

## **B O S T O N C O L L E G E**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2017**

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#### **1. PRESENT**

Stephen Brown, Steve Crozier, George Harrison, Jo Maher, Helen Mather, Chris Pett and Ben Webb.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Fiona Grady (Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality) and Vicki Locke (Head of Quality)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Jayne Mitchell.

Attendance 87%

#### **2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

Having been duly nominated Stephen Brown was elected as Chair of the committee for the 2017-18 academic year.

Stephen Brown in the Chair

#### **3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

Having been duly nominated Chris Pett was elected as Vice-Chair of the committee for the 2017-18 academic year.

#### **4. ACTION LOG**

Members reviewed the committee action log and noted that a number of the action items were being addressed during the current meeting.

#### **5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JUNE 2017**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2017 were reviewed and approved.

#### **6. 2016-17 QUALIFICATION ACHIEVEMENT RATES**

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality.

Fiona highlighted key points in the report on achievements. It was noted that headline achievement rates remain above national average by 2% although this was a drop of 2% on last year's results. Functional Skills low achievement rates pulled down the overall rate.

Fiona explained improvements in the achievement rates for apprenticeships and highlighted that 'College only' apprenticeships were now above national averages. One area still identified as being of concern was electrical. Stephen Brown asked about the current progress and staffing arrangements and it was clarified that VITAL is now in use in progress reporting for apprenticeships and this is going well.

AS/A2 results were reviewed and an increase in higher grade results was noted. AS level pass rates require improvement. Level 3 results were generally strong but there were some concerns about Hair and Beauty retention rates.

The committee discussed the functional skills achievement rates and it was noted that Levels 1 and 2 particularly had further work to be done. Some learners had been moved from Functional Skills to GCSE.

Stephen Brown asked about Hair and Beauty outcomes and the committee was advised that there were a few weak indicators in this area. Chris Pett asked about achievement levels in Level 2 maths functional skills which were worse than Level 1. Jo Maher advised that this was a National issue and that Level 2 functional skills is actually harder than a GCSE and has a particular issue with the use of English in its assessment papers.

## **7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2016-17 UPDATE**

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality.

It was noted that most of the indicators had already been reported to the Corporation but that this paper identified the final position in one or two areas particularly in respect of internal progression. It was noted that targets not met included:

- Adult achievement rates (College)
- Maths and English Functional Skills pass rates for 16-18 year olds
- Internal progression rates

Targets which were met or exceeded included:

- apprenticeship achievement rates (College and subcontractors)
- achievement rates of High Needs Learners
- 16-18 GCSE English grades
- Achievement gaps less than 4%
- Vocational high grades

## **8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2017-18**

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality identifying proposed KPI targets for 2017-18.

The committee noted that there had been some rationalisation of targets and that the change away from lesson observations was reflected in the proposed targets.

A discussion took place about whether there should be targets relating to disciplinary action. Fiona Grady advised the committee that use of the card system often reflected support and challenge for learners and therefore may offer a misleading picture if these were all regarded as simply disciplinary actions.

Jo Maher advised that attendance targets had been set at 90% in all areas because the College expects consistent performance. Stephen Brown commented that for some areas this was a particularly high target.

In response to a question about enrolment numbers for 16-18 year olds Fiona advised the committee that the numbers were about 70 down which reflected a fall in demographics. The College had hung on to its market share. Chris Pett asked about EU enrolments. Fiona advised the committee that reduction in EU enrolments is affecting ESOL recruitment at

lower levels. Jo Maher commented that this is affecting the College's performance against its AEB target.

Ben Webb asked if the tracking of observations would identify highly positive outcomes. Vicki Locke advised that the tracking was on positive and above outcomes. Stephen Brown asked for the committee to be provided with a copy of the criteria used to assess performance. Jo Maher explained to the committee that the Ofsted Chief Inspector's report was strongly in favour of not grading lesson observations.

## 9. START OF YEAR SURVEY

Members received a report from the Head of Quality.

Members noted that the performance in the survey against KPI's was:

<b>KPI</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Learner view – quality of teaching (Good +)	98%	99%
Learner view – Safety (Good +)	96%	96%
Learner view – respect (Good +)	96%	98%

The only aspects where overall satisfaction levels had dropped were learners feeling safe and second year learners' understanding of support available from Learner Services. The areas which were very positive were Work Experience, course representation and being treated fairly and with respect.

Jo Maher explained how for technical reasons it was not possible to record confidence intervals in respect of the survey outcomes.

Vicki Locke advised that the College had considered the safety concerns of learners and that, after a couple of unusual incidents, the College had contracted day time security on a trial which would run until Christmas. Jo Maher pointed out that safety is often a perception rather than necessarily a fact. Stephen Brown commented that the College had worked through these concerns appropriately. With regard to the understanding of support services offered by Learner Services, the Head of Learner Services has visited the groups which had particular concerns and emailed others about the Learner Services offer.

A query was raised about how the new management structure including the 3 managers heading the curriculum offer was working. It was reported that this was achieving a consistent approach

## 10. HIGHER EDUCATION PERFORMANCE 2016-17

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality.

The committee noted that the Higher Education Funding Council for England required governing bodies to receive and discuss the report and action plan relating to continuous improvement of student academic experience and outcomes. The annual quality assessment return has to be signed by the accounting officer as a governor on behalf of all governors. The report identified key strengths through the review process as being excellent student satisfaction for teaching academic support received and overall quality, a student centred ethos with a pro-active approach to acting upon student views and effective HE induction and study event. The key weaknesses which had been identified were underdeveloped study skills programme and learning resources and an insufficiently well-developed HE culture.

The committee noted that the College had been revalidated by Bishop Grosseteste University last year. An issue which was being addressed was retention which had seen an increase over the years.

Jo Maher commented that the college was using foundation degrees as intended as a service for students in employment. It was noted that the college was scoring less highly in the ratings for highly skilled employment as a destination. The committee felt that the report read positively and it was agreed that the committee Chair should sign off the action plan.

## **11. COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS SUMMARY 2016-17**

Members received a report from the Head of Quality.

It was noted that there was a considerable reduction in the number of complaints in 2016-17 as compared with 2015-16. Of these complaints a third were substantiated with appropriate action taken, a third was found to be unfounded and the remainder partially substantiated and followed up. It was noted that there were no apparent patterns emerging from the data on complaints other than that there is a continuing trend of most complaints coming from female learners and all complaints in 2016-17 coming from white British learners.

## **12. RISKS**

It was agreed that the heading of this item in future should be risks and good news stories. The committee noted that there were no risks to report.

Jo Maher advised the committee that she was very pleased with how staff had pulled together for the Ofsted inspection and the committee agreed to record its appreciation of this. Steve Crozier commented that the College was one of the few organisations locally not in Ofsted's 'requires improvement' status. Jo Maher explained to the committee that the next inspection of the College will be a long inspection and the College will be working on moving to outstanding.

The committee noted that a lot of students had done significant charitable work in recent months including UPS students working on British Legion charity fund raising, Health and Social Care students washing cars in aid of charity and the work learners were undertaking to raise funds for Children in Need.

## **13. COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE**

The committee reviewed its performance against its 2016-17 targets. The committee's attendance rate was 77% against the target of 75% and the committee had demonstrably addressed all of its other targets. After discussion the committee agreed that its targets be proposed for 2017-18 should be:

- Maintain an attendance of 75% or higher
- Monitor overall achievement rates
- Monitor the use of VITAL for progress monitoring for all learners
- Continue to review performance in electrical, AS levels and Functional Skills English and maths
- Oversight of T-level implementation strategy to ensure readiness in line with Department for Education deadlines.

The committee was asked to consider how effective it had been in addressing its remit as defined in the constitution. It was agreed that the performance of the committee in this respect had been good.

**14. MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE**

Chris Pett asked how the new structure was settling in. Fiona Grady advised that it was generally working well. There were some concerns about the way in which the Programme Area Managers role has changed which the College was looking at.

**15. SELF ASSESSMENT**

Fiona Grady advised the committee that following inspection the College was proposing a different approach to Self-Assessment. An external advisor would be visiting the College to look at a couple of areas but it was proposed not to have formal validation panels this year. The committee noted that the SAR will be brought to the Corporation meeting.

**16. NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee will take place on 24 January 2018.