

PETROC

Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee held via Teams on Tuesday 17 October 2023 at 16:30

Present:

Pat Denham	Vice-Chair of Board, Chair of Committee
Deborah Watson	External Governor
Dawn Stabb	External Governor
Katerina Kolyva	External Governor
Sean Mackney	Principal and CEO

In attendance:

Jason Jones	Deputy Principal Education and Learners
Bill Blythe	Vice Principal Finance and Resources and Regional Affairs
Sheena Murphy-Collett	Vice-Principal People, Organisational Development and Engagement
Joanna Boardman	Governance Advisor and Head of Executive Office
Jeanne Gollop	Head of Quality

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received Lindy Stacey and Keira Keen

2. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests were made in respect of the items on the agenda.

3. Confidential Items

No items were confidential on the agenda.

4. Minutes and Matters Arising

23CQ01

The minutes and actions from the meeting of 24 May 2023 were approved.

It was noted that all actions were up to date.

5. Matters Brought Forward by the Chair

None

6. Deputy Principals Report (receive)

23CQ02

The committee commended the report for the level and detail, and it was agreed that the Deputy Principal would run through the report and pick up on strategic points taking questions throughout.

For future reporting it was requested that the paragraphs be numbered throughout to allow for easier referencing in discussion.

It was also asked if the college could provide an update on the recent MIDES. Report around English and maths outcomes.

The Deputy Principal explained that the report had been constructed from both a college and an Ofsted perspective.

It was reported that currently the achievement rates in general are below the national average with some improvements showing in places. The implementation of the adult success coaches is starting to show benefits, but there is still work to be done.

Some evidence was discussed showing some under performance by subject area and once the Subject Access Review (SAR) is completed there will a greater level of granularity available. It was reported that a number of improvement actions around educational quality have been implemented this year which should start to lift the results. The Performance Improvement Reviews which were shared as currently underway would also draw out more areas to address and highlight best practice.

The committee asked if there was a specific point where the college would expect to see students drop out by and the impact on the pass rates of that.

The Deputy Principal shared that up to 42 days learner withdrawals would not count in the achievement rates. Last academic year there was a spike in withdrawals in March, however it was felt that may have been an artificial spike due do late withdrawals being actioned on the system for learners who had left earlier in the term. It would be usually to see the last quarter of the first term as a key risk area.

English and Maths

It was shared that the MIDES report was released last week, and it contains comparisons across the Southwest and nationally.

The college will do a full analysis in the future, but headline picture for now is quite disappointing – some contributory factors.

It was shared that pass rates in both subjects were below both the southwest and national indicators. The committee asked if the college had less able learners, but the report also showed progress rates and distance travelled from grade two and three which showed Petroc also had lower rates in those areas as well.

The college needs to surface the contributory factors and the Director for Progressive Studies is drawing together a paper so the College Leadership Team can assess factors and agreed actions and report back to the committee.

It was noted that some subject areas had struggled with staffing sickness and retention and complicated cohorts with a history of issues in previous education settings.

The committee asked how the additional tuition funding was applied and the college shared that it was used to support the groups last year although it was unable to fully utilise all the funds. This coming year greater application of funding will be used.

Issues noted that are relevant were listed as

- Low attainment from feeder schools
- IT Infrastructure needs improvements.
- Teaching load needs review.
- Attendance monitoring issues.

The committee requested quartile positioning in reports going forward.

The Chair shared that nationally some colleges are making some very brave choices and are approaching this issue very differently. All agreed that the situation is extremely challenging and there are no easy solutions, but it important to seek solutions.

The PIRs should highlight appropriate interventions and other support options include a dual curriculum delivery where maths could be taken over two years rather than one which supports gaps in provision of learning.

Linked news is that NORDAB is looking at a regional maths excellence hub. maths HUB.

The committee asked what the current resit numbers look like, but the college did not have the information to hand at the time. It would be shared later though the Governance Professional.

The Deputy Principal shared an update in apprenticeship provision and that the achievement rates have lifted to 53.2 Department of Education have confirmed that they are pleased with the improvement. It was noted that is still not at the target of 60 but does show an upward trajectory.

The committee asked the college what it thought the factors involved in the lift had been and it was felt that the new approach in programme delivery, quality of education, dedicated Faculty Manager focus and consistency of assessors had all had an impact.

The college shared that over the past 12-15 months the college has been much clearer in its upfront conversations with employers to define the level of support and commitment they must show the apprentice.

The committee asked the college to pass along their thanks to the FM in question for their hard work and progress in this area.

Improvement Strategies - lesson observations and professional learning

The Head of Quality shared the college approach last year and moving into this year of bringing teaching and learning to the fore in the academic arena. There has been a programme of professional learning embedded for staff and one of the first things was to bring teaching and learning to the fore. There has also been an hour created in the week to allow all curriculum staff to come together either in teams or to attend educational development sessions in rotation.

The committee asked (noting one conflict due to their role at the ETF) to what extent the college was using professional standards to ensure consistent application of practice. The college responded that it used the Education Training Foundation professionals' standards as well as others from other professional and educational bodies. It was confirmed that this was a bedrock of the development plans and regarded as best practice.

A discussion was held where the committee agreed that the initiatives were good, but that they wanted to ensure that they were being used and asked the college to consider what the consequence for non-compliance would look like.

The college shared that the annual appraisal and associated meetings through the year should be used for this with talks around what elements have been focused on, what measures have been used and what can be taken from that.

Lesson observations were talked about with a note that the list of areas which did not receive, and observation last year have been prioritised to the Faculties for this and that list will be audited after the October half-term.

The approach to learner numbers was shared with the key focus currently being to ensure that the learners are on the right levels and the right courses to avoid any dropping out or becoming NEET. Alternative provision for learners who may be struggling is available in the dual curriculum delivery and programmes offered in progressive studies.

It was noted that the Learner Success Standards document had been reviewed since the date shown on the document and that the date would be updated.

It was shared with the committee that the Subject Access Review was being finalised and would be completed by the beginning of November this year.

The current plan was to use a progress grade again this year and that there would be some demonstrable progress to report.

The committee mentioned that some colleges have been looking to minimise the amount of text in the report and focus on the Quality Improvement Plan and actions to be time and focus efficient. The college agreed that it should be best practice to do so and was looking at around twenty pages including the skills.

Safeguarding

Whilst the importance of attendance had been talked through in general throughout the meeting it was recorded that there were some ongoing technical issues with digital registers as reported through the Chair and safeguarding governors. One of the safeguarding governors reported that the actions described to mitigate the risks for learners were thought to be strong and should provide good assurance to the Board if they are applied consistently.

The Deputy Principal shared that the curriculum plan for next year was beginning to emerge, and work had started much earlier this year and was being driven by strong support with data and horizon scanning.

It was agreed that for the next committee meeting the Curriculum Plan would be presented with the proposed impacts and detail on how it meets the skills plan.

The Principal spoke to the challenges and need for a curriculum plan that seeks to fill skills needs balanced against the funding available from employers who may not be willing or able to contribute. The plan needs to look towards the employer market and economic trends that relate to the learner profile. It will seek to look at the demands for each applicant type group and where the opportunities and challenges exist.

The committee agreed that it is important to align the educational provision to the learner needs and not just employer ones.

The other item in safeguarding issues discussed were around the volume of referrals and work coming into the service in both safeguarding and wellbeing. As mentioned in the recent safeguarding committee the increased issues that learners are facing are no longer just attributable to the impact of COVID, such as the future fiscal impacts related to the conflicts in the middle east.

Staffing levels were discussed with the college stating that a proposal was due to be reviewed by the College Leadership Team in the near future.

The group discussed the impact of the school experience in the local context with the number of hours of non-attendance and suspension time being incredibly high. Colleges are increasingly taking the burden of that impact on and trying to find resolutions in a difficult landscape.

It was agreed that the college needs to do all it can and may need to try something innovative or difficult to help learners. One key initiative that the college is already delivering this year is the Home to Onsite (H2O) programme which the board is familiar with, however since then it has been picked up by the District Council and as a role model plan within the community. The programme has picked up students from the North to South Coast of Devon.

SEND

The report was received with one note shared that the toilet provision in the Mid Devon campus was now on the way to being resolved with a contractor having been appointed.

Action List

Action No	Action	Owner	Date Due	Status
	Paper sections on future have numbers throughout	Jason Jones		
	Provide information on resit numbers to committee members.			
Completed actions				
	Deputy Principal to present an updated report to the next Board meeting	JJ	19 April 2023	Completed
	Deputy Principals report to cross reference the QIP in future presentations	JJ	19 April 2023	Completed
	Governance Ofsted development plan to be developed and shared	JJ/JB	9 May 2023	Completed
	Update on the actions from the apprenticeship improvement work to the next committee meeting	JJ	23 May 2023	Completed
	Report from SEND link governor to committee/board	DS/MW/PG	23 May 2023	Completed

Next meeting to have an in-depth report on Apprenticeships		Craig Litster	8 February 2023	Completed
Next meeting to have an in-depth report on attendance		Craig Litster	8 February 2023	Completed
1	College to undertake survey review and report learner information to this committee and staff information to the Finance and General Purposes Committee	Sheena Murphy-Collett	8 February 2023	Completed

The meeting concluded at 18:04

The next meeting of the committee is on 23 May 2023