

BOSTON COLLEGE**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2019**

1. PRESENT

Stephen Brown (Chair), Steve Crozier, Jo Maher, Helen Mather, Chris Pett and Helen Wright

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Craig Gosling (Head of Quality) and Vicki Locke (Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality).

Attendance 100%

2. ACTION LOG

The committee reviewed progress on the action log.

3. MINUTES

Members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2018 and approved them as a correct record.

Helen Wright asked how much work is being done with Derby University. Vicki Locke explained that there is quite a lot going on and she gave some examples of the work being done. She reported that the Higher Education Manager has a good relationship with her equivalent in Derby and that the College is getting good support from them. Stephen Brown suggested that the committee should have a further review of the arrangements after the April validations. Vicki Locke reported that the Office for Students registration had now come through.

The committee noted that its 2018-19 target in respect of Apprenticeships had been slightly amended by the Corporation.

4. 2018-19 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality on the Quality Improvement Plan.

Vicki Locke advised the committee that the report showed headline targets and, where possible, the current position and that further information is shown on the Quality Improvement Plan which is RAG rated.

Steve Crozier asked about the differential between the teaching and learning high grades target in vocational and academic areas. Vicki explained that the targets reflect last years performance. Stephen Brown asked about Apprenticeship targets which were noted to be:

- College apprenticeships overall achievement to increase from 67% to at least 72% (National Average = 69%).
- Apprenticeships overall achievement in Construction to increase from 29% to at least 69%.
- Apprenticeships overall achievement in Care to increase from 59% to at least 72%.
- Apprenticeships overall achievement in Business to increase from 69% to at least 74%.
- College apprenticeships timely achievement to increase from 64% to at least 66% (National Average = 62%).

Helen Wright queried if the Apprenticeship target for Construction is achievable and Vicki confirmed that it was based on current performance to date. A number of improvement actions had already been taken. It was noted that most of the actions in the QIP were for apprenticeships. Monitoring is being strengthened and there are now stand alone PMRs for apprenticeships. Vicki advised that the College had had to delay a decision on e-portfolio for financial reasons and was checking whether VITAL could do what was needed. Stephen Brown queried the criteria for checking progress in apprenticeships and Vicki Locke outlined the process. Craig Gosling explained the review process and that the reviewers are independent of the areas. Helen Wright asked about the number of reviewers and it was noted that there were five with approximately 500 apprentices between them. Craig advised the committee that apprentices had four to five reviews per year but that not all of these were face-to-face. There was a mixture of reviews with the majority taking place in the workplace. Chris Pett commented that the strength of workplace reviews also demonstrated the College's commitment to employers. The College is monitoring achievement in this area closely and support could be reinforced if necessary.

Helen Wright asked about employment take up after apprenticeships. Vicki will check on this and report back. It was noted that it was important for employers to have genuine reasons to take apprenticeships. Helen Mather reported that levy payments have changed employers views of apprenticeships. Her own organisation takes around 37 apprentices and keeps roughly 50% of these after completion. It was noted that the College offers some traineeships first for employers not used to apprentices. Catering apprenticeships have been particularly challenging and no new apprenticeships are being commenced in this area.

Chris Pett asked whether the College discussed apprenticeship wages or wage progression with employers. Vicki advised that progression was covered in surveys and Jo Maher noted that nationally employers were encouraged to offer above minimum wages but that this was a delicate issue.

Vicki gave the committee details about the QIP for adult progression. More paper based exams were being taken since these suited adult learners. The offer of free courses for low wage earners had been problematic with some of those learners leaving the College. Vicki and Craig Gosling outlined the new ways of monitoring progress on VITAL which will help with production of progress reports for adults.

In respect of study programmes, Vicki advised that Programme Area Managers were having extra support meetings and had a visit to Grimsby Institute arranged. Individual PAMs were coming to meet with SLT to look at performance.

Looking at the actions proposed to prepare for 2019-20 entry, Jo Maher explained that there were issues being discussed about Level 1 admissions in technical areas. Vicki advised that numbers were well up for HE progression from last year and noted an improvement in data quality. Jo commented that, with devolution reducing AEB funding, Higher Education can help offset this reduction. Stephen Brown asked about the strategy for 'keeping warm' applicants. It was noted that GDPR was causing issues relating to the use of data. Vicki reported that the College was increasing the Sixth Form visits, doing parents briefings and a follow up campaign in Spalding. Jo advised that the College was looking at the affordability of support for recruitment in Higher Education.

Vicki told the committee that the remaining sections of the QIP are from the additional areas for development and the plan to move to outstanding. Jo confirmed that whilst an Ofsted visit may be some way off, the College has to focus on what outstanding means to it. Helen Wright asked about whether progress was happening at the right pace and Jo confirmed that resources were being prioritised with the College being where it wants to be at headline indicative levels. The stable PAM structure and use of an interim Head has supported this.

5. **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2018-19**

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality.

Vicki Locke advised that performance to date was quite promising. The College is working on English and maths attendance in focussed areas and has allocated funds from Be Brilliant to help with attendance. It was noted that Work Experience was flagged as amber rated and Vicki reported that she is confident that this will improve. Jo advised the committee that attendance is a key indicator and a priority. Steve Crozier commented on English and maths attendance targets being particularly challenging for students who had had a period of sickness absence.

6. **APPRENTICE SURVEY**

Members received a report from the Head of Quality.

Craig Gosling advised that the report showed that quite a lot of progress had been made and explained the follow up process for it. Work continues to focus on the reliability of progress monitoring, booking on to English and maths blocks earlier, and a consistent approach to ICT. It was noted that progress is updated on VITAL.

A discussion took place about the survey outcomes on British Values and whether there was less exposure to this within the workplace. Chris Pett asked about scheduling College based delivery and it was noted that this was a focus of attention. Helen Wright queried the responses about exit interviews and asked who attended them. Craig advised that there was some confusion about this question and the terminology has been changed to 'end of programme'. Vicki Locke confirmed that the answers to this question can be affected by timing and terminology.

Helen Wright noted that there was some good outcomes on softer skills such as motivation and confidence.

Jo Maher advised that, having lost some inherited factors which were affecting performance, the College was looking to see significant improvements in apprenticeships. Apprenticeships were currently working well but were not outstanding and need to go further with Higher Level Apprenticeships.

7. **TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATE**

Craig Gosling as Head of Quality gave a verbal report to the committee on Teaching and Learning.

He advised the committee that Apprenticeships had now been split out in reviews and that outcomes were identifying 'best practice' and 'intervention required' judgements. The outcomes currently were showing best practice 17%, requires intervention 2%. If only the observations within QMRs were looked at best practice was 29% and requires intervention 1%. It was noted that for apprenticeships all 100% were in the middle ground.

A discussion took place about the impact of Standards on apprenticeship requirements. Vicki Locke reported that the College has purchased resources to help assessors with the new Standards.

It was noted that the College is developing a specific observation model for Higher Education and also doing more work with sub-contractors.

Stephen Brown asked what the overall picture was like and Craig confirmed that it was good with pockets of best practice. Jo Maher advised that the College was looking at using Advanced Practitioners in a different way to help support a move on from a stable position.

In response to a query from Helen Wright it was confirmed that the College had 4 APs equating to 2 FTEs and 0.5 of ILT specialist support.

8. RISKS AND REPORTABLE EVENTS

The committee was advised that the Interim Curriculum Support arrangements which had been put in place were proving useful but could only be delivered for 6 weeks, in the current arrangements.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Jo Maher advised the committee that 2 Catering students had secured placements in 2 star establishments in London with the support of 'Be Brilliant' and that there would be 10% more placements next year.
- b) Jo advised that the Gangmaster project had got really good feedback and had proved to be an excellent project.
- c) Vicki Locke advised that there is a consultation on the Ofsted inspection new framework which will run until April and it was agreed that she should circulate this to the committee.
- d) Jo advised that a number of representatives including herself and Helen Mather had attended a Parliamentary event. Helen Wright asked about political support for colleges and Jo confirmed that there was good support particularly from John Hayes.

13. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would take place on 24 April 2019.