

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SKILLS AGENDA WORKING PARTY HELD ON Tuesday 7 November 2023 at 15.30 at Collyer's

Present: Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum), Andrea John (VP Pastoral), Sally Kent (Adult Education & Skills Manager), Paul Mittendorfer, Helen Smith, Bev Valley

In attendance: Russha Sellings (Clerk)

In the Chair: Helen Smith

1. Welcome / Introductions / Declaration of Interests

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Bev Valley and Sally Kent to their first meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Rebecca Adams (Director of Progression).

There were no declarations of interest with respect of items on the agenda.

2. Minutes and Actions from the last meeting

Papers: Minutes and actions 7 July 2023

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without amendment. The items for action were covered on the agenda.

3. Update on external networking opportunities

Paper: Note from Chair of WP

i) Activities over the summer

The Chair reported to the working party the meetings she had attended in her capacity as Skills Governor. There were some useful insights from the FE Sussex meeting and the autumn term Sussex Careers Hub forum was also very informative, although it was not certain if other Governors from the area had attended. The VP (Pastoral) advised that the Director of Progression would normally attend but this meeting had clashed with another meeting.

ii) Progress on Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs)

The VP (Curriculum) was delighted to confirm that 40 of 45 subjects, had their initial ERB meetings with 3 employer representatives per subject resulting in over 100 new links established. Members discussed the possibility of creating a database system for the subject ERBs (a potential new QIP target), especially as it has been observed by the Education Committee that there appeared some overlaps where some larger employers had provided more than one department name or contact. This would also enable the College to track employer engagements and provide additional opportunities for example work experience and guest speakers, some of which could be actively promoted on SharePoint, especially as it was understood that some apprenticeships had resulted from these links. There was a discussion on how this could then dovetail with employers supporting the development of the transferable / employability skills outlined in the LSIP. The VP (Pastoral) explained that the College were in the process of researching a database product to purchase which can record employer engagements across the college (a target in the QIP). This will support a wide range of functions including ERBs, work experience, enrichment, marketing, alumni and fundraising. The VP (Pastoral) commented that the Progression team are already providing numerous opportunities for students to hear from employers on the development of skills but that take up is generally quite low. It was agreed that embedding employability skills development within subject delivery for example at the nominated 'skills week', may be more impactful.

The difference between subject and College ERBs was clarified during the meeting. As a way forward, it could be beneficial to create a short list and pick one employer from each of the LSIP identified

sectors (minus Land-based, Agriculture & Viticulture which the working party had previously recommended to the Governing Body be met through collaboration with other relevant education providers). Additional background was provided on the process for reporting and strategic planning.

It was further suggested by members that the College tap into the parent body as a source of employer contacts which would add to the data source and provide useful insights. This led onto a discussion of what might be possible through Adult Ed provision. The Adult Ed & Skills Manager spoke of the need to articulate this separately as there were some students with established links. The VP (Pastoral) agreed in terms of the Progression QIP, it was important to provide Adult Ed students with a similar range of opportunities that daytime students currently benefit from.

Members heard a new role of Employee Engagement Administrator funded by The Mercers' Company that was being recruited for the next 3 years which could support related initiatives.

The discussion ended with the following agreed actions noted:

- Promotion and awareness raising via Adult Ed e.g. strong comms, careers / flagship event / for example on a Saturday or at an open evening
- Employer Engagement Administrator to establish employer links for both daytime and Adult Ed learners which may include parent contacts and Adult Ed student contacts
- Utilising external partnerships – suggestions included Sussex Council of Training Providers and Eppie Silverman, Enterprise Co-ordinator for West Sussex
- Developing a list of ideal employers for the College ERB by sector (could be a mix of company size)
- Incorporating College ERBs into the strategic curriculum planning cycle and reporting via the QIP
- Database development (future QIP target).

(Action: VP Curriculum/VP Pastoral/Director of Progression/Adult Ed & Skills Manager)

4. Mapping Exercise outcome (LSIP)

Presentation at the meeting

A first mapping document had been drafted by the VPs and was circulated at the meeting. This was not yet fully complete but provided a starting point for the discussion. The VPs advised that some LSIP sector areas had more evidence than others e.g. Creative and Culture, in part due to the Digital T-Level. The benefits of Adult Ed provision were a positive aspect of this process as discussed under the previous agenda item and there could be new short courses developed in response to the LSIP. Enrichment was a possible route to skills development, particularly transferable skills.

Members challenged whether the document was realistic enough in terms of what was achievable; it was recognised that there were opportunities to provide leadership related skills and other employability skills, however in some areas, where the emphasis was mainly on practical skills, it would be better to be clearer about where the College should collaborate with other Governing Bodies and engage with education providers to establish the right links or sign post as necessary. Some sort of RAG rating or star system might be helpful in terms of this assessment.

Members discussed the benefits of learning through VR and where this might be able to enhance the curriculum offer e.g. to extend the offer of vocational courses. SMT had various opportunities to trial the technology. For some subjects it was possible to extend the teaching to a greater number of students and lighten the workload, however the benefits were very specific to certain subjects and ultimately online teaching was not considered as impactful as teaching in person.

The VPs took an action to complete and refine the document and report back to the working party.

(Action: VP Curriculum/VP Pastoral)

5. Ofsted preparation (enhanced EIF)

i) Staff and Governor prep

The VPs felt the College was much more prepared for the next inspection. There had been particular strides in work experience with online and in person options and careers development. The specifications for meeting the Careers guidance for schools and colleges was challenging and the Chair said that some had shared at the Careers forum that they were outsourcing some of the advisory work. The VP (Pastoral) agreed that providing access to a L6 qualified Careers Adviser for all students is required for 100% achievement of Gatsby Benchmark 8. Good progress had been made towards this with the appointment of our L7 qualified adviser (4 days per week) however, it may be necessary to consider some outsourcing to provide the capacity needed for all students to have an appointment. Career aspirations were tracked from the initial application, confirmed at enrolment and recorded on MyProgress. This helped to inform tutor support for individual students and engagement with enrichment. Some students were prioritised where no obvious career path had been identified. Additional considerations were made to SEND and Disadvantaged students and specific reviews were in place. In terms of the Gatsby benchmarks, the VP (Pastoral) said the College met 6 of 8 of the published benchmarks and a good level was considered as meeting 3.

It was clarified the next inspection may be as early as autumn 2024 and therefore it was important to prepare for the skills aspects in particular. The VP (Curriculum) said some prep work had been started with the subject based employer contacts and correspondence had been circulated so they knew what to expect.

ii) Future Skills review

It would be possible to start drafting the review once the majority of the preparation work had been completed. Colleges should complete their first review by the summer of 2025.

6. AOB

Members reiterated the importance of establishing the contacts, especially through the parent body which would ensure the opportunities were equitable to all students.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The working party agreed to put a date in the diary for the next meeting: Tuesday 20 February 2024 PM (TBC).

The meeting closed at 17.18

Chair

Date

RRS 14-11-23