

Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting

Held Tuesday 17 November 2020

Present Lance Hanson (*Chair*), Joanne Williams (*Interim Principal*), David Allen, Jake Hiatt, Zubeda Limbada, Joanne Rouse,

In attendance Mandy Davis (*Director of Learner Services*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

Based on the updated agenda (12.11.20)

1		Apologies There were none.
2		Declarations of Interest There were none.
3		Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting held 17 June 2020 Subject to one correction for accuracy, the minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting held 17 June 2020 were approved as a correct record.
4		Appointment of Committee Vice Chair Due to changes in membership and a current vacancy to the Corporation and the Committee, members agreed that appointment of a Vice Chair would be deferred.
	Action 4a	Vice Chair of Students Curriculum and Quality Committee, to be addressed through the following Corporation meeting in December 2020.
5		Update on Student Enrolments against contract - In-year 2020/2021 Data Joanne Williams reported that while early in the data cycle, the current enrolment numbers were above contract for 16-18 learners, however, adult enrolment was low and under contract, which seemed to echo the national position. The College expected to recruit further adult learners in the new year and planned courses to help learners into employment. In looking at the breakdown of enrolments in more detail, members noted that the increase in A Level was across the offer, that there was an increase in Health and Social Care, Sports and Animal Care and an increase in Educated at Home students. Members discussed concern that some A Level students would struggle, noting that the impact of Covid-19 on exams, predicted grades and qualifications was far reaching. While an access to A Level course had also been introduced, this had further highlighted the gap in aspiration and ability for students.

		The updated position was noted.
6		<p>Student Performance Report 2019/2020 (including retention, achievement, attendance and destinations)</p> <p>Joanne Williams confirmed that the overall area of focus was on Level 3 retention. A Level retention remained the main area of concern, with A1 issues of 2019/20 now feeding into 2020/2021. The College was considering some A/S Levels to provide further qualification outcomes, to support student progression.</p> <p>Joanne Williams explained that vocational and applied courses, such as expressive arts and Level 1 courses, had been prioritised for face to face in College provision.</p> <p>A Level students had received less time in College and were finding it hard to engage in online provision. It was recognised that it is hard for new students to be visible and vocal on line, in a group of their cohort, who they don't know. The College was trying hard to address this.</p> <p>Retention in both Beauty and Sport courses were also of concern.</p> <p>Members noted the information on student achievement and particularly the leaps in performance for Public Services and Sport, however, Adult attainment had not improved enough.</p> <p>In looking at student destination data, and in particular the take up of places at Russel Group universities, members discussed student aspirations and how these were being encouraged in College. Mandy Davis explained the immense amount of work undertaken by Careers staff in this arena. The student governor attested to how challenging it was to raise student self-belief and engagement. Joanne Williams also noted a range of other factors including finance, Covid-19 and finding the right individual fit for students, were also at play in student HE choice.</p> <p>Joanne Williams reported that the position for Apprenticeships was particularly affected through Covid-19, with trainees losing jobs, and in the case of NHS and Level 5 provision, the work needs of the pandemic overriding the courses. The College recognised the work to do to continue to move this provision forward.</p> <p>With further reference to attendance, which was being recorded for both face to face and online provision, the results were varied, with some courses doing well with virtual provision. Covid-19 and the need for isolating was again impacting on attendance moving forward.</p>
		The report was received.
7		<p>Value Added Report for 2019/2020</p> <p>Joanne Williams addressed the biggest challenge to the College, with the need to push attainment for the higher prior attainers.</p> <p>Members noted the subject areas that had improved and those areas where grades had gone down, also noting the impact of Covid-19 where students did not have the opportunity to raise grades.</p>
		The update on value added data was received.
8		Review of Courses Under Notice

		<p>Joanne Williams emphasised that A level retention continued to impact on the current year, with consequent reduced pass rates.</p> <p>Members noted the areas of persistent dips and those where there was improvement, but which would remain an area under closer attention.</p> <p>It was noted that some courses, by the nature of the problems that the student cohort brought, would consistently be of concern.</p> <p>Joanne Williams outlined avenues of action aligned to the Development Plan, to address particular course issues.</p>
		The review of courses under notice was received.
9		<p>Current year 2020/2021 – Targets</p> <p>The targets, as set by the Corporation, and as related to the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee were considered.</p> <p>It was noted that the targets were set above the sector norms, were challenging and necessarily aspirational.</p> <p>Members further discussed the challenges of online delivery and participation, particularly with encouraging and retaining student engagement.</p>
		The current year targets were noted for monitoring by the Committee with nothing at this stage to report to the Corporation.
10		<p>Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2019/2020</p> <p>Mandy Davis provided a comprehensive outline of Equality and Diversity across the College, including data across age, gender and ethnicity.</p> <p>In particular, the outcomes for 2019/2020 had revealed that some achievement gaps had been reduced and the gender gap had dissolved.</p> <p>With regard to ethnicity, both White Asian and Not Provided cohorts did not achieve in line with other groups.</p> <p>Mandy Davis outlined the College actions in responsiveness to safeguarding, to meet increasing student needs through the change in access, and commended the Safeguarding Team for their hard work. In addition to more staff the College was also using Together All.</p> <p>Members were informed of the work being done for Children Looked After and that together with partners, the attainment gap had been narrowed.</p> <p>With regard to students with Education and Health Care Plans, members noted the rapid increase in numbers in the new cohort. While there had been a decrease in the performance gap for the previous year, there was further work to be done to reduce this.</p>
		The Students Curriculum and Quality Committee received the Equality and Diversity Annual Report and recommended it to the Corporation.
11		<p>Pastoral Report 2019/2020 (incorporating Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding and Wellbeing)</p> <p>Mandy Davis outlined the work done to get as much information and as many opportunities for activity to students as possible. The Covid-19 pandemic had highlighted the need to work differently, to engage students and to receive their feedback. A significant amount of enrichment activity had still been provided, despite gaps in hitherto planned activity across spring and summer.</p>

		<p>Members received a detailed review of work being done to respond to extra-curricular engagement activities, which students still wanted, and to move forward to support students in employability, including virtual work experience.</p> <p>The College continued to do 'temperature checks' with students to seek out any gaps or needs not being addressed.</p> <p>Student successes were shared with members to show the breadth of achievement and managers commented on their pride in student success.</p> <p>Mandy Davies also highlighted;</p> <p>that there had been fewer expulsions than the previous year</p> <p>with regards to learning support, that it was positive to note students who had won awards,</p> <p>with regards to access to learner support, the College sought to get information through from schools earlier,</p> <p>that the percentage of Children Looked After who went to university was now 10%, however the manager had a current target of 25%</p> <p>that the amount of safeguarding concerns had increased by 33% and that issues raised by poor mental health was also increasing, and consequently the College sought to further increase support.</p> <p>The Chair commended the amazing success stories, while noting that there were less success stories for male students evidenced.</p> <p>The Student governor noted involvement of the student ambassadors in promotion and Mandy Davis explained that the student ambassadors were in teams covering six themes in the current year, to better support focus on a range of key areas.</p>
		The Committee accepted the detailed overview provided in the Pastoral Report.
12		<i>Self-Assessment</i>
	12.1	<p>Progress Report on Quality Improvement Plan for 2019/2020</p> <p>Joanne Williams updated members on progress against key areas of the Quality Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The review of Level 1 courses had been delayed due to Covid, but would be considered, Public Services courses were also being reviewed. Dog grooming courses had been instigated and the approach to Functional Skills had been rationalised.</p> <p>Members noted that behavioural leads were working well and the introduction of cover supervisors had been particularly successful.</p> <p>Members discussed the complexities of timetabling and the 'new normal' regarding online provision. Joanne Williams responded that the timetable was reactive regarding the split of face to face and online delivery, dependant on course delivery and need. Some courses such as IT, where delivery had been particularly suited and well received through online delivery, would more likely have some online provision become normalised.</p> <p>With regard to exams going forward there remained a lack of clarity and consistency. The student governor noted how the lack of parity regarding exams was difficult to understand.</p>

		<p>With regard to good student behaviour, Joanne Williams agreed that this was perhaps due to less students being on campus at any one time and general appreciation of the opportunity to be in College.</p> <p>The staff governor noted that in light of Covid-19, some staff had also expressed an increasing sense of isolation. Joanne Williams responded that this was pertinent and that there were variable responses regarding wellbeing in the current way of working.</p>
		Progress on the Quality Improvement Plan was noted.
	12.2	<p>Office for Students Annual Assurance Statement</p> <p>Members noted that assurance was provided in the comprehensive Higher Education Self-Assessment Report and was not now due in a separate statement from the Office for Students.</p>
	12.3	<p>Higher Education Self-Assessment Report</p> <p>Joanne Williams noted that the report from the Head of Centre for Higher Education and Training provided assurance on how Higher Education offer was managed by the College.</p> <p>Higher Education still comprised a small offer for the College however, results were relatively good and some small, niche areas were working well.</p> <p>Members noted that while the numbers for current recruitment were low, the College hoped to continue to build the Higher Education cohort.</p>
		The Higher Education Self-Assessment Report was received.
13		<p>Update of the Common Inspection Framework</p> <p>Joanne Williams explained that while usual inspections under the Education Inspection Framework remain suspended, Ofsted were operating a system of Interim Visits. Halesowen College had received one such visit on 10th and 11th November 2020.</p> <p>Members noted the positive interim feedback received and awaited the formal written response from Ofsted.</p> <p>The Chair offered formal appreciation of staff and student engagement in this process on behalf of governors.</p> <p>Joanne Williams commended the students involved.</p>
14		<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The staff governor asked about potential receipt of more detailed information on apprenticeships. Mandy Davis noted that the College would be doing more satisfaction checks of separate cohorts including apprenticeships.</p>
	Action 14a	Joanne Williams proposed that apprenticeships and adult provision be addressed specifically in March and June meetings of the Committee, respectively.
15		<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting was noted as 16 March 2020.</p>

The Meeting closed at 7.40pm

ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETINGS		
<i>Actions from the meeting held 17 November 2020</i>		
Action 4a	Appointment of Committee Vice-Chair Vice-Chair of Students Curriculum and Quality Committee, to be addressed through the following Corporation meeting in December 2020.	JSu Dec 21
Action 14a	Any Other Business Joanne Williams proposed that apprenticeships and adult provision be addressed specifically in March and June meetings of the Committee, respectively.	JWi March 21 June 21