

PETROC

Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee held via Teams on Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 16:30

Present:

Pat Denham	Vice-Chair of Board, Chair of Committee
Lindy Stacey	Chair of Board
Deborah Watson	External Governor
Dawn Stabb	External Governor
Katerina Kolyva	External Governor
Melinda Stacey	Chair of Board (joined at 16.45)
Keira Keen	Student Governor
Sean Mackney	Principal and CEO
Jon Price	Staff Governor (joined at 16.45)

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

No Apologies received – all members present.

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.

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)**23CQ04**

The Deputy Principal took the overall paper as read and said that they would speak to key issues specifically but welcomed questions and challenges on any area.

It was agreed that the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) would form a substantial part of the committee discussion due to its importance and that it had received external scrutiny from a former inspector. Primarily those areas identified in RED and AMBER were described as those under immediate focus for the college.

It was shared that across the whole college the QIP evidences some improvements being demonstrated through the most recent Performance and Improvement Reviews that had taken place, but that the college wouldn't be complacent on that and would continue to drive improvement.

QIP RED rated areas discussed.

Learner Attendance was checked the day of the meeting and the results were the same as shown in the report which the colleges acknowledged showed a lack of traction in that area. Previous meetings of the committee had discussed a number of factors contributing to poor attendance, the major one currently having the biggest impact was felt to be poor IT infrastructure and WIFI. It was shared that major works had been scheduled for the coming half-term break after which an improvement should be felt.

The committee asked if parents were still being notified of non-attendance and if the IT was not accurate were those notifications accurate?

The college confirmed that it was continuing to notify parents but noted that it was not consistent. The current CELCAT register system is unable to do this and the college stated it was chasing hard to have that resolved. The initial resolution date has been promised as Christmas 2023, so further escalation had now occurred.

The Chair asked if there was a concern with attendance not being notified externally, as that had been a key part of the attendance improvement strategy around parental involvement and safeguarding. They noted that it was disappointing to see the college in that position mid-year as it challenging to change behaviours then and the links to employability would not be built in.

The college commented that without a working system the volume, workload and timing for staff doing it manually was proving to be an issue.

The committee noted and appreciated all the planned work in digital and the pressure being applied to CELCAT, however asked how the college was dealing with its risks whilst this was happening. It noted that the most vulnerable learners suffer with lower attendance and retention and asked what guidance was being given to staff to prioritise them?

The college noted that the Personal Development Coaches had been directed to triage students with attendance issues and look to provide immediate support for the most vulnerable. One of the remaining issues there was noted as that need being translated through to the parents.

The Chair asked what benchmarking had been done with regards to other colleges attendance rates and how was Petroc performing against it?

The college stated that attendance does vary, noted that they had asked for this as a discussion item at the next College External Benchmarking Group. It was shared that the feeling was that colleges were on the same kind of levels and that whilst there was a follow on from COVID there would be other factors now at play.

The committee shared its worry that the disadvantaged and vulnerable need to have extra layer of assurance and asked what other practices can be put in? What lessons were being learnt?

The college agreed with a committee comment that staff sickness at this time of year also means that some registers are not being completed or only partially completed.

Action: The committee asked for further detailed information as a report on register completion to be circulated after the half term break by correspondence. The Deputy Principal will share that report with the Director of Governance who will send it out to the committee for review and comment.

The Principal prompted a discussion on the longer term question around schools continuing to have high levels on non-attendance and what the college can do to reset the learners into new behaviours when they join it. Some work done locally on the issues was reported by a governor and the SEN team toolkit was noted as a strong support system.

The college shared that the toolkit was already thought to be having a good impact in the college across all teaching staff and learners, but especially within the disadvantaged groups. The Personal Development Coaches were noted again as a positive within the college and the Executive stated that they were looking at ways to grow that positive work,

The committee commented that attendance in Maths and English was still significantly lower than other subjects and asked what the impact of the college interventions had been there?

The Deputy Principal shared that the class sizes in that area were unbalanced currently with some groups being larger than they would have liked. The college was working on ways now to resolve that, but funding in some areas would be an issue. Talks were underway on other ways to resolve teaching gaps where staff recruitment was proving difficult.

The committee asked if internal training and upskilling was an option and the college replied that they were looking at ways to 'grow their own' talent, but still needed to find good base skills and or underutilised staff. DS offered their support as a Maths specialist to the college if it would be helpful.

The Principal shared that the college was also in partnership with Exeter and City Plymouth Colleges in the area of Maths excellence and that Core maths had been introduced this year. They further noted that whilst some group sizes were large at 30 learners, when the non-attendance had been factored in the numbers dropped to a mean of 21-23. They shared that they would be trying to increase the smaller groups then the right balance could be achieved.

The committee asked if the tuition fund had been fully used yet and the college confirmed that a significant amount had been with plans in place for the rest.

Action: The committee asked for a specific update at the next meeting on tuition fund impact.

The staff governor asked what work was being undertaken to support teaching staff in this area as from their own experience it could bring significant challenges and pressure.

The Deputy Principal shared that this was an area of support currently under review through workload modelling to establish if there would be ways to support and change systems. It was stated that it was not a process of blame, but rather to consider what can be done to turn things around for them.

It was noted that the college delivered a specific session at the staff development day in December 2023 on Maths and English and will be sharing greater contextualised examples, which staff had requested following that.

The Deputy Principal also spoke to the issue on the impact of bulk withdrawals being actioned in March of 2023 and shared that a much greater focus had been given to understand and prevent this for 2024 as well as a more effective promotion on learner retention.

Another area of concern at this stage was noted as the co-construction of curriculum with employers. The college had not achieved actions as swiftly or completely as it had hoped to but reported that the drive forward was now in motion. The directive to staff is to engage with a minimum of one employer in the design, delivery, and review phases. Some good practice can be seen in some areas, but not yet as consistent as it needs to be.

The committee asked if work experience was progressing as expected and the college answered that it does vary, however it is programmed into the Study Programme and progress was being made.

The next area was in the delivery of tutorial session where the Deputy Principal spoke the work being down by the PDCs delivering a more cohesive and consistent system of tutorials.. As noted earlier the ways to drive more of this activity was under discussion now within the college.

The committee asked if the Animal Care T-Level was currently being delivered and the college confirmed it was due to start from September 2024.

The committee asked it that was concern since it has been and continues to be noted as inadequate. It asked the college what it was doing about that.

It was noted that areas in RED in the QIP were under enhanced scrutiny and support systems as well as Apprenticeships already being under the same. Notable improvements had been seen in apprenticeships through that system.

It was noted that there has been significant staffing capacity and capability in the animal care area (the Director of Governance cautioned the meeting to take care in this discussion here as members of staff may be able to be identified if further details were shared). A professional learning programme was implemented and was intended to recover ground as well as the sharing of best practice.

The committee asked what number of learners were involved in this subject area and it was shared that it was approximately 20. It was discussed that this subject areas were important for providing a diverse and lower level recruitment opportunity and was becoming a popular entry point to education.

Other areas with similar issues and therefore concern for the committee were in Electrical and Plumbing. It was shared that Plumbing formed part of onsite construction which would not be continuing as it had been identified nationally as unfit for purpose. Electrical would be part of a T-Level.

The committee noted that staffing had been shared as an issue in both areas and asked what the colleges view was on overall staff profile? It acknowledged that the issues here may have been described as the 'perfect storm', but what if it happened again?

The college acknowledged that it had happened twice now and that it would have to monitor staffing carefully and watch for issues whilst looking at its staffing through curriculum planning.

Level 1 programmes were also noted as a red concern and changes had been implemented for next year which were hoped to change that. Previously the level 1 learners would rotate through three subjects and often did not like one and would not attend. Moving forward there will be a more suitable foundation based programme which will better provide target setting and progress tracking.

Engagement with learners was discussed with the college discussing more emphasis on learner surveys and the Student Union (SU) shared that many don't get or respond to emails. The idea of suggestion boxes around campus was discussed with some pros and cons to the idea, but the Deputy Principal stated that they would take the idea away for consideration.

Distress was shared by the college around the results of the Sexual Harassment survey where 27% of responses believed that there is a culture of sexual harassment. These figures were better than those from the respondents' previous schools, but still noted as an issue and tied into the Safeguarding report.

The staff governor asked if reports on the induction survey could be more nuanced as it was noted that certain subject areas respond in greater numbers which can actually have a negative effect on those areas.

The Principal shared that the college was in discussion with the company that supports the staff engagement survey as they are also able to provide benchmarked student surveys. The college would still want to address the issues in areas where learners are more confident in responding therefore potentially skewing college wide results and would be looking to triangulate responses.

The Head of Quality shared that the professional learning systems were in place and the progress tracker was being completed and RAG rated. Moving forward the college would look to address some conflicts in timetables to allow all to attend and delivering bespoke sessions using the Education Training Foundation.

In terms of observations, they confirmed that 51 out of 198 has been completed which was an improvement on last year.

STUDY PROGRAMME

It was shared that there were no substantive changes in the Study Programme however the previous and proposed copies were shared in full as the document had been completely reordered to make it flow better. It was confirmed that there were no major changes nationally that would need major amendments to this document.

The committee asked who the target audience for the document was? It was confirmed that The Directors, Faculty Managers and Business Managers were the key audience..

The committee further noted that challenge that colleges have to make it understood that learners are funded for the delivery of the whole Study Programme and did the Executive believe the lecturers understood this?

The Deputy Principal felt that they did and that shared that it was discussed and reinforced.

The committee asked if it was available as a visual rather than just text?

The college said that it wasn't currently, but that it would be a good thing to do and that they would move on that and share it. The committee asked that it be

shared with parents as well as good practice and to understand that all elements of the programmes were important. The visual would provide a view of how the timetable would be broken down and that subjects such as Maths take equal place to subject specialisms.

The committee further asked that a greater emphasis on its commitment to diversity and neurodiversity and that as an institution it provides access and an approach to that. The college agreed.

It was approved by the committee that the changes would be made and could be approved by Chairs Action outside of this meeting.

Across all levels and areas we have as a principal of recognition of diversity of the learner in neurodiversity and that as an institution we would also have access and approach to support in that. Would you be happy to more explicit in that? Enrichment does not speak to that. Can achieve that by chairs action after this meeting.

Action: Add commitment to diversity and neuro diversity to the Study Programme and approve by Chairs Action.

Final comments were asked for and the committee asked for a deep dive into the areas discussed previously in the QIP around Animal Care and Electrical at the next meeting.

The committee also noted the issues in digital and infrastructure and its impact on success and safeguarding. Staffing and performance and the links to student attainment. It asked that these be considered by the Board or by the Strategic Review Committee as if insufficient improvement is made in those areas it would prevent the college from achieving its strategic aims.

It was thought that areas around staffing and performance should be fed into the People and Remuneration Committee.

Action:
A deep Dive into Animal Care, Plumbing and Electrical to be presented to the next committee meeting.

The Director of Governance to review the asks for further information and work with the Chair to ensure the right reviews are fed into the right forums.

Action List

Action No	Action	Owner	Date Due	Status

1	Report on register completion to be circulated after the half term break by correspondence. The Deputy Principal will share that report with the Director of Governance who will send it out to the committee for review and comment.	JJ/JB	23/3/24	
2	The committee asked for a specific update at the next meeting on tuition fund impact.	JJ	8/5/24	
3	Add commitment to diversity and neuro diversity to the Study Programme and approve by Chairs Action.	JJ/JB	8/5/24	
4	A deep Dive into Animal Care, Plumbing and Electrical to be presented to the next committee meeting.	JJ	8/5/24	
5	The Director of Governance to review the asks for further information and work with the Chair to ensure the right reviews are fed into the right forums.	MS/JB	23/3/24	
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

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
Paper sections on future have numbers throughout	Jason Jones	6 Feb 2024	Completed
Deputy Principals report to cross reference the QIP in future presentations	Jason Jones	6 Feb 2024	Completed

The meeting concluded at 17:54

The next meeting of the committee is on