

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 16.30p.m.**

- Present: Mrs. Rebecca Aylett (Parent Governor), Mrs. Sally Bromley (Principal), Mr Reuben Crawford Clarke (Student Governor), Ms Jazmin Demjan (Student Governor), Mr Roger Raymond (Staff Governor), Dr David Skipp (Chair of Governors)
- Apologies received: Ms Melaine Coward (Governor), Mr Thom Hodson (Governor), Dr Grant Powell (Governor)
- In attendance: Mr Dan Lodge (Vice Principal – Quality and Curriculum), Mr. Steve Martell (Deputy Principal); Mrs Patrice Gordon and Mrs Helen Smith (Governor observers); Ms Noami Lask (item 4); Mrs Di Dowling, Mr James Gordon, Mrs Ann Mutluer (Item 5), Mr Ian McAlister (item 6); 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 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018** were approved.
3. **Matters Arising**

**Item 3 (ref item 4):** In the absence of the HE governor and Assistant Principal, the Clerk reported that the opportunity for student placements had been shared with the Surrey mental health nursing cohort and to-date one student had expressed an interest in a placement at the start of the Autumn Term. The AP was looking into what was practicable.

**Item 6: Learning walk**

The Clerk confirmed that a demonstration of MyProgress had been included at the start of the Learning Walk programme and had proved a very useful introduction to subsequent discussions with Heads of Faculty and House. Feedback from the visits had been positive and was being collated for sharing.

4. **E&D Update**

*Paper: Equality and Diversity Review 2017/18*

The E&D Officer explained that the updated E&D review once again covered both quantitative information and a qualitative narrative on the positive action in College. Points to note included good high-grade rates for students with disabilities, a higher male than female achievement rate - for the first time, new reports on socio-economic parity and a more favourable picture with regard to the gender pay gap. Governors were keen to establish that there was a fair picture within comparable groups. The Principal explained that some discrepancy arose through the greater number of PT female staff which meant they were less likely to take on additional responsibilities where posts were generally more practical for those on 0.8 f.t.e. or equivalent.

Members recognised the more diverse student cohort but that the relatively small numbers made it difficult to read too much into some variability in terms of achievement and retention. It was acknowledged that there might be scope for greater recognition of the work done by the Deputy

Principal with disadvantaged students both internally and with several of the partner schools. Those present asked further about provision for those with different religions in terms of quiet space for prayer and reflection. They passed on their congratulations to the E&D Officer and Director of Information Services for the comprehensive report.

*[16.42pm Ms Lask left the meeting which was joined by Mrs Dowling, Mrs Mutluer and Mr Gordon as Heads of Faculty as well as the parent governor.]*

## 5. External Quality Reviews (EQRs)

*Paper: BTEC Level 3 provision and A level high grades*

The Head of the Business and Social Science Faculty explained the move away from subject reviews to focus on cross-college themes, namely value added in selected BTEC Level 3 subjects and A level high grades. Whilst value added was generally strong, there was still room for improvement in the higher grades across a range of subject areas and faculties. This approach was new requiring adaptability on the part of the staff and reviewers. Areas explored included extension activities, Teaching and Learning (T&L) approaches, access to planned study materials and work outside lessons. The reviews included the more familiar lesson observations as well as conversations with students and staff.

The Arts and Communications HoF outlined the key findings in the BTEC report focused on the more established subject areas. Positive observations were made regarding confident student engagement, the culture of learning, clear and effective guidance and templates for assignments. Whilst lessons focused on distinction level, there was thought to be scope for further challenge to encourage higher level contributions. The Library was considered underused and there was no formal mechanism for staff to share best practice. Whilst MyProgress was widely praised as an effective approach to tracking performance and identifying areas for improvement, earlier intervention with parents was suggested. Whilst the new action plans and letters home on poor assignments were bearing fruit, there remained some inconsistency in approach across BTEC areas. QIPs might also focus more on Year 1 performance and earlier skills assessment could better inform the choice of study programme. As such BTEC subjects were reviewing learning materials, use of the library and probing questions. A revised induction programme was being discussed for September as well as the scope for more time in Inset for BTEC discussion.

Mrs Mutluer explained the need for some difference in approach in the review of the disparate subjects across the Humanities and Science and Maths faculties which had given rise to some disquiet about some of the judgements. These had covered differentiation, student ownership of learning, gender approaches and applying class learning to the exam situation. Key recommendations being taken forward were more consistent use of peer mentoring, already established in Chemistry and Geography, and robust questioning. The recommendation for more joined up thinking across subjects in terms of planned study had caused some debate with some variety of approach also thought useful to add interest. It was agreed that students might find it helpful to use planned study more consistently for learning content with lessons focusing more on conceptual thinking. The review had also stimulated discussion of the pros and cons of gender-specific or – neutral approaches to exam preparation. There was agreement that more Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT) in Humanities lessons could be useful. In Science more time might be given to students to answer questions.

In discussion governors asked whether there was scope for early communication of the implications of achieving a pass, merit or distinction in BTECs and how good practice was currently shared. It was thought that an associated theme within the T&L communities next year might help leverage some improvement along with time in inset agendas and the proposed internal learning walks. Members noted the difficulty in projecting value added for BTECs in the older BTECs. A project by

the Science and Maths HoF was seeking to address this in the interim before all subjects were subject to more rigorous assessment under the new specification from 2020.

Noting that the next cross-college reviews would look at Employability and Adult Education, governors commented on the review's mention of work experience and their own concern that there should be such opportunities particularly for those in lower socio-economic groupings, ideally brokered by the College given their greater leverage than individual students. The VP (Q&C) commented on the efforts to build capacity for T levels in addition to existing advice on the VLE, careers events, Unifrog, support from the Library, a vets and medics group and the employability programme.

Members thanked the HoF for their comprehensive reporting of the latest EQRs which they had once more found invaluable in giving insights into teaching and learning at the college.

*[17.40 Mrs Dowling, Mrs Mutluer and Mr Gordon left the meeting which was joined by Mr McAlister.]*

## 6. **Student Progression Report**

*Paper: Higher Education and Destination Report Jan 19*

The DP explained that the College aimed to ensure that students were able to progress as they wished. The Director of Higher Education and Progression's report showed that there had been an increase in HE applications and offers per student with a migration towards higher tariff courses in the upper rather than lower to middle range. The increase in unconditional offers was believed to reflect recognition of the strength of Collyer's students rather than any lowering of standards. Another trend was a student desire for security of employment in uncertain economic times.

Concern was expressed that unconditional offers might adversely influence student choice with some assurance from the student governor in terms of her choices and the figures which showed that 113 had accepted such offers but 92 declined them. Further analysis by the VP would be included in the Principal's report. There was a mixed picture in that the most academic students did appear to have underperformed when in receipt of such an offer – prompting an advisory email to Year 2 students - whereas others such as those with mental health issues had benefited from the reduced pressure. The Principal commented also that such offers might be less prevalent when the national and international demographic dip ended in 2023.

UNIFROG was thought to have influenced the wider choice of universities chosen although the emphasis remained on the South East. The ranking of subjects was believed to be quite often gender linked but also reflected strengths in teaching and regional employment opportunities. One observer expressed an interest in the S7 picture as a comparison. **(Action: VP to seek to explore S7 benchmark.)**

Members thanked the Director for his report.

*[17.50 Mr McAlister left the meeting].*

## 7. **DfE Performance Tables**

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

The VP explained that further to the College's excellent results shared with governors early in the academic year, the recent DfE performance tables demonstrated how well Collyer's had performed nationally based on value added. For example, Collyer's was in the top 6 SFCs nationally for A levels and second amongst its local strong S7 grouping. The aim for next year

was to be top in the county and top five nationally amongst SFCs. The Principal commented that Further Maths students were exploring (through scatter graphs) whether there was some statistical reason why the larger colleges were doing better.

#### 8. **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019 Update**

*Paper: Quality Improvement Plan 2019*

The VP reminded members of the new format to help demonstrate progress. Some items were further forward still than when the report was written. Key initiatives launched in 18/19 spanning multiple QIP targets were raising aspiration, the introduction of T levels, increasing the number of international students and pastoral consistency.

The first of these was being supported through the measures discussed in relation to the EQRs as well as the new action plans, focus on attendance, VESPA and Collyer's Aspire. A student governor thought that the latter might be more effective if more closely enforced. Feedback from the RCU on the trial suggested it might usefully be extended to first years. In terms of studentship it was very early days but there were signs that students were now more familiar with the gradings. The VP confirmed that further review of the measures, not least through examination of exam results, would inform any fine-tuning of approach.

In terms of T levels, the College had recently been visited by the Prime Ministers' Implementation Unit. The Arts and Comms HoF had arranged placements for 9 students so far for a 45-day placement against a DfE target of 15 in any vocational area (which would increase to 33 for 2019/20). Those present discussed the constraints on placements including timetabling, qualification currency, transport and businesses' constraints - particularly given the number of local SMEs. The College was in discussion with the Mercers' Company for some possible support.

The College's International Strategy was also being reviewed with the help of the new Director of Admissions and Marketing. The aim was for the College to be light on its feet in seeking out new markets and offering a range of programmes to international students, both organised with specific institutions or offered more widely. The numbers were looking promising for 2019/20. The meeting explored the potential impact of Brexit (with EU students more likely to be affected than international students) and the Principal commented on her broader Brexit action plan.

*[18.30 Mr Martell left the meeting].*

Finally, the VP reported that the pastoral support and intervention measures such as Action Plans appeared to be contributing to the improvement in results and would continue to be monitored.

Members were greatly encouraged by the excellent progress and thanked the VP for his extensive work in presenting the information clearly.

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

*Paper: KPI Health Check January 2019*

The Principal explained that the KPI document had been updated to reflect the position as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019. The early signs were that recruitment for 2019-20 was going very well with 1600 clean applications received compared with 1455 at the same time the previous year (reflecting in part the demographic upturn). The latest figure was 1763. The current budgeted number of students for the next academic year was 1970 using the expected conversion rate.

It was hoped the new tracking tables would be helpful in looking forward to anticipated results drawing on internal assessments over the year, the accuracy of which would be monitored. HoFs

were now more responsible for interventions in year drawing on this evidence (covering Year 2 only.)

**10. Survey update**

*Paper: Parents' survey questions 2019*

The Principal reported on the parents' survey which was due to close on 5<sup>th</sup> April. Some questions had been changed in response to students' and parents' comments assisted by the parent governor. Discussion followed on the arguments for and against the usual Likert scale with a neutral mid-point answer.

**11. Sector update**

*Paper: Clerk's SFCA conference notes; SFCA PowerPoint presentation*

The Principal updated members on recent developments in support staff and teachers' pay negotiations. Industrial relations at the College continued to be good. There had been some concern at the recent funding allocation (down by c. £60k) which appeared (and subsequently proved) to be an error. That said the funding campaign continued with the need for some consistent settled funding rather than piecemeal ad hoc support. Governors noted too the latest thinking on the new EIF framework to apply from September 2019. A further update from the SFCA would be available to all governors at the forthcoming meeting of the Governing Body.

**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 Chair thanked the additional governor observers for their attendance.

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

**14. Date of the next meeting:** Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 16.30

*Meeting ended at 19.10*

Chairman .....

Date .....

NCW 21-3-19