

Brooklands College

**Minutes of the Curriculum and Performance Review Committee
co-ordinated remotely via 'Zoom' meeting platform software across various College and domestic
locations, commencing 16.00 hrs on 30 June 2021.**

Present:	Jackie Pearson Mary Hughes Dr Barbara Spittle Teresa Roberts Christine Ricketts	Chair Vice-Chair & Safe-Guarding Governor Vice-Chair of Governors Staff Governor Principal
Observer:	Bob Pickles	Independent Governor
In Attendance:	Simon Lovegrove Andy Russell Dr Stephen Dowbiggin OBE Jonathan Lipscomb	Assistant Principal (Curriculum) Assistant Principal (Apprenticeships, Partnerships and Student Experience) CEO Clerk to the Governing Body
Apologies:	Jeanette Bell Teresa Roberts Princess Badilla Muhammed Bilal	Independent Governor Staff Governor Student Governor Student Governor

PART 1

1. Action in the event of fire

Action to be taken in the event of fire was left to the individual.

2. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Jeanette Bell, Teresa Roberts, Muhammed Billal and Princess Badilla.

3. Declarations of Interest

Dr Barbara Spittle declared that she is a former Chair of Governors of East Surrey College and had been a Governor of Merton College prior to its merger with South Thames College.

Dr Stephen Dowbiggin OBE declared his position as Chair and Senior Ambassador of the Sainsbury's T-Level Committee.

4. Notification of Any Other Business

The Committee Chair had not been notified of any other business.

5. Draft Part 1. Minutes of the Curriculum & Performance Management Committee Meeting of 25 November 2020

The draft Part 1 minutes of the meeting on 17 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair when circumstances allow.

6. Matters Arising and Action Points from the Minutes of the Meeting of 17 March 2021 (Part 1.)**Noted:**

- i. Additional COVID funding had been made available for small group tuition.
- ii. The Wellington Building had been but is not currently a testing centre. There is the potential for testing centres to be required again in September. If so, an alternative will have to be found as the Wellington Building will be needed for teaching.

Items for Consideration and Approval**7. Update on Current COVID-19 Actions and Impact on Student and Staff Experience and Achievement [CP 20/21-20] (CR)****Noted:**

- i. The College experienced two cases in April and six cases in June. They were all among the 16-20 yrs age group which fits in with national context as infections are predominantly amongst the young. There have been none since, but the College continues to encourage staff and students to test. As previously noted there is no designated test centre as such but this may change in September depending on Government announcements.
- ii. All staff and students have returned to site (though they have recently broken up for the Summer). Just a few staff continue to work remotely where they have personal needs such as health and anxiety issues.
- iii. We have revised our open events and staff student events in line with COVID protocols.
- iv. The College had held a passing out parade for Public Services students, the first event of any kind held on College premises for some time and it had been a great success.
- v. Also the student awards event had been held on-site. It had not been possible to accommodate as many parents and students on site as the College would have liked.
- vi. Open events have been tweaked in line with Government guidelines. Prospective students were able book a tour of the specialist facilities and these are now fully booked.
- vii. The College continues to publish a newsletter with covid updates. In addition, there have been specific COVID-related bulletins where necessary.
- viii. Members raised the matter of the discussion in parliament that day about children dropping out of education system because of studying at home. Had there been instances of students drifting away and not engaging? The Principal assured them that retention rates remain high. Progression members have worked hard to maintain communication with 'at risk' students and the vast majority have been encouraged to return. The College has lost a few but not a significant number.
- ix. It was suggested that in that case, the College should reflect that success in its publications, if the matter continues to attract media attention.
- x. The Principal reported that the Health & Safety Officer had been extremely rigorous in the application of his protocols and whilst inconvenient at times this has meant that neither large groups of students nor staff have had to be sent home.
- xi. If someone has tested positive, it has only affected close contacts and whole cohorts have not had to be sent home. This is unusual and again Governors urged that this should be used for publicity purposes.

8. Brooklands College Improvement Plan and KPIs [CP 20/21-21] (CR)

Noted:

- i. The College's overall predicted achievement rate has been sustained at or above national rates for 3 years.
- ii. There has been year on year improvement in GCSE high-grades.
- iii. The College is forecasting an achievement rate of 62.5% for adult provision (up from 61.7% in the report). It is evident that the increased focus on adult provision is having an impact, there having been an achievement rate of only 48% in the previous year.
- iv. Overall performance at Level 1? Contradicts below and Level 2 is strong at 90.4% and 90.7% respectively (target 87%).
- v. An area for Improvement is Level 1 which has dipped for 2 consecutive years now (though the data is not final at this stage), in part owing to the predicted performance in 'Functional Skills'. By way of context, there are 425 students on L1 programmes and 1,277 on Level 2 programmes. The College has seen an increase in students starting Llevel 2 programmes and their eligibility is believed to be an outcome of reliance (for COVID-related reasons) on predicted rather than actual grades at the point of entry.
- vi. The retention rate for Level alone 1 when asked for, was not immediately available and members expressed concern that as the College is to some extent branding itself as catering for lower ability students (a point that seems to have been recognised by the FEC), this is what it is meant to be good at. It is unfortunate therefore that it is proving to be challenging. The Principal was asked if splitting out Functional Skills would help to highlight success on vocational programmes, if indeed more Level 1 students are otherwise seen to be dropping out.

[Andrew Baird joined the meeting at 16.21]

- vii. The Assistant Principal reminded members that they had been presented previously with a breakdown of retention figures which had not showed any clear anomalies and did not suggest that the College was losing more Level 1 students than might be expected.
- viii. Members were reminded that nationally Colleges have experienced difficulties with learners at that level finding it difficult to engage with remote learning.
- ix. The Committee Chair commented that if students don't attend, then they won't achieve and so attendance is another area that needs to be worked on. There was concern too over the exam preparation given to functional skills students
- x. Members were reminded of the context and that teaching had been moved online. This had caused some unforeseen difficulties. Some students had for example struggled to engage with an on-screen calculator and such difficulties had had a disproportionate impact. Since realising this in May, additional support has been given.
- xi. A number of resits have been organised and the College is seeing some positive improvement but the Principal agreed that there had not been sufficient preparation for recent examinations and that a different skillset is required to work online.
- xii. Members believed that there should have been more support in place and that Managers should have appreciated the difficulties and were anxious that students did not acquire a track record of failure.
- xiii. The Principal agreed but emphasised that during the pandemic teaching had begun remotely. Students were then asked to come back into the College, only to have to complete an online exam. The team had underestimated what was needed and it had been challenging for them.

- xiv. The Assistant Principal added that the schedule had become compressed, as the College had not originally anticipated that students would be required to sit exams. They were entered for online examinations as the marking and publication of results had a quicker turnaround, which would enable resits to be arranged should they prove necessary. The lack of examination training in for example Mathematics had resulted in students carrying out their calculations on paper and not including them in their on-screen submissions, adversely affecting their outcomes. The resits had been taken on paper.
- xv. The Principal confirmed that in most cases the College has submitted teacher-assessed grades, approved and mediated, but the awarding body for 'functional skills' had held out for examinations.
- xvi. With respect to English and Mathematics, the Manager will be responsible for taking forward the recommendations (in Appendix 4), working with the consultant (to be discussed in part 2).
- xvii. Independently, the GCSE team are already engaging well with those recommendations but further investment is needed by functional skills team.
- xviii. Members stated that tools such as Pro-Monitor had been available to managers for a long time and that they had failed to address long-standing shortcomings.
- xix. The Principal reminded members that the consultant had been brought in, precisely to address this underperformance. The consultant has coached the various teams in an effort to support cohesion and the Managers will need to progress this and to embed greater rigour throughout.
- xx. It is important to note that the GCSE team is doing well and it is 'functional skills' that requires attention in support of greater consistency of practice. The consultant will be returning in November to see how far the team has progressed with adopting the recommendations.
- xxi. The Full Governing Body should be made aware that this remains a risk area, as stated on the KPI's.

9. Predicted Achievement Report [CPR 20/21-22] (CR)

Noted:

- i. Overall College retention stands at 95.9% which is above the KPI of 93% and which is very high. It is difficult to make in-year comparisons with other colleges but in January it had seemed that the College's figures were tracking above the national average. The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) was confident that this has not changed and that most of the students have remained on their programmes, for which much credit was due to the progression mentors.
- ii. The current predicted overall achievement rate is 87.3% which is above the KPI of 87% and last year's rate of 86%.
- iii. The team continues to process achievements and Functional Skills examinations for example were being held that week, meaning that learners continue to achieve and the figures ought to improve. Management was confident of a strong performance.
- iv. GCSE high grade achievement is 40% for Mathematics and 45% for English, both above College KPI's.
- v. Functional Skills achievement is predicted to be 71%, 6% lower than the previous year. As it stands 68% is confirmed and so this is the worst case scenario. 130 outcomes are still dependent on examination results and current pass rates are quite high at 90%. This is the cohort that have not done well before and so may not score so highly. but even at rates of between 50% and 70% the College would come very close indeed to its KPI of 77%. ? sense here – take out last sentence?
- vi. As this includes Functional Skills, SEND and Apprenticeships, the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) committed to circulating a breakdown to members following the meeting.

- vii. The Assistant Principal (Apprenticeships, Partnerships and Student Experience) reported on Apprenticeships specifically, where overall achievement rates stood at 64.4%, which is 2% below the 2019/20 level and 3% below the 2018/19 provider rates (the most recent in the College's possession). It was however, up by 2% on national rates published in the Spring (no provider rates were published then) and is an indication of where the College sits nationally.
- viii. These achievement rates are challenging to benchmark. Whilst there is an indication that national rates were not impacted as much as had been thought by the pandemic, it may be that providers have rolled students over into the following (i.e. current) year. It is hard to see where the College stands but the Assistant Principal believed that it is in line with national rates.
- ix. Standards have bounced back from the year before but many of those students are in their first year. Timely achievement is estimated at 45.7% which is below the 2018/19 provider rates of 59.9%.
- x. Areas for challenge continue to include motor vehicle engineering where lower rates of achievement are still predicted, but the College has increased its delivery capacity to assist with timeliness. This has involved agency staff, which is expensive. For example, there are two new assessors, both of whom are agency staff as the College is struggling to recruit in this area. The assessors do, however, have a strong background in this field and progress is starting to be made.
- xi. The CEO confirmed that the Institute of Apprenticeships have been lobbying for a relaxation of timeliness criteria to reflect current difficulties, this may also apply to Functional Skills students not having to complete their apprenticeships. The point is that these difficulties are not specific to Brooklands.
- xii. The Principal drew members' attention to the KPI document, (Appendix 3 of the Principal's Report) where one of the areas of concern last year had been 19+ achievement rates which were forecast to show an improving picture. She acknowledged that improvement in some respects was still required but did not want Governors to lose sight of the areas of good work. The Committee Chair supported this and stated that it was a useful table.
- xiii. The CEO further noted that the achievement rate for 19+ students was increasing at a time when AEB itself has grown by 35% growth in year. Growth can often dilute achievement but the College has managed both to grow and to improve simultaneously which is unusual.

Action:

- i. Assistant Principal (Curriculum) to circulate breakdown on achievement figures by department.

10. Student Applications 2021/22 [CP 19/21-23] (CR/SL)**Noted:**

- i. At the time of writing, student applications for the forthcoming year stood at 1,298, up by 6% from 1,220 at the same time the previous year. With the birth rate rising by 3.5%, a 6% increase suggests an increase in market share.
- ii. Areas that continue to recruit well include Media, Computing, Construction and Health & Social Care.
- iii. Areas of concern include Business, Health & Beauty at Weybridge (applications at Ashford are up, possibly on the back of the new salon), Childcare and Hospitality; all areas affected by the pandemic. The Management Team is working hard to support applications via events at schools.
- iv. The Safeguarding Governor had been to Ashford to see hairdressing salon which she described as large and beautifully fitted out. It enjoys an excellent location, and ultimately it will form part of a plaza. It is an excellent investment and local headteachers or careers advisors should be invited to see it.

- v. Further positive news surrounded progression, with some 760 students returning to the College so far including around 30 Level 3 Beauty students returning to Ashford – more than twice the number of available beds in fact.
- vi. The Principal updated the meeting on the new course for pupils from other colleges with behavioural needs ('Progression Plus'). So far eight pupils had been recruited. This course is financially viable at eight but the College's target is for ten and she was confident that there would be further additions.
- vii. TG will lead and is planning a dedicated five-day provision. The pupils will take English and Mathematics GCSE or Functional Skills together with a Level 1 or Level 2 vocational programme, dependent on their ability, with a wraparound of development for employability. On Fridays they will participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme which will itself be opened up to the wider College in September.
- viii. The Principal believed that it was an exciting development for the College and the Committee Chair was pleased that the College has already secured a viable number with which to commence the programme.
- ix. Members again raised the possibility of the marketing team publicising the fact that students had not been sent home *en masse* during COVID but the Principal remained wary given that this may yet have to happen.

[With the approval of the meeting, item 14. Was taken next.]

14. Marketing Report [CP 20/21-29] (LW)

- i. The Committee Chair was surprised that Public Services applications were down, given the positive press that they had received over the preceding eighteen months.
- ii. The Principal sought to balance this development by pointing out that although new applications are down, progressions are up for example from Level 2 to Level 3. Furthermore, the College has tended to recruit late to Public Services. She added that the COVID crisis has not necessarily had a positive effect on recruitment to the NHS, who are not seeing as many people moving into nursing for example as there had been previously.
- iii. Members were surprised, given that at the beginning of the pandemic, interest in nursing had increased. The recent pay settlement for nurses may have diluted the initial belief that these roles were highly valued by the community.
- iv. The Senior Team is working on a prospectus with an emphasis on careers pathways and raising aspirations rather than specific qualifications. This was something that had come out of the review so members were pleased to know that it was progressing.
- v. By way of further reassurance for Governors, the CEO reminded them that the system for monitoring is more sophisticated than previously. Figures for the forthcoming year are more solid than previously and do not include for example, duplications arising from a student enrolling on more than one course. These have been filtered out.
- vi. The figures had improved, even since the writing of the report and the Principal took the opportunity to update the current figure for applications to 1,344 as reported to SLT that week. This represents an uplift, not of 6% but of 15% on this point last year. This is something that other Colleges are seeing – it is certainly a London trend.
- vii. Data on progressing students quoted as 693 in the Assistant Principal (Curriculum)'s report is already at over 700 actually enrolled. Furthermore, those 700 are actual enrolments since the new MIS enables the College to enrol them now, rather than having to wait until the new academic year.

- viii. The CEO further reported that the recent staff meeting showed that people are now much more focussed. They know what they have to do, what resources they have at their disposal and the responsibility they need to take. The Senior Team had been quite firm with the staff but there had not been any negativity. This represented real change from the previous year and indeed real progress.
- ix. The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) concurred. There is a 'can do' attitude abroad and in business planning meetings, managers are setting the bar high for themselves. If this is followed up in September then it will lead to seismic change.
- x. In answer to a question, the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) confirmed that no fewer than four 'access programmes' for nursing and midwifery would run in the coming year, two for 'Health Professionals' (which includes paramedic preparation) in Weybridge and two for 'Nursing and Midwifery' in Ashford.
- xi. The Principal added that the College was not working specifically with Trusts on nursing programmes but on English and Mathematics, ESOL and apprenticeship programmes. The latter, together with Adult Education represent exciting new possibilities.

11. Governor Link Scheme [CP 20/21-24] (AW)**Noted:**

- i. The Principal had presented a very clear report and asked for Governor approval.
- ii. Members agreed that the outline proposal was excellent but considered the possibility of a pilot scheme initially during 2021/22 which is likely to be another disrupted year, even if it is just a case of the College adjusting to a 'new normal'. If the pilot went well then it could be rolled out everywhere for the academic year 2022/23.
- iii. After some discussion, it was agreed that the College should select four of the most stable departments and then seek Governors interested in engaging with them, each in concert with one of the four College 'Development Coaches'.
- iv. That having received general consent, the Committee Chair was very keen that first sessions occur early in the Autumn term so that it does not slip. The Principal agreed to find a date.

Agreed:

- i. A governor Link Scheme will be piloted during the 2021/22 academic year.

12. Professional development Report [CPR 20/21-26] (AW/CR)

- i. The Principal presented the report on behalf of the Head of Professional Development
- ii. The report details in particular the key findings from 'Learner Walks' and identifies feedback around performance development which has taken place for all staff during this past academic year.
- iii. The College has launched a number of online programmes with a large number of staff engaging.
- iv. Along with the 'Learner Walk' process the College runs a Professional Development Centre sporting a range of resources and modular training opportunities for staff.
- v. The other investment during the past year has centred on the Middle Leadership programme delivered by Emma Jarman. Four Directors and the two Assistant Principals have been engaging in one-to-one coaching sessions with Emma and believe it to have been well worthwhile. The focus of those coaching sessions has been aligned with the 'Education Case' (seen by Governors) to the strategic direction of the

College and to growth, working on the contribution that they can make to the College by developing the expertise necessary to achieve those growth targets.

- vi. SLT have rebranded 'Teaching and Learning Week' as 'Professional Development Week' and Governors will be sent the calendar for the week's mandatory training sessions and the opportunities for all staff to participate in related AoC activities. There will be sessions focussed on well-being and on the Friday there will be a local history nature trail and quiz.
- vii. Steve Frampton from the AoC will speak on climate change, an initiative being led by the Assistant Principal (Apprenticeships, Partnerships and Student Experience). Steve will also present to governors prior to the Full Governing Body meeting on 19 July.
- viii. The Committee Chair believed that there was a great deal of positive material in the report and in particular the emphasis on 'knowing your students'.

13. Adult Curriculum [CP 20/21-27] (CR)

Noted:

- i. Both Assistant Principals have been focussed on this area, together with Sarah Clancy.
- ii. The College is short of its target and knows this but right up to the final cut off it will be pushing for additional provision. It has been a challenging year and as with COVID, other external factors have come into play. Demand for ESOL for example, has been impacted by 'Brexit'. The Team Leader has been working with Care Homes to try to establish additional income streams.
- iii. Furthermore, the College has tried to add an additional digital dimension to provision already offered, for example 'Cake Decoration'.
- iv. Back in November the College had been looking for other new, innovative and more entrepreneurial provision. It had partnered with the 'Skills Network' and rolled out many AEB and Level two courses online. Previously the College had not had the means by which to validate that provision but now has the flexibility to manage that and Curriculum Leaders are engaging with the process.
- v. The Committee Chair commended what was a good summary and though she expressed disappointment that the target had not been met, a twenty per cent improvement since the previous term's meeting was nonetheless significant. The team was again commended but reminded that this needed to be a bigger focus in the future.
- vi. Members asked how the College could tell if a candidate for a professional studies or functional skills exam being set remotely was in fact the person sitting the paper. The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) responded that the assessor has a photograph of the candidate in front of them so they can make a positive identification on screen. Telephone calls can also be made, to check. However, for professional courses all exams are held on-site.
- vii. In the national context of achieving AEB targets so as to retain funding, the ESFA are sticking with a 90% target but the AoC continue to be hopeful that this may drop to 77% or even 75%.

15 Student Experience Report [CP 20/21-29] (CR/SL)

Noted:

- i. This report appeared to demonstrate good work this term in terms of engaging students.
- ii. Following recent performance reviews, the 'Careers' and 'Workplace' teams are to be merged. They have both worked hard and brought in many new employers so they will now be one team moving forward.

- iii. The Committee passed on its thanks.

16 Disciplinary Report [CP 20/21-30] (SL)

Noted:

- i. Again, staff have worked hard to keep students engaged and hopefully pro-monitor comments have decreased but not because it has not been used.

19. Any Other Business

There being no other business, Part 1 of the meeting was concluded at 18.15.

20. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be confirmed at the Full Governing Body meeting on 19 July.

Jackie Pearson
Chair of Curriculum & Performance Review Committee

Jonathan Lipscomb
Clerk to the Governing Body