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Standards & Performance Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday 20 June 2023
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Boardroom

Present:

Dr Sue Lomax (Chair)
Andrew Fawcett
Dr Bill Webster (Principal)
Dr Gill Waugh
Tom Martin
Gulnaz Brennan
Michael Walker
Claire Garth

In Attendance:

Deborah Bradburn (Clerk)
Mark Burgoyne (Deputy Principal)
Tracy Clarke (Assistant Principal - Curriculum Design, Information and Technical Services)
Catherine Langstreth (Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Stakeholder Engagement)
Karen Westsmith (Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Quality)
Jill Hebden (Minute Taker)

1. SECTION A - BUSINESS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

1.1 Welcome to Members/Officers

Members were welcomed to the meeting, which commenced at 2.02pm.

The Chair welcomed Claire Garth (Support Staff Governor) to her first Standards and Performance Committee.

1.2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Chris Ball.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare any interests in relation to any item on the agenda.

1.4 Request for an item to be unstarred

No requests were received.

1.5* Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting held 15 March 2023 had been previously circulated to Members for consideration.

Agreed: that the minutes are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication.

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1.6 Matters arising from the previous minutes

The action progress log was presented. It was confirmed that all actions from the previous meeting had been completed.

2. SECTION B - COLLEGE MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

2.1 Applications, Enrolment & Progress Report

The Assistant Principals presented the Applications, Enrolment and Progress report noting the following key points:

Young People:

- Current recruitment for 2022/23 was at 2301 which remained slightly under target.
- There had been a slight decline in attendance at 82.7% with an overall reduction of 0.6% since the previous report.
- Retention was at 91.4% with an overall reduction of 2.8% since the previous report.

Governor Questions:

The attendance of engineering learners is lower in maths than in English. Is it not the expectation that this would be the other way around?

There are only small numbers of learners attending maths for whom engineering is their core subject area, this means that the impact on the percentages is greater for each occasion.

Is it contextualised well?

Yes, it isn't the same learners who are attending the English and maths lessons. It only equates to one or two learners doing maths.

Apprenticeships:

- There were 275 new starters with continued apprenticeship recruitment.
- The College would become the provider of apprenticeships for the Anderton Centre.
- Due to the increased stability in health, health apprenticeships would be offered from September 2023.
- The AoC had approached the College to deliver the Youthwork apprenticeship with five new starters from September 2023.
- Attendance had increased by 2% and was at 86.2% although still below the 95% expectation.
- Best case achievement for 2022/23 was 72.5% with achievement currently at 47.5%.
- There were some 'out of funded' learners within building services and AAT with fifteen electrical apprentices potentially at risk of withdrawal.

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Governor Questions/Comments:

Why do we retain the 'out of funded' apprentices?

Some of the issues around these apprentices not yet completing are outside of their control. For example, not sufficient time on site, assessments have not gone well, moving from one organisation to another or changing employer. The College will continue to proceed with integrity to do everything within its control to ensure these apprentices pass including engaging in dialogue with both the apprentices and their employers.

Why are apprentices improving in English and maths?

The twelve-week 'front loading' model has worked well. This also means that no apprentices will be 'held up' at the end point assessment due to not completing their English or maths.

Could the same model be used across other qualifications that are not work based?

This wouldn't be possible due to a condition of funding that will not allow 'front loading'.

Are the programmes contextualised sufficiently well?

There is still work to be done on contextualisation and it's a key focus, but we also need to consider decontextualizing in order to enable learners to pass the examinations.

How many learners will be 'rolling over' to the next academic year?

This is currently sitting at around forty learners, which is a big reduction on the ninety-five carried over from last year. Performance boards are addressing and supporting areas to ensure end point assessments are scheduled and booked.

Adults and Community Learning:

- There had been an enrolment increase of 7.6% that was currently at 87%. Funding was at 83.2% of target.
- Non-formula funded provision recruitment had increased dramatically due to the provider/stakeholder feedback groups.
- Partners continued to request shorter and more informal courses that had been communicated back to the GMCA. The College would need to request a change in funding profile if it moved outside of the current provision in order to meet employer needs.
- Sector-Based Work Academy projects (SWAPs) were not formally recorded on the individualised learner record and were included within the non-formula funded category.
- There had been an impact on attendance and retention on the ESOL provision due to more learners gaining entry level employment or being offered additional working hours.
- The College had received confirmation that it was on the flexible procurement system.

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- Attendance remained below the minimum expectation of 90% at 84.5%, a decrease of 1.5%. The College would increase the number of attendance officers to support attendance in all areas.
- Evening classes had been reduced due to a lack of learner interest and an inability to pay course fees.

Governor Question:

What is the difference between a SWAP and an apprenticeship?

SWAPs are short intensive programmes (approx. 4 -10 days) and at the end the learner is guaranteed a job interview. The College has had 100+ successful job outcomes from SWAPs.

Why are early years and education significantly over-recruited?

These relate to teaching assistant courses of which there is a sector shortfall.

Are we still feeling the affects of COVID-19 in attendance rates and will it have an impact on next year?

There is a potential funding clawback of £400,000, which we have reported on.

Higher Education:

- Recruitment remained unchanged since the previous report at 65%.
- Validation of the Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in HNC Construction Management had been successfully completed for construction design and build technician and construction site supervisor pathways.

Governor Questions:

Will this work towards increasing numbers in HE?

Yes.

English and Maths:

- There was the inclusion of 'Family Learning' for maths with a view to growing this provision.
- Link teachers and apprentices continued to work together to improve attendance. There had been a decline in attendance as a result of an increase in the delivery of extra sessions.
- Staffing in maths was more stable due to the close working relationship with the University and the recruitment of University trainee teachers to the College. The result had been that the College was no longer dependent on agency staff, which was a positive outcome of the merger.

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Governor Questions:

Are the College's rate of learner special adjustments/support needs the same as across Greater Manchester?

The College is slightly out of kilter with the rest of Greater Manchester but is at similar levels. The rate was high throughout Greater Manchester but not as high as at the College due to its learner demographic.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the information provided in the Applications, Enrolment and Progress report and congratulated the English and maths staff on their efforts.

The Committee acknowledged that there had been a significant increase in learners that required additional support and that the links with the University had proven to be very positive in terms of the 'grow your own' student teacher recruitment model with the recommendation that links with the University be maintained and extended to other subject areas.

ACTION:

Causality and retention figures for each apprenticeship area to be presented in future reporting.

2.2 Intensive Support Improvement Update

The Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Quality presented the Intensive Support Improvement Update, noting the following key items:

Health and Social Care actions:

- Catch up sessions for learners had taken place in addition to the learner timetabled hours. This had prevented retention issues from worsening in-year for Level 3 (Year 1) and Level 2 learners.
- The results for Level 3 (Year 2) learners were predicted to be above the national rate with Level 1 learners predicted to be in line with the national rate.
- Increased staff development time had been allocated with targeted themes around managing learner behaviour with specialist external and internal training delivered.
- Issues remained around Work Based Tutors with experience in the industry.

Skills Technical actions:

- Managers from the student experience team had provided additional support with attendance strategies.
- Managers from the learner support team had provided additional support with intervention strategies and training on how to implement them.
- The Head of Quality had provided 1:1 support for the interim Curriculum Leader which was in addition to 1:1 meetings with the Head of Construction.

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RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Intensive Support Improvement Update.

2.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Quality presented the interactive Skills Contribution, noting the following key points:

- The BLUE system focused on the development of reflective practice that encouraged self-reflective learning and increased teaching ownership.
- The College had reviewed a research informed teaching platform that was used to share teaching techniques and could monitor each department. It could also be used as a reflective log.

Governor Questions:

Is the BLUE system opt in or compulsory?

It is compulsory. Curriculum leaders or teaching, learning and assessment leaders are in the process of 'buddying up' across curriculum areas.

Have all staff bought into the BLUE system?

The majority of staff have welcomed it and found it rewarding, it has opened up conversations in teaching, learning and assessment. There are a minority that have refused involvement in the process that we are working with as part of their performance management.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Teaching, Learning and Assessment update.

(Gill Waugh left the meeting at 3.48pm)

2.4 Job Shop

The Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Stakeholder Engagement provided a verbal update that outlined the plans behind the 'Job Shop' to be launched in September 2023. The Job Shop would create better visibility and presence of the business development team that would be aimed at learners, stakeholders and employers.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Job Shop update and congratulated the College in support of its development.

2.5 Marketing Update

The Assistant Principal, Curriculum Design, Information and Technical Services presented the report, highlighting the following key points:

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- The priorities for the marketing team remained to increase 16 – 18 and apprenticeship applications in addition to increasing the promotion of adult provision and ‘essential skills’.
- Social media engagement continued to increase due to it being managed internally with marketing activity supported by the school’s liaison team.

The Committee noted that the marketing update report was very thorough and provided a greater understanding of how the marketing team was integrated into the College system.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Marketing Update.

2.6 Applications for 2023/24

The Assistant Principal, Curriculum Design, Information and Technical Services presented the report, highlighting the following key points:

- Applications from school leavers had increased by 12%.
- Adult applications had increased and were significantly higher than this time last year.
- The number of individuals that had expressed an interest in an apprenticeship had declined slightly.
- The College was working with a partner to increase applications by providing additional financial support to learners.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Applications for 2023/24 report.

2.7 Progressions & Destinations Report

The Assistant Principal of Curriculum Design, Information and Technical Services presented the report, highlighting the following key points:

- 88% of learners on study programmes had a positive progression or destination. This was a 12% increase on the previous year.
- 71% of adult learners had a positive progression or destination.
- 70% of community learners who completed a personal and community development course (PCDL) had a positive progression or destination. This was an 8% decrease on the previous year.
- 75% of learners that had completed an accredited course through the Bolton Council contract had a positive progression or destination.
- It was the second year that the College had used an external company to collect destinations data. The information yield continued to increase with additional measures implemented to further increase the destinations data return.

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Governor Questions:

The destinations information is better than previously reported, do individuals still not answer an 'unknown' number?

There are some difficulties with this, however the company has the ability to make calls that appear to be from different numbers in an effort to mitigate this.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Progressions & Destinations Report.

2.8 Link Governor Scheme

The Clerk informed the Committee that link areas had been identified in collaboration with the Senior Management Team and would facilitate further governor interaction. Link governor meetings had taken place with others scheduled.

Feedback had been provided from the mental health and well-being governor link meeting with overall feedback received to date being positive. Governors had found the meetings informative and a good insight into the areas identified and discussed.

The Clerk noted that there were vacancies in the following areas that would be explored:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Adult and community learning
- Environment and sustainability

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Link Governor Scheme update.

3. SECTION C - UNIVERSITY GROUP MATTERS - FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

None.

4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Meeting Evaluation

Members agreed that the reports provided comprehensive and detailed updates on causes for concern and a high degree of transparency.

5. SECTION E - FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 28 November 2023 at 2.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 4.29pm

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Chair's Signature:

Date: 28 November 2023