

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
held on Tuesday 22nd June 2021 at 14.00 by Zoom**

- Present: Rev'd. Lisa Barnett (Governor), Mr Dan Brown (Student Governor), Ms Hari Gunturu (Student Governor), Mr Dan Lodge (Principal), , Mrs Clare Ruaux (Staff Governor), Dr David Skipp (Governor), Mrs Helen Smith (Governor), Mr Dominic Wakefield (Parent Governor)
- Apologies received: Dr Grant Powell (Governor)
- In attendance: Mr Rob Hussey (Vice Principal – Curriculum), Ms Andrea John (Vice Principal - Pastoral), Mr Steve Martell (Deputy Principal), Mrs. Helen Mayer-Dean, Ms. Nicola Whitehead (Clerk)
- Chair: Mrs Helen Smith

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

Members were content with the one proposed consent item and agreed that agenda items 6-8 merited the most attention – the QIP update, Survey results and Student Support items including a new Pastoral Strategy.

1. **Declarations of interests:** None
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2021** were approved.
3. **Matters Arising**

Item 8: The VP (Curriculum) confirmed that the fine-tuning of the Examinations and Assessment Policy had been completed, adding some detail on exam appeals costs as requested.

4. **KPIs: Education**
Paper: Key Performance Indicators: Education 2020-21

The VP (Curriculum) explained that:

- **Students were on course to meet the high grade target of $\geq 62\%$ at A level and $\geq 80\%$ in L3 BTEC courses** as evidenced through regular and robust assessment. The **reduced L2 transition cohort had received additional support to support progress in these subjects. Achievement in GCSE retake courses was outstanding;**
- **L3VA remained strong** though below that at the same point in the previous year. Some caution was recommended in relation to interpretation of BTEC VA given the mix of reformed and unreformed subjects and related availability of national data.;
- **Student attendance rates were strong** though yearly comparisons complicated by different methods of recording in the earlier lockdowns. Staff were also conscious of the additional challenge of student engagement during distance learning. PR3 data - over a longer period- now presented a more accurate picture.
- **Retention was significantly higher** than last year and the drop-off at PR3 smaller than anticipated. Analysis suggested a range of pandemic related factors which might however impact retention in 2021-22.

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

Papers: College QIP Review June 21

Members noted the key issues at this stage of the plan as highlighted by the VP (Curriculum) as follows:

- Improved **attendance** rates during the Covid pandemic were encouraging but would continue to be monitored as teaching and learning (T&L) returned to normal;
- Continuing uncertainty regarding the **outcome of the AGQs review** – now postponed to the autumn suggesting that any defunding might not be until 2023. The College hoped that the significant lobbying led by the SFCA and AoC would be persuasive in allowing a three-pathway option with mixed L3 programmes in spite of the Government's apparent binary preference for an academic (A level) or vocational (T level) choice. Collyer's would be less affected by any changes than some colleges given its lower volume of BTEC courses and early entry into T level courses;
- National difficulty in recruiting to the **Digital T level** owing to Covid, lack of DfE promotion and need for students to make an early decision on a particular vocational path;
- Considerable work undertaken in **pastoral support** with assessment yet to be completed on their impact and success in meeting the targets set. That said, the restructure of Houses with a new Director of Student Engagement was yielding results with improved tracking of disciplinary issues and online support workshops. Enrichment opportunities had however been restricted by Covid and there had been difficulty in recruiting a suitably trained permanent Careers Officer although a further post had been created and filled in terms of a new Director of Progression (CE).

Members thanked the VP(Curriculum) for the clear and open reporting of progress against the plan supported by the RAG ratings.

[Dr Skipp joined the meeting]

6. **Stakeholder Survey Results 2021**

Papers: Student and Parent Satisfaction Surveys 20/21

The VP (Curriculum) explained that the recent Student Satisfaction Survey had replaced the more detailed annual Student Evaluations for this year only owing to the unusual circumstances over the past year for which the usual questions were less appropriate. On average 2/3rds of students expressed either high or moderate satisfaction or neutrality in response to the 10 questions. Given the challenging year, with substantial disruption to learning it was considered understandable that students appeared less satisfied than in previous years (when Student Evaluations usually attracted a response of 95% - 98% strongly agree / agree). The response rate had also been lower with fewer direct opportunities to encourage participation.

Whilst the results were in part thought to reflect frustration with the pandemic and associated national measures, there had been some clear polarisation of opinion in certain areas which helped identify areas for improvement. These concerned the blended learning approach during the Autumn term and some inconsistency between teaching and tutor groups during periods of online learning as well as the level of support provided for UCAS applications. Some students had particularly enjoyed the lack of travel and ability to focus at home whereas others would have welcomed more face to face contact. There were also differences of opinion with regard to the frequency of and level of detail in communications, albeit possibly reflecting the availability of Government guidance. The student governors commented that such polarisation had been evident too in discussions by the RCU.

In response to questions, members received assurance that the absence of more teacher-specific survey questions did not detract from the College's ability to identify any areas of concern. These had principally been addressed through training and greater clarity on expectations as experience of the exceptional measures grew.

[14.50 Mrs Mayer-Dean, Director of Student Support, joined the meeting].

7. Student Support

Papers: Pastoral Strategy (New); Safeguarding, SEND & Wellbeing Reports Annual Reports 2020-21

a) Pastoral Strategy

The VP (Pastoral) explained that the **Pastoral Strategy worked in tandem with the Curriculum Strategy to drive achievement of the educational aims of the college strategic plan**. The strategy had been written in collaboration with the Pastoral Directors (**Engagement, Progression & Support**) with each reflecting their own set of strategic directorate objectives under the new structure. A fourth set of strategic objectives captured the direction of the **wider 'Student Experience' elements** of the College's work; EDI, Student Voice, Tutorial and Enrichment.

The local context and Covid-19 were **external strategic drivers** applying to all three directorates, whereas emerging social issues mainly influenced Support and Engagement, Gatsby Benchmarks drove Progression and the SEND Review impacted on Support. The **internal strategic drivers** (Tracking, Monitoring and Reporting; Parent/Carer Engagement, Independent Study and Enrichment), were key for all three directorates and Student Experience.

In discussion, **members welcomed the very clear strategy and range of services offered**, particularly in terms of **student wellbeing**. They agreed however that the College and its pastoral staff could not be expected to compensate for the absence of sufficient resource in external services such as CAMHS, either in terms of specialist knowledge or the financial investment which would be required. Members recognised too the need for clear lines of responsibility both for governors and staff and for the wider health and social care sector. The high level of community interest in mental health issues from both students and parents was recognised and dialogue would continue to hone College provision but could not compensate for that lack of specialist support.

Turning to **progression**, members – and most notably the student governors - recognised the value of the investment in UNIFROG as a tool to support students in their research and planning for the future. New features were being added - for example, to inform consideration of apprenticeships and gap year activities as well as aid reflection on experiences in building towards progression aims. Work experience opportunities were being circulated online and the directorate restructure and additional staffing would help deliver the strategy which governors welcomed as ambitious and well-targeted.

In respect of **student support**, members asked about the efforts to-date in engaging parents and how this might be further expanded. The ensuing discussion focussed on the **wider student experience**. The VP reported on the outcome of the recent **Ofsted review** and the follow-up work including further consultation with students, coverage in RSHE and development of the disclosure procedures. In response to questions on the **enrichment** programme, the VP commented on the importance of clubs and societies and ensuring these were welcoming, inclusive and clear in terms of the benefits of participation. The student governors commented too on the RCU's interest in the clear monitoring of such enrichment activities and their continuation throughout the year albeit with some inevitable impact of Covid-19. Some had however continued online and provided

new opportunities such as the new wellbeing initiative, Incognito, which had been successful in encouraging socially anxious students to get involved.

Members thanked the VP (Pastoral) and Directors for their successful collaboration on the strategy and planning towards its fulfilment.

Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the Pastoral Strategy at their next meeting.

b) Reports

Members noted the continued integrated approach across the student support team aimed at providing a tailored package of support measures sensitive to each student. Key themes emerging from the reports were as follows:

- **SEND**
 - Responding to student needs, both specialist and in terms of greater demand for the more universal offer and **adapting systems for blended learning** with similar online pastoral support;
 - **Increased drop-in provision** with demand up from 89 students in 2019/20 to 160 in 2020/21);
 - **Increase in bespoke support** for GCSE English and Maths including the 16-19 Tuition Fund, successfully addressing notable extra difficulties with advanced study skills following the prolonged disruption but also encouraging signs of the difference which could be made;
 - **Challenges in engaging students with EHCPs** who had notably suffered in their progress towards outcomes given the **difficulties in maintaining a routine during Covid measures**. As such annual reviews had been more complex than usual;
 - Revised **exam access arrangements** working well (with assurance sought from the Chair on any implications when progressing to HE);
 - **EAL student intake strong** enabling more complex discussion - possibly reflecting increased entry requirement. (The Chair asked for clarification of the reference to 'cultural socialisation' in the report which reflected the student's own request better to understand regional variations and different social contexts. As such it was consistent with (and not contrary to) the College's wish to respect diversity.)

- **Wellbeing**
 - As mentioned in discussion of strategy, capacity concerns within CAMHS and the **increased volume and complexity of referrals**, occasioned at least in part by the pandemic, had necessitated an **increase in college support** through the appointment of a temporary wellbeing practitioner;
 - Whilst .b mindfulness courses had continued, **some services** (such as the Academic Anxiety and practical strategies courses) **had been reduced in order to concentrate on higher risk areas**;
 - **Close collaboration with parents** whilst awaiting CAMHS support to ensure coherent support to the students.

In discussion members commented on the sobering nature of the reports both in terms of the plight of the students and the demands being placed on College staff in areas which were the responsibility of health services. They appreciated however the dedication and evident strength of the core team and its wider liaison with teachers, tutors and external services (as reflected also in the appendix to the Wellbeing report describing the Foundations for our Future review in West Sussex).

- **Safeguarding** (Helen Mayer-Dean & Andrea John)

- **Team developments** including the excellent response of the Director of Student Support and team **taking on additional safeguarding responsibilities** whilst the VP (Pastoral) focussed on the **additional specific Covid requirements** related to testing, track and trace etc.;
- Ongoing training
- Detail of the type and volume of safeguarding risks presented this year, along with common responses/interventions
- Challenging cases and LADO referral
- The Ofsted Review of Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB) to which the College had contributed. The report was contributing to the College's existing appraisal of its safeguarding provision e.g. in relation to joined up thinking with external agencies, the focus of staff training and forthcoming tutorial content (informed too by a follow-up survey of students including feedback on previous school coverage). In summary, students reported feeling safe at college but not always so outside of college. The tutorial programme would seek to address the difficult topics raised, possibly employing specialists to deliver the content

[16.00 Rev'd Lisa Barnett left the meeting]

c) Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Members noted that updates to the policy had been postponed pending the latest KCSiE guidance. This had just been received with significant changes informed by the Ofsted review of peer-on-peer abuse. It was proposed that, once digested, the guidance would be incorporated into the policy and approval sought in the autumn term.

[16.05 Mrs Mayer-Dean left the meeting.]

8. Social Media Policy

Paper: Social Media Policy 2021

Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the Social Media Policy at the next (July) meeting.

9. Any other business None

10. Governance Quality Framework: Committee Annual Assessment

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

The acting Chair commented on this most sobering of the year's committees and thanked the student governors for their participation at this challenging first meeting. In terms of the annual assessment, members reviewed the Committee's terms of reference and were content that they had fulfilled their remit in terms of scrutiny of curricular and pastoral issues. They agreed that the refinement of responsibilities between Q&C and F&GP in terms of the SAR and QIP had been helpful as had similar broader discussion of the Admissions Policy. They welcomed the dynamic review of agendas to ensure members continued to focus on the right priorities.

Finally, members thanked the parent governor for his service to the committee, welcoming his anticipated continuing contribution to the F&GP and ESC.

11. Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 23rd November 2021 at 10.30

The meeting ended at 16.10

Chair

Date

NCW 26-07-21