

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
HELD ON Monday 20 November 2023 at 16.30

Present: Steve Allen, Dan Lodge (Principal), Tanishka Mehra, Dr Grant Powell, Will Power, Helen Smith, James Yandell

In attendance: Members of SMT – Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum), Andrea John (VP Pastoral)

Russha Sellings (Clerk)

Chair: Dr Grant Powell

1. Chair's Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed new Student Governor Taniska Mehra. Governor Bev Valley, due to join the meeting virtually, was unable to attend at late notice and her apologies were accepted.

The Chair said the focus of the meeting would be on the QIP, in particular, as reflected in the timings of the agenda.

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared with respect of items on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

4. Matters Arising

Item 6iv – students' understanding of online practice via RCU

The Chair invited the VP (Pastoral) and the Student Governors to comment on the progress. The VP (Pastoral) advised that following a recent meeting with the Student Governors, feedback was sought on the student body's understanding of the College's filtering and monitoring systems [as detailed in the Student Use of Computer's Agreement] including the use of keystrokes. James Yandall felt that awareness was low amongst the majority of students they had spoken to, despite receiving and signing the agreement. It was considered appropriate to take the matter to an RCU meeting as hearing from Tutor Reps may help raise awareness amongst students of the rationale to both protect students and the College's network. The College's IT Network Manager was called in to provide an update and answer questions. The Chair remarked that knowledge of the protective measures in place may also have a preventative effect on students' misuse.

Item 9 – feedback on pronouns

The VP (Pastoral) wanted to ensure students were empowered to raise instances and feedback to staff where pronouns were not being used correctly. There was a refresh of the campaign 'pronouns matter' online and new posters were put up around the College. James supported this approach.

5. Strategy Developments

Papers: Education KPIs, College SAR 22-23 and QIP 23-24 parts 1-4

a) KPIs (Education)

In respect of high grades at PR1, performance was considered strong overall. However Technical was flagged as an area for concern being substantially below target at this point in the year and the VP (Curriculum) said this was being investigated. The GCSE RAG rating was attributed to several factors including the withdrawal of Functional Maths and likely higher PR1 estimated grades. The latter had a timing implication, where students were due to take their re-sit, it was important to ensure they were encouraged to achieve the best outcome.

There was a debate about the accuracy of the PR1 assessment, grading and the correlation with each subject's outcomes. There was a wide variance in high grades for example 100% for Textiles to Geography at around 30%. Members questioned why Geography was so low. The VP (Curriculum) relied on the DoFs context in PR grading methodology. In Geography, there was a newly appointed Head of subject which may have influenced assessment, and an evidence-based approach was required.

Members also queried whether there was a relationship between the PR assessment and stuck subjects. The VP (Curriculum) had not undertaken the analysis, however believed that subjects that had better outcomes were more adept with the data in any case. There was a further update on the new response to stuck subjects under Item 5b (QIP target).

The Staff Governor emphasised the importance of studentship in assessment practice. The VP (Pastoral) agreed and this was a matter recently discussed by the Education Committee. Modelling examples of effort, system and practice would be beneficial and ensure consistency. The Student Governors were invited to provide input in their experience of PR assessment and there appeared some misunderstanding on what contributed to the grading between subjects. Efforts would be made to address communications including revisiting the guides on SharePoint.
(Action: VP Curriculum)

There remained high target rates for L3 value-added which would eventually be rectified over time with the current 2A students being in the last year of the inflated GCSE grades. A Governor raised a question in advance on the calculation in response to Alps and Sixth Sense data and the VP (Curriculum) agreed it might be more useful to rely on these as a benchmark in the intervening period, especially as they used in-year data. Members heard later in the meeting that the College were 9th out of 87 SFCs for value-added based on raw results and which was a remarkable achievement.

The VP (Pastoral) spoke of the related KPIs and was pleased with the attendance data which showed an improvement compared to the previous year. In response to Governor feedback, the data had been split across 2 tables with an additional column minus enrichment and pro-study where attendance was now mandated and tracked. The attendance of both was however also at a good level. There was still work to do in particular on the transition year where the size of the cohort had reached 2019 numbers although relatively low numbers overall meant that it wasn't always possible to identify trends. Members were keen to ensure transition students did not miss out on key aspects of their education and suggested the inclusion of studentship might be positive. A planned review of the Transition Programme covered under the next item (QIP target) would seek to undercover and address the issues.

The VP (Pastoral) was particularly heartened by the improved retention rates. The same pattern was observed by other colleges of a drop off rate between the 1A and 2A summer period and this was likely attributed to gaining employment. The Principal reiterated to members the importance of the focus on attendance and retention as there was a likely link between the two and the improvements were very positive overall.

b) College SAR-QIP

i) Self-Assessment Report 22-23 and Quality Improvement Plan 23-24

The VPs were requested to summarise the SAR with the majority of time allocated to the QIP.

The VP (Curriculum) directed members to the targets table showing L3 and vocational remaining steady, however there was a notable dip in GCSEs likely arising from previous year's grade inflation.

A question was raised about T-Level performance. Aside from the update on PR grades under the KPIs, the VP (Curriculum) assured members that 50% of students received high grades which was still much higher than the national average of 33%. The cohorts were small which presented questions on the significance level of the data. The two courses currently offered were good

options with specified pathways, however it remained challenging to reach the same high grades as A-Level courses and more work was required on the implementation of T-Levels by the DfE.

Alps had adjusted from 2 to 3 overall this year and there was some further exploration around this. The VP (Curriculum) said the College had moved away from 'stuck subject' terminology this year, as it was not motivating for the lesser performing subjects. Instead, a target minimum Alps grade 4 or above across all subjects was considered achievable by the DoFs and therefore more aspirational. The majority of subjects were already achieving this so the focus was to bring the remaining nine subjects to a grade 4. Members supported the new approach.

Teaching & Learning to achieve the Alps grade of 4 and above was a core aspect of the Curriculum QIP for this year. The focus was on retrieval and revision strategies and Members heard that sharing good practice had been the focus at a recent College INSET Day. The Education Committee looked at the impacts of neurodivergence and what strategies could be beneficial to all students through the learnings of the Director of Student Support. There was also work to be done specific to BTEC to improve exam performance to bring it more in line with coursework by adopting a more A-level approach tackling examined units. A member questioned whether students chose BTEC options due to the coursework based assessment and therefore focus on examinations could put them at disadvantage. The VP (Curriculum) believed it was important to raise the standard due to the reformed BTEC assessment requiring 50/50 coursework and exams and also this wasn't likely impact those students on a mixed programme for which there was a significant number.

The VP (Curriculum) referred members to the one page summary on curriculum reforms in relation to QIP target 1.3. Members heard the latest policy developments from the SFCA and it was understood there was some uncertainty in the political landscape that may impact the final landing position. There would be a new AAQ (Alternative Academic Qualification) for some subjects for example Criminology. The navigation and communication of this was crucial.

For QIP target 1.4, the Transition Programme review will observe updated T-Level Transition Programme guidance from the DfE.

Views were sought on the AI strategy from the Student Governors who gave an update from their experience. AI could be a useful tool for revision purposes, however most students were aware of the repercussions of relying on AI tools for coursework, especially those undertaking an EQR. Members supported the introduction of a new viva option under consideration to verify content knowledge; this could also be beneficial in reinforcing learning.

In response to a question on international student numbers and return on investment, members were directed to the papers and minutes of the recent F&GP meeting for the latest updates or were welcomed to discuss further with the Deputy Principal.

The Pastoral SAR referred to the significant amount of work and embedding of new strategies that had taken place in the previous year such as Collyer's 360. Aspects of the new strategies were quite complex, involving multi-stakeholder engagement. Refinements would continue such as increasing activity and engagement and updates were shared in the Pastoral QIP.

The VP (Pastoral) wished to highlight the cross over into staff wellbeing and there was a resource consideration to be made in terms of the capacity of key Student Support personnel driving the staff wellbeing initiative. The Chair relayed very positive reports about the work of this member of staff and the recent Planning Day.

Central to the QIP was a review of the Pastoral systems to ensure effective support. This was largely driven by the reduction in LA funding for counselling services. Some students required longer term support and offering a short term solution could actually increase the risk. This QIP target linked to the College Risk Register.

There were no further questions.

Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the College SAR-QIP.

ii) Post-16 curriculum reforms and defunding general qualifications (see also SAR/QIP)
Covered under the previous agenda item.

6. Ofsted Preparation

Paper: Ofsted update

The VP (Curriculum) summarised the development under each header. Some of the work was underway at the point of the last inspection but had now undergone a full cycle. There was evidence to demonstrate progress in every area including teaching which could be RAG rated green.

The Committee discussed the timing of the next inspection. Ofsted had confirmed they would return from autumn 2024 under the enhanced EIF.

7. Update from Skills Agenda working party

The Chair of the working party, Helen Smith provided a brief update. The core elements of the Skills Agenda were being well managed:

- The VPs had started the exercise to map the current provision and course offer against the LSIP sectors (minus the land based). The working party had discussed the importance of the assessment being realistic given the majority of the skill requirements were practical and therefore unlikely to be fully met through the current provision and the mapping would be revisited with this in mind.
- It would fully reveal where collaboration with other local education providers would be needed.
- The Chair was collaborating with other Skills Governors in the Sussex area.
- Contacts from subject ERBs for which the majority had been established would be added to a new employer links database.
- The next step would be to plan for College ERBs and the impact on curriculum planning.
- This preparation would be needed before a review could be drafted (statutory element).

The Chair requested the draft minutes be circulated to the Governing Body so they understood the progress against their statutory duties. **(Action: Clerk)**

Record thanks to HS

8. Safeguarding termly update

The VP (Pastoral) showed 3 slides at the meeting which since the updates had started to be presented, now included data trends. The top level categories slide with data pulled from CPOMs caused some confusion and it was agreed to remove the totals. Members found the slides on specific risks very useful, especially comparatively to the previous year. Suicide attempts were trending down but ideation had sharply increased. Eating disorders and sexual abuse were also on the rise.

The Chair referred to the importance of the updates to Governing Body.

Members wished to thank all the staff in the College involved in supporting young people in need.

9. Policies

Papers: Adult Ed suites of policies

The VP (Curriculum) highlighted the importance of the policies in supporting the operations of Adult Ed provision. In terms of safeguarding, there was new guidance specific to vulnerable adults.

The Chair highlighted some minor corrections in advance. The following points were to be fed back:

- Are Adult Ed students were required to sign a Use of Computers Agreement (relevant to the discussions on awareness of filtering and monitoring online systems)
- Could something be included about the skills drive in the Curriculum Strategy.

(Action: VP Curriculum)

Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the Adult Education suite of policies subject to amends.

10. AOB

Nothing to record.

11. Meeting Assessment

It was requested that the safeguarding slides be simplified and the Skills Agenda minutes shared with the Governing Body.

12. Date of the Next Meeting:

The Committee would meet again in the autumn term on Monday 20 November 2024, 16.30.

The meeting closed at 18.20

Chair.....

Date

RRS 21-11-23