

**Minutes of the
Joint Quality, Standards and Achievement Committee and Board
Thursday 24 November 2022
Room BB010 Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) building and virtual**

Present	Richard Dimbleby	Board	Dennis Buckley
QSA:	Joe Gallacher	members	Emelia Mustoe
	Ian Pryce	non QSA:	Alasdair Simmons (by zoom)
	Sharon De Leonardis		
	Dominika Kalinowska		
	Emily Parnwell		
	Allan Schofield		
	Sheila Selwood		

In attendance:	Sarah Baxter (Executive Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment)
	Pat Jones (Deputy CEO-Finance)
	Em Lowe (Deputy CEO-Quality)
	Rachel Nicol (Group Director of Governance)

**QSA/43/22
C/58/22 Apologies for absence**

Apologies from committee members were received from Luisa Vecchio. Apologies from other board members included Luke Ferebee, Raj Randhawa, Vinod Tailor, Amanda Wagstaff and Cliff Wragg

**QSA/44/22
C/59/22 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from those present relevant to the matters on the agenda.

**QSA/45/22
C/60/22 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

Emelia Mustoe and Emily Parnwell were endorsed as student governors for the academic year and welcomed to the meeting.

The Board was asked to endorse a change in the status of Dominika Kalinowska from external governor to co-opted member of the QSA Committee.

**QSA/46/22
C/61/22 Strategic opportunities and risks update**

The CEO outlined the current position and in particular highlighted the potential reclassification of FE colleges by the ONS on 29.11.22. There is an expectation of a change in status to public sector with potential implications for funding, borrowing, change of year end, permission requirements for leases, credit facilities and additional controls over pay.

The budget was considered generous to schools but not to Further Education “FE” colleges with an anticipated 5 years of additional financial pressures which impacts on curriculum planning.

Opportunities for the college include the potential merger and economies of scale, investment in technology, estates rationalisation and potential reduction of competition.

It is understood that the ONS are also looking at non chartered universities. The Board will have further discussions when an announcement is made.

Meetings have taken place with the staff at Central Bedfordshire college (“CBC”) and Bedford College. The Principal of CBC has resigned and the Deputy Principal is acting up on an interim basis. Outstanding issues regarding due diligence were outlined and the current position summarised.

The update was noted

QSA/47/22 C/62/22 Sustainability and Climate Action strategy

The Executive Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment attended to present the report and the proposed Sustainability and Climate Action Strategy. She was complimented on the report provided.

The methodology behind the strategy setting process was outlined, including the work of the steering group, focus groups and consultation with various stakeholders. A further student survey is going out in the next 2 weeks.

The target to achieve net zero by 2042 fits with the overarching College strategic plan. It is ahead of the government’s 2050 target and ahead of other colleges. The College has signed up to the Race for Net Zero. Most colleges have set a target between 2040 and 2050.

The plan itself has 5 aims around:

-Leadership and governance

- Curriculum planning
- Minimising the impact on the environment
- Procurement efficiency
- Being a leader and key influencer in the sector and changing student and staff behavior.

Goals have been aligned to the current DfE Strategy on sustainability. The DfE will set a framework and targets will be adjusted when more information is available.

The Board questioned:

-Whether potential loss of autonomy with a reclassification to public sector may impact the achievement of objectives? The DfE strategy has articulated the aspiration that education will lead on the sustainability agenda. It is not therefore anticipated that the strategy will change. It is accepted that some buildings will never be completely sustainable due to their age

-Reporting bi annually? It was confirmed that the intention is to report to the Board twice a year, one interim progress report and then an annual report.

-What is the current engagement of different areas in curriculum planning for embedding sustainability? There are some areas promoting best practice. Further training is being given to other areas and best practice being shared. Student governors provided feedback on sustainability training provided to them and highlighted areas where the college promotes sustainability. Work on skills of the future is being reviewed to support the development of the future curriculum and a research project with students is supporting this.

-What was the survey reach as against the response rate? Response rates for some groups was stronger than others with more consultation planned to ensure focus and priorities are appropriate

-Who determines net zero? At the present time institutions are defining this themselves but it is hoped that there will be more benchmarking and guidance around this in the future to improve the ability to compare progress.

-What questions are you asking in the survey? Questions for students include whether they support the strategy, how they would prioritise initiatives and what they consider will have the most impact?

-Membership of planned committees and whether we can consider governor membership following the governance structure review? It is hoped that the Committee can replicate the model used in other key areas such as Safeguarding, Health and Safety and EDI. However it was recognised that the governance structure is being reviewed, including the time commitment of governors, and participation in internal committees will be considered as part of the review.

-Whether there is an opportunity to revisit some of the KPIs approved at the October meeting of the Board? Once the internal committee has been set up and a lead in Estates has been appointed the KPIs will be reviewed. **Governors were invited to**

provide feedback on the KPIs directly to the Executive Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment.

-Whether we can reference the commercial opportunities, even with the caveat around capacity

The Board resolved to approve the Sustainability and Climate Action Strategy

**QSA/48/22 QSA Committee rag rated report
C/63/22**

The Chair of QSA summarised the rag rating report from the 3 November 2022.

Key risks discussed centred around attendance and achievement, HE numbers, T level recruitment and requirements around planning to meet local skills needs. The Committee had considered that the College was managing these issues well.

The Quality dashboard and lack of data for benchmarking across the sector was highlighted.

The report was noted

**QSA/49/22 Encouraging excellence in teaching and learning
C/64/22**

The Deputy CEO – Quality gave a presentation on teaching and learning and how the Board oversees the quality of education.

Governors highlighted 2 areas they wish to explore in the current year:

How is the Board informed about the Quality of Education?

How does a Board challenge the quality of education driving forward excellence?

Questions discussed included:

What are the current mechanisms for scrutiny? QSA review academic risks and detailed reports on various issues around quality of education. Governors are invited to participate in Self Assessment Report (“SAR”) moderation meetings and QSA scrutinises the College SAR and delivery of the Quality Improvement Plan following Board approval. The current joint meeting had been established to enable more board members to have more time on quality of education. At the moment the Board reviews the rag rating reports and receives termly reports on the student

experience. The Deputy CEO-Quality is drafting a reformatted paper for the next board meeting enhancing the focus on quality of education.

Following discussion it was agreed that there is a need to increase the confidence in this agenda by triangulating information provided through organised drop ins, further participation in SAR meetings and walkabouts. *It was agreed that it would be helpful for governors to receive an overview of survey results and summary of an areas's performance headlines before visits to help triangulate information and enhance the experience.*

The value of surveys was discussed further and it was considered that further intelligence on the student experience can be ascertained by following the student journey and ensuring the student voice framework is effective. Focus groups are used to follow up on findings and assurance given that external facilitators are used to support this. The QSA Committee confirmed from their meeting in early November that the timing of reports to committees is being looked at to ensure focus group output is considered at the same time as survey results.

Student voice and how this operates across the group was discussed in detail. Areas for further development included information for students on where to go for support, signposting on website, particularly around mental health issues and support for student representatives to ensure they know where to report information received.

The student governors agreed to provide support in this area by meeting with the Deputy CEO-Quality to discuss the student representative framework, consistency of meetings, processes and how they are being followed.

Further discussions will also take place internally on setting the priorities for tutorials. Current priorities are noted to include sustainability and mental health awareness.

It was noted that an updated teaching, learning and assessment policy will be presented in the new year for review.

The Board welcomed the discussion and in particular the contributions from the student governors.

**QSA/50/22 TBCG Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan
C/65/22**

The Deputy CEO-Quality attended to present the report and the Chair of the Corporation outlined the methodology for the SAR and QIP.

The Board sought to understand where professional services SAR's appear? It was confirmed they are reflected on in the leadership and management section and also woven into other areas of the report. The detailed reports had been reviewed in the Resources Committee.

The Quality of Education grade in the draft report had been reflected on and had been significantly impacted by the English and maths performance (affecting half of 16-18 students) Although high grades in this area were above the sector norm overall achievement is below. This had resulted in a number of areas identified as requiring improvement.

The Quality Improvement Plan assigned actions to the new Principals with plans for the Quality team to support and challenge and create standardization across the Group.

Further questions included:

-How assured are we that the grade is accurate? Allocating grades had been difficult given the significant amount of aggregation required, local SARs and lack of sector benchmarking.

-How aligned are we with current Ofsted thinking? The inspection in 2019 had been carried out under the new framework and CBC was inspected in March under new framework. The College has worked closely with peer organisations to ensure alignment.

-What would the position be if English and maths was removed? Although performance would be better it is accepted that this is a fundamental part of study programme for half of 16-18 year olds and therefore proportionality dictates it is accounted for.

-Can the leadership and management grade be justified given the other conclusions, in particular declining achievement. Processes are noted to be strong but results are not where we would expect them to be. However destinations are better than they've ever been.

-How do we eliminate inconsistencies, some good results and others that are not? Work is continuing on sharing best practice with each area having quality improvement plans. It is anticipated that campus management will support greater scrutiny and collaboration to drive improvement across the Group.

-How do we motivate students to do English and maths? Anecdotal evidence highlighted the lack of engagement, preference of main study programmes, entry criteria and need for clear messaging around the importance and benefits of

achieving in this area. It was raised whether there was a particular issue for students with English as a second language but this was not believed to be the case.

-What is the impact of attendance on English and maths? A significant review is being carried out on delivery and requirements for attendance to ensure an appropriate model encourages attendance and utilises resource effectively.

-Can skills can be linked better with main study programme? English and maths is embedded in study programmes but challenges remain and will be picked up in the review of provision.

-How achievable are the targets given the 3 year trend on page 27 suggests declining results? The targets are aspirational but will be reviewed to enable realistic assessment.

It was agreed that the Deputy CEO-Quality will include more narrative prior to approval. The College is invited to provide a copy of the SAR to Ofsted in January and it is intended that this will be done.

-How with the current resource at the College do we ensure standardisation of the document and equivalence of judgements? Members of the executive team have been in attendance and the document has been peer reviewed by another College.

The current position was summarised as achievement for 16-18 year olds not being where we'd want it but with the overall performance of College still considered a 2. The English and maths data is being reviewed again and positive include the improvement in the performance of high needs students and destinations. The approach and actions are right but with more work being carried out to ensure consistency.

-What is the likely impact of merger and how issues will be managed with resources available? Teams are already working closely together and accountability of campus principals and vice principals will be managed to ensure the drive for improvement and consistency continues with more ability to share best practice.

*-There are 4 sections with no areas to develop in the current document? **The Deputy CEO-Quality will review for completeness prior to submission to the Board.***

Quality Improvement Plan ("QIP")

It was agreed that the document reflects the SAR closely.

Governors did however raise:

*-Whether the big areas for improvement identified could be more consistent with the actions set out to generate improvement? **The Deputy CEO-Quality will review***

*-Attendance is a dominant issue for the College, can this be reflected on further in the QIP? **The Deputy CEO-Quality will review***

-How is the QIP tested? The plan is to test application of the QIP with one academic area before rolling it out more widely.

Governors were invited to email the Deputy CEO-Quality directly with any further feedback.

The agreed changes will be implemented prior to the SAR and QIP being presented to the Board for approval on 7 December 2022.

**QSA/51/22
C/66/22 Safeguarding update**

The report was confirmed as read.

The Safeguarding lead governor reported on the internal safeguarding meeting and provided assurance that actions are monitored to completion and meetings are well run. **Updates to the alarm system for campus incidents will be followed up.**

Assurance was noted.

**QSA/52/22
C/67/22 Quality assurance and campus management**

The new campus management structure had been implemented in August and it has been recognised internally that clarity around ownership, autonomy and accountability will be critical to its success.

A governance structure review will pick up on some of the issues.

The update was noted

**QSA/53/22
C/68/22 External assurance framework**

A report had been provided at the Board Strategic Development day in October. A plan is in place and the Quality team oversee department evidence The Deputy

CEO-Quality is carrying out training with new staff in the quality team and other heads.

The update was noted

**QSA/54/22
C/69/22 T level thematic review**

The generic report had been read. For the College, initial advice and guidance for T levels around specialised placements, timing of work experience and recommendations are being followed through. A further visit is anticipated in Spring 2023. Recruitment nationally for T levels is lower than expected and further publicity around T levels is needed.

The update was noted

**QSA/55/22
C/70/22 HE fees**

The Chair of QSA updated the Board on the confirmation received from the Director of HE that fees will be maintained at the same level. The Corporation approves the group Fees Policy each year and the update was for noting.

**QSA/56/22
C/71/22 Minutes**

The following minutes were approved as accurate records of the relevant meetings:

**QSA 3 November 2022
Corporation 13 October 2022
Corporation 7 July 2022**

**QSA/57/22
C/72/22 Next meeting**

The next meeting of QSA will take place on Wednesday 8 March 2023 and the Board has planned meetings on 7 December 2022 and on the 8 December 2022.