

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
held on Tuesday 23rd June 2020 at 10.30**

Present: Mrs Sally Bromley (Principal), Mr Aidan Cross (Student Governor), Ms Lorna Macrae (Student Governor), Dr Grant Powell (Governor), Mrs Clare Ruaux (Staff Governor), Dr David Skipp (Governor), Mr Dominic Wakefield (Parent Governor)

Apologies received: Rev'd. Lisa Barnett

In attendance: Ms Andrea John (Vice Principal - Student Support), Mr Dan Lodge (Vice Principal – Quality & Curriculum), Mr Steve Martell (Deputy Principal), Mrs. Helen Mayer-Dean (Director of Study Support & Student Wellbeing), Ms. Nicola Whitehead (Clerk)

Chair: Dr David Skipp

The Chair welcomed the two new student governors to their first meeting.

Members were content with the one consent item and agreed that agenda items 6, 7 and 8b merited the most attention – the QIP update, Survey results and Student Support reports

1. **Declarations of interests:** None
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2020** were approved.
3. **Matters Arising**

Item 3: The Vice Principal (Student Support) reported that a meeting of **S7 E&D** leads later that week was expected to provide the first opportunity to seek **benchmarking** information on the gender split in colleges.

Item 6: In terms of promoting links with **Collyer's alumni**, members noted plans to bring the OCA website into the main college website with a greater prominence and focus on the "new" Old Collyerians. Discussions with the new RCU were complex, not least in lockdown, but were in hand.

4. **KPIs: Student Progress**
Paper: Key Performance Indicators 2019-20

The Principal explained that:

- **Applications** were to-date **down** by c.50 students for 2020/21 entry (as anticipated following a spike the previous year and changes in local provision) **but were expected to meet the College target;**
- **Retention** – There had been a slight improvement in retention with the Information Services Manager attending SMT half termly to help with **monitoring;**
- **Student attendance** had been **strong to end March**. Unfortunately, **college closure** had meant the College had been **unable to continue monitoring** attendance. **Teachers** have been **reporting student engagement with online learning** to tutors where there have been concerns.

- **In year progress reporting** regarding subjects on which students had underperformed in 2019 showed some cause for concern in one subject but a potential upturn in student achievement in another.

The VP (Quality and Curriculum) explained that, in spite of evidence for potentially even better results in 2020, this would be difficult to achieve with the system of standardising grades following the cancellation of exams owing to Covid-19. In response to questions, he commented that:

- The methodology for awarding grades was unclear but understood to be evolving to seek to be as refined and fair as possible;
- The College did not predict a large number of second years opting to sit exams in the Autumn especially if universities showed some flexibility in admissions;
- Entrance requirements could be expected to remain the same at Collyer's with any GCSE exam 'resits' taking place at the previous provider;
- International student numbers were holding up in spite of some nervousness with the UK position. The Director of Admissions and Marketing would be monitoring Government guidance with the possibility that students might need to self-isolate for two weeks on arrival. Travel corridors could be expected to help e.g. with the Swiss students;
- All Collyer's students studying BTECs would be on the new specs from 2020.

5. **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**

Papers: College QIP Review June 20

The VP (Quality and Curriculum) reported that most actions had been progressing well, although some had been postponed to prioritise the response to Coronavirus. Some areas could therefore be expected to carry over into the next QIP such as a new Pastoral Strategy, work experience development, faculty EIFs and 360 feedback. Staff were however to be congratulated for the considerable effort made in setting up remote working, providing both distance learning (including the launch of Collyer's Online) and Centre assessment grades (CAGs), supporting identified learners, adapting the welcome to Year 11s and planning for reopening. The staff governor commented on the need to acknowledge the responsibility placed on Heads of Subject in ranking students especially in subjects such as Maths with c. 400 students, decisions they had not taken lightly.

In respect of the four key themes identified, the VP (Q&C) explained that the second phase of **raising aspiration** e.g. the focus on B grades, had been tracking well. **T Levels** were on track for launch in September albeit with greater interest in EYE than Digital. Considerable work had been done on pastoral support in terms of tracking and intervention as well as a management restructure. Enrichment had been developed and there had been refurbishment to provide three new IT rooms, not least to support the new vocational IT provision.

In response to questions on the detail, the VP (Q&C) covered the key points in **Section 1 (Curriculum)** as follows:

- **Government decision to proceed with T levels:** Blended or distance learning would enable the academic element to progress but a protracted Covid-19 situation would present challenges with work experience although this was mostly in the second year. Established relationships on childcare would assist with employer engagement but this would be more challenging with Digital as was recruitment to the course given other similar provision. Close contact with DfE sought to address any potential clawback of funding and new Digihub would be a draw;

- **Exams profile in 2021** still unclear. There might be flexibility in the range of questions to accommodate different coverage of the curriculum across schools and colleges;
- **Mercer Scholarships** secured with contribution of £12k over 3 years. Three students benefited from placements in 2019/20. As for T levels, Covid situation might affect possibilities in 2020/21;

Turning to **Section 2 on the wider curriculum**, the VP (Student Support) explained that research had been undertaken towards a **five-year student support strategy**. Further development would continue in the autumn ensuring alignment with any restructuring following the recent Principal appointment. To-date one area taken forward was a review of the pastoral structure with fewer Heads of House (but each with more time) and a new Director of Student Engagement to sit alongside the Directors of Student Support and Progression, echoing the curriculum arrangements with three Directors of Faculty. A new online platform for tracking enrichment activity course – Navigate - would be piloted with those on transition courses. There would also be further development of a Progression Strategy. Members noted that recruitment of a Work Experience Coordinator had proved challenging and the offer was being reviewed before being readvertised.

In terms of **growth (Section 3)**, the VP (Q&C) explained the increased competition in the area. The College's scholarship offer would be reviewed in the context of the College's marketing strategy. In response to questions on **Sections 4 and 5 (Staffing and Resources)**, the Principal explained that no refunds had been due to international students in the light of the Covid-lockdown given the continued work on exam grades and offer of distance learning but the new summer schools had not been possible. There had also been a loss of income from lettings.

Members thanked the VP(Q&C) for the open reporting in the light of the Covid challenges.

6. Stakeholder Survey Results 2020

Papers: Student Evaluations Executive Summary 2019/20; Staff Survey on Support Services Summary; Parent 'Pulse' and Staff Remote Working Survey Plans

In terms of the **regular surveys**, the VP (Q&C) explained that there had been some **realignment of the student survey** questions making year-on-year comparisons more difficult but helping to **tease out the levels of satisfaction given the very high grades usually given**. Covid had potentially led to a **lower but still healthy response rate and overall satisfaction remained high, though with some reduction in 'strongly agree' responses**. In response to questions, the VP explained thought would be given to improving the response rate to match other S7 colleges through, for example, dedicated tutor time, or a more accessible platform than MyProgress. The focus group approach to exploring results continued but had been hampered this summer term owing to lockdown.

The Principal reported on **two new surveys to explore staff and parent thoughts on the experience of remote working** and potential needs going forward. Further feedback would follow but the early signs were that **staff were generally very satisfied with the support they had received**. The difficulties were largely to do with **IT needs** in respect of hardware (e.g. webcams) and appropriate software platforms to support teaching as well as the physical set-up of workstations. The S7 colleges were working together on a **new Home Working Policy** covering e.g. expenses for which the survey results would be helpful evidence. In response to questions on training and the College's legal obligations, the Principal confirmed that some guidance had been issued on both physical and safeguarding factors at the start of lockdown and there was ongoing training over the remainder of the term including the current Inset week. Further advice would be sought on employment law to contribute to the policy. **(Action: Mrs Smith to consider whether she could share any of her training modules e.g. on VDUs with the College).**

Asked about the development of an online learning platform for ease of access and revision, the VP (Q&C) explained that staff had been consulted about the development of **Collyer's Online**.

This now comprised **virtual classrooms on Teams, teaching materials on SharePoint, an expectation of video lessons - either live or recorded, and an element of interactivity e.g. through message boards or online discussion each week.** There was a wealth of current activity to progress this offer. In the autumn term there would be scope for greater cataloguing of resources. The staff governor offered insights into her subject experience with the team, working together, able to play to their strengths - and within their comfort zones - in the preparations for students. She also commented on the **huge advantages of remote working for keeping in touch** – in her case by choice whilst on maternity leave, enabling her to access training and meetings which would not normally have been possible. All recognised however the extent to which established personal relationships facilitated such flexibility.

7. **Student Support policy updates and Annual Reports 2019-20**

Papers: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Safeguarding Annual Report 2019-20; SEND & Wellbeing Reports 19-20

a) **Policies**

Members noted the relatively minor changes to the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** following the significant rewrite in the autumn term 2018. These included:

- staffing developments;
- clarification of timescales and expectations for **safeguarding training**;
- the new IT software introduced to support IT filtering and record keeping - **Smoothwall Monitor and CPOMS**;
- a new **Covid-19 Annex** to reflect changes in practice during lockdown.

Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the minor changes to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy at its next meeting in July (as a consent item).

[12.00 Mrs Mayer-Dean joined the meeting].

b) **Reports**

i) **Safeguarding**

The VP (Student Support) introduced the **Safeguarding Annual report** which included the **further development of the support team in terms of staffing and training** and the processes in place to support students. The relationships with **external agencies** had been further embedded, albeit with remaining challenges with regard to their capacity. Members noted the generally **broadly similar types and numbers of issues arising although these thresholds had largely been reached at an earlier stage in the year** before lockdown. There had been an **increase in** the number of students with **eating disorders** and instances of **domestic abuse** had more than doubled, particularly during lockdown. More positively, there had been **no child protection referrals in 2019/20.**

The safeguarding link governor commented on the **'fantastic' and constantly evolving support** offered by the team against the background of poor societal provision. In response to questions, the VP explained the **Smoothwall** system - in offering a **proportionate (and curriculum-sensitive) alert system** to the College with regard to student IT activity of concern - and **CPOMS** which facilitated a more sophisticated and flexible **system of sharing information on student support needs** from partner schools and within College on a 'need to know' basis. Neither had been able to be used, at least to their full potential, during lockdown. With regard to **Prevent training**, some governors had attended the training at Planning Day and all should now complete the **new online module** released that month and ensure their participation was logged.

The Clerk commented on her intention to pull together a range of recent training offerings in order to present a **coherent package** to governors with clear deadlines. *(Action: Clerk to send training update to all governors before the end of term and to liaise with HR in the autumn about renewal cycles.)*

ii) **SEND and Wellbeing reports**

The Director of Study Support and Student Wellbeing (DSSSW) commented on the **successful restructure of the team enabling a more integrated approach** to addressing the needs of students. As such distinctions between SEND and Wellbeing were in some ways false. Students were presenting with co-occurrence of issues requiring team input to understanding and addressing their needs. Drop In Study Skills Clinics and a number of social hubs were available to support students as well as 121 support and wellbeing programmes. **Students with EHCPs were looking forward to clear destinations** with some progressing to further courses at Collyer's.

During lockdown, the impact on those with additional needs had been even greater. Like the Safeguarding team, the Student Support team had managed to provide **continuity of care** remotely, and throughout the holidays. A Wellbeing 'temperature check' had found that **most students were well and enjoying college although there was a common theme of finding it hard to relax and switch off.** Analysis suggested that rather than do more, the team **needed to raise the profile of the support available.** In response to a question from a student governor about anecdotal evidence of delays in support, the DSSSW explained that this was due to the detailed assessment undertaken and effort to put in place tailored support but the question reinforced the need for effective communication. The student governor suggested this might be something the RCU could help with.

Whilst acknowledging the **impressive support available**, a governor member asked if there might be any benefit in greater **gender diversity in the SSSW team** to reflect the student cohort. The DSSSW acknowledged this point as potentially valid whilst flagging that there was diversity in the counselling and head of house/ tutor pastoral teams which gave students some choice were this an issue, as did access to subject teachers for support. Members thanked the DSSSW and her team for the very thorough reporting which reflected the remarkable efforts being made to support the College's students.

[12.35 Mrs Mayer-Dean left the meeting.]

8. **Any other business** None

9. **Governance Quality Framework: Committee Annual Assessment**

Paper: Committee Annual Self-Assessment Questionnaire and Terms of Reference

Members noted that the increasingly refined cover sheets were helping to encourage in-depth questioning to good effect. They considered themselves fortunate to have such insights into the College's students' teaching and learning experience. Members agreed that the Zoom format had not detracted from, and might even have even facilitated, discussion.

10. **Date of the next meeting:** Tuesday 24th November 2020 at 14:00 (provisional).

Meeting ended at 12.52

Chair

Date

NCW 06-07-20