

**MINUTES OF THE LEARNING & QUALITY COMMITTEE
OF CROYDON COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION
CORPORATION,
WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 2014 AT 6.00PM, 422**

PRESENT: Gordon Smith (Chair)
Anita McGowan
Craig O'Donnell
Ryan Raghoo (Student Governor) until end of item 5
Matt Sims
Frances Wadsworth

ALSO ATTENDING: Melissa Drayson (Clerk Designate)
Ann Monaghan (Assistant Principal, Curriculum &
Quality: APCQ)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive: DCE)
Jane Stroud (Clerk to the Governors)

APOLOGIES Kene Ibezi, Stephan John, Clare Mackie

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted as above.

The Chair welcomed Melissa Drayson

The Chair opened the meeting by congratulating all on the 'fantastic milestone' that was the outcome of the OFSTED inspection in April. It was now important to sustain the achievements made, and build on them with next steps.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2014

The minutes were **agreed** and **signed** as a true record.

3.1 Matters Arising

Item 7: Annual Business and Curriculum Planning 2014/15

Further updates would be taken to the Board in July.

Item 11: Matters for Next Meeting - Self-Assessment Presentation Update

This had been overtaken by the OFSTED inspection.

4 DRAFT OFSTED REPORT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The DCE informed members that the text of the draft before members was due to be published by OFSTED within the next week. The College would now look at what needed to be done to be graded as outstanding. It needed to look at areas that were not graded good or outstanding, and to look at some issues that had not been picked up by OFSTED but which the College knew required attention. He highlighted two issues around progression. The first was that some students were insufficiently stretched and ambitious to go on to HE. The

Unconfirmed

second was that there were not enough students going directly into employment. It was a difficult market and the best route was through an apprenticeship. The College needed to work with employers to ensure a sustainable solution. Officers confirmed that the College's Employability Strategy encompassed all of Croydon Council's 'Pathway to Employment'.

The Chair informed members that he had written a letter, as Chair of Governors on behalf of the Board, congratulating and thanking staff for the OFSTED outcome. This would be issued on the day the report was published.

5 INITIAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)

The report was **RECEIVED**. It had been issued separately to the rest of the papers. It had been produced earlier than usual because of the OFSTED report. It retained key themes from the previous year. The Plan was colour coded: The APCQ explained that purple indicated areas on the current QIP that were being taken forward, and red indicated the need for more detailed information which would follow once final outcomes for the current year were available.

The Chair asked how officers could ensure that the Plan remained dynamic and 'fresh'. Officers reported that there was more widespread ownership of the Plan than ever before, and that OFSTED inspectors had commented that staff were consistently positive about staff development. This was a sign of the maturity of the organisation. The maturity was also illustrated by the increasing number of 'outstanding' lesson observations, and staff who had sessions graded as '2' invariably asked the question 'what do I need to do to become outstanding?'.

The Chair then asked what areas might be more difficult to move forward. Officers replied that attendance and Functional Skills continued to be a challenge to Croydon and other colleges. Only 43% of Level 3 students had both English and maths GCSE at Grade C or above and this was significantly below the sector norm. The College had been more rigorous in applying entry criteria this year to ensure that students were 'ready' for their programme of study. However, it was also important to acknowledge the context of intense competition for students in the area.

The Principal drew members' attention to section 6 of the QIP, a small section on strategic direction. Strategic direction would be addressed fully in business plans. She would be bringing external input from a number of sources before the Board and reviewing stakeholder feedback. Members asked if there was justification to accelerate the journey to excellence for parts of the curriculum where jobs were in demand, such as Construction. The DCE stated that, following a labour market intelligence review, the College had concluded it was offering broadly the right programmes in Construction, particularly those for Electrical Installation and Plumbing. Significant changes were planned for the 2014/15 curriculum, moving away from single trades to programmes for multi-skilled maintenance operators. Most courses were level 1 and level 2, and subcontractors looked for well qualified technicians who they could then take and train in specialist areas. The APCQ said that it was necessary to cater for young people who needed time to decide their preferred career pathway while developing core skills including English and maths. It was important to ensure that such students had clear pathways for progression right through the levels of study including to higher education.

Members emphasised that the curriculum needed to be positioned to take advantage of medium term local opportunities in Retail and Construction, and that it should develop strengths for the medium and long term. There was a discussion about whether an area could be deemed outstanding, but not be sufficiently relevant to employers.

Unconfirmed

The Chair concluded that a further iteration of the QIP should be taken to the Board for approval, that discussions about staff development should continue, and that the College should look at how it could engage in strategic discussions about local employment opportunities.

6. INITIAL TARGET SETTING FOR 2014/15

The report was **RECEIVED**, setting out indicative targets for 2014/15. The report provided a guide to the predicted outcomes of key targets set during the academic year, and initial targets for next year. The DCE stated that the Lesson Observation targets were ambitious; the Employability targets were business critical; and the Value Added targets would need to be reviewed in the light of the 2013/14 outcomes. He pointed out that although all subject areas had been graded as '2' by OFSTED there were differences between them, and the targets needed breaking down.

The Chair stated that although members needed to keep an eye on high level targets and a strategic review of the curriculum they also needed the opportunity to drill down to understand how strategic oversight played out in individual areas. The DCE said that he would welcome guidance on what members would like to focus on. The Chair said this should be re-visited in the autumn term following the 2013/14 learner outcomes.

In answer to questions officers confirmed that the targets were cascaded down to individual teacher objectives. The targets were always above the 2012/13 targets and above national benchmarks where these were available. There would be more national emphasis on destinations in future, but success rates were unlikely to be discarded. Performance on long qualifications and functional skills were regarded as particularly important.

It was **RESOLVED** that the initial high level targets be recommended for approval by the Board, prior to review in the autumn.

7. HE QAA OUTCOME – VERBAL REPORT

The draft letter from the QAA was tabled and the verbal report was **RECEIVED**. Overall provision was 'Good' but there was also a comment that the College did not offer a standardised student experience. It was felt that this was likely to refer to one programme of study but the final report would confirm this. The HE team had been delighted with the students' response and participation in the review process. The University of Sussex response had been particularly positive.

The Chair commented that the 'Good' evaluation was consistent with OFSTED's evaluation for other parts of the College, and that the two outcomes should be used to create further recognition.

8. RISK MAP

The report was **RECEIVED**. The DCE pointed out that three risks had moved from amber to green as a result of the inspections. Craig O'Donnell who was also Chair of the Audit Committee pointed out that Committee's request for the commentary to be updated, and that the Audit Committee had suggested that OP1 should be monitored by the Board as well as LQC.

Unconfirmed

9. GOVERNANCE

(i) Review of Committee Terms of Reference

The report, proposing some minor amendments to streamline the Committee's business was **RECEIVED** from the Clerk. The Chair supported the changes but emphasised that the LQC should not lose sight of HE quality issues.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the updated terms of reference for approval by the Board.

(ii) Annual Review of Confidential Items

There were none to review for 2013/13

(iii) Members Feedback on Quality Improvement Activities

The Student Governor reported on the Big Lunch which had a D Day theme; the UNICEF project on child trafficking (students were going to Westminster for a strategic meeting with Theresa May, taking 1000 signatures, poems and letters with them); an FGM event; and mock interviews (some had led directly to real job offers).

10. DATES AND AGENDA PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR

The report was **RECEIVED**. Committee dates proposed for next year were 6pm on the following Wednesdays:

26 November 2014

4 March 2015

3 June 2015

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the dates and the proposed outline agendas, subject to final approval by the Board.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ MATTERS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The DCE reported that HE recruitment was slightly ahead of last year, and that the distribution of demand against courses was better. This was because of quicker turnover of applications to offers. However, in previous years the conversion rates from application to entry was low so he was cautious about final figures. Internal applications were also ahead of last year as more resources were being allocated to helping students take informed choices about their next steps. Last year's conversion rate for internal applications had been 84% so he was more confident that these applications would translate to student numbers. In answer to a question he thought that it was too early to say whether the improved applications were due to the OFSTED inspection. Other local providers had also had good inspections. The College was the largest provider of 16 – 18 courses in the Croydon area but was dependent on applications from outside of Croydon.

The Principal reported on the management re-organisation taking place. Where managers had resigned they had not been replaced. There was a need to make savings but the opportunity was being used to re-align curriculum areas to encourage progression through the levels up to level 6. This followed the successful model of the School of Art. The new schools would be overseen by Ann Monaghan and Jason Pemberton-Billing. Academic leaders had not been disturbed by the re-organisation. In answer to a question she agreed that in the past FE and HE staff had not regularly worked together, but that the new arrangements were to be seen as creating something 'special'.

Unconfirmed

Members agreed that the re-organisation appeared streamlined and focused while delivering savings. The bottom line had to be high quality in the classrooms and workshops.

The Principal announced that the College had received the Queens Award for Volunteering, crediting Di Lazelle, the students, and the stakeholders who worked with them for the award.

The Chair thanked Ryan Raghoo, attending his last LQC meeting, for his contributions and wished him well with his exams.

The meeting then ended at 7.55pm

Signed:(Chair)

Date: