

# HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 09 December 2015

Membership:

- \* Sotirios Adamopoulos
- \* Chris Christofides (Chair)
- \* Luke Jones
- \* Myrtle Prodger
- \* Karen Spencer
- Mike Thorne

*\*denotes present*

In attendance

- L Turner, Deputy Principal
- M Stokes, Deputy Principal
- R Jones, Assistant Principal (agenda item 533 only)
- R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation

#### **527 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Thorne and Debbie Sheridan. C Christofides welcomed L Jones to his first meeting of the Standards Committee.

#### **528 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### **529 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the joint Standards and Resources Committee meeting and the Standards Committee meeting both held on 18 June 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

#### **530 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

##### **530.1 Key Performance Indicators (minutes 6 and 7 of the joint Standards and Resources Committee refer)**

K Spencer reported that a full paper on KPIs will be presented to the Corporation on 10 December 2015. The KPIs align with the targets in the QIP and the KPIs which were discussed at the Standards Committee meeting on 18 June 2015.

##### **530.2 Quality Report (minute 523 refers)**

Governors noted that the main themes highlighted in the Quality Report have been incorporated into the SAR and QIP.

##### **530.3 Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee (minute 524 refers)**

Governors noted that the Committee agreed to change its name to the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

## 531 Self-Assessment Report for Harlow College 2014/15

The Standards Committee received and considered the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for Harlow College for 2014/15, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

L Turner informed the Committee that the format of the SAR had changed and it now reflects what Ofsted are looking for and is aligned to the judgements which Ofsted make. Governors noted that the College may not receive a grade from Ofsted for high needs learners as this is dependent on the College's actual number of these learners.

L Turner highlighted the key information in the SAR and Governors noted the following:

- The College's overall success rate for 2014/15 including English and Maths was 82.3% and excluding English and Maths was 87.7%. This 5% difference in success rates is the same as the 2013/14 academic year and reflects the large number of learners studying English and Maths.
- 103 learners passed GCSE English last year and 109 learners passed GCSE Maths last year. Whilst these figures are not as high as the College would like, they are in line with national standards and the College knows what it needs to do to improve. Overall success rates nationally for English and Maths are low.
- Learners struggle with the gap between Functional Skills Level 1 and Level 2.
- Learners are motivated if they see English and Maths are vital for their career path and staff are being developed in motivating learners and building their resilience.
- Moving forward, the English and Maths curriculum will be getting harder and the College will have a cohort of students who have not studied large parts of the curriculum when previously sitting GCSE English and Maths. Another issue is English controlled assessments where some learners have previously sat the international GCSE with no coursework whereas the College uses the national GCSE which has substantial elements of controlled assessments.
- Retention for 2014/15 was 93% which, despite being a small decline from 2013/14, is classed as strong.
- Attainment remains high. The average A-Level grade for 2014/15 was C+ and the average BTEC grade was distinction.
- Progress and value added for 2014/15 is 0.3 for both A-Levels and BTECs.
- These progress and high grades measures put the College in the top 1% of all colleges nationally.
- Overall apprenticeship rates remain the same as in the previous year, however there has been a slight decline in the timely success rate. The main barriers to timely success are the English, Maths and ICT elements of the framework.
- The College has self-assessed apprenticeships as requiring improvement due to the timely success rates and the College's relationship with some employers. Some internal culture change is also required to ensure apprenticeships improve.
- Learner satisfaction has declined by 0.03% compared to the previous year. The area the College scores least well in is the advice given to learners on what to do next. The College is taking a number of actions to address this. It is focusing more on careers and not just courses with learners being recruited onto a career pathway.
- The Student Talent and Recruitment (STAR) Agency locates the Progression and Placement Officers with MIS and Admissions. The Agency focuses on employability, work experience and next steps.
- The College is focusing more on destinations and all learners have completed an ILP with planned destinations. Tutorials are also being used to highlight the importance of destination data.

- The College has self-assessed itself as good for overall effectiveness of provision. Its key strengths are:
  - Its flexible approach to staffing and timetabling;
  - Teaching, learning and assessment is good but could be better still;
  - New partnerships with employers and stakeholders have been established;
  - Partnerships with local schools have been re-established;
  - The College has a more outward-looking focus;
  - There is more focus on employability skills in lessons through live briefs and external work experience;
  - Curriculum development and review is taking place with a view to ensure that the curriculum meets employer needs and where appropriate, new qualifications are being delivered;
  - Governance is strong and effective;
  - Safeguarding and student support is strong;
  - Information, advice and guidance is good when students start at College;
  - There are very few incidents of poor behaviour;
  - Study programmes were individualised last year and have been again this year;
  - The volume of student employability activities has increased;
  - Outcomes for adult learners are excellent. Government statistics show that 40% of benefit recipients are finding employment.
- In a minority of areas improvements need to be made and this is reflected in the areas' lesson observations and self-assessment grades. It is more often individual staff rather than whole teams and more likely amongst new or unqualified staff. The teacher training being delivered by the College is having a positive impact on this. There are a small number of staff who have had a "requires improvement" grade for too long and this is being addressed. A number of walk-throughs have been completed this term by senior leaders which have highlighted strengths and weaknesses.
- The areas for improvement in the leadership and management section were noted.

A discussion was held around whether any of the Ofsted judgements were limiting grades. Whilst there are no official limiting grades, if safeguarding is not good then leadership and management cannot be rated as good and if teaching, learning and assessment is not outstanding, then overall effectiveness cannot be outstanding.

K Spencer thanked L Turner for her hard work in producing the SAR and Governors agreed that the clarity of the report and its fit with the Ofsted framework was good.

The Standards Committee noted the Self-Assessment Report for Harlow College for 2014/15.

### **532 Quality Improvement Action Plan and Associated Targets for 2015/16**

The Standards Committee received and considered the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2015-16, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

Governors noted that the QIP reflects the key features and issues arising from the judgements in the SAR. Governors were informed that the QIP is reviewed termly, however the actions in the QIP are being worked on constantly by the College.

Governors noted the following areas for improvement in the QIP and discussed the

action points arising from these areas as follows:

1. Apprenticeships:

There is a strong focus on apprenticeship outcomes, employer relationships and recruitment. New apprenticeship standards are being introduced in 2017 and teams need to plan effectively for this transition. Awareness raising and increased marketing of apprenticeships is taking place, particularly at open evenings.

2. English and Maths:

The College acknowledges there is still work to be done on English and Maths. Targets have been set which appear to be low but they are realistic and higher than the national figures. Once the next round of national figures is released in January 2016, this target may be revised.

Governors requested that a progress measure in English and Maths be captured, measured and recorded.

Learner engagement with English and Maths is an issue for some students, as there are some who choose to make themselves NEET rather than study English and Maths.

3. Teaching, Learning and Assessment:

There is a focus on getting more staff up to a “good” lesson observation grade and a coaching programme has been introduced to help enable this. There is also a focus to move more staff from good to outstanding. In-year progress is being made in both these areas and the College has set a target of 90% of teaching to be good or outstanding.

4. Work Experience and Destinations:

The Placement and Progression Officers are working hard. Work experience needs to be meaningful and deliver employability skills. The College has a clear plan in place and teams are profiling work experience into their study programmes. There is an increased focus across College on collecting destination data.

5. Curriculum:

There is a drive by Government to get curriculum endorsed by employers and to get students work-ready. Managers are currently reviewing the curriculum offered by each team and awarding bodies are changing their curriculum to make it more aligned to industry standards.

6. E-Strategy:

A substantial amount of work has been undertaken in bringing together IT systems across the College, ensuring it is as integrated as possible and being used.

I-Pads have been given to all students and delivery staff and are working well. Learning has been enhanced, one device can be used for the majority of students' work, they are more efficient and they fit into the College's and employers' culture, Three e-learning apprentices have been recruited who offer a drop-in surgery for

students and staff. There is still a need for fixed IT across the College however there have been less issues raised around access to IT. The scheme is improving students' employability as more technology is being used in all areas and employers identify this as a skills gap.

#### 7. Strategy:

The College continues to implement its Strategic Plan and associated plans and strategies, linked to the College's KPIs.

#### 8. Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare:

This is a new Ofsted judgement and brings together a wide range of information. British Values are key and they are being promoted in College. Governors noted that the use of the College's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy needs to be consistent and this is an area of focus for the Assistant Principals.

The Standards Committee noted the Quality Improvement Plan for 2015-16.

### **533 Draft Higher Education Strategy**

The Standards Committee received and considered the draft Higher Education Strategy, presented by R Jones, Assistant Principal.

R Jones informed Governors that the College has been working closely with Anglia Ruskin University as well as looking at other Level 4 opportunities, with a view of providing clear progression opportunities for students and improving financial viability for the College.

- Strategic Driver 1 – grow the curriculum to produce work ready students progressing to meaningful destinations:

The curriculum offer is being looked at, More students come to University Centre Harlow (UCH) through clearing and study foundation degrees due to the lower UCAS points requirements. UCH is in direct competition with Core Anglia for full degrees.

The existing offer is being reviewed and looked at how this might change over time and how foundation degrees fit with higher apprenticeships and HND/Cs. Governors were informed of the proposed new curriculum and how it links to providing progression opportunities for learners and how the College could ensure better value for money.

Governors noted that the College has twenty learners enrolled on its HND/C Sport programme. The College charges £5,500 per learner and none of this is top-sliced. The College has also been approved to deliver HND/Cs in Health and Social Care, Public Services, Fashion, Business and Computing and Systems Development.

- Strategic Driver 3 – to ensure financial viability and stability:

The College has reviewed all of its Higher Education provision and has discontinued its Foundation Degrees in Public Services, Tourism Management and Business Information Systems.

The College is looking at aligning its higher and further education staff as this will provide clearer pathways for students. This staffing model will require careful planning and close management. The HND/Cs processes are similar to BTEC processes therefore this should not pose a problem for the further education staff.

- Strategic Driver 4 – to have a positive impact on our communities, strengthening our relationships and raising our profile regionally and nationally.

The College is looking to develop its relationships with employers and develop new partnerships working on higher and degree apprenticeships. The new trailblazer for apprenticeships is also being developed.

The Standards Committee endorsed the draft Higher Education Strategy and agreed that the Committee should receive further updates by R Jones on how the Strategy is progressing.

### **534 Complaints and Compliments 2014/15**

The Standards Committee received and considered the report on complaints and compliments for 2014/15, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

L Turner thanked Barbara Gamble for producing the report.

Governors noted that there are no significant differences from 2013/14. There have been broadly the same number of complaints and the number of those upheld. The biggest cause of complaint is those relating to issues on programme. The HE Journalism team had a difficult year last year and received the highest number of complaints.

L Turner highlighted the breakdown of the complaints and acknowledged that more work needs to be done with learners on course. Governors noted that complaints are mostly resolved quickly and that the comprehensive nature of the report shows that the College takes complaints seriously and no complaint is regarded as being trivial.

Governors noted the breakdown of complaints into gender, sex, ethnicity and disability.

The compliments received during 2014/15 were highlighted and Governors noted that the report will now track compliments via social media and a more detailed analysis of compliments will be provided in future reports.

The Standards Committee noted the report on complaints and compliments for 2014/15.

### **535 Ofsted**

The Standards Committee held a general discussion around Ofsted and the new common inspection framework, with the aim of giving Governors a greater understanding of how different Ofsted now is.

Governors noted the following:

- It is likely that the College will have a short two day inspection, however there is a possibility that it could be a full inspection.
- Throughout the two day inspection, the College needs to prove that the judgments are at least the same as in the previous inspection.
- The lead inspector will identify 4 – 5 lines of enquiry taken from the SAR and will test these during the inspection. The SAR is therefore critical and it is key that the

- College has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development.
- Learning walks will take place rather than lesson observations. Marking, assessment and feedback will also be looked at.
  - Inspectors will talk to students and senior staff, both formally and informally.
  - Inspectors will want to meet with Governors and ambassadors if possible.
  - Inspectors will want to know about current outcomes and predictions along with historic data.
  - The recent Matrix reaccreditation provided staff with a good insight into how the Ofsted inspection is likely to be.
  - The College is looking to make the relevant Ofsted questionnaires available at all times.
  - The Prevent agenda and British Values are critical.
  - Five reports for FE colleges have been produced under the new framework, four of which were rated with requires improvement or inadequate and only one was rated good.
  - Essex's strategic area review is timetabled for November 2016 and it is likely that the College will be inspected before this date.
  - Position papers have been written by the College on a number of areas under the new Ofsted framework.

C Christofides offered to send some information in to the College and work with the College to help prepare for Ofsted.

The Standards Committee noted the information arising from the discussion and requested to be kept up-to-date with the College's Ofsted preparations and any development or changes with Ofsted and the new framework.

### **536 Any other business**

K Spencer informed the Standards Committee that the College has been successful in its recent Matrix reaccreditation and thanked Sallyann Abdelmoula, Assistant Principal, for her hard work. The associated action plan will be shared with Governors once received.

K Spencer informed the Standards Committee that L Turner features in Ofsted's annual report as it features the College's approach to English and Maths and how the College has embraced the delivery of English and Maths.

### **537 Dates of future meetings**

Spring Term	Tuesday 09 February 2016	08.30am
Summer Term	Tuesday 28 June 2016	08.30am