

**Minutes of the  
Quality, Standards and Achievement Committee  
Thursday 11 March 2021  
Video conference - Microsoft Teams**

**Present:** Richard Dimpleby (Chair)  
Sharon De Leonardis (SDL)  
Melissa Peacock (MP)  
Ian Pryce (IP)  
Lauren Newman (LN)  
Allan Schofield (Asch)  
Sheila Selwood (SS)  
Luisa Vecchio (LV)

**In attendance:** Georgina Ager (Vice Principal)  
John Guiney (Head of Quality)  
Em Lowe (Vice Principal)  
Alex Mortby (Director of HE)  
Rachel Nicol (Director of Governance & Clerk to the Corporation)  
Petra Williams (Director of Quality, Learning, Teaching and Assessment)  
Faye Williams (Director of Adult & Community Learning)

**QSA/1/21 Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**QSA/2/21 Declarations of Interest**

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

**QSA/3/21 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**QSA/4/21 English and maths**

The Director of Progression Pathways attended to give a presentation on English and maths.

The Midas report showed positive progress. The presentation and discussion focused on the centre assessed grade process, samples, standardization of marking and roles of awarding bodies. Staff had received significant amounts of training and

development. Work continues to monitor consistency across counties and focus on improvements across the Group.

An update was given on the November 2020 GCSE sitting with 196 learners having now achieved grade 4 and above. The government had directed that all students who wanted to re-sit could. Achievement rates take account of all those entered and results were impacted by non-attendance at exams.

Achievement gaps by area were highlighted. Whilst there were no significant gaps in English, gaps in Maths achievement were noted with gender differentials in particular considered.

Actions being taken to address issues identified included:

Recruitment of staff, particularly in poorer performing areas.

Drop-in observations.

Focus groups.

Student feedback from focus group was outlined with both qualitative and quantitative feedback looked at. Feedback highlighted a few issues on student knowledge of assessment dates due to changes in working practices. Attendance remains a focus and English and Maths staff are working closely with curriculum heads to address issues through the disciplinary process where needed. Any disruption to learning believed to be due to staff changes has been managed.

The Committee discussed motivation of students, given the experience they have had at school, and other factors impacting attendance. Rapport with teachers, open discussions and support from vocational areas to identify at risk students were discussed. English and Maths staff are involved at open days and at induction to ensure information is available and communication strong. Staff work to contextualise English and Maths, and training is available to ensure different learning styles are catered for. Student confidence levels are monitored and work is being carried out to ensure students are aware of the potential benefits of continuing.

English and Maths teams have been centralised to allow for a more unified approach

Progress in utilising the catch up (tuition) fund, including tutor appointments and the use of technology to support learning have received positive feedback from students and staff.

### **The update was noted**

#### **QSA/5/21      Academic Risk**

The Vice Principal (EL) presented the extract of the risk register and updated the Committee on progress since the last report.

The Committee considered the volume of exams undertaken. These related to vocational, functional skills and AAT. A significant number of exams were set up and then cancelled by the government and awarding bodies.

Safeguarding and guidance to staff on things to look out for during remote learning were outlined to ensure student welfare is maintained.

The Committee discussed roll out of rapid Covid testing and the resources required. It was confirmed it has had a significant impact on resources with 7 testing centres established across the Group. The centres are supported by existing staff with roles being back filled and associate staff in place. 700 to 800 students are tested each day and additional equipment such as mirrors etc. have been purchased. Staff tests have been distributed and forty thousand tests for students have also been received. The tests are voluntary but some areas are achieving 80% attendance.

Home testing kits are logged and then individuals register results with the NHS with only positive tests being reported to the College. Actions taken following positive tests were outlined.

**The Committee congratulated the team for the successful roll out and noted the update.**

#### **QSA/6/21 Curriculum planning update**

The Vice Principal (GA) outlined the new strand approach and how this has resulted in elements of time lines for strands being out of alignment with the timeline for the new strategic plan. The use of Local Market Intelligence (“LMI”) for curriculum decisions and growth areas was outlined.

The Committee discussed in particular the expected growth in the Sixth form numbers and the potential reasons including entry criteria, academic bursary, reputation and ease of enrolment. Some schools do not have sixth forms. The Marketing team are analysing applications and space not currently used is being prepared for use with additional staff being recruited.

The Committee discussed changes to the adult curriculum, progression pathways and underdeveloped areas of provision. The strategic aim to reduce subcontracting remains relevant. A blended model is being developed but the balance will always depend on the needs of students.

A view was expressed that there is a need to bring together the strand documents in a coherent way to support the Board in approving the overall college strategy in due course. Apprenticeships and 16-18 strands will be presented when progress has been made with the main strategy.

The consensus was reached that the strand documents presented to date are plans to progress operations which will be picked up in the overall strategic plan. Strand leads are looking at the funding opportunities relevant to their areas.

**The update was noted.**

#### **QSA/7/21      QIP monitoring report**

The Director of Quality, Learning, Teaching and Assessment presented the report and outlined progress on the plan. Apprenticeship timely achievement and FE achievement are considered amber on the rag rating due to the impact of lock down. Risks on attendance for English and Maths and accessibility of moodle material and progress made were highlighted. Student events have been impacted by Covid but virtual events for careers are taking place.

Enhancement in some areas has been slower since lock down but progress is now being made. Examples of potential activities were given, including guest speakers and employer links.

Induction packs for the adult cohort on Safeguarding and Prevent have been developed and the impact will be monitored.

The Committee discussed feedback from the recent governor conference and in particular from apprentices talking about missing out on the development of work relationships and also the difficulty in holding confidential conversations remotely. It was agreed that different students and cohorts have responded in different ways. Where students had already developed a rapport with tutors, the online experience has been positive.

**The report was noted.**

#### **QSA/8/21      HE Strategy**

The Director of HE outlined the research carried out to inform the report. Opportunities for students have been reviewed and feedback from students on the quality of teaching is central to the approach being taken and the strategic intent.

Key focuses include teaching and learning, partnership working and qualification development.

The Committee discussed growth and the plan. Specialist providers have been approached and working relationships are considered positive. The Committee questioned whether there is a potential ceiling to the planned growth. There are some subjects that are not being offered at the moment which have potential and also a greater understanding of higher vocational qualifications. It was confirmed that the Skills for the Future White Paper and likely investment will impact on levels 4 and 5 which will in turn impact on college provision of higher education.

Aspiration for students was discussed with universities often recognised as leading institutions. Outcomes are monitored and student views are taken into account in the design of the curriculum. Assurance was given that the feedback from NSS survey has been taken into account in formulating the document.

The document was considered helpful in setting out the local market intelligence and short term plans

It was agreed that the document is considered a 2 year plan rather than a Strategy. Development of the longer term strategy will be taken forward as part of the strategic planning process and the development of ideas, what the Group is capable of and required investment.

**The report was noted.**

**QSA/9/21 HE QIP**

The Director of HE presented the report Progress was outlined but evidence of impact will not be available until the NSS scores are known.

The Committee asked whether the QIP should cover financial sustainability, viability on recruitment, student numbers and cost of delivery. It was confirmed that a lot of work has been done on this during the curriculum planning and that requirements are not the same as they were under the Higher Education Inspectorate. The Executive are reviewing the sustainability of all individual strands and this will be taken forward as part of the Strategic Plan.

**The report was noted.**

**QSA/10/21 Access and Participation plan annual report**

The Director of HE presented the report. The data will be submitted to the OfS.

An overview of work on access and participation was outlined and has been analysed by strand.

The update, impact and progress to date will be reported. The Student HE representative has provided strong input and provided a good evaluation

Financial support was outlined, applications are being managed and staff trained in promoting the support available to students.

It was confirmed that a Head of HE is being recruited to support the work on Access and Participation evaluation and to look at achievement gaps. The Committee was pleased that resource has been allocated and that the impact is being monitored.

The Committee considered the student feedback, on dyslexia in particular, and how this is being taken forward in the existing plans. This is being provided in terms of interventions and support.

The achievement highlighted in red in relation to black student achievement was explained. It was highlighted for action at Tresham but is being reviewed at group level with ongoing work to reduce the gap.

The Committee discussed the theory and change model setting out the intended actions and progress so far. The Committee questioned whether the needs of OfS have been met. OfS is noted as a principle-based regulator and doesn't prescribe how change should be achieved. The requirement is to show evidence of position and the fact that evaluation is being carried out. Although the College is evaluating against a 5 year plan it is also looking at older targets.

The Quality team will assist to review it against the criteria before submission to the OfS.

**The upload has to be signed off by the Principal and subject to the Quality team check the Committee is content for the document to be submitted.**

#### **QSA/11/21 External partners quality assurance report**

The Director of Adult and Community Learning provision presented the report.

Progress on subcontracting, distance learning, impact on monitoring quality due to Covid has not changed since the previous report.

Inductions were previously carried out in person and the move online has delayed the collection of enrolment packs. There is however strong student feedback particularly in respect of good learning and assessment.

Practical delivery partnerships were referenced and the Director of HE supports monitoring of these where they relate to HE.

No significant concerns were identified. It was noted that Greater London Authority are moving to local providers and Executive are reviewing other arrangements.

The issues of financial sustainability, income received and reputational risk were outlined. It was highlighted that these discussions will be picked up as part of the strategic planning process. The point was however also made that some of the specialist provision provided through partnership arrangements enhances the offer to students.

The strength of the current approach in supporting the progression of adult learners across the college offer was outlined. Mapping has been carried out under industry sector headings to demonstrate to adults how they might progress. Business development are supporting in the links with employers to ensure a connected and clear offer.

**The report was noted.**

## **QSA/12/21 Stakeholder feedback**

The Head of Quality presented the report. Surveys were carried out in very different circumstances at different time points to the usual cycle due to lock down. Overall, the survey results are very positive and focus groups have been held.

It was however noted that the results are a “step” on a journey. Areas being monitored and support being provided were outlined. Where areas noted positive performance this was attributed to staff listening to student feedback and responding.

The internal HE survey shows positive progress from the previous NSS survey. The survey mirrors the NSS survey and supports early improvements in the student experience.

The Committee was pleased with the positive results. It is anticipated that the NSS scores will be available in late June, early July.

Students governors provided anecdotal evidence of positive experiences, positives of working in the college environment and accommodation. Mixed opinions exist amongst peers about online learning versus physical attendance with blended learning providing some freedom. Where students have felt unwell they have continued to attend online in some cases and attendance was easier during isolation with support provided. This view was supported by the management team in terms of the improved delivery during the second lock down. The College is seeking to balance DfE expectations and student demands and look at how best practice can be achieved. Mini surveys by some staff have been noted to be a good measure of progress between lockdowns and allowed timely feedback to generate improvements.

The staff governor provided background to the success of her areas and the initiatives used. Students have supported the innovation and collaborated with staff to ensure progress.

**The report was noted.**

## **QSA/13/21 Quality dashboard and academic performance**

The report and positive progress were outlined. Attendance for 16 to 18 year olds is being addressed.

The Committee questioned how attendance is monitored for virtual learning, including actual attendance and work completion. Concern was raised as to how this might impact on achievement. The process in monitoring and recording mental health issues and student support was outlined

Engagement remains strong with improvement since the first lock down.



Retention and continuation in HE remain strong.

Gaps were explained in terms of enrolment numbers for access and participation.

No performance tables for last year are available so it is difficult to monitor trends. The Committee asked how the management team consider the college is placed. The lack of common moderation on centre assessed grades was raised as a concern but it is not considered that the student year needs to be extended. The College is focused on measuring their own performance and achievement of higher grades. It is anticipated Autumn term work on attendance, particularly in English and Maths will further support performance. The high proportion of fitness to practice courses may impact the overall results and attendance is required for practical assessment.

***The destinations report will be presented at the next meeting of the QSA Committee.***

Progress following on from an internal audit on pro monitor was outlined with it being used well in some areas but with consistency of use in other areas being monitored.

#### **QSA/14/21      Plans for centre assessed grades and assessments 2021**

The Head of Quality confirmed knowledge of the planned process to date.

Qualifications have been categorised in terms of GCSEs and A levels with tutor assessed grades, competency and work-based qualifications and other qualifications and assessments where there will be a mix of assessments and tutor assessment.

A qualification explainer tool is expected when the consultation has been completed and the Quality team will work closely with the Exams team.

Grades need to be uploaded by 18 June 2021. Moderation meetings will take place internally with each department to look at evidence and information. Meetings will take place between 26 April and 28 May. The process will mirror last year's process due to its robust nature.

It is planned that mocks will be blind marked and timetables have been issued on GCSEs and A levels.

It is anticipated there will be external moderation from the exam boards.

The Committee took assurance from the strength of existing quality processes and the low number of appeals in the previous year. The Committee was satisfied with the process outlined.

A verbal update will be provided at the next meeting

**The update was noted.**



### **QSA/12/21      OfS review of compliance**

The Vice Principal (GA) outlined the self-assessment on consumer protection. The VP Executive assistant had carried out an independent review. Those dealing with complaints have now had training on the Office of the Adjudicator requirements. The conclusion reached was that the requirements have been met and the review means the action from the internal audit can be closed off.

#### **The process has been completed and Committee is satisfied the review has been carried out and noted the results**

The Committee was made aware of a new OfS process allowing students to make direct reports to them on incidents and concerns. The impact of this will be monitored.

### **QSA/13/21      Minutes and actions**

The minutes of the meeting on 26 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

***It was agreed that the revised version of the HE SED document referenced in the last meeting will be submitted to the Committee Chair in due course.***

### **QSA/14/21      Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Tuesday 8 June.