

PRESENT: Gordon Smith (Chair)
Deane Braid-Lewis
Kene Ibezi
Stephan John
Clare Mackie
Frances Wadsworth
Kate Ward

APOLOGIES: Anita McGowan

ATTENDING: Neil Blackmore (Clerk)
Chay Champness (Chief Operating Officer)
Ann Monaghan (Director of Learner Performance & Quality)
Jason Pemberton-Billing (Dean of HE, item 8 only)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive)

5pm (preceding the meeting) Governors' Workshop: LQC's role in monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and improving outcomes for learners. Best practice workshop.

Key issues covered: the central importance of the quality committee to the Board as guardians of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; the focus firmly on learners and learning, members having good knowledge of teaching and learning and using this to monitor and challenge; the importance of Governors knowing of both under-performing and high-performing courses and monitoring actions to address weaknesses or spread best practice; that Governors should ask questions and seek information cut in a variety of ways to explore progress across groups, levels of study, as well as by SSA; interrogating the interplay between observation scores, learner feedback and outcomes- both success rates and wider outcomes. Understanding strengths and limitations of Observation of Teaching & Learning (OTL) profile monitoring as a measure of the quality of teaching and learning and the need to look at this with other measures and factors to ensure learning programmes meet needs, such as learner voice feedback. A need for a full understanding of wider outcomes was discussed – and to monitor and challenge on progression, employability. Ensuring planning of quality into the learning offer, making use of LMI/ stakeholder feedback. Ensuring robust performance management and ambitious target setting; targets which are closely monitored.

ACTION: DCE and Director of LPQ to produce a summary of key issues for members.

THE MEETING

The Chair welcomed K Ibezi and K Ward as new members.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

As noted.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No new declarations were made.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 13 JUNE 2012

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3.1 Matters Arising From The Minutes

The Chair asked about the COO's comment in the minutes on SFA transitional protection. The COO stated that there had been an application which had been unsuccessful. The DCE outlined the SFA robust approach to in year clawback for Employer Responsive provision.

4 SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2011/2012

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Chair noted that he and the Vice-Chair had been part of the SAR validation panel. Managers outlined further work that had taken place on the SAR since the panel, with further external validation from two Principals and a Vice Principal, to assure grades. The DCE outlined that there was some further work to be done on detail of equality and diversity and that C Allen, as E&D Governor, was taking part in further interrogation work in the following week to validate judgements of that particular area.

Governors queried that although areas for improvement were strongly evidenced, areas of emerging strength would benefit from more factual analysis and detail. This would be useful for the report itself but also articulate the College's progress. The DCE conceded the point and noted that there were further areas for improvement to be added to the SAR that had been clarified as the Quality Improvement Plan was being finalised. Governors queried the possibility of complacency where areas were RAG-rated red for progress and how this would be dealt with. The DCE assured that, as governors suggested, a fresh view of risks and issues be taken each year and issues not left to drift.

Governors asked about improvements in staff punctuality, which had been noted previously. The Principal reported areas of significant improvement from the monitoring effected, but stated that anecdotally there were inconsistencies. Governors encouraged managers to continue work on punctuality, as it was such an important aspect of the learner experience and staff responsibility. The Principal agreed and stated that getting the curriculum middle management right was the critical aspect of quality improvement being effected. She provided a recent example of robust improvement in one division with a newly appointed Head which had led to significant improvements in all aspects of operation, including staff morale and aspiration for learners. Governors queried why data reporting was noted for improvement not management as an area of improvement given the significance in the College's recent history. Managers clarified that data management was no longer the issue, as SFA had lifted the NTI and practices right sized and that effective data usage had been added to the Quality Improvement Plan.

The Chair queried how a Grade 3 overall effectiveness was possible with a Grade 4 outcomes for learners. The Director of LPQ stated that there was a question of a Grade 4 being appropriate, but that given the trends and improvements and college journey that in these circumstances a 'requires improvement' grade of 3 was felt by the management and externals to be justified. It was noted that the quality of teaching and learning observed and progress made in year would be a critical factor should there be an inspection. The Chair stressed that quality of teaching and learning will be most important and the need for the committee to monitor this and performance management of unsatisfactory teaching and learning closely. Governors further noted that the evidencing of in year improvements of learner progress was vital, such as attendance and predicted outcomes.

The 2011-12 QIP Plan was **APPROVED** as signed off. The SAR was then **RECOMMENDED** to the Governing Body but noted that additions to the areas of improvement would be made.

5. REPORT ON SUCCESS RATES BY SECTOR SUBJECT AREA (SSA) 2011/2012

The report was **RECEIVED**. The DCE outlined areas of weaker performance and some managerial changes that had taken place. The Principal expanded on external referencing on some of the weaker-performing areas. The Chair asked for some monitoring at the next meeting on the effectiveness of improvement strategies on areas that had NTIs. He also requested that a manager might also attend to share their experience of the improvement process.

ACTION: The next LQC to receive a report on the effectiveness of improvement strategies on areas that had NTIs to include leadership and success of identified actions.

Governors requested more analysis of the poor outcomes in some cohorts in SSA 14. It was agreed to add a Clerk's note to the meeting providing this information. Governors drew attention to specific items of data presented in the workshop earlier which needed more clarification.

[Clerk's Note: A note by the DCE is appended to these minutes.]

6. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2011/2012 – SIGN OFF

The report was **RECEIVED**. This item was considered within item 4.

7. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2012/2013

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors recognised the need for close alignment between the main judgements within the SAR and the QIP priorities for 2012/13 and supported the proposed main areas for improvement identified.

The Chair asked that the milestones be amended to show the key points for governors monitoring through the year and this was agreed. Governors then questioned how management were insuring that all staff understood the QIP and what it meant for their work. The Director of LPQ referred to the self assessment process and the college's journey to ensure greater ownership of this process throughout the college. Hence the QIP is the product of curriculum level self assessment and identifies whole college themes for priorities. The QIP will now be discussed with the Wider College Management team and then taken through to teams and individual level for the articulation and agreement of actions and timescales to work towards whole college quality priorities. Once approved at the meeting, the cascading process would begin. Governors asked about timescales for capability management for under-performing teachers. Managers noted that there was a very wide variety of issues with under-performing staff which made a standardised timescale difficult and that HR procedures were closely observed. The Chair stated that the College had to be robust in performance-managing under-performing staff, remembering that the learner experience should not be negatively impacted by slow action on poor teaching.

The Quality Improvement Plan 2012-3 was then **APPROVED**.

8. HE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2011/2012

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors asked about a timescale for reapplying for a Tier 4 licence for UKBA. The Dean of HE reported that a new post was being created to address

this and a specialist legal team appointed. Governors stated that this was an important item to address for market growth in the coming years and urged timely but effective action.

The Chair stated that some of the actions in the Action Plan were too vague and should have a clear impact on standards. Governors asked whether the team was confident that it understood the causes of high levels of Year 1 withdrawal. The Dean of HE stated that students were well integrated at UCC and known at a closer level than a university but that staff worked hard to track them but that the non-traditional cohort posed specific issues with withdrawal.

Governors asked about the apparently low success rates on the LLB. The Dean of HE noted that it did relate to the toughness of the programme against the non-traditional UCC cohort. The member representing the University noted that with such a cohort, the rates were reasonable. Governors noted UCC provided a significant social function in providing HE opportunities for non-traditional students but requested stronger gap analyses in future on performance such as E&D, distance travelled and value-added issues for future reporting.

The member representing the University made suggestions to maximise UCC students' access to online learning resources, given this had been a point of student feedback. The movement towards open-access journal publication meant that creatively managed, a good spread of free e-book resources were available and could be developed within reading lists. She further outlined how the NSS data is put together to show positive effects and how this impacts on recruitment now that NSS data is much more prominent in UCAS information. Governors asked for more longitudinal NSS data to better monitor trends.

The report was **APPROVED** to be submitted to the University.

9. DCE'S REPORT ON PARTNERSHIPS 2011/2012

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors asked about clawback on partnerships that had under-performed in terms of quality. Managers noted that this was difficult because partners would not accept penalties in the contract because partnership contracting is a supplier's market. Nonetheless the COO stated that in the absence of this, termination clauses had been strengthened. There was a discussion as to whether the College could replicate the business model of successful private providers. The Chair noted that he was confident that partnerships were now effectively managed and delivered to contract in most cases. The Committee noted the poor performance of Accent in delivering 16-18 learner responsive provision and acknowledged that due diligence had been appropriately carried out and quality assurance visits made which identified the serious management of learning issues at an early stage.

10. ANNUAL TARGETS 2012/2013

The report was **RECEIVED**. It was noted that this report further articulated targets already received at Board and the DCE outlined a small number of changes. The report was then **APPROVED**.

11. REPORT ON ENROLMENT AND PARTICIPATION ANALYSIS

The report was **RECEIVED**. Governors questioned whether a number of A levels remained commercially worthwhile offering with low levels of demand. Managers stated that it was difficult to remove certain A levels without impacting the attractiveness of the entire A level offer. Governors questioned managers as to what had been learned from the 2012-3 recruitment and enrolment processes. Managers stated that: the College was generally effective in terms of admission and conversion; induction had been improved; interview

content and guidance needed to be more prescriptive and standardised; compliance with minimum grades or students' performance at other institutions needed to be strengthened; gaps between vocational level and literacy/numeracy levels needed better analysis. Governors instructed managers to ensure that curriculum planning accounted for upcoming policy change and that the Committee be informed of the same.

12. REPORT ON TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Chair noted that this report was a summary of the current year's OTL process rather than the previous year's reports included within the SAR. Governors were assured that the process was judged to be more robust with the profile seen as an accurate picture. Governors were pleased to hear that all teaching staff were now being required to consider future actions to either improve and/or share best practice and this was captured in a Personal Action Plan for each teacher. The Chair asked managers to highlight any additional areas for improvement. The Director of LPQ stated that there needed to be more of a broader focus on learning across the SSAs to more fully inform judgements. This would include both factors within lessons and outside of lessons so we can evaluate the impact of all the influences on the learner. The formal OTL process therefore would be one very key aspect to inform judgements on teaching, learning and assessment across SSAs but it would not be the only one. Governors were interested in this and asked for some sample reports to be brought to their next meeting so they can gain more of an overall feel for the quality of the learning experience in different curriculum areas.

Governors asked for further updates on the impact of actions in hand to improve performance for underperforming staff as this will enable governors to monitor the impact on the learner. Managers agreed to further update this committee at its next meeting with the revised grade profile for OTLs and progress towards the achievement of the KPI target.

Governors asked that future agendas be reconsidered so that items on Teaching, Learning and Assessment are given a higher priority by being placed earlier on the agenda.

13. REPORT ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Principal outlined the Strategy and how important it is for the College to be at the hub of its community, listening to stakeholders, aware of and responding to needs and skills gaps. The various routes were discussed for employers, learners, community and some examples of practice outlined. Governors reported on their attendance at recent events including the Student Parliament and the Stakeholder Forum. It was also noted that another Governor had attended a recent Performance Review. The Principal stated that Croydon's Student Parliament was particularly effectively learner-led and the governor who had attended agreed and outlined some of the issues raised. The Director of LPQ outlined the GOAL initiative (Go Out and Listen) and how this is working with staff and learners. The Clerk stated that he was about to start rolling this out to Governors.

The Strategy was **APPROVED**.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO highlighted changes in risk (Op9iii Red to Amber; Op14 removed; Rp1 – Amber to Red). The Chair queried the Rp1 movement in which the risk of a poor Ofsted outcome now remained a red risk net. Managers stated that the risk was increasing, because the pattern of outcomes of recent Ofsted inspections means that the College has to be realistic about the new CIF culture.

15. DATES FOR NEXT YEAR

The dates were noted.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS/MATTERS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Governors asked about how learner complaints were reported in the College. Managers provided examples of how complaints are made at divisional level and within Learner Services. Governors requested that an annual report on complaints be made to this Committee.

ACTION: A report on complaints to be presented to the next meeting and thereafter annually.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 13 March 2013, 6pm

The meeting then ended at 8.35pm.

NOTE ON ITEM 5 AS REQUESTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Full details of long course retention, achievement and success rates against benchmark are appended to the minutes.

The main groups of provision in SSA 14 are:

16-18 ESOL, full time

Cambridge ESOL Certificate in ESOL and speaking and listening, Award in Supported Employment for Pre-Entry and Entry 1, functional skills Maths. Pre-entry to Level 1.

19+ ESOL, full time

Cambridge ESOL Certificate in ESOL and speaking and listening, Award in Supported Employment (Entry 1), City and Guilds Award Employability & Personal Development (Entry 2-Level 1). Entry 1 to Level 1.

19+ ESOL, part time

Cambridge ESOL Certificate in ESOL and speaking and listening. Entry 2 to Level 2.

SLDD (moderate)

Entry 1 – Entry 3. Subjects include: Functional English, Maths & ICT. Students can study a range of life skills or supported employment training programmes at Certificate or Diploma Level: Certificate in Life Skills, Diploma in Personal Progress, Diploma in Skills for Independence and Work. All students have SEN and are taught by specialist staff in small classes of 8 with learning support assistants in the majority of classes.

Adult Basic Skills

Entry 3-Level 2. Subjects: Literacy and Numeracy. Includes 2 Deaf workshops.

Vocational Entry Pathways

Entry 3. Courses are divided into 5 pathways and are aimed at learners unable to access Level 1 programmes. Most learners either have a declared learning need or have ESOL needs. Small class provision, 12 per class with learning support assistants. Each pathway

takes a different vocational element per term together with functional skills English, ICT and Maths and Certificate in Employability and Personal Development. Current Pathways:

- Pathway 1 = BTEC Awards: Health and Social Care, Caring for Children, Public Services.
- Pathway 2 = BTEC Certificate for IT Users, BTEC Award in Business Admin, BTEC Award in Construction
- Pathway 3 = Award for Intro to Vehicle Tech, BTEC Awards: Art & Design, Construction, Sport & Leisure
- Pathway 5 = BTEC Awards: IT Users, Business Admin, Travel & Tourism

Vocational Entry Fresh Start

2 x 18 week courses in health and social care, hair & beauty, construction and including FS ICT, Maths & English. Courses aimed at NEET students working at Entry 3. Provision of small group size with learning support assistants. Most learners have had interrupted educational backgrounds and present challenging behaviours.

Issues with respect to results are as follows:

16-18 ESOL

Success rates in ESOL 16-18 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life were inadequate compared to national averages and have dipped when compared to 2010-11. Poor achievement at pre-entry level was due to inappropriate accreditation. There was no pre-entry qualification for ESOL and, as a result, learners could only take speaking and listening. Some of this cohort had to take Entry 2 speaking and listening as they had achieved Entry 1 previously. This spiky profile with other fails at Entry 1 contributed towards an achievement rate of 57%. Other contributing factors for pre-entry:

- Large group size: the closure of a pre-entry class which resulted in the remaining two classes being above the target of 12.
- High levels of sickness by the personal tutor. This was being performance managed by the TL.
- Nature of the cohort. Most of the learners were male, unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan who were often housed in semi-independent living with little or no adults to shape and provide positive guidance. Some had mental health issues including suffering depression for which strong medication was taken and which impacted on their ability to get to lessons on time or affected concentration. Some learners did not value education and undertook a course solely for financial reasons whilst some learners lacked the motivation to stay on a course which was a year in duration.

Other factors which impacted on success rates: Entry 2 – for 2 groups there was one tutor who had high levels of sickness due to stress – this was being managed by the TL. For Level 1, some learners lacked the literacy skills to be successful having automatically progressed from Entry 3.

19+ ESOL

19+ ESOL is divided into full time (Gateway) and part time. Whilst overall success rates are inadequate, there are some good outcomes:

- Part time, Entry 3 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life: 88%, BM 74%
- Part time, Level 2 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life: 78%, BM 63%
- Gateway 4, Level 1 Award in Employability and PSD: 88%, BM 79%

Factors which impacted on success rates:

- Accreditation opportunities – PT ESOL learners in 10/11 were entered for the full qualification. Learners in 11/12 were entered for Speaking and Listening (S&L) only or the full mode if a mock was passed. This was due to poor success rates in 10/11 and recommendation from Cambridge ESOL that each mode was delivered in approximately 150 GLH. This impacted on retention as some learners were unhappy at having been entered for one mode only. The tracking of learner progress was inadequate and did not start until February 2012.

SLDD & ABS

Success rates in SLDD were outstanding. All courses had 100% success and for Pathways and Independent Living Skills, this was a 2 year continued trend. Learners benefitted from small class sizes with learning support assistants. However, there were limited opportunities for learners to be involved in work placements.

Outcomes for ABS were inadequate. Some success rates were good:

- Entry 3 Literacy 90%, BM 73% with a continued upward trend, 69% in 1011.
- Level 1 Literacy 72%, BM 68% with a continued upward trend, 56% in 1011.

There was ineffective use of initial and diagnostic assessments to inform targets and lesson delivery and insufficient tracking of learner progress. The use of Moodle was underdeveloped in this programme. Most ABS has now been transferred to CALAT.

VOCATIONAL ENTRY

Some outcomes for vocational Pathways are outstanding at 100%. Freshstart outcomes are inadequate. Freshstart outcomes were affected by long term sickness of the main tutor and over-reliance on agency/sessional staff who often lacked experience in delivering to this challenging cohort. For the first cohort there was no in class support. However, this was rectified for the second cohort who benefitted from small class sizes and LSA support. Many learners in Freshstart had interrupted educational backgrounds and presented challenging behaviour or personal issues which impacted on attendance.

Overall for Skills for Life progression internally was very good and significantly above the college average and learners enjoy their course. Learners developed well their broader skills with a significant contribution made by learners in working in the community.