

Brooklands College

Minutes of the Curriculum & Performance Review Committee held at 14.30 on 13 November 2019 in Room MC5,
Weybridge Campus.

Present:	Jackie Pearson Andrew Baird Barbara Spittle Mary Hughes Teresa Roberts Andrew Barrett	Chair Chair of Governors absent Vice-Chair of Governors (Observer)
In Attendance:	Ioan Morgan Christine Rickets Simon Lovegrove Jonathan Lipscomb Andy Russell	Interim CEO Interim Principal Assistant Principal Clerk to the Governing Body Director of Apprenticeships and Partnerships
Apologies:	None	

1. Action in the event of fire

Action to be taken in the event of fire was noted.

2. Welcome and apologies

There were no apologies for absence. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

3. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

4. Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting

The change of Clerk and the pressure of 'COMPANY A'-related work meant that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June were not available.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising other than on the agenda.

6. Committee Chair 2019/20

Jackie Pearson was nominated by Barbara Spittle as Chair of the Committee for the year 2019/20 and Mary Hughes was nominated by Jackie Pearson as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the year 2019/20.

Both appointments were approved unanimously.

- i) **Appointments of Chair and Vice-Chair approved.**

For Discussion

6. College Self-Assessment Report

The Chair stated that the executive summary was both clear and helpful.

By way of an introduction to the report the Deputy Principal summarised key points:

- i) The College SAR provides a detailed analysis of the 2018/19 academic year. In 2017/18 the College had self-assessed as 'Good' but for 2018/19 it was self-assessing as 'Requires Improvement'. A formal validation panel with external verifier input will sit on 25 November. The main reason for the grading was the significant decline in apprenticeship provision together with the issues surrounding subcontractor provision. Detailed analysis of the Apprenticeship Provision is included within the SAR. Overall performance of the College has improved though SLT acknowledge that there is further work to do.
- ii) Improvements are not consistent across the College. Attendance rates show some improvement but it is still not good enough at 10% gap between vocational and English and maths rates. Additionally, the 'COMPANY A' issue has placed the College under significant financial and administrative pressure. The SAR focus is on the quality of provision rather than Finances so the focus will be on Study Programme provision.
- iii) The Quality Improvement plan (QIP) lists seven points, cross-referenced to 'Aim 1' of the College's Strategic Plan. These were set out in full in the paper and covered Digital Strategy; Sub-contracting; Apprenticeships; Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Student Behaviours; Recruitment and Governance.
- iv) Members raised the matter of a 'dashboard' with real-time data to help monitor KPI's, as desired by the FE Commissioners. The Vice-Principal reported that the College was concerned about the cost of such a system and had already signed up to add 'Pro-Metrics' to 'Pro-Suite' in an effort to address this. Other institutions have been able to create their own dashboard. Brooklands has an IT specialist with the necessary skills but he envisaged such a project taking one year to implement. Integration, with Pro-Monitor or a bespoke in-house solution will always be a major issue.
- v) Members were assured that in the interim, there will be a system of manual reporting to the Education and Training Committee by each Director on performance in their area against KPI's such as attendance and in-year achievement. These reports may be seen by the Curriculum and Performance Review Committee (CPR).
- vi) The Vice-Principal restated that the IT specialist was at the same time honing the skills necessary to build a dashboard. He confirmed that there was very little spare capacity in the IT Department for such development work.
- vii) The Interim PCEO asked if the relevant commercial software was expensive and on being told that it might cost £5K or more, considered that in the context of other capital expenditure and indeed of savings that the College was known to have made elsewhere, this was affordable.
- viii) The Vice-Principal again counselled caution over potential integration issues but the Interim PCEO, whilst accepting this, was confident that external agencies could be found (perhaps even recommended by the FE Commissioners) to assist the College with implementation.
- ix) Members agreed to make a direct recommendation to the FGB on 27 November to approve a capital budget for this project of up to £10K.
- x) The College Self-Assessment Report itself was then considered page by page for comment by governors.

Page 2. College SAR Self-Assessment Judgements

- xi) The overall College SAR Self-Assessment Judgements revealed a 'spikey profile' with 'Overall Effectiveness' assessed at 'Requires Improvement'.
- xii) Some areas are graded 'good' (Adult Programmes, High Needs, Study programmes and Personal Development); others are graded 'requires improvement' (Quality of Education, Behaviours and Attitudes and Leadership and Management) whilst Apprenticeships is graded 'inadequate'.
- xiii) The point was made that an overall judgement of 'Requires Improvement' combined with one 'inadequate' area necessarily makes 'Leadership and Management 'Inadequate'. The Interim Principal challenged this on the ground that evident improvement in outcomes were not consistent with inadequate leadership and management.
- xiv) It was accepted that Leadership and Management had been seen to be inadequate in 2018-19 and that changes had been made to improve Leadership and Management in the later part of 2018/19. The Interim Principal reminded members that the SAR covered the 2018-19 year and that when inspectors look at 2019-10 they won't see 'inadequate'.
- xv) The Chair considered that the discussion was sufficiently inconclusive as to suggest that further consideration was warranted. The overall grade stands at 'Requires Improvement'. Members would be nervous of going into an OfSTED inspection with an 'inadequate' self-assessment, even if it was an attempt to demonstrate progress post-period. OfSTED inspectors don't generally change much and may not upgrade.
- xvi) SLT were cautioned to keep the matter under review until the last possible moment. The SAR is not due for delivery until January 2020 and in the meantime the Interim Principal undertook to continue to speak with thirds parties, possibly including the FE Commissioners to arrive at a final judgement.

[15.02 Andrew Barratt joined the meeting]

Pages 5-7 Distance travelled since previous inspection 2017

- xvii) Members asked the Interim Principal to include numbers as well as percentages in the text and where possible to include national rates as a benchmark in all cases and not just selected points.
- xviii) The Chair raised the subject of the 'Google Classrooms' facility and considered that governors needed to know more about it and the impact of it on Teaching and Learning.
- xix) [Members agreed that although apprenticeship was rightly highlighted as a problem, it should not be allowed to define what the College was about. The impact of the 'COMPANY A' matter was largely financial. The structure of leadership and management and systems of Apprenticeships had been operated as a distinct unit, apart from other college systems.]

Pages 8-9 Quality & improvement Plan

- xx) The Interim PCEO encouraged the Interim Principal to make reference to 'vocationally relevant behaviours' when discussing the development path for each area as this concept was known to have a high profile currently.

Page 10 Key Strengths

- xxi) The Chair reminded the meeting that a lot of work had gone into making curriculum provision sustainable, with all departments having a contribution target and this receives insufficient emphasis given that the College's sustainability is a weakness.
- xxii) The comment was made that that the engagement of 14-16 yrs students is a key strength.

Page 12 Key Strengths (data)

- xxiii) Having asked about the 2017/18 headings in the data tables, members were advised that the tables were imported directly from 'Pro-Achieve' and that the headings matched the national datasets.

Page 15 Self-Assessment Grades Year on Year

- xxiv) The Interim Principal was asked to replace personal names with job titles.
- xxv) The message that SLT wished to convey was that Leadership & Management is operating effectively and meet many of the 'good' criteria of OfSTED but because of sub-contracting and apprenticeships will be graded 'inadequate'. Consequently, the overall self-assessment cannot be other than 'requires improvement' at best.
- xxvi) The grade '3' for 'Work Experience' was discussed and it was noted that the bar had been raised. It was no longer sufficient for a learner to have had work experience of any type, it now had to be 'curriculum appropriate work experience' which was far harder to source.
- xxvii) The Interim Principal confirmed that the work experience of those requiring special support was analysed separately and the PCEO suggested that if the College was successful in this that it should be emphasised. (Page 17)

Page 20-23 Study Programmes

- xxviii) The Vice-Principal reported that the College was working with construction firm Kier as one of four colleges in Surrey working on a highway maintenance pathway with Infrastructure Academy. There are at present no students recruited in connection to the new pathways. The College is working hard to develop provision that matches the needs of industry and recognises that creating new provision to meet the needs of the community can take years..
- xxix) Members encouraged the Interim Principal to include something about high needs learners and to make more of the planned Health & Beauty Academy in Ashford.
- xxx) The Interim Principal reminded members that the previous year they had been very keen to drive improvement in English and Mathematics. The latter had scored well at a time when National achievement rates were falling but English, though improved, still lagged behind.
- xxxi) It was noted that there was a low level of learners at Brooklands with high grades as in Surrey these tended to progress to Sixth Form Colleges.

Page 27 GCSE Maths Progress

- xxxii) There was a general aversion to the use of the colour red in the imported bar charts.

Pages 28-30 Behaviours and Attitudes

- xxxiii) Members expressed surprise that only 33% students completed the survey and SLT described different tactics that had been employed (such as completion during enrolment) to improve participation in the exercise.
- xxxiv) The Interim Principal asked if there were any further comments to be taken into account when considering the final overall judgement.
- xxxv) Members believed that poor attendance rates should be framed in such a way as to avoid the impression that this is down to poor teaching. The Interim Principal could not say how many lessons were 'good' but

was able to confirm a variety of ways in which efforts were made to ensure a high standard was maintained. These included Teaching and Learning Days, Learning Walks and Themed Learning Walks and members were reminded that the data from the Learning Walks is captured and reported to the CPR Committee.

- xxxvi) A balance was to be struck between Governors' scrutiny of data and them not being drawn into deciding whether lessons were good or not. External validation of learning walks was a possibility, but the potential merger had made it difficult to find a validation partner that was independent of the process.
- xxxvii) A change to the wording of the final bullet point on page 32 was requested. 'The College continues..... safeguarding requirements and it can therefore be stated that safeguarding is effective'.

Appendix A: Brooklands College Apprenticeship Provision

- i) This section looks at why Sub-contracting was graded inadequate and the actions being taken to address the position.
- ii) A major problem is that sub-contracting was far too high a percentage of turnover. In addition, students were often rolled over when they should have left their course. Progress has been made with the help of RSM. Learner walks will be used as a means of assessing delivery. A great deal of effort was going into ensuring that the offering was relevant to local employers.
- iii) It was noted that the College was working with the ESFA on this issue.
- iv) An aspect of apprenticeship provision that had worked well was a programme with King's College London in terms of standards-setting but this had not proved sustainable in part because in some cases students had linked with other universities to participate in Masters programmes instead and so it had not been possible to grow the initiative and as a consequence it had been brought in-house. The Department was working to improve the rigour of their quality systems. There are good relationships and they require nurturing. Direct provision has not diminished and now needs to grow.
- v) The point was made that the College could have been prevented from having any apprenticeships and so their own provision must be well regarded. It is important therefore that the apprenticeship difficulties are isolated as being associated only with sub-contracting.
- vi) The Interim Principal noted that the report was intended to be critical and less celebratory than in the past and asked for affirmation of that approach. Members in fact believed that it required boosting in places. All concerned were encouraged to treat the document as inspection preparation which to all intents and purposes it is.
- vii) The College now has Supervised Status which means that Leadership and Management is automatically deemed inadequate. This needs to be stated and given the context of the 'Company A' anomaly. Since then, there has been a change of leadership and the College has implemented all the recommendations of the FE Commissioners.
- viii) The Chair thanked everyone involved in the preparation of the document.

7 Quality Improvement Plan

- i) Much of the ground had been covered already in the examination of the SAR. The Interim Principal reported some remaining difficulties with such a high-level document that is necessarily underpinned by a great deal of strategic thinking and change. She acknowledged that there was still some refining to do.

- ii) Item 6.1 for example could be fleshed out to include further strategies for improving progression rates. A recommendation of the FEC was the governors formalise an overarching set of KPIs'. The drafting of these was still with the senior team and would be shared imminently for comment and approval.
- iii) The matter of staff morale was raised, and it was noted that the FE Commissioners had reported that it was high. There had been some uneasiness over the arrival of an interim PCEO but that this only reflects a normal response to perceived instability at the top of an organisation. Naturally staff were concerned for their livelihoods, but they had been pleased by recent efforts by the SLT to communicate openly with them. It was accepted that nervousness will remain until a merger has crystallised.

8 Higher Education

- i) The committee focussed on the letter from the Office of Students regarding compliance with regulatory deadlines. The College had missed two deadlines; the first was a payment of fees and the second related to the submission of Unisat data.
- ii) In the case of the first, no actual invoice had been received, the Registration Fee Notification stating that it represented an invoice. This had caused confusion and a short delay. The Unisat data had been submitted 5 days late on 21 August. In summary, the Interim Principal said systems were better understood now and that there would be no repetition.
- iii) Members were concerned that this was not the first instance of a compliance failure. There had been a Leadership and Management failure over sub-contracting for example and staff should understand the importance of regulatory deadlines and make use of appropriate calendars.
- iv) Asked by the Chair if Higher Education provision was truly viable at the College, it was noted that Oxford Brookes had suspended their partnership with the College for the coming year. However, the work on the LPNA by the FEC is unlikely to focus on HE students as a priority for the College as they will assume that they are more mobile and willing to travel.

9. Enrolments and achievements

- i) The Vice-Principal summarised the key data set out in his report.
- ii) Asked if Health & Social Care was a priority, he conceded that generally such provision was being tailored more towards university curricula and the preparatory studies therefore, being undertaken at Sixth Form Colleges.
- iii) There is possible growth in providing relevant apprenticeships and meetings were being held but it is too early to say whether this will be successful. There is interest as is reflected in enquiries and applications, but conversion rates are not high.
- iv) SEND and Transition showed a marked decrease in achievement levels, but this depended very much on the interpretation of data. Transition students are achieving worthwhile outcomes and SEND achievement levels are above the national average, but the College is nevertheless assessing the area as '2' not '1'.
- v) Members thanked the Vice-Principal for clear data tables whilst alerting him to one typographical error.

14. Marketing

- i) The Chair decided to take the Marketing Update at this point as recruitment strategies were relevant to enrolment outcomes.
- ii) The College is holding monthly applicant events, incorporating a standard presentation, at the end of which candidates are offered a place. (The previous evening alone 175 potential students had been processed in this way at Weybridge and a further 20 at Ashford). This is a major change, led by the Vice

Principal and has the dual benefit of being less intimidating for nervous applicants whilst at the same time saving time formerly spent by staff interviewing the same candidates individually. Feedback has been good.

[16.25 Andrew Barratt left the meeting]

10. Learner Involvement Report

- i) The report was presented for information. Members were concerned that the previous year only 66% students had said that they would recommend the College.
- ii) The Vice-Principal confirmed that this statistic was tabulated and published nationally and that the remarkably strong scores obtained by some Colleges (e.g. 93%) gave rise to suspicion that data collection may be manipulated in other institutions. It was important to note that there was anecdotal evidence that students often based their response on trivial aspects of College life that had no bearing on the core purpose of their being there.
- iii) Members encouraged SLT to come up with a strategy to boost this score if possible, to 80%.

11. English and Mathematics

- i) The Chair confirmed that this has been a focus for a long time with statistics being reported to this committee. It was clear that some enrolment registers from the previous year remained incomplete and the Vice-Principal was asked what steps had been taken to avoid repetition.
- ii) The Vice Principal expressed frustration at the enrolment staff not having followed clearly set out procedures. The matter would be reviewed with them during imminently forthcoming appraisals.
- iii) In terms of improving attendance, it had been found that having 2 x 1.5 hour sessions per week as opposed to 3 x 1 hour sessions was more effective in encouraging attendance and assisted with the administration and timetabling.
- iv) Additionally, a facility known as Century Learning (on-line) is being used for English and Mathematics as reported previously to the FGB. It was noted that achievement in Both English and maths had improved despite challenging circumstances.

12. Safeguarding Report

The Safeguarding governor led the discussion of the report and made the following observations:

- i) The College now has regular safeguarding meetings (3 per year) which report to CPR. The main concern is that we are grading the function as 'requires improvement' with the main reason being the time taken to address actions during 2018/19. During that year there had been no effective meetings and communications have been ad hoc with governors. SLT needs to ensure that actions identified by OfSTED are being addressed
- ii) Systems are good but not all students at risk are picked up. This should happen at enrolment. The new safeguarding lead has liaised with MIS to ensure we capture data more effectively and speedily
- iii) Not all students had filled out a survey to check that they know what to do about Prevent and Safeguarding concerns
- iv) A small leaflet had been produced for part-time attenders but had not proved successful. There was to be further liaison between the new Safeguarding Officer and the Apprenticeship Lead

- v) Another concern is an apparent lack of consistency in the training given to staff in each faculty. Some students are not completing student response surveys. It would be interesting to see a breakdown by faculty
- vi) The Safeguarding Officer would be presenting to Governors that evening, using material emanating from her discussions with third parties. She is contributing to a county-wide survey and the research required will be an opportunity for her to discover how other entities approach this responsibility
- vii) Governors have read 'Keeping Children Safe (Part 1)'
- viii) The area is graded 'Requires Improvement' but with a little help will be graded 'Good'. OfSTED do not grade "Safeguarding"

13. Progression

A report was tabled and the Vice-Principal which stated that of 414 learners surveyed:

- 1% went on to study at a lower level owing to mental health issues with which they are being supported.
 - 27% continued to study at the same level, sometimes a second part of the same course (Level 3).
 - 25% studied went on to a higher level.
- i) The College's destination survey suggests that 55% learners either continue in education or go on to paid employment. 9% are not studying or in employment.
 - ii) 1,200 students have not responded and each Director is charged with following up their students.
 - iii) Members believed that the number of missing responses was quite high and that OfSTED would require the College to explain this. Work is continuing to find out more data to improve this KPI.

14. Marketing

- i) Returning to marketing, a variety of releases had been circulated with the papers for the meeting and the Chair asked for an update. The Interim Principal reiterated everyone's concern for the College's reputation locally and was grateful that the local press had as yet made nothing of recent developments.
- ii) Reporting on recent meetings with the Heads of schools in Elmbridge and Spelthorne, the Interim Principal said they had appreciated the honesty of the College's updates and were very positive. The Principal of Esher College in particular had offered assistance if required.
- iii) It might have been expected that there would have been questions at the previous evening's enrolment event but there had been none.

15. Chair's Business

Review of risks to be reported to FGB:

- i) Up to £10 000 to be allocated for purchase of a commercial "live dashboard" to help leaders and managers at all levels of the college monitor operations and KPIs.
- ii) Explain the rationale for deciding that Effectiveness Overall will be "Requires Improvement" not inadequate.
- iii) Focus for all leaders and managers must be to improve recruitment to help make college more viable.
- iv) Destination data is very poor and may be an issue in Ofsted Inspection – SLT are working to improve this data urgently

- v) Study programmes at risk must be regularly reviewed as part of work to ensure sustainability of college

Meeting closed at 17.05.

Jackie Pearson
Chair of Curriculum and Performance Review Committee

Jonathan Lipscomb
Clerk to the Governing Body