

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
held on 29th January 2019
at the Sheepen Road Campus

Present

David Gask, in the Chair	Keith Moule
Alison Andreas	Kevin Prince
Martin Fordham	Terry Smyth
David Gronland	

In Attendance

Caroline Fritz	Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning
Hazel Paton	Clerk to the Governors
Jason Peters	Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance
Jill Wognum	Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality

Keith Moule was welcomed to his first meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Daniel Clarke and Scott Piper.

2. **Declaration of any conflicts of interest**

None.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2018 (CIC/CQ/19/1/1) were received and confirmed. The Chair signed the minute book.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None, other than on the agenda.

5. **Post Inspection Action Plan**

CIC/CQ/19/1/2, Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP), was received and considered.

In the context that the PIAP was put together over a short timeframe in response to the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection and is a very detailed document, the College Management were asked, having had time to reflect on the plan, whether from their perspective it is a good plan for delivering what the student body needs, and what Ofsted expect. The Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality responded that although long, the plan is appropriate, focussing on the things that the College needs to improve in order to recruit better and achieve better outcomes, and it is impacting on more than just areas identified in the Ofsted feedback. The College Executive recognise that they cannot tackle all of the actions at once, and are focussing on the priorities that will have the most impact on student outcomes in July 2019. The College has linked with Northampton College (Ofsted Grade 2) and Burnley College (Ofsted Grade 1), and the College's PIAP reflects what those colleges are doing. The College has made good progress on Priority 2 (implement a more refined progress measurement system at all levels within the organisation) and has already seen some impact from the new systems that have been put in place. Although the College is not quite where it would like be with some of the other priorities, the PIAP is achievable.

Three members of the Committee had attended a Governor conference earlier that month which included a presentation by Paul Joyce, HMI and Ofsted Deputy Director for FE and Skills, on the proposed Inspection Framework 2019. Their view was that the new framework has a different

drive and ethos to the current Inspection framework. Given that the College's next inspection will be under the new framework, Governors asked if this had been taken into consideration when putting together the PIAP. The College Executive has reviewed the draft Inspection Framework 2019 (which is currently out for consultation) and Inspectors will still be looking at outcomes. The view of Inspectors is that good teaching and learning leads to good outcomes; if outcomes are poor then Inspectors expect teaching and learning to be poor.

The Corporation Chair reported that another topic of discussion at the recent Governor conference was English and maths. It had been suggested that in response to trying to improve their outcomes data, colleges were putting students through GCSE maths when it may be more appropriate for them to study vocational maths that supported their learning. The Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance reported that the College had moved students across to GCSEs for a number of reasons, including improving outcomes. Employers have a better understanding of GCSEs than Functional Skills. The specification for Functional Skills has changed in the last three years. Functional Skills are now very demanding and difficult to embed in the vocational area. Governors accepted that the College had a clear, well defined rationale for putting students on GCSEs.

It was reported that under the proposed new Inspection framework there will be a strong emphasis on destinations, and an increased emphasis on the pace of progress. Governors asked how progress will be assessed and were advised that Inspectors will want to see student's work over a period of time, their progress, and from their feedback evidence that the student is being stretched enough.

The Staff Governor gave his perspective as an Area Head on the progress monitoring process which had been introduced over the last few weeks. Although tutors now have an additional administrative task, staff can now track every single student and the progress they are making at any one point in the year. In conjunction with ProMonitor, the system shows the interventions that have been put in place to improve the progress of a learner and the distance travelled. Governors asked the extent to which students are involved in the process and were advised that at each review point the student has a one-to-one meeting with their tutor to review their progress score, receive feedback on their performance and to set targets. Governors asked whether the students would be able to articulate their progress score and the targets they have been set if questioned. It was reported that the new system is in the early stages and the process of progress reviews is more refined in some areas of the College than others; some students may not know yet what their next steps are. The first stage was for staff to identify the criteria for the expected skills, knowledge and behaviour on that course and then for every student to grade them against these criteria or 'milestone targets'. Quality review meetings were held the previous week and the focus was on the next steps in terms of teaching and learning to support students currently graded a low amber or red. Staff have been asked to put targets on ProMonitor, which can be viewed by students. ProMonitor also shows the discussions which staff are having with individual students, and the interventions that have been put in place. Having been set up very quickly as a management tool for curriculum managers it is working well. Governors asked if the students had embraced the new system but were advised that it was too early to express a view. Area Heads are currently being asked for their feedback on how the system has been introduced.

Governors asked about actions being taken to support a change of culture. A Learning and Teaching Development Day (LTDD) has been organised for 15th February. A range of activities linked to the PIAP and practice in the classroom will take place in the morning. The focus of the afternoon will be on how teaching staff use the information on student progress and adapt their planning and delivery to ensure students maximise their progress.

Progress against the plan as at 22 January 2019 was considered. It was reported that good progress has been made against analysing the training needs of staff. What has yet to be decided is how to deliver the staff development. The College is considering weekly training slots, targeting individual

staff, and bespoke training for groups. The teaching and learning hub has been renewed and is currently being put together as a virtual tool ready to launch at the LTDD on 15th February. Governors asked what training is likely to have the most impact and were advised that some Area Heads have identified a need for training in planning for more differentiation in sessions, and giving staff the techniques and skills to plan sessions using students starting points more effectively. Other staff want a refresher on session planning and questioning techniques. A member of the Quality Team has been working with 18 members of staff on a one-to-one basis. The feedback on the impact of this has been very good. Governors asked if this is a permanent role, and what the support structure would be like in the longer term to maintain quality standards. It was reported that the number of staff in need of this type of intense support is small, possibly those who are new to teaching and/industry specialists.

It was reported that a programme of staff CPD will commence after half term focussing on CI 7 (a set of essential skills for teaching staff). There will be around nine sessions a week, including breakfast and twilight sessions, starting with 'Do the basics'.

Governors sought more information on CI 7. It was reported that it has been adapted from a document offered to the College by Northampton College, and was central to the improvement at Northampton. CI 7 outlines the standards of the best, and contains practical guidance to get everybody teaching to the standard of the best. The College is looking at whether to fundamentally change the timetable and start teaching later on two days a week so staff can focus on teaching and learning at the start of the day.

Governors asked if the focus of CPD events will be directed centrally or decided at Area Head level, and whether staff will be required to attend or have an element of choice. At this stage the College is relying on the areas to identify their priorities, and the impact will be measured through learning walks. A review of the observation process is underway, and some training has been arranged for May, to be delivered by an Ofsted Inspector. The trainer will carry out some paired observations early in the autumn term to test the training.

Governors asked when the Executive will have a sense of how well the new progress system is working. The impact will be seen in when the summer results are available. As a process, staff engagement can be evidenced by the volume of students who have been graded. Learning walks in February and at Easter will focus on how this is being transferred into the classroom.

The partnership working with other colleges was discussed. The Principal reported that colleges with Ofsted grades 3 and 4 are able to make an application to the Strategic College Improvement Fund. Colchester Institute hopes to put in a funding bid to put the current arrangements on a more formal footing. If successful the funding will go to the colleges providing the support to cover the costs of working with Colchester Institute (visits and sharing materials etc). Both Northampton and Burnley colleges have indicated that they are happy to work with Colchester Institute without this funding support.

The challenges of increasing student outcomes in maths and English, and moving students from a grade 3 to grade 4, were discussed. It was reported that the College is approaching this in a new way and a number of initiatives are taking place.

Governors noted that a number of initiatives are in place but would like more detail to give the Board assurance before the end of the year that the College is doing the right things, and actions are making a difference. For example, each statement could follow a structure:

- What you are doing
- Why you are doing it
- The timeline

- What you have already seen / how it is making a difference / how it will be measured and when
- Quantifiable data such as this training has been put in place, and this change has been seen in the observation profile.

The Committee Chair questioned whether the objective to increase the number of Grade 3 students achieving Grade 4 in maths and English should be changed, given the grade boundaries are not known. It was reported that this particular target is included in the plan because it has been identified as a particular weakness at Colchester Institute. This will be a challenge for all staff, not just the maths and English department. Students close to the grade boundary who have demonstrated that they are capable of improving (about 400 students for each subject) have been identified for focussed support. The students and their families are being contacted about an 11 week programme of additional support, starting after half term and the students have been given extra workbooks.

Governors noted that quite a lot of work was still required on Priority 5 (improve the rigour and impact of College quality assurance processes). The Corporation Chair reported that a number of colleges organise learning walks with Governors and asked if this something the Committee would like to see introduced at Colchester Institute. The purpose will be to visit lessons and get a better feel for what is going on in the College; it is not to ascertain whether the teaching is good or not. The learning walks will be led by an Area Head and there will be an opportunity at the end for Governors to ask questions about what they have seen. It will allow Governors to have discussions with students and ask questions in terms of their progress. There was support for the proposal. The Chair will discuss it further with the Principal.

Other ways of increasing Governors' knowledge of the College and raising the profile of the Board with staff, were discussed. Suggestions included integrating into a lesson, shadowing for a day, and attending staff development events. Such activities should have a purpose so the Governors gets some value from it. Governors are welcome to join staff at the Learning and Teaching Development Day on 15th February, either for the whole day or particular sessions.

6. **Annual Report to the Board**

CIC/CQ/19/1/3, Annual Report to the Board 2017-18, was received, considered and accepted for submission to the Board subject to minor modification. It was agreed to amend the statement "A policy on mental health has been developed for 2018/19", to read "is being developed".

7. **Proposed Link Governor Scheme 2019**

CIC/CQ/19/1/5, Link Governor Scheme 2019, was received. The Committee discussed and accepted the general approach of aligning the link scheme to the priorities in the PIAP. There was some concern that the proposed links might fall on a small number of managers, but it should be possible to allocate roles to avoid this. For some areas, it might be more appropriate to have two link managers, to give Governors a full overview, for example to cover both GCSE and Functional Skills maths and English. Consideration was given to pairing Governors for link visits, but this could make it more difficult to schedule meetings. The proposals, with identified link governors/link mangers, will be put to the next Board meeting.

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday, 6th March 2019 at 4.30pm.

9. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were no items.