

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE  
held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at 16.15**

- Present: Mrs. Rebecca Aylett (Parent Governor), Canon Guy Bridgewater (Governor), Mrs. Sally Bromley (Principal), Dr Grant Powell (Governor), Mr Roger Raymond (Staff Governor), Dr David Skipp (Chair of Governors)
- Apologies received: Dr Melaine Coward (Governor), Mr Ed Cray (Student Governor), Mr Thom Hodson (Governor), Ms Charlie O'Neill (Student Governor)
- In attendance: Ms Andrea John (Assistant Principal – Student Support), Ms Naomi Lask (item 4), Mr Dan Lodge (Vice Principal – Quality and Curriculum), Mr. Steve Martell (Deputy Principal), Mr Ian McAlister (item 5), Ms N Whitehead (Clerk)
- Chair: Dr David Skipp

1. **Declarations of interest:** There were no declarations of interest.
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017** were approved.
3. **Matters Arising**

**Item 3 (ref item 7)** Clarity was sought as to whether permission for access to MyStudent was for the full period of study or on an annual basis. Members noted that this would be reviewed as part of the consideration of the impact of the General Data Protection Regulations. Whilst the move towards greater transparency with parents was valuable, it was recognised that students should also have the right to withdraw consent (**Action: Deputy Principal**).

**Item 5: Cover Policy**

The Principal confirmed that this had been circulated to parents by e-mail, in response to which a number of concerns had been raised. She had sought to reassure that this was common practice in the post-16 sector where students were able to work independently and that registers were taken and work set. She would continue to flag the good practice on cover and rationale to parents as part of regular updates and to include it in the new parents' briefing evening.

**Item 6:** With reference to the discussion on **attendance** and its connection with results, the Deputy Principal (DP) explained that school attendance figures were noted as part of the interview process for new students and questions asked as to the underlying cause.

**Item 8: Exam marking**

The Vice Principal– Quality and Curriculum (VP) reported on progress following discussion by governors of streamlined ways to help identify any anomalies in exam results. For the next summer exam results, MIS would be generating a report which showed final outcomes against March Performance grades. This would enable the VP to identify any concerns even before the usual analysis and input from subject staff. MIS would also enhance current reporting to include further information and functionality which would improve subject leaders' ability to spot anomalies in results.

#### 4. **E&D Update**

*Paper: Equality and Diversity Review 2016/17*

The E&D Officer explained that the updated E&D review once again constituted a statistical analysis supported by a qualitative narrative on the positive action in College. The latter included training such as that provided by Gendered Intelligence on gender diversity which had led to lively discussion as well as participation in events from both external and current students. For example, a talk by a journalist, author and Old Collyerian on transgender issues had been open to both current and prospective students from partner schools. There had been a notable increase in student-led activity, starting with their increased involvement in the E&D Committee extending, for example, to them leading in providing information for tutorial discussion.

The statistical analysis showed that broad parity had been maintained with regard to the protected characteristics albeit with some variation. There had, for example, been a decreasing gap on gender in relation to achievement and retention where females had tended to perform better in terms of high grades but males better on value-added. The student body had become more diverse in terms of ethnicity owing to recruitment from a wider area. Whilst there was lower retention for black students, the % statistics could be misleading given, for example, the very small number of 19+ black students. The Chinese students achieved the best value added. The evidence in relation to students with disabilities suggested that the additional support available was effective. The postcode analysis demonstrated that there was not an issue with distance to travel. The College was however looking into a more refined measure of any socio-economic bias with options including a look at students with bursaries.

Members welcomed the comprehensive data noting that international students were not included. The age range of staff was also skewed by the inclusion of invigilators who were often retired. It was agreed that some small refinement of the self-declared data on religion could usefully be made with regard to Christianity (Action: E&D Officer).

*[16.45pm Mrs Rebecca Aylett joined the meeting.]*

Members thanked the E&D Officer for her extensive work on the wider activities, report and effective monitoring.

#### 5. **Student Progression Report**

*Paper: Higher Education and Destination Report Jan 18*

The DP explained that the new Director of Higher Education and Progression had relinquished his senior tutor role in order to focus more on progression. His report showed that there had been an increase in the number of applications to university and successful applications to Oxford and Cambridge, possibly helped by the appointment of an Oxbridge tutor who offered support in making the applications and preparing for interview.

With regard to discussion of student engagement, the Director of Higher Education and Progression explained that this was strong with a good understanding of the options and the 'Not going to Uni' events very popular. The College was also proactive in offering workshops on apprenticeships. That said the number of HE applications had increased with the majority staying within a near geographical radius of Horsham, where there were very good universities. There was a shift in popularity towards courses with a clearer career pathway with newer universities generally being seen to offer more forward-thinking courses. Fewer students, relative to the size of the cohort, were choosing to take a gap year before university and there appeared to be a greater propensity to go to university after gap years than in the past. There did appear to be

some impact from fees in that students were seeking value for money in terms of contact hours and were not afraid to change university if their initial experience was not what they had sought.

In response to a question in relation to predicted grades, the Director of Higher Education and Progression commented that he thought that Collyer's reputation for accurate appraisal combined with the aspiration and commitment of the students might well be contributing to the increase in unconditional offers and a high success rate in gaining places even when the grades requested were not quite achieved. 80% of students were achieving their first choices which had led to a decrease in Priority Reviews of Marking.

The DP explained that the report would continue to evolve with particular regard to the latest DfE guidance to demonstrate performance against the Gatsby recommendations and the impact of the College's employability courses. The SFCA report was also valuable in demonstrating the success of SFC students at university.

*[17.15 Canon Guy Bridgewater left the meeting].*

## 6. **DfE Performance Tables**

*Paper (electronic): Excerpts from tables concerning local schools and colleges*

The VP (Q&C) explained that further to the results shared with governors early in the academic year, the recent DfE performance tables demonstrated how Collyer's performed nationally based on final exam results. This information was readily available in an accessible form for both the College and stakeholders and as such was gaining currency with parents.

The tables demonstrated Collyer's 'above average' performance in value added at A level, ahead of local competitors who were average or lower. The Principal had shared the results with parents and local schools as part of the College's action to ensure local students had reliable information on which to base their choice at 16-19. Collyer's was a good example of sixth form colleges' impressive national well above average performance on Maths and English retakes. Indeed the S7 colleges to which Collyer's belonged were a strong South East grouping within the national picture with Collyer's ranking third of the nine colleges at A level. Members discussed the scope to improve the performance at BTEC where it was thought that the new specification provided opportunities to differentiate from A level and hone assessment whilst continuing to produce well-rounded candidates who performed well on progression to university. Proven effective practice in Business Studies was being more widely shared and the guidance for admissions interviews could usefully be reviewed.

## 7. **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2018 Update**

*Paper: Quality Improvement Plan 2018*

The VP (Q&C) reminded members that the QIP had been approved at the December Governing Body meeting but work had been underway since the start of the academic year enabling a mid-year update on progress already made on Part 1 of the QIP concerning the key actions underpinning the College's five strategic aims. The QIP had been thoroughly reviewed by SMT and all actions were progressing well with some not scheduled to be addressed until the summer term. Key initiatives launched this year spanning multiple QIP targets were improving studentship, raising achievement and broadening ILT.

Asked about the College's current drive on attendance, the VP reported that parents would soon be kept in touch with any issues through automated e-mails which, it was hoped, would facilitate conversations with the student. The e-mails might also further boost uptake of MyStudent by parents currently standing at 95%. The AP (Student Support) reported further on the increased

level of student engagement with RCU officers promoting the new systems as being in the students' best interests. The staff governor also commented on the very useful latest PEARS intervention guidance to staff which, the AP explained, was also feeding into review of the Student Disciplinary Policy and procedure with a clear action plan model more closely related to the VESPA studentship initiative. This was designed to give students more detail on where they might improve, for example through splitting the effort grade into a more refined appraisal, with a clearer focus on target-setting to bring about change. The parent governor commented on the invaluable insights she had gained from MyStudent, for example in photography, whilst appreciating the investment of time required by staff. The AP commented that the system was designed to be a more efficient means of recording existing conversations and advice in a clear and unambiguous way, drawing on her own recent experience as a subject teacher. She highlighted that a central record of targets visible to staff, students and parents, would be particularly beneficial for students with additional learning needs such as dyslexia, which often impacts students' ability to organise their studies.

Asked about how success would be measured, the AP commented that it was hoped that students would get back on track more quickly having received clear input in a readily accessible form. The Principal added that a baseline assessment of the numbers and levels of report cards issued last year would facilitate a comparison with the hope that SMT would see fewer and lower level cards. There would also be clearer tracking of interventions and support to inform referral at an earlier stage to an appropriate course of action such as fitness to study or disciplinary procedures.

In response to questions, the VP anticipated that these key initiatives on studentship and attendance would contribute to the College's targets to improve performance in the higher grades and at BTEC. He also hoped to build on the identification of key successes and any pockets of underperformance for governors through, for example, use of the cover sheets and the possible trimming of some regular items. The Principal agreed however that the SAR and QIP templates were sound and the meticulous detail important to inform the management of issues by SMT. Members agreed that they were not seeking to add to the SMT workload through additional documentation.

## **8. Student Progress - KPI Health Check**

*Paper: KPI Health Check January 201*

The Principal explained that the KPI document had been updated to reflect the position as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 and would continue to be refined in the light of experience and change in practice such as the refinement of PEARS data to reflect the VESPA initiative. The early signs were that recruitment for 2018-19 was going very well with 1455 clean applications received compared with 1375 at the same time the previous year. Indeed the latest figure was 1578 although it could not be assumed that there would be a full conversion rate.

Members noted that the % retention of daytime students was down on the previous year, though some increase in volatility was not unexpected given the higher enrolment figure. On balance student numbers remained higher than in the previous year but SMT had agreed some follow-up research to establish any data issues and the reasons for withdrawal. Attendance was above the national benchmark of 90% including authorized absences such as work experience and visits. The programme of lesson observations for 2017-18 was well underway with over 80% of staff observed (considerably up on the previous year).

## **9. External Quality Reviews (EQRs)**

*Paper: EQRs: Art and Design, and Photography; Psychology*

The VP reminded members that the EQR scheme was an effective peer review programme undertaken by colleges across Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex. Members noted that both the

recent reviews had agreed with the departments' SAR analyses and grades, whilst usefully adding some areas for reflection. Follow-up would involve review of the reports by the Head and Deputy Head of Faculty and, working with the Heads of Subject, development of action points which would, where appropriate, be integrated into the QIP for this academic year.

Turning to the specifics, in the Art and Photography report the many strengths identified included student tracking and support, team management, subject knowledge, quality of student work and classroom displays. Ideas had been contributed on the assessment of learning, target setting, checking of prior learning and stretch and challenge. In Psychology, the report identified well organized, structured provision, outstanding planned study, team management and subject knowledge whilst identifying more robust key assignments, stronger links to universities, extension and early intervention as areas where further added value might be achieved.

The Chair commented on how encouraging the reports were for members and hoped that they were equally valuable, and not too onerous, for staff. The VP reported on their recent discussion at the Curriculum Committee which had agreed that, after a good number of very positive subject reports, there would be benefit in focussing in 2018/19 on some priority cross-college themes. He was therefore exploring the option of two reviews with one looking at stretch and challenge particularly in respect of high grades at A level and the other at BTECs. Subject scrutiny would continue through the SAR/QIP process.

Members noted that further reviews had recently taken place on Business, Economics and Geography which would be considered at the next meeting.

## 10. Policies

*Papers: Admissions, Examinations and Assessment and Student Disciplinary Policies 2018*

### i) Admissions Policy

The Principal explained that whilst not scheduled for approval in January 2018, further additions had been made to the policy in the light of end of year transfer arrangements (para 6.1), a new attendance policy, and changes to ESFA conditions of funding for students under the age of 16 at the start of their course (para 3.7). Students with particular needs regarding physical and mental health as well as learning support needs were required to disclose these at interview (para 4.5).

Minor amendments were proposed to paras 4.4, 6.1 and 11.2 in relation to the disability statement, modular A levels and appeals process. It was agreed that, to facilitate accessibility, the Policy and associated documents, once reviewed and approved, should be placed on the College website (**Action: Principal**).

**Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the Admissions Policy at their next meeting subject to the minor amendments.**

### ii) Examinations and Assessment Policy

The VP reported that the policy review ensured that the College remained compliant with JCQ regulations for the management of exams. The College was inspected against these regulations annually. To this end there was only one major addition to the policy which was to include new procedures to manage centre assessed marks following the new JCQ requirement to publish marks and allow the possibility of reviews. Separate internal guidance had been issued to subject leaders on how to manage the JCQ changes. Otherwise amendments were largely cosmetic and to correct small points of detail with regards to access arrangements and staffing, or bring the policy and procedures in line with the updated standard template.

Members discussed the challenges presented by the recently announced changes including the timing constraints, increased workload and communication to students and parents.

**Resolved: The Q&C Committee approved the Examination and Assessment Policy**

iii) **Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures**

The AP explained that the main changes to the policy included the loss of exam entry status at Stage 2 of the Disciplinary Process (with clear criteria for students to work towards in order to 'earn back' their exam entry status), name changes to reflect changes in SMT personnel and areas of responsibility and minor wording changes. The Clerk proposed a minor amendment to the description of the appeals process in the light of the other changes.

**Resolved: The Q&C Committee approved the Student Disciplinary Policy subject to the minor revision agreed.**

11. **Sector update**

*Paper: Clerk's digest of latest information*

The Principal updated members on recent developments including the promise of £562k in S106 money as well as the recent conclusion to teachers' pay negotiations. The Clerk highlighted the curriculum areas in her digest including the national picture on English and maths, trends in relation to BTECs and access to university, the new T levels and a DfE report on the falling number of apprenticeship starts in the past year to November 17.

12. **Any other business** None

13. **Governance Quality Framework: Meeting Assessment**

*Paper: Committee Self-Assessment Questionnaire*

Members confirmed that they were content with the timely and clear documentation and attendance.

*The student governors were thanked (in their absence owing to the snow) for their contributions over the past year and the enthusiasm they had brought to the Committee's business.*

14. **Date of the next meeting:** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at 4.15 p.m.

*Meeting ended at 6.00 p.m.*

Chairman .....

Date .....

NCW 2-3-18