being addressed.</p>	
5.	<p>Final Success Rates 2014/15</p> <p>Members received the update on final success rates noting the proposal for how a broader and more in-depth view of teaching, learning and assessment should be developed in the Autumn term to enable more informed and robust judgments to be made. The Principal confirmed that accurate figures made available the preceding Friday provided an overarching picture of “Requires Improvement”. The main weakness around AS and A2 levels was highlighted and a request made for the percentages in terms of A*-C grades to be supplied.</p> <p>Value added is expected to be poor with the current figure for 2014-15 awaited but expected to be similar to that in the previous year. However, In English & Maths, especially GCSE, the College is performing very well in the sector.</p> <p>Members discussed the need to turn the figures round next year whilst accepting that experience suggests that where significant improvements occur these are generally in</p>	VPC

	<p>the second year. Consequently areas where quick fixes can be made are in the spotlight including Business, Animal Care and Sport where the current low success means they can improve during the balance of the year. There is also the probability that National Averages may be lower when they are published in December. Overall there is potential to buck the trend if retention for 16-18 year olds on Diploma courses improves aligned with a continuation of current performance in English & Maths.</p> <p>Following scrutiny of the outcomes in the report an explanation was sought for the low results in hairdressing with the previous poor recruitment policy stated as being behind them. Members expressed concern that the introduction of linear A levels will increase the challenge to improve outcomes. The fact that pupils are frequently “drilled” at GCSE level but lack the cognitive ability to step up to A levels was identified as a particular challenge. The measures to mitigate it under consideration include adjusting entry requirements combined with support and challenge and programme coherence with pathways to sustainable employment. Members commented that they felt that by targeting relevance with support and tutoring the College could make a huge difference. The Principal and Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality emphasised that every single student achievement matters and advocated the targeting of borderline students where a difference can be achieved in-year.</p> <p>A discussion followed about the observation of teaching, learning and assessment grades in which it was noted that an lesson observation grade is a judgment based on an observer spending 45-60 minutes in a single session, that although with some merit, requires a broader view including marking and feedback. It was confirmed that the Post Inspection Action Plan will include a revised progress update column before the next Ofsted Support & Challenge visit that will, in turn, be scrutinised by the Committee. Reference was made to inspections made under the new Common Inspection Framework in which it appears that Ofsted have driven the grade from the performance data. This emphasised that the main focus must remain on pushing up results and drilling down to individual learners as the data must look right.</p>	
6.	<p>Recruitment against allocation</p> <p>The Principal reported that the College had achieved its 16-18 target of 1,897 and at the highest point numbers were more than 40 above. However, this figure included some returning students who had failed to turn up, some students with attendance issues and some who left to move into work and apprenticeships with the result that the College is now 34 students below target. The expectation is that this figure will rise to around 55 students with a consequential reduction of approximately £250,000 in next year’s funding. Nevertheless, Members felt that right sizing the organisation is essential to quality and supported a move away from an emphasis on numbers to integrity in recruitment allied with responsibility on staff to retain students. It was confirmed that this will be achieved this year, noting that in addition the College faces the challenge of the declining 16-18 demographic and the negative impact that being Grade 3 may have on marketing.</p> <p>Overall recruitment is down from Stamford but up from Peterborough. Adult activities are above profile and apprenticeships are doing well against funding.</p>	
7.	<p>Post Inspection Action Plan (“PIAP”)</p> <p>Members received the PIAP and agreed that the Chair and Principal will discuss the proposed actions, targets and outcomes and progress in relation to governance at</p>	

	<p>Section 6.</p> <p>Members questioned the difference made by CPD to which multiple references are made in the progress review column and asked that where progress can be ratified with interim data this should be included to show that progression.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Plan will be revisited after Christmas 2015.</p>	<p>Principal & VPC</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Report on the OFSTED Support and Challenge Visit – 14th October 2015</p> <p>A copy of the letter dated 19th October 2015 received from Ofsted following the Support and Challenge visit was tabled. It was reported that the meeting had been broadly positive and that no judgments will be made until the impact of actions being taken can be assessed. The staffing changes and improvements in apprenticeship provision were acknowledged and the impact of legacy issues on quality understood. Positive comment was received about the strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning and the establishment of the Employability Hub.</p> <p>The next scheduled visit on 16th March 2016 will include going into classes and it is expected that a better view of where the College stands will emerge afterwards.</p> <p>Members discussed the content of the letter and suggested that the College should use it as a preparatory document for the next visit and show how each line is fulfilled, for example by providing evidence about users of the Employability Hub.</p> <p>The fundamental need to get students on the right programme was discussed including the process around aptitude testing. Currently potential students are interviewed and have an initial assessment with a full diagnostic of their English & Maths when they have started their programme. It was confirmed that the intention is to establish service standards for this process. Currently aptitude testing is conducted in the first 6 week period during which time transfers between Levels and subjects are made. Discussion followed about the potential for an aptitude test to show a student's flair and to motivate those who are already on a programme. In response to a question about the tools to do this, it was suggested that the RAF in Lincoln is a potential source. A gaming package that could be used as an aptitude test for identifying learning styles, especially for learners with learning needs, was also suggested and will be followed up. The Committee supported the further investigation of these ideas that would enhance good recruitment and have the potential for other benefits including the reduction of low level disruption.</p>	<p>Allison Sunley</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Apprenticeship Quality Improvement Plan – Progress Report</p> <p>Since the Plan was last presented to the Committee it has been RAG rated and the action followed through. A new Apprenticeship Team is now in place and results have improved. The recent purchase of the Smart Assessor e.portfolio software is expected to lead to improvements for students, staff and managers.</p> <p>It was confirmed that there are no apprenticeship subcontractors now as all provision has been brought in-house. Overall the priority is to improve reporting and the Principal confirmed she is working with the Executive Director, Partnerships, Skills & Commercial Development to do this whilst noting that the College has turned the corner in this area.</p>	

	<p>Members emphasised the need for tight management against the interim deadlines in the Plan. A request was made that future versions of the Plan have letters instead of, or in addition to the coloured RAG rating.</p>	Principal
10.	<p>Higher Education (“HE”) Review</p> <p>The Principal shared the content of a letter to her from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education that confirmed that the Report is likely to confirm that the College meets expectations on all four judgments. Further, it is also likely to highlight an area of good practice around pastoral support arrangements and some affirmations of courses of action the College has identified. With just two minor recommendations expected the overall outcome is the best that could be expected. Members noted this achievement in the context that one third of the inspections of HE provision in the FE sector result in a judgment that it is unsatisfactory and that where such provision is for less than 249 HE students, 45% is found to be unsatisfactory, meaning that the College is performing highly in this area. Whilst the final Report is awaited, it is expected to be consistent with the findings that have been shared and the absence of any significant concerns.</p> <p>Members encouraged the use of the opportunity that the Report brings to capitalise on its positive PR benefits. Meanwhile the Principal has met with a representative from Peterborough Regional College to set up reciprocal arrangements to improve the pipeline for both Colleges in their specialisms.</p> <p>Altogether the HE Review process had been a very positive one that highlighted the support and togetherness of the team under the leadership of Matt Shough.</p> <p>It was agreed that a similar report will be provided to the Corporation at its next meeting on 4th November 2015.</p>	Principal
11.	<p>Development of Key Performance Indicators (“KPIs”)</p> <p>A discussion took place about the development of targets that relate to Quality that would sit beneath the overall College Dashboard. These targets would be reviewed at meetings of the Senior Leadership Team and at Performance Panels (formerly known as Principal’s Excellence Reviews) with progress reports being made to the Committee. It was explained that using sector norms and current performance, appropriate yet stretching targets have been established via a process of discussion with the Senior Leadership Team and the Directors of Learning.</p> <p>In order to ensure they have the information available to challenge the Executive and enable them to have a better overall view of the College, Members suggested that they would benefit from additional information, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the National Average (where applicable), • where the College currently stands, • the definition of “high grades” • enrichment opportunities available to students and • what the College offers that makes students choose to study there. <p>The KPIs and overall quality targets were agreed with the additional background information, including a suggested Report on Study Programmes, including enrichment, to be finalised in the Committee.</p>	Principal & VPC

12.	<p>Any other urgent business</p> <p>(i) Committee Chair – The Committee Chair told Members that time constraints prevent her from continuing as Chair of the Committee although she is willing to continue to serve as a Member. Paul Wingfield indicated he is willing to take on the appointment and so Members were asked to consider that proposal. It was agreed that the election of the Committee Chair will be an agenda item at the next Committee meeting.</p>	Clerk
13.	<p>Date of next Meeting</p> <p>It was agreed that the meeting planned for 25th November was too soon and so will be cancelled. Consequently the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 6th January 2016 at 4.00pm in the Executive Boardroom with the papers for the meeting to be distributed before Christmas.</p>	Clerk

The meeting ended at 6.40pm

Signed Chair

Date