CORPORATION COMMITTEE

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

HELD AT 9.00 AM MONDAY 3RD JULY 2017

IN THE BOARD ROOM, TOWN CENTRE CAMPUS

*MINUTES*

**MEMBERSHIP**

\*Mrs E Brocklehurst (Chair)

\*Mrs S Jee

\*Mr P Round

\*Dr J Burford

Mr J Middlehurst

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr N Gribben

Ms V Roberts

Mrs A Pryer

Mr M Hodgetts

**ITEM 1 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests declared.

**ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Mr J Middlehurst

**ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12TH JUNE 2017**

Minutes agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting with the following amendments:

Page 2 – Andy Taylors methods be shared as best practice

Point 5 – Extended Diploma – where appropriate

Page 5 – Delete the point about ‘victim of numbers’

Matters arising not covered by the agenda

1. Ms Roberts drew attention to page 2 and the point regarding assessor workload at Waterside. She confirmed that the assessors there have a caseload of 18 which by College standards is very low. Mr Round suggested that this is perhaps why the results are good and with a low caseload of 18 it would be difficult for the College to make a reasonable contribution.

Dr Burford pointed out that the SFA expects at least a 40% contribution.

Mr Round queried the emphasis on finance at the cost of outcomes. Dr Burford suggested that the matter be further investigated to draw comparisons to see how the caseloads compare taking all work commitments into account. Ms Roberts agreed to pull together some further information about the roles of the assessors alongside the assessing role, and to look at what the contribution of Waterside is over the summer to bring back to the Committee in September.

**ACTION Ms Roberts to undertake comparisons of workload and calculate the financial contribution made by Waterside to bring to the meeting in September.**

**\*ITEM 8a TEACHING AND LEARNING OBSERVATION PROFILE – OUTSTANDING TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**8:1** Mr Hodgetts delivered a presentation outlining the work done, and the outcomes of the OTL process in College. He confirmed that during the Ofsted inspection, 7 joint observations were undertaken with College staff and the Inspectors. Of those 7 observations, all were in line with the Inspectors findings indicating that the College OTL process is accurate. 3 were ‘outstanding’, 3 were ‘good’ and 1 was ‘required improvement’. Dr Burford confirmed that the inspectors made mention of the quality of teaching and learning in the Ofsted report, but advised that progress was observed as part of the Learning Walks and this was used as the basis for the Ofsted grading alongside the observations. Mrs Jee raised a question about how well equipped the College was now to deal with the new inspection regime and it was agreed that training was underway with all staff to make improvements to some areas that were referred to, for example, differentiation. It has also been agreed that every member of staff will have a lesson plan which is clearly differentiated even though it states in the handbook that this is not needed because it was clear that this made it difficult for staff to demonstrate that differentiated learning had been planned during the Ofsted visit. Dr Burford outlined the plan to look at the kind of differentiation that takes place in schools. Schools differentiate by task for different groups of students within the class. This is not the way that FE differentiates at the moment, but it would now seem that different tasks will be needed to satisfy the Ofsted. Mandatory CPD is planned for staff around differentiated tasks for learners, staff are visiting schools to look at what best practice can be brought back into College to make sure that the College is at the forefront of development and ready for the challenge ahead.

**8:2** Mr Hodgetts showed the profiles of observation over time – 692 observations that have been completed outlines the journey that staff have taken and shows all sessions and progress made over the year. This is then shown as a comparison with the previous year and shows improvement in grades good and above, and a reduction in the observations that required improvement.

Any member of staff who requires improvement, or who is inadequate, receives support to improve. Mr Hodgetts advised that the report from Pro Observe gives a clear picture of outstanding observations, particularly at A Level. Dr Burford pointed out that if this was the case it would be reasonable to expect good retention in this area, but this has not been the case. She suggested that IAG may need to be looked at. Mrs Jee Ms Jee asked about the lack of link between outstanding teaching and good outcomes for learners. Mr Hodgetts confirmed that Pro Monitor is now being used to track progress of learners and the number of tasks that have been completed so it will be possible to see very clearly where learners are falling behind despite outstanding teaching. Ms Brocklehurst suggested that a holistic picture is needed that includes attendance, punctuality, retention as well as progress and quality of teaching. Ms Pryer confirmed that having gone through support and challenge for teaching and learning, it was clear that the emphasis from Ofsted was heavily on progress. From a merge point of view, both St Helens and Knowsley have Pro Monitor, but have also included work on attendance and punctuality as well, so it would be prudent to look at the ‘softer’ targets as well, but going forward, data will be needed by faculty to enable SLT and the Board to be able to focus on areas that progress is not what it should be. This will enable investigation into the cause of low achievement where teaching is outstanding as it will be possible to see where things are going wrong early enough to be able to make interventions to improve the picture so that the outstanding teachers are getting outstanding results and if they are not, why not.

**ACTION: 1) Ms Roberts to investigate the quality of initial IAG on entry for A levels**

**2) Mr Hodgetts to work with Ms Roberts to look at reports to SLT and the Standards and Curriculum committee to track and monitor progress in all areas**

**8:3** The developmental process now in place shows the marginal gains, individual support is in place for staff with a focus on learning which will mean that it will be very clear why learners were not progressing adequately even where teaching is outstanding. Dr Burford pointed out that ‘Learning’ needs to be seen in a wider context and should include IAG, homework and the entire learner journey, not just a snapshot in observation. Ms Brocklehurst reminded the Committee that Ofsted did mention that in class, evidence was not available to show the background of the group outlining any additional learning needs so Group Profiles will form part of the evidence in the classroom for inspection and observation. Dr Burford suggested that in light of the Ofsted experience, staff be asked to have with them the scheme of learning, the session plan and the group profile as a requirement for observations and for inspection. Mr Gribben confirmed that there is a large CPD session before the end of term and this will be raised with staff to see if there are any barriers to this happening.

Mr Round asked what induction learners get in the expectations of them as a student of St Helens. Ms Roberts confirmed that there is a clear student Code of Conduct, and a behaviour policy, that is shared with the learners and signed by them at the start of the year.

**ACTIONS: Mr Gribben & Ms Roberts to suggest that staff have group profiles with individual learner information, and lesson plans that detail the differentiation taking place in the class for observation and inspection**

**ITEM 8b – ENGLISH AND MATHS TO OUTSTANDING – UPDATE**

Ms Judge joined the meeting to present the update with regard to English and maths. She confirmed that early indicators are that learners will achieve predicted grades. These have now been calculated by curriculum area to give a composite picture as outlined in the report.

English and maths GCSE attendance for all exams has now been analysed, and all Heads and Curriculum Managers have met and gone through all the Special Exam Considerations where learners have missed exams for illness, or other extenuating circumstances. Ms Judge confirmed that the attendance picture was better than last year, and the work done on the Special Exam Considerations has been completed and all applications, so far, have been approved. Predictions suggest that the higher grades will improve. Ms Judge reminded Members that the College have used the new specification, but it is likely that the majority of learners nationally will have undertaken the old specification.

Ms Judge was able to confirm that the £10k grant has now been used to support English and Maths. An English and Maths Intervention Officer has been appointed who will work with learners for the first two terms at 16 hours per week. Also, an enrichment coordinator for English and one for Maths will be appointed. The posts are going to advert. Ms Judge confirmed that the team are continuing to explore additional funding opportunities to further engage learners and improve outcomes.

Ms Judge confirmed that there were some legacy items that continue to have an impact, but currently, the majority of programmes are sitting above the national rate.

**ITEM 8c – WORK PLACE LEARNING – TO OUTSTANDING**

Ms Roberts confirmed that work in relation to English and maths for apprentices is ongoing. Apprentices will sit Functional Skills exams, and these are booked through July with Adult learners and any remaining 16-19 learners. Mrs Brocklehurst asked about the front loading of Functional Skills. Ms Roberts confirmed that these learners sitting exams are those who have not managed to complete during the year. Ms Judge confirmed that additional resource is being put into FS in Apprenticeships to ensure completion.

Dr Burford confirmed that work is ongoing to make sure that the contracts for apprenticeships include access to learners to ensure that they complete all aspects of the framework including English and maths.

**ITEM 7 – POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN**

Mr Gribben confirmed that the CPD days at the end of the term were tailored to address the issues identified in the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and these include:

* Pro Monitor training. Progress monitoring both short and long term and with regard to Value Added using Pro Monitor
* Mark Book training – basics and advanced. External trainers from Compass will be delivering this and will focus on tracking of progress in qualifications.

1. Working with KCC to see how they use Pro Monitor and Mark Book to pull both systems into line.
2. Support for staff on how they set targets and for what. Mr Gribben referred to the Blackburn College approach which is to have what they call ‘Pass Plus’ which includes all the other aspects of progress, not just in terms of assignments completed.
3. There is still no standardised, national value added scheme for level 2 in the way that there is for level 3, but consideration will be given to how progress will be tracked and reported for level 2 and below. Mr Gribben confirmed the College will continue working with Compass to ensure that Mark Book will be useable for learners who are not working to an external qualification. Internal assessment criteria will be set and tracked on Pro Monitor. Dr Burford confirmed that research would be ongoing into this issue
4. Assessors will have mandatory training on use of internal systems along with progress review training that is part of the role

Ms Brocklehurst asked when the PIAP would be available and Mr Gribben confirmed that it would be within the next week once the targets have been set.

**ITEM 9 – LEARNER PERFORMANCE REPORT (INCLUDING IMPROVEMENT SCORECARD)**

**9:1 - Apprentices:**

Ms Roberts confirmed that work was ongoing with regard to developing the quality of apprenticeship provision and CPD is planned to take staff ‘back to basics’ to ensure they are fully compliant with all cross college processes and procedures. CPD will include:

1. Start points for apprentices
2. Skills development – this has been an issue, and what is required is recording skills developed over and above the requirements of the programme. The starting point of an apprentice needs to be noted, where some learners have substantial experience before starting the programme and some may not.
3. Progress over time – distance travelled from the start point
4. Recording of other skills acquired over and above unit achievement
5. Using good Skill Scan or equivalent at the start of the programme to ensure progress can be demonstrated
6. How to ensure that learners understand the progress made and are able to articulate this

Ms Roberts drew Members attention to the fact that the new frameworks for apprentices include moving away from units to standards. The only measure then will be distance travelled by the individual. The learner will need to be able to talk about the skills that they have acquired and how they have learners and improved in the same way that we would expect learners on Study Programmes to do, and in doing so, moving away from a unit / tick based culture.

Dr Burford noted that there were 16 items not completed and suggested that a senior manager was given ownership as well as the middle management points. Ms Roberts confirmed that she would look at the levels of ownership to make sure that the actions were achieved.

Ms Jee raised the point of access to employers. Ms Roberts confirmed that ‘Contact Manager’ is the CRM system being used. The Apprenticeship Manger has talked with Heads of Curriculum to identify any employers that the College would prefer not to work with and this has now been recorded on Contract Manager with a note to contact the Apprenticeship Manager or equivalent.

**Action: 1) Ms Roberts to clarify the point around who adds in the information to the CRM with regard to employers**

**2) Ms Roberts to assign senior managers to monitor progress for the outstanding points**

**9:2 - A Levels:**

Ms Greenhalgh joined the meeting to give an update on A level provision. She confirmed that the College is hoping for a better spread of grades, and improvement in higher grades, and suggested that they were cautiously optimistic.

Dr Burford pointed out that retention was an issue in 15/16, and remains an issue in 16/17 with almost 20% withdrawal rate. She reminded Members that Value Added had been an issue in inspection, and asked Ms Greenhalgh what the issue was with regard to retention.

Ms Greenhalgh confirmed that this has been analysed, and resilience has been identified as an issue. Enrolment assignment is given out to learners and staff have been asked to be more rigorous in marking the standard of the work. Dr Burford suggested that some criteria be set around the return and the quality of the enrolment assignment. Marks are awarded for effort at the moment, but Dr Burford suggested that the marks need to be more to do with quality and content. Reward for effort might be sending the wrong message. Ms Greenhalgh confirmed that there would be a Summer School – arranged for the 11th and the 19th July. Looking at it from a ‘Readiness to Learn’ perspective, resilience, study skills and such skills. Ms Greenhalgh confirmed that learners will also undertake a subject based session to check that learners have made the right choices. This is further supported by the enrolment assessment – checking that learners are on the right course.

**9:3 – Withdrawals Report**

**16-19 learners**

Mr Gribben pointed out some of the key trends in withdrawal, and Dr Burford suggested that the report should reflect more accurately the trends – for example, how many went into employment, rather than all the individual details in the report. Ms Jee concurred with Dr Burford and suggested that a long list of reasons is not helpful. Trends would enable the Members to see where the problem lies.

Ms Pryer suggested that 40 learners withdrawing in May is a significant issue and asked about how long curriculum areas had held onto the learners before withdrawing them. Dr Buford noted that there were 100 withdrawals in October and questioned by they were not withdrawn within in initial six-week period. She also noted there was a spike of withdrawals in January. Mr Gribben confirmed that there had been issues with timely completion of assessments in some areas, and confirmed that for September 2017 higher standards need to be set during the first six weeks ensuring readiness to learn, attendance, attainment and high standards. He further confirmed that attendance in 16/17 had been heavily affected by weak IAG on entry, learners with mental health difficulties, and learners with significant financial difficulties. Mrs Jee also commented on some inconsistencies in the report, and Mr Round suggested that analysis by faculty and team might facilitate easier interrogation of the data.

**Action 1) Future reports to include analysis of trend data and be produced by faculty / curriculum area**

**2) Mr Gribben and Ms Roberts to undertake joint working with KCC to address IAG, timely withdrawals and assessment schedules to avoid learners having a backlog of work after Christmas and in May to avoid the spikes in withdrawal**

**Adults**

Ms Roberts confirmed that work was underway to look at the length of delivery for adult programmes to avoid withdrawals mid-year for 2017/18

**Apprenticeships**

Ms Roberts confirmed that she is now meeting with staff on a daily basis to finish the remaining learners and bring them in timely. Correct performance = timely 63.3% overall 72.6% She also confirmed that work currently underway to change the culture within the assessor team to ensure that they understand what is required of them. Mrs Jee suggested that better ongoing monitoring throughout the year would avoid this end of the year backlog and the need for such close monitoring. Dr Burford requested regular updates on the remaining 20 learners who, if achieved, would ensure that the College achievement is well above national average.

**Action:**  **1)** **Ms Roberts to continue the process to ensure that progress is strictly monitored throughout the year with interventions to be put in place where necessary, and report on a regular basis to the Committee.**

**2) Ms Roberts to report to Dr Burford on the progress of the remaining 20 learners**

**ITEM 10 – HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE UPDATE – CLARE WEBSTER**

Ms Webster confirmed that work is underway with employers with regard to local hospital trusts to improve applications and enrolment for Health and Social Care courses in 2017/18.

She advised that in year, the SSA changed and now includes Youth Work and Level 4 Sports Massage which makes year to year SSA comparisons difficult. Currently, retention stands at 80%, which is low, but there are some adult skills outcomes to go onto the ILR and this is predicted to have 100% achievement which will have a positive impact on the overall retention figures. She confirmed that classroom based delivery and counselling also now sit in this area, further compounding the difficulty with like for like comparisons at SSA level. Comparisons can, however, be made at subject level.

Ms Webster advised that some remodelling of the curriculum was taking place to better suit adult recruitment and the team are looking at more robust IAG for adults together with putting on tasters and establishing process for the better checking of academic rigour before enrolment on programme. There will also be a shortening of some adult provision to avoid difficulties at the end of the year.

A bigger package is also being explored to support learners onto level 4 and above programmes. AEB tasters will be put on between now and the start of term next year, and work is ongoing to support achievement.

**Action: The Committee note the report.**

**ITEM 11 Higher Education Update.**

Ms Roberts confirmed that preparation is now underway in anticipation for next Spring. She presented a summary of the information from QAA regarding the process for QAA inspection, and what evidence is likely to be asked for. She confirmed that an action plan to deliver what is needed is now in place. The role of the Facilitator will be discussed further in future meetings.

Lead student representative: Ms Roberts is looking at a pool of learners who might be involved in the inspection, and will continue to work to identify the right person and plan to offer the right support to the person who is identified as Lead Student Representative. She confirmed that there was less of an emphasis on strategy planning, more a reflective approach, so she will look at presenting the information in a similar way to how FE is presented. QAA will be expecting to see a fully integrated new college approach and the work that is underway will deliver this. Ms Pryer confirmed that she will be happy for joint working to begin now. Ms Jee asked about preparation in case the QAA team don’t understand the context of the inspection. Ms Roberts confirmed that the self-assessment and preparation will go to QAA in advance and this will give them their lines of enquiry that they want to pursue. We will be able to explain in the provider submission the data that is presented. Ms Jee suggested it might be prudent to sense check all data with a range of staff outside the HE framework and ensure that it is fully understandable to all people. Dr Burford recommended that we work with the HEIs to support the process. Dr Burford requested a timeline for the processes to be presented to the Committee that will give the detail of the data to be presented so that this can be monitored.

**Action: 1) Joint working to begin immediately. Ms Pryer and Ms Roberts to meet to begin the process and report back to the next meeting.**

**2) Ms Roberts to begin work with the HEIs as part of the preparation.**

**3) Ms Roberts to prepare a timeline for information and data to present to the Committee**

**ITEM 6 – MERGER UPDATE**

Dr Burford confirmed that there has been no response yet from the transaction unit and the process is expected to lead to a decision on the 26th July 2017.

**Date and time of next meeting – 15th September 2017 (subject to approval)**