

St Helens College

CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at the Town Centre Campus, St Helens

Thursday 27 January 2022 at 11.00am

Present:	Mrs L Duncan (Chair)	External Governor
	Mr S Pierce	Chief Executive/Principal
	Mrs S Littlewood	External Governor (via Teams)
	Mrs J Heap	Staff Governor
In attendance:	Dr B Nixon	Chair of Governors
	Mr M Doyle	Deputy Principal - Curriculum and Quality
	Mr I Carten	Head of Quality and Improvement
	Mr N Gribben	Vice Principal - Curriculum Development & Student Experience
	Mrs J McGill	Head of School – Services to People
	Mrs G Hayhurst	Governance Director (minutes)

The Chair welcomed Jen McGill to the meeting.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mr A Owen.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 November 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record subject to corrections to the attendance list as Mrs J Heap and Mr B Nixon did not attend.

4 Matters arising and action tracker

The action tracker and updates were presented for comment.

Regarding action CQ1, a summary report showing data by school will be provided at the May 2022 meeting showing the data for the college year.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the action tracker update.

5 Head of School presentation

The committee received a presentation from the Head of School – Services to People.

Improvements have been seen over the past year, following the amalgamation of travel, hair and beauty and public services. These areas are now sharing best practice. The Head of School noted a priority for this year to increase the volume of work experience opportunities, including for students at Level 1. This is against the background of fewer placement opportunities being available over the last two years.

The school is running a one-month pilot scheme offering rewards and incentives to students to improve attendance. The incentives that deliver the best outcomes will be rolled out more widely.

Following feedback from Ofsted, the school is analysing the reasons for the percentage of destinations that are not directly linked with the course subjects. Early indications suggest that developing the curriculum offer for levels 3 and 4 would improve this position. Employers are more comfortable with recruiting staff with a level 3 qualification than level 2, although those with level 2 qualifications who wish to enter employment are able to demonstrate transferable skills developed during their studies.

The introduction of Progress Coaches has improved outcomes for at-risk students. Evidence suggests that students are more comfortable discussing personal issues with the coaches, rather than tutors. The coaches are also developing relationships with teaching staff and improvements have been seen following joint meetings with the student, coach and tutor.

The school has undertaken a review of courses and disestablished those that were not performing. Consideration has also been given to the awarding bodies and improvements to outcomes have been realised in areas where changes have been made.

The school is also working closely with the Directions Team to adapt courses for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

College's facilities were discussed and the board noted that external partners, such as the Police, have utilised the plane cabin to run training. Governors were invited to arrange a visit to view the facilities.

The board queried whether staff and students within the school could answer questions from Ofsted about the College offer and how this supports progression. Most staff and students would be confident in an Ofsted inspection and are enthusiastic about the College and curriculum. Attendance is lowest in

level 1 courses; however, the enthusiasm and student voice feedback in this area is very good.

In response to a query on how teaching was adapted because of the pandemic, examples were given that demonstrated the use of technology and flexible delivery of theory and practical sessions.

The committee queried what opportunities were being taken to support partners with delivering training to their existing workforce. Examples of co-delivery for individuals in industry were provided.

A discussion was held on how the College responds to changing trends. The College has seen a rise in popularity for invasive and non-invasive aesthetics training following the pandemic. Some invasive procedures are now regulated and the College is providing continued professional development in these areas. Teachers are being encouraged to use social media to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

The committee thanked the Head of School for their participation in the meeting.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the Head of School – Services to People presentation

Jen McGill left the meeting.

6 College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and progress against Education Inspection Framework (EIF) 'Good'

The committee was presented with progress against the QIP since December 2021, noting that the Christmas break meant a shorter period was being reported.

The committee queried whether the pre-day 42 drop-out rate included all students or just new starters. The figure is based on new starters; however, many two-year courses involve two one-year enrolments so this data is included.

A discussion was held on the College's industry placement targets. The committee raised concerns over the risk of clawback, particularly as pandemic restrictions are lifted. The College submits returns at regular intervals but is it unlikely to meet the target given the high number of hours that individuals need to complete. The funding is for capacity development rather than specifically for placements and the College is providing other activities, such as guest speakers to prepare for placements. New posts will be established to focus on work placement to support delivery of this target and the target for work experience.

In response to a query on how staff are responding to the introduction of unannounced lesson observations. There have been no individual or collective concerns raised internally. Observers are using their judgement where an observation is intended but it is not appropriate at that time, for example, where students are taking tests or exams.

The College is focusing its observation activity on high-risk areas, identified through metrics such as poor in-year retention, low achievement rates and poor attendance. Where an observation results in a not-effective judgement, staff are provided with targeted continued professional development and re-observed.

Heads of schools are working with staff to develop their understanding of curriculum intent and the local context. Teachers understanding is checked as part of the observation process.

Regarding the tuition fund, the College undertakes baseline assessments at the start of the year to identify knowledge and skills gaps. Support is provided through small group activity, which the College can evidence. This area is being further developed to understand the impact that this support has on the students.

The committee queried what evidence the College can use to demonstrate action against sexually harmful behaviours and how the highest risks are being addressed. Discussions are being conducted within various cohorts within the College and student groups supported in their understanding. The College is further exploring feedback where students are reporting not feeling safe to understand the root causes.

A request was made to review the content of the College position in relation to 'Good' in EIF FE & Skills Handbook 1 document to focus not only on strengths but the work being done to address weaknesses.

The committee discussed the requirements of Ofsted for the College to receive an overall 'good' rating. Senior leaders have an opportunity during the planning stages of an inspection to provide some local context to inspectors.

The committee noted that the scorecard (included at appendix 2) was a legacy performance management tool relating to the Restructuring Fund agreement. The College is no longer working against these requirements of the agreement and is developing a wider performance dashboard for board. This scorecard will no longer be presented given the duplication of information provided and resource required to produce it.

RESOLVED: **The committee noted the progress against the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), Education Inspection Framework (EIF) 'Good' and scorecard.**

7 Teaching, Learning and Assessment update

The report provided a summary of activities undertaken since the previous report in November 2021, to assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) across the College.

College leaders updated the committee on activity since the report was published. Scrutiny of students' work in all eight schools is now complete. To date, five teachers who have been observed delivering sessions that were judged as not-effective have been re-observed. There are currently ten teachers being supported following not-effective judgments. There has been one case of a further not-effective judgement following intervention and reassessment. This is now being addressed under College capability procedures. Updates on re-observations will be included in future reports.

The committee queried staff engagement in the continued professional development (CPD) programmes. Observations conducted suggest engagement is mostly good. Changes to the College's approach means that support is being targeted at individuals who most need it. Historically feedback from learning walks was provided on a thematic basis, but this is now complemented by individual feedback. The College now offers a standard suite of CPD courses with bespoke one-to-one support and responsive intervention. Development themes include challenging, questioning, ambition, stretch and feedback.

A discussion was held on learning walks, their resource requirements and whether the College has seen any improvement to teaching as a result. The learning walks are undertaken by the head or deputy head of school and it is seen as a valuable management tool that delivers many positive learning outcomes. The College is focusing less on the number of observations completed and more on improvement of individual teachers.

In response to a query on development expectations for teaching staff whose sessions are rated as effective, the committee was provided with an overview of expectations. All teaching staff have a post-observation action plan and in the case of best practice, the individual's action would be to share this with colleagues.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the Teaching, Learning and Assessment update.

8 Student Voice update – January 2022

The report provided an update on Student Voice activity to January 2022.

Heads of schools, Progress Coaches and members of the Quality Team are further engaging with students to understand themes emerging from the survey

but there is a disconnect between the survey responses and direct feedback from students, which is considerably more positive. The mid-year survey is being simplified to support students to be clear on whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied. The committee noted that not all questions are relevant to all students and a 'not applicable' option will be included in future surveys.

In response to a query on how the survey is facilitated, the committee was informed that this is mostly done through Progress Coaches following their recent appointment. Consideration is being given to further ways to engage students and encourage participation.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the Student Voice update – January 2022.

9 Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2020/21

The annual Equality and Diversity report 2020/21 was presented for consideration.

The committee questioned what in-depth analysis will be undertaken as a result of the report. The College will focus on the various disadvantage factors facing the students and staff and consider what further support could be provided.

In response to a query on benchmarking, the committee noted that sector data had not been gathered due to the pandemic. In general, the College has an older workforce and the risks and opportunities associated with this are monitored.

RESOLVED: The committee approved the Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2020/21 for publication.

10 Equality and Diversity Policy

The committee was presented with the Equality and Diversity Policy for review prior to presented to the Governing Body for consideration.

Consideration was given to how the College could engage governors with the Equality and Diversity Strategy Group. Progress against the equality and diversity leadership plan may be included as part of the reporting dashboard being created for board.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the draft Equality and Diversity Policy prior to its presentation to the Governing Body for consideration.

11 Any other business

There were no items of any other business.

Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee will be held on Thursday 3 March 2022 at 11.00am.

The meeting closed at 12.40pm