

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
held on 29th January 2020
at the Sheepen Road Campus

Present

Keith Moule, in the Chair	Kevin Prince
Alison Andreas	Terry Smyth
Lizzy Ellam	

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Pam Donnelly.

2. Declaration of any conflicts of interest

None

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2019 (CIC/CQ/20/1/1) were received and confirmed. The Chair signed the minute book.

The Chair referred to the statement in the minutes that the College “needs to do better” (in respect of results for English and maths). He felt that this terminology did not help Governor’s understanding of the current position and asked for more clarity in future.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

4.1. HE Students’ Union

Members asked for an update on the appointment of Officers to the newly formed HE Students’ Union. It was reported that no students had put themselves forward for these voluntary roles by the close of the nominations period. The Dean of Higher Education is now talking to students who may be suitable and if they are willing to take up office will use a power within the SU Constitution to co-opt them to the Union.

4.2. UCC Validation Update

It had been reported at the last meeting that half the College’s HE programmes had been validated by the University of East Anglia. Governors asked for an update on the current status of validations. It was reported that there had been two validations this academic year. A Computer Games with 3D Modelling and Animation programme had been successfully validated the previous week. Further validations were scheduled for the coming three months.

5. Outcome of QAA Review 18 November 2019

It was reported that the draft QRSMI (Quality and Standards Review for monitoring and intervention) Report had still not been received. The Principal had sent an email to the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) on 9th January saying how disappointed the College was at the whole process. A holding

response had been received, indicating that the delay was not specific to Colchester Institute and that other institutions that have been through the same review process are still waiting for their draft report. The Principal will follow this up if the report is not received by early February and escalate the complaint as necessary. The draft report should come to the College to check the factual accuracy before it is shared more widely.

6. Ofsted Monitoring Visit Report

CIC/CQ/20/1/3, Ofsted Report following a monitoring visit 11-12 December 2019, was received and considered. Governors were pleased to note the judgements for the four themes:

- (i) What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that the quality of education improves so that learners understand and apply key concepts fluently to their learning? Significant progress
- (ii) What progress have leaders and staff made in selecting and sequencing the curriculum so that learners develop new knowledge and skills and work towards defined end points, including their next stage of education, training or employment? Reasonable progress
- (iii) What progress have leaders made in ensuring that teachers and assessors use assessment to inform teaching, check learners' and apprentices' understanding and help them gain, extend, and improve their skills? Reasonable progress
- (iv) What progress have leaders made in supporting adult learners to gain valuable employability skills and understand what they need to do to reach and succeed in their chosen career or next phase of education or training? Significant progress

Governors focussed on the two areas of concern identified in the report and asked Management what actions had been put in place to move these forward. The Principal reported that these are things that are clearly more important under the new EIF (Education Inspection Framework) than under previous inspection frameworks. This is particularly so in relation to students reaching their destinations and identifying the link between current activity and where they are going. The College has not focused as highly on this aspect as is now expected and some actions have been included to the PIAP/QIP (Post Inspection Action Plan/Quality Improvement Plan) to address this.

The statement in the report that too few teachers ensure that learners develop their skills in written English was not a surprise to Management, but will be quite challenging in terms of how it will be addressed. In some cases this is because staff do not have the confidence, and the College will need to come up with a sensitive plan that will get staff to be open if this is a difficulty for them.

Governors did not underestimate the sensitivity and size of the challenge. Governors asked what was going to be implemented, by when, and what a sensitive approach to this might be in practice. It was reported that the College was still in discussion with Area Heads about what the strategy should be. These discussions will take place in the period up to Easter and the strategy implemented in the summer so that it is in place for 2020/21. The Committee Chair asked if there was an expectation that something should be put in place that could potentially have an impact on this year's students. The Executive felt that the timeframe that the College was working to was reasonable. Governors asked what had been introduced since the report was published, and what impact it had had. It was reported that consideration was being given to putting up key words in all teaching spaces that could be of assistance to staff and teachers alike.

The Staff Governor gave an example of how this was being addressed within their area. Embedding and promoting English and maths is discussed at team meetings and there is an area where staff can share ideas across the department.

Governors asked what action, and timeframe, had been put in place to address the statement "too few learners know about their future skills development or steps needed to achieve their long-term goals." The Principal reported that the Executive need more time to consider what the most appropriate actions should be. The paragraph in the report relates to two different points about careers: (i) how students know about and access careers advice; (ii) how the learning in the

classroom links to their next steps and their careers. This was being followed up in the Quality Monitoring meeting taking place that week where Area Heads were being asked how much work was going on in teams around this aspect.

7. Current Performance including in year Progress

7.1. Education Programmes for Young People

CIC/CQ/20/1/4, Education Programmes for Young People, was received and presented by the Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance.

It was reported that the data at this stage suggests that it will be another strong year. The second round of predictions have been thoroughly tested in meetings with Area Heads over the last two weeks and appear to be plausible. The low number of students in Painting and Decorating means that final achievement rates could be impacted if retention is not maximised. Last year retention fell by 3.2% between January and July.

Governors noted an increase in attendance in key areas and overall compared to the same point in the last academic year and asked if there were any areas where attendance or retention was significantly down on the prior year. It was reported that there was a problem in Health and Social Care (80% attendance) which the College has not been able to turn around. There are a large number of students with mental health concerns whose attendance is between 40% and 60%. Governors asked about support arrangements in these cases and were advised that efforts are made to keep in touch with students. An example was given of a student who completed work on 12% attendance through College staff providing a bespoke programme.

Work to increase the number of students moving from a grade 3 to 4 in GCSE English and maths is progressing. The Vice Principal reported that the present estimates for English and maths outcomes were too high and not expected to be achieved. Governors asked about action to improve on the previous year's data and were advised that the College is going to re-run last year's voluntary sessions on moving from a 3 to 4, and for the first time is going to introduce compulsory sessions at the end of May for students at the end of their main qualifications. Attendance is much better than last year, and the results for the November 2019 resits were better than in previous years.

Governors noted that although Electrical has been making steady progress it will remain a subject of close scrutiny, and asked if the change of Area leadership at Easter, due to retirement, is an area of concern. It was reported two applicants were being interviewed for the role later that week.

7.2. Adult Learning Programmes

CIC/CQ/20/1/5, Current year performance – Adult Learners, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning.

It was reported that since the paper had been issued the results for the first term's examinations in ESOL (speaking and listening) had been received and were much more positive than the previous years. Overall results for ESOL last year for 83%; results for this year are 83% without resits. This is reflective of what is being seen now in the classes, where there is a greater focus on targeted revision improving the likelihood of achievement.

Due to the roll on/roll off nature of the programmes offered through the Learning Shop, only about half the expected enrolments have been completed, making it more difficult to have confidence in the projected final outcomes (88%). The College does not do well in the smaller IT qualifications but continues to run some of these because there is a local need.

Current predictions suggest that the outcomes for adult learning programmes will show an improvement on the previous year.

7.3. Vulnerable Learners

CIC/CQ/20/1/6, Current year performance – Vulnerable Learners (Study Programmes), was received and presented by the Principal.

It was noted that there was only one category of vulnerable student where the predicted achievement was below the predicted achievement for the College overall, and the number of students in this category is very small. The Vice Principal: Student Services and Support is in discussion with Area Heads about this.

It was reported that Area Heads are well aware of the vulnerable learners in their area and are able to track them and take action where there is cause for concern.

Governors asked if individual students appeared in more than one category, and if so if this flagged up any issues. It was not known whether there was any double counting in the report. It was agreed that future reports would give a clearer picture if the total headcount was included at the bottom.

8. Teaching and Learning Observations

CIC/CQ/20/1/7, Teaching and Learning Observation update, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning. The College has not previously undertaken a second round of observations in year to look at the impact of actions arising from the first round of observations. The paper outlined the proposed process for a second round of observations to be undertaken during February.

Governors asked if the data that would result from the observations would meet the expectations of Ofsted with regard to the quality of information that is provided. It was reported that Inspectors are interested in seeing if the College knows where teaching practice is good or needs improving in the classroom. There is no expectation as to what the College should do; Ofsted will make a judgement about the effectiveness and impact of what the College is doing in terms of the quality assurance of teaching and learning.

9. Initial Feedback from Student Survey

CIC/CQ/20/1/8, Teaching and Learning Survey 2019-20, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning. The window for completing the survey was 24th January 2020, so limited information was available for this meeting. An analysis of the data will be brought to the next meeting.

The Assistant Principal gave a brief oral report on the emerging data. The survey had been updated to reflect the Education Inspection Framework, and the responses (3400 learners compared to 3277 in the previous year) were generally pleasing.

The Principal reported that since the paper had been written for this Committee it had been updated for the forthcoming FE Commissioner monitoring visit with data for some of the areas. This will be circulated to the Committee for information, but it was stressed that the data was not final.

Governors asked if any learner groups had not completed the survey. ESOL have worked on their own version of the survey because some of the questions are too complicated for those students to answer.

10. Update on Progress against Post Inspection Action Plan

CIC/CQ/20/1/9, Update on Progress against Post Inspection Action Plan 19/20, was received and presented by the Principal. The original plan had been written following the Inspection in 2018. That

plan was then updated for this academic year. The production of the SAR (Self-Assessment Report) and the Ofsted Monitoring visit resulted in some new actions which have been added to the plan.

Governors noted new action 1.8 referred to ‘Deep Dive’ knowledge organiser and asked what this meant. Knowledge organisers were introduced by Tom Sherrington for use with students and can take many forms. Ofsted Inspectors will spend a whole day with an Area Heads, and knowledge organisers might be used to prepare for Inspection and ensure that they have the evidence and the material that they will need. One of the key themes in Inspection will be around CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) and staff will need to be able to articulate the CEIAG activities in their areas. Over the course of this year the College will be working on other aspects. This will include looking at comments in grade 1 and 2 inspection reports and asking how the College would evidence it. In response to a question it was acknowledged that staff cannot yet evidence some aspects as well as would be expected.

11. Quality Improvement Strategy

CIC/CQ/20/1/20, Quality Improvement Strategy 2019-20, was received and noted. In response to feedback at the last meeting the Strategy had been updated to include a more comprehensive description of the aspects relating to Student voice and student feedback.

12. Annual Report to the Board

CIC/CQ/20/1/21, Curriculum and Quality Committee Annual Report 2018-19, was received and approved for submission to the Board.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday, 2nd April 2020 at 4.30pm.

14. Any Other Urgent Business

14.1. 16-19 Performance Tables

It was reported that the 16-19 Performance Tables had been published the previous week. Further data will be published in March and a detailed report will be presented to the next meeting of this Committee. The data published to date shows that the College’s scores are the same as or up on last year. The scores are comparable to those of colleges graded 2 this year and comparable to other colleges graded 2 in the Eastern region. The progress scores for English and maths are the best they have ever been. National average data for general further education colleges is not yet available, but is expected to be published over the coming months. National Achievement rates will be published in March, and this data will be presented to the next meeting to give context to the results for last year.