



WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 4th March 2021 at 5pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Mary Mamik, Chair
Andrew Cropley, Principal/CEO
Andrew Spencer
Spencer Moore
Bev Whitefoot

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance
Matt Vaughan, Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality
Diane Booth, Assistant Principal: Quality and Standards
Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communication, Engagement & Student Experience
Suzanna Smith, Director of HR & Organisational Development
Phil Clark, Assistant Principal: Construction
Ian Frear, Assistant Principal: Engineering
Nikki Slack, Assistant Principal: Health, Education & Service Industries
Jayne Fishwick, Assistant Principal: HE, Academic, Digital, Creative & Professional Studies (from 5.45pm)
Nathan Clements, Governor Observer
Rebecca Joyce, Governor Observer

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made, and standing declarations were noted.

2 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Truscott and Steve Sutton. Bev Whitefoot was welcomed to her first meeting as a committee member, and round-table introductions were made.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH JANUARY 2021

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 06/05/2021

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7th January 2021.

There were no matters arising.

4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The committee were happy to note the content of the update provided and were assured regarding the good progress being made on actions requested at earlier meetings.

5 **QIAP – 2020/21 PROGRESS UPDATE**

The vice principal introduced this item and drew the committee's attention to the QIAP. He explained that this is updated internally every two weeks. As agreed, the intention for this meeting is to focus on two of the five key aspects that require improvement.

1) Apprenticeship provision

Key matters brought to the committee's attention were:

- There are nine overarching actions in the QIAP that focus on strengthening the weaknesses.
- There is much emphasis on improving the teaching, learning assessment and support of apprentices, as well as monitoring of performance in a number of ways.
- The college continues to hold apprenticeship performance monitoring reviews which are chaired by the assistant principal: quality and standards.
- The OneFile task group helps to drive the consistent use of OneFile across all apprenticeship provision.
- There are a series of improvement drivers, including apprenticeship coaches, comprehensive CPD, and regular attendance by external professionals.
- Section 3 of the report confirms that there is a trajectory of improvement but it is still not felt to be swift enough.
- February 2019 was a watershed moment in terms of the scrutiny of apprenticeship provision.
- A number of poor performing concerns have exponentially improved since the 18/19 year: e.g. the overall achievement of apprentices improved from 48% in 18/19 to 53% in 19/20, and the current overall retention rate of 74.2% will, if all apprentices remain in learning and achieve, mean a significant increase in performance for 20/21. This would place performance above national averages; however, it does depend on a series of actions having the required impact.
- There are good end-point assessment outcomes, particularly in relation to high grades: 60.2% achieved high grades.

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- Most apprentices, despite COVID, have remained with their employers.
- A total of 27% of apprentices took on enhanced roles and/or secured promotion, which is really exceptional, with the sector average being circa 9%.
- That said, there are too many apprentices not receiving their reviews within the statutory twelve-week window. This was described as 'stubborn data', with approximately a quarter of apprentices not having had a review within the last twelve weeks. There are some specific reasons for this in a number of areas, e.g. in health and social care settings, apprentices cannot be released by their employers because of work demands and, in relation to construction, employers do not want to release apprentices for online learning. There are 16% of apprentices with no activity recorded on OneFile for 30 days.

The committee were advised that the vice principal and the assistant principal have met with every single specialist and are driving forward increased accountability. As an overview, apprenticeships are improving, but the vice principal expressed the view that there were still too many issues to address.

2) Tutorials

Key matters noted were:

- There are six overarching actions within the QIAP.
- A deep dive has been undertaken in relation to this area, and one area for improvement is the need to make sure that one-to-ones are undertaken when there are no other students in the same room.
- Some good practice was seen during the deep dive. A number of elements are working well, but there is more to do in relation to the risks of radicalisation and target setting (in some tutorials).
- Employability and IAG are largely strong.
- A large proportion have moved to positive destinations.

In general discussion, the committee acknowledged that, from the initial starting point, the position in relation to apprenticeship provision has definitely improved and the committee is given assurance regarding the detailed reviews undertaken.

Q

The committee asked for an update in relation to the local footprint for apprenticeship provision. The vice principal confirmed that the college has been driving a more local/regionalised offer for some time. The college is supporting locally where it can, e.g. hair and beauty apprentices will be invited to site over Easter to use the salons. It was confirmed that the college has withdrawn from most of the national provision, although it does still consider opportunities in this area; however, these have to be supported by a very strong business case. The

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vice principal indicated that the college has 'upped its game' in terms of welfare, with regular contact made to check wellbeing, mental health, etc. There are lots more touchpoint opportunities via emails, calls, etc. outside of the formal review arrangements.

Q In relation to progress recording, the committee asked whether this was just vocational or included maths and English. The vice principal confirmed that it is a mix where progress is not being recorded and includes both vocational and maths and English elements. The committee were advised that the college is hoping to recruit a new Functional Skills post to support the work required to regularly monitor maths and English progress. It was explained that, of the 16% with no recorded reviews, it is in some instances just apprentices not pressing a specific button to confirm activity is completed; however, for others, there really has been no contact.

Q One member of the committee asked whether it is possible to link the OneFile system with bksb to obtain more data. It was confirmed that this is possible and that more concrete plans in relation to this would be established by the time of the next meeting.

The committee asked for clarification on the current volume of apprentices enrolled, whether the level of funding is an issue, i.e. not enough to do what is needed, and whether or not OneFile is the right system. The vice principal confirmed that the college is committed to the OneFile system and is continually looking for ways to improve. The college used to have Smart Assessor but moved to OneFile as this was generally thought to be the better system. The assistant principal indicated that to change again would be catastrophic and gave assurance that the college is seeing improvements in OneFile use, albeit that it is slower than required. The vice principal indicated that the reviews have been streamlined, with four sections removed to make it less burdensome to complete; this was a multi-party review and response. The college is now asking assessors to create voice recordings rather than manually type into the system: this is easier and provides much richer data in any event.

In relation to funding available, the vice principal expressed the view that the college needs to broaden its approach and offer in relation to sport and leisure, and he confirmed that the team were working to better understand the market and opportunities in this area.

CH When discussing tutorials, the committee cross-referenced with the deep dive report later in the meeting, and the comment was made that they were too teacher-led and didn't sufficiently help students to develop their study skills. A challenge from the committee was whether or not a core curriculum is required in tutorials, and one member of the committee questioned whether 'tutorial' is the right word, i.e. do students value them enough. All agreed that it was important to raise

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the value-added profile for students. The vice principal expressed the belief that on-site tutorials have a much greater impact, particularly with visuals and cross-fertilisation that has taken place in the past. He indicated that it was hard to maximise tutorials when carried out virtually/remotely and acknowledged that there was a need to energise and excite students in relation to these. That said, the on-site survey carried out in the autumn term showed that students were overwhelmingly positive in relation to the tutorials provided. He indicated that, in the post-COVID world, staff would really be able to crack on with plans in this area.

CH One member of the committee challenged on the quality aspects of tutorials. She indicated that there was a wealth of amazing resources but that the college is asking staff to deliver some particularly sensitive topics. She questioned whether staff have the right skills, experience, qualifications, etc. to deliver. It was felt that there is more that can be done to equip staff with the right tools and also use external resources where appropriate.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 BALANCED SCORECARD REPORT

The vice principal introduced this item and indicated that there were seven aspects of the balanced scorecard to report on at this meeting, including:

- 1) Impact of the ASPIRE curriculum on deep dives – he confirmed an amber RAG rating in relation to this and, in terms of the positives, the DD process is rigorous with 20 trained observers. There is constant ongoing training but it is believed that the college does not have enough focus on ambition and high grades when considering curriculum intent. To address this, the college has now changed the focus of the DD template and it has been broken down in to each of the component parts: A-S-P-I-R-E. He expressed the view that DD as a process, apart from the focus on drive and aspirations, is RAG-rated as green. The principal indicated that the college covers approximately 50% of ASPIRE without even thinking about it and that there is confidence that the new framework in place will push the position to 100%.
- 2) Outcomes of deep dives – the vice principal confirmed that this was also RAG-rated as amber. He explained that 15 deep dives have been undertaken in this academic year; however, no grades have been given for overall effectiveness because of the remote working arrangements. He confirmed that the intention is to start to grade once deep dives of site activity can take place. It was confirmed that the intention of the process is not to be punitive and that the aim is to engender a culture of collective

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improvement.

The vice principal indicated that, if the college were to grade, A-Levels would be a grade 2. Business studies has been improving incrementally and has moved to a 2 from a mid-3. He described apprenticeship provision and music and media as both being too 'cuspish', as are HNCs and HNDs. The committee were advised that maths and health and social care have not moved on sufficiently, and he explained that in a number of areas the college has struggled with staffing and staff sickness. In addition, online learning has been a struggle for the lower-level learners.

- 3) Progress with the curriculum strategy – this is RAG-rated as green. All agreed that it was critically important that teachers own and drive this strategy, and assurance was given that this is evident. It was noted that the first college Skills Conference takes place on 5th March, and all agreed that this was a significant step forward.
- 4) Progress with the TEL strategy – this is RAG-rated as amber. The vice principal indicated that there is still more to do and that strategy development was at an early stage. He confirmed that it would be available for presentation to the committee at its June meeting.
- 5) Progress against QIAP – this is currently RAG-rated as amber but is moving towards green. What is preventing it from being green now is the variability in teaching and learning and apprenticeship provision. That being said, the college does have some really good areas of performance, with no area now graded as a 4.
- 6) Upskilling of teachers – all acknowledged that CPD at college is absolutely tremendous; however, it was explained that the RAG-rating of amber is because the impact on learners is too variable. The college is confident that it has the right processes in place, but the impact is not yet there in all areas.
- 7) Improvements in apprenticeships – it was acknowledged that this was discussed in an earlier agenda item.

VP C&Q

June 2021

Q/CH

A question and challenge from the committee was in terms of how staff respond to the feedback of deep dives and implementation of any actions identified. The assistant principal indicated that there was a real mix, which says a lot about the culture of some teams. It was confirmed that the college is seeing far less 'pedestrian' responses, with much better engagement evident when compared to a year ago. The college gives a mix of collective and individual feedback, which is welcomed. The majority of staff feel a sense of collective responsibility and a team approach through the deep dive process. The committee were advised

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that, initially, there was some anxiety regarding deep dives being undertaken around online activity; however, overall, the staff view is positive. One member of the committee asked whether individuals felt a sense of loss because of the collective approach. It was explained that the appraisal process uses the deep dive process as no observations are undertaken. It was confirmed that the college has a framework in place which encourages self-reflection, and these will be used in one-to-ones. The principal confirmed that the aim is to create a culture of development, and this is what staff are working towards.

Q

One member of the committee made the observation that, reading the report as a whole, it was clear that there were some solid gains. In relation to upskilling teachers, he asked whether there were plans to support teachers with employer engagement. The vice principal confirmed that there is a clear link on this with the strategic plan, and staff are all aware that the priorities for students are employability and jobs. That said, he acknowledged that there was a gap in relation to the CPD offer as industry days had had to be put on hold because of COVID. He described this as the next evolution piece.

One member of the committee made an observation in relation to deep dive methodology and, particularly, noted that the college was not yet having one-to-ones with teachers regarding sequencing. It was acknowledged that this does need to be addressed as it is an area that Ofsted are likely to focus on.

In relation to the collective approach taken through deep dives, one member of the committee asked whether there was a loss in that there was no longer individual focus and, potentially, this is a lost opportunity for a head of department to share staff concerns. The vice principal indicated that it is important to make the step change at the right time and pace. He confirmed that expectations were increasing but that it is important that staff feel it is possible to be open, honest, and not afraid to take risks and, because of this, the college does not intend to revert to processes that could lead to individual fear.

One member of the committee noted that the head of A-Levels is moving to another role and asked what mitigating steps are being taken to minimise risks in this area. The principal advised that the college has constructed a new post to drive forward adult learning and that the head of A-Levels, Amanda Gleadall, is moving into this role. The college wants to use this vacancy as an opportunity for staff internal progression and intends to mirror the model successfully introduced at Station Park. There will be three heads of department who each have a 50/50 teaching role. There is optimism that this change will lead to internal progression. The principal confirmed that the staff survey was very clear regarding the need for progression opportunities. In terms of mitigating risks, he confirmed that external support has been secured from a sixth form college principal and that this sits alongside the fact that he has

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also previously been a sixth form college principal for a year. The committee were advised that the A-Level team are very positive in terms of the future.

In terms of a culture change, the principal indicated that the college is managing and supporting staff and has so far been able to avoid having to go down the route of applying the capability procedure to do so. The use of CPD pushes staff beyond their comfort zone and breeds high expectations. In a number of instances, staff have decided that this is not for them; however, most staff wholeheartedly embrace the change.

In relation to industry days, the principal indicated that the college has been able to utilise some online opportunities, i.e. bringing together a Board of really diverse high-profile individuals who would not have been physically able to attend together.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7 **RISK REPORT**

The vice principal introduced this item and confirmed that this summarises the quality and curriculum risks on the risk register. He explained that there was no longer a risk of a grade 4 in any area, which leaves two risks remaining. These are:

- 1) Failure to embed the ASPIRE curriculum
- 2) Grade 3 Ofsted overall effectiveness.

In relation to the first, he confirmed that the college now has a visual cycle, i.e. the 7 steps. It is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the sector and locality. There are rigorous QA and QI processes in place, including monitoring the quality of deep dives. Business improvement groups have been very successful, including the work done by the curriculum planning group and the first 42 days group. The college is able to gain valuable feedback from students through Rate Your Course and learner voice, and it was indicated that the Skills Conference planned will allow the college to take in external views regarding the curriculum.

In relation to the risk of a grade 3, the vice principal expressed the view that the college is currently at a 'cuspish' point. It is on the point of being graded good for teaching and learning but is not quite there yet. In terms of the positives, these include feedback from learners and the level of CPD provided. In terms of culture, managers were described as the engine room and, therefore, winning their hearts and minds is critical. There is confidence that there are really tangible good processes in place and there is evidence that hearts and minds are being won and, as a consequence, the green shoots really are compelling.

Q The committee asked for an indication of the timeline to get over the cusp and have clear evidence of good. The vice principal indicated that,

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were it not for covid, he would be confident of the position now, but COVID has slightly put the college back. As a best estimate, he feels that the evidence will be available in May. The committee asked how this ties in with the practical preparation for an Ofsted visit. The committee were advised that Ofsted have communicated the intention to return to inspection in the summer and that, on balance, it is felt that an inspection is more likely than not. The vice principal confirmed that the college has been incredibly honest and self-critical within the SAR and that this may in itself trigger an inspection.

In terms of curriculum planning, he explained that the college was on a cultural change journey and that the processes are now better, freer, and owned by staff. In particular, assistant principals really engage and own and there is a sense of purpose in the design. Staff are now much clearer in terms of the why, the focus, and then the design, with the aim always being to create a brilliant experience for students.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 DATA ON A PAGE

The assistant principal introduced her detailed update, and a number of aspects were brought to the committee's attention:

- Attendance – attendance for young people has declined, as has retention, but progress has improved. The expectation is that this will improve further.
- Attendance for maths and English has declined but progress in English has improved significantly. Maths has not improved at the same rate and there is more work to do on this.
- Adult attendance and retention have declined but progress is improving
- Subcontracted retention has slightly declined but achievement has declined at a more significant rate. That said, the college is expecting more enrolments, which could potentially lead to an improvement.
- Apprenticeship attendance has declined but achievement has improved, and the expectation is that this trajectory will continue.
- In relation to high needs, there has been a decline in attendance and retention but progress has improved
- Deep dives continue to be undertaken but, as indicated earlier, are not graded for overall effectiveness and, therefore, are considered to be more developmental this year.

The committee were advised that, whilst the attendance decline might look like a worry, it is important to remember that this is the lockdown impact, i.e. purely 100% online learning. There is confidence that the position will stabilise once students return to site. The assistant principal confirmed that, when the data is split down even further, it does clearly

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show the online impact. The committee made the observation that, despite the decline, it does not seem to be translating into gaps in learning, with attendance being pretty evenly spread.

- Q One member of the committee asked where the national rates were derived from as they seem high in the current circumstances. It was explained that they are taken from the 18/19 NAR as this is the most recently published data; however, all acknowledged that these were probably now higher than the reality. The committee felt that potentially the college was comparing 'apples and pears' as circumstances have changed so dramatically since the 18/19 data. The committee all agreed that the statistics were really good considering the 2020/21 upheaval, and all felt that it would be a great performance if the numbers could be maintained until the end of the year.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

9 LEARNER VOICE REPORT

The vice principal: communications, engagement & student experience introduced her report and summarised the learner voice and your voice activities. She was pleased to report that meetings have now moved away from discussing canteens and buses and described the January learner voice meeting as the 'best ever'. There was really high-quality feedback, with learner reps suggesting solutions as well as highlighting issues. A lesson learned is that there is far more student engagement via the use of Teams than has ever been the case, with some students feeling more comfortable to make a comment in the chat function when compared to the vocal confidence required at on-site meetings. She described the learner reps as really representing rather than just giving their own views, which is a real step forward. Students did raise a few issues, particularly uncertainty regarding exams and assessments. Given the government announcements, the college was able to give them clarity and assurance immediately. Some students expressed concern regarding work placements and this was described as 'not an even playing field'. She confirmed that the work placement team are being innovative, particularly in relation to the virtual offer.

Learner reps were positive about the support given to students by the college but indicated that it would be useful to receive this as a student before actually starting on site. To respond to this, the support details will be published to applicants in May going forward.

The vice principal confirmed that the curriculum learner voice sessions mirrored what was raised in the cross-college sessions, which is a real positive and gives confidence.

- Q One member of the committee asked whether there had been any analysis undertaken of any gaps that may exist because of the lack of

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face-to-face delivery. The vice principal confirmed that 100% of students prefer face-to-face learning, and the overwhelming feedback is that they want to get back on site.

- Q The committee asked what the intended use of Teams is in the first 42 days, given the comment in the survey that there had been some confusion. The committee were advised that clear induction will take place, both in terms of how it is likely to be used and the frequency.

The committee were advised that the second round of Rate Your Course was circulated in January during lockdown. There were 576 responses and the learner reps worked very hard to secure this response rate. Of those who responded, only seven indicated that they had learned nothing or made no progress. A really good statistic is that 95% of students indicated that they would recommend the college. The vice principal indicated that, when you layer on top of this the hugely different year and that fact that it has not been what students had expected or what had been planned, all agreed that this was a significant achievement.

The committee were advised that it is possible to drill down into specifics and that there are a few areas that have been followed up, particularly where students are not happy or didn't feel that they were making progress.

- Q The committee asked whether the college provides feedback in terms of what has changed or what has been done to respond. It was confirmed that this has not yet taken place but that it is planned. All agreed that the learner reps need to be able to see impact.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

10 **SAFEGUARDING, PREVENT AND E&D**

The committee's attention was drawn to the statistics, and it was confirmed that there has been a decline in the number of students with EHCPs and there has also been a decline in the number of safeguarding referrals. The college has recently been alerted that one apprentice has been convicted of a sexual offence. The employer wasn't aware of this but now is, and it is highly likely that the company's HR processes will lead to his dismissal.

Governors were advised that the college will be undertaking its annual audit, and the first draft of the documentation was shared. The vice principal confirmed that all governors were welcome to be involved in the validation process.

The committee were advised that there is some sector consultation on Keeping Children Safe in Education and that there are some significant

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changes proposed. Specifically, the role of designated safeguarding lead has caused some controversy, as the proposal is that they will have more accountability for student outcomes. The concern is that this relates to students who 'have or have had' a social worker at any point. The college would be heavily reliant upon transition information, which may or may not be provided, and it could relate to a really historic position.

In relation to Prevent, she indicated that there appears to be a mismatch between concerns regarding right-wing and ISIS. Police feel that providers may be reluctant to report faith-based concerns. Online radicalisation is still a huge risk, and some organisations are using anti-COVID materials as a method of recruiting. Police are reporting a change in hate crime patterns, with these now taking place in more residential rather than city centre areas, which leads to suggestion that they are pre-planned. She confirmed that the college's Prevent risk assessment has been updated in response to the briefings.

The government has issued a Prepare strategy, and this is likely to include additional statutory responsibilities for the sites that are open to the public, with colleges needing to respond. She confirmed that existing risk assessments are being reviewed to see if these new requirements can be incorporated within existing assessments rather than creating something separate and new.

The college has been doing a lot with teachers in relation to trauma-informed practice, and the college is working with a network of providers in this area.

Q The committee asked whether the college is expecting a spike in relation to welfare work when students return to site. The vice principal indicated that the expectation is to see more safeguarding referrals but that the drop-off rate this lockdown was much lower when compared to March 2020. She confirmed that the team is prepared for this. Staff are also expecting a delayed impact of lockdown, with students initially quite excited and pleased to return, but by Easter it is expected that there will be some students who show signs of struggling. She confirmed that work is being done with some external agencies, with the aim being to be proactive regarding resilience.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

11 **COMPLAINTS (MID-YEAR REPORT)**

The committee were happy to note the content of the information provided.

12 **AOB**

There were no matters of additional business.

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13 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The director of governance confirmed that this is 6th May 2021 and drew the committee's attention to the draft agenda. One minor change was requested and this is to separate out the curriculum strategy as an individual agenda item for discussion.

Meeting closed at 7.05pm.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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