

WIGAN AND LEIGH COLLEGE: GOVERNING BOARD

MEETING OF CURRICULUM AND STUDENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

TIME/DATE 5.00pm, Tuesday 10th March 2020

VENUE Gateway Conference Room, Parson's Walk, Wigan Campus

Committee Members

Andrea Ferguson (Chair)
Ann Harrison
Jenny Bullen
Janet Minto
Rebecca Armstrong (Staff Governor)
Anna Dawe
Rachel Coombs (Student Governor)
Kodie Anderson (Student Governor)

Clerk

Robert Smith

Vice Principal, Curriculum
Vice Principal, Corporate Services
Assistant Principal, IT, MIS and
Sub-Contracting
Assistant Principal (Curriculum)
Acting Head of Early Years

Claire Foreman
Louise Brown
Dave Harrison

Kendra Chant
Pauline Doyle

Italics denotes absence

MINUTES

Item	The meeting opened at 5.00pm and was quorate with at least 3 members being present.
1 CSM/20/03/01	APOLOGIES Apologies were received from Jenny Bullen and Janet Minto. The Chair welcomed the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) and the Acting Head of Early Years who would be making a presentation to the committee.
2 CSM/20/03/02	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.
3 CSM/20/03/03	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26th NOVEMBER 2019 The minutes were approved as a correct record and authorised for signature by the Chair.
4 CSM/20/03/04	MATTERS ARISING The Clerk advised that all matters on the Action Sheet had been completed.
5 CSM/20/03/05	CURRICULUM PRESENTATION: EARLY YEARS The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) provided an outline of improvement strategies and outcomes for the Early Years area and it was noted that the area had been graded as requiring improvement at the last self-assessment, following a period of instability in its leadership. It was also noted that this had coincided with a significant number of new and relatively inexperienced staff being recruited who had needed support and development. She advised that, despite challenges in the area, it had been clear that the team had been enthusiastic and keen to deliver improvements.

The Assistant Principal reported that the area had recently undergone a curriculum review and this had identified significant year-on-year improvements, which had been influenced by the appointment of an interim Head of Department, a period of stable staffing, the appointment of a new Specialist Personal Tutor and best practice sharing activities with other curriculum areas. She explained that the improvements had included improved compliance with quality assurance requirements, improved student satisfaction rates (92% overall satisfaction), an improved programme of enrichment and improved employer feedback from work placements.

Members discussed the outcomes for the area and noted that study programmes attendance stood at 90%, but that attendance for Maths and English required further attention at 83%. Members were pleased to note that retention rates had improved with overall retention of 94.4%. The Assistant Principal explained that retention at Level 1 had been challenging in the previous year but that successful strategies had been put in place to bring about significant improvements for the current year. The Assistant Principal outlined key areas for further development, including Maths and English attendance, Math and English progress and high grades, retention and student satisfaction rates in higher education. She explained that the next steps for the area would include continued focus on achieving key performance indicators, improving internal progression, preparation for the delivery of T Levels and preparing a capital bid to develop a 'real working environment' classroom as part of T Level preparations and the area's growth strategy.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her presentation and commented that it was clear that the area had addressed leadership challenges and improved focus on staff compliance with quality assurance requirements in order to improve outcomes. She explained that the area had been invited to provide a presentation because its overall self-assessment grade had fallen from Grade 2 to Grade 3 and that governors wanted to see that improvements would be delivered to reverse this grading. The Assistant Principal responded that staff remained motivated and newer staff had now gained the required experience to deliver improvements to move the area forward. She added that the team was now confident that the self-assessment grading would be raised back to Grade 2 in the current year.

The Principal commented that Early Years students were amongst the hardest working across the college, with three days per week at college and two days on work placement. It was noted that the area had also moved to exams-based assessment, which added additional time demands on students in terms of revision time. The Assistant Principal added that the Early Years qualifications were very rigorous and challenging, so that students had to work harder than many other student groups.

Members asked for further information in relation to the improvement in Level1 retention and the Acting Head of Department explained that this was largely down to consistency of teaching, where a small group of staff get to know students well and develop a clear understanding of the support needed by individual students. Members also sought clarification about the role of the Specialist Personal Tutor. The Vice Principal, Curriculum explained that the tutor was not involved in teaching and focused on attendance, retention and organising work placements. She added that it was a dedicated role to provide pastoral care and support in getting students to learn personal skills and resilience. The Chair asked whether the Specialist Personal Tutor

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	<p>would remain in place after the current trial arrangements. The Assistant Principal confirmed this would be the case. Members also asked what the area's most significant challenge would be for the rest of the academic year. The Assistant Principal responded that, like many other areas across the college, Maths and English attendance and outcomes would remain the most significant challenge.</p> <p>The Chair commended the Assistant Principal and Acting Head of Department for the significant improvements in the area.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) and Acting Head of Department left the meeting at 5.35pm.</p>
<p>6</p> <p>CSM/20/03/06</p>	<p>CURRICULUM REPORT</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum provided a summary of the Curriculum Report and highlighted key changes in attendance and retention data. It was noted that attendance was slightly below the same period in the previous year and that retention was at the same level as the previous year for 16-18 study programmes and 1% up for 19+. The Vice Principal commented that she was pleased with the retention data, given the significant increase in the number of Level 1 learners as this was often an area where retention could be challenging. The Vice Principal also explained that, whilst the introduction of streaming for Maths and English was an overall positive change, it had the unintended consequence of making escorting students to classes more challenging. It was noted that this had contributed towards the overall reduction in attendance data.</p> <p>The Vice Principal reported that the move to the new RQF and technical programmes had gone well, including the additional requirements for exam-based assessment. She advised that exam attendance had been very positive and students appeared to be well-prepared for exams and showed less concern when leaving exams, suggesting that the exams had gone reasonably well. She added that, whilst there were no results yet, she was hopeful outcomes would be positive.</p> <p>Members discussed the movement of apprenticeship programmes to the new standards and the additional requirements for end point assessment. It was noted that end point assessment brought new challenges for students and staff. The Vice Principal explained that there was a significantly increased focus on remembering the whole of the apprenticeship content, rather than simply completing one element and moving on to the next. It was noted that this was because the external and independent end point assessment would be required to cover the full content of the standard in a holistic way to assess the apprentices' understanding and skills development across the apprenticeship requirements.</p> <p>The Chair of the Governing Board sought further information in relation to the new requirements of the Education Inspection Framework, including the requirement of students understanding and recalling the content of their courses and the intent behind specific parts of the course. The Vice Principal responded that the Chair's concern was a valid one and explained that staff would be required to regularly reinforce overall course content and to ensure that students fully understand the intent behind course content. Members also discussed new RQF courses and commented that they appeared to push higher quality and more in-depth learning. The Vice Principal agreed that this was the case and commented that, whilst the transition created new</p>

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	<p>challenges for staff, the overall teaching and learning experience for students would be improved.</p> <p>Members also sought further information about work placement requirements and the way in which the college was meeting these expectations. The Vice Principal explained the difference between work-related learning and work placements and it was noted that the former encompassed a wider variety of employment related learning and employer interactions and was easier to arrange than the latter. It was noted that work placements were essentially a period of employment and required significant support from employers to provide sufficient numbers of placements and over a sufficient duration. The Chair commented that the 50-day placement requirements for T Levels would be particularly challenging. The Principal responded that, even though the college had very extensive employer engagement and was better placed than most colleges, this would be a significant challenge. She suggested that the deliverability of this requirement by all colleges may lead to a review of the extent of this requirement in the future. Members asked whether placements could also be delivered out of term time. The Vice Principal explained that placements generally had to take place both within term time and within college opening hours, with only minor exceptions, such as hospitality placements sometimes including working during the evening.</p> <p>The Chair of the Governing Board asked for an update on working with Craven College under the Strategic College Improvement Fund. The Vice Principal confirmed that working with Craven College continued and that this had given the college an opportunity to gain some additional best practice from this Grade 1 provider. She also explained that apprenticeship delivery staff had visited the college to look at its processes and procedures in order to provide advice on where improvement could be made. Members noted that working with Craven College appeared to have been a successful project with a number of indicators including employer satisfaction having increased.</p> <p>The Chair of the Governing Board also asked whether the KPI Dashboard could be updated to include the number of students in each group of data in order to give a better indication of the proportion of each area of activity and therefore the extent of the impact of the data. The Vice Principal explained that providing numbers would not give a perfect indication of overall student numbers as many students would be taking multiple courses, including main course requirements and Maths and English. The Principal added that the data could be added but governors would need to remain aware that these related to the number of starts on each learning element, rather than relating specifically to the numbers of students overall. It was agreed that this data would be added to the dashboard for the next meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Assistant Principal, IT, MIS & Subcontracting</p>
<p>7 CSM/20/03/07</p>	<p>QUALITY & CURRICULUM KPI DASHBOARD</p> <p>Members noted that the Quality & Curriculum KPI Dashboard had largely been covered under the previous agenda item. However, the Chair commented that it was pleasing to note that almost all indicators were positive, although challenges remained in relation to KPI targets for Maths and English.</p>

CSM/20/03/08

Quality

The Vice Principal, Curriculum reported that staff development remained focused on the requirements of the new Education Inspection Framework, including developing a clear understanding of new inspection expectations. She also reported that professional development for higher education staff had increased its focus on the transition of students from further education to higher education, with additional support and advice being provided by an external consultant. Members also noted that UCLan had recently carried out a Periodic Course Review, which had highlighted several areas of good practice and the final report was expected to be positive. The Vice Principal also highlighted the adoption of Blended Learning Consortium materials to improve interest and relevance in personal tutor sessions.

Members noted the priority actions for 2019/20, which included preparations for end point assessments, including the first higher education assessment in engineering. The priority actions also included continued focus on improving apprenticeship outcomes, further staff development activity relating to the new Education Inspection Framework, improving pass rates for Maths and English, and preparation for T Level delivery.

Place

The Principal outlined progress to date, including increased engagement with partner schools. She advised that 16-18 enrolments had again increased in 2019/20 and were currently 182 higher than the same point in the previous year. The Principal also reported that the college had made significant progress in developing its reputation for apprenticeship delivery and was now a significant provider for higher and degree apprenticeships. It was noted that this had also helped to significantly increase the number of levy employers working with the college. Members discussed progress in developing employer engagement approaches and noted that these had helped to double the number of employers working with the college over the last two years.

The Principal outlined the college's work with Wigan Council and other partners in the development of the Employment & Skills Strategy and the college's curriculum development to respond to local and regional skills needs. She also explained that the college was expecting to deliver the whole of the GMCA devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) allocation. Members noted that recruitment of levy apprenticeships remained strong and that, whilst 16-18 non-levy numbers were down, this would be counteracted by over-delivery of adult levy provision.

The Principal provided a summary of key actions to be taken, including a review of the Level 4 and above programme offer as progression from Level 3 remained static. Key actions also included the implementation of a revised progression and destination strategy, and supporting employers through new funding arrangements for non-levy apprenticeships. Members noted that the college would also continue to work with stakeholders to change patterns of AEB activity to better address skills priorities, and would continue to implement the Skills Strategy, including working with relevant higher education providers.

The Chair commented that apprenticeship funding appeared to be subject to constant change and asked whether the college would be able to cover the cost of the additional work with non-levy employers to support them through funding changes. The Principal responded that it had been difficult for a number of years to accurately forecast apprenticeship income and expenditure due to a series of funding changes, but that the college would need to provide additional support in order to ensure that budgeted income could be secured. However, she acknowledged that the college would also have to adopt a cautious approach to income and expenditure planning to

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	<p>ensure viability of delivery was maintained, and act accordingly if the cost of delivery was unlikely to match associated income. The Chair of the Governing Board highlighted the difficulties in recruiting good assessors in specialist areas and asked what progress the college had made. The Vice Principal, Corporate Services responded that, as the college's reputation had improved, there had been significant improvements in its ability to recruit specialist staff.</p>
9 CSM/20/03/09	<p>HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGIC UPDATE: OFS REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum provided a presentation outlining the new requirements under the Office for Students (OfS) regulatory framework. She highlighted the key areas of focus for the OfS through participation, student experience, educational outcomes and value for money. Members noted that the new regulations had introduced a robust set of registration conditions that needed to be satisfied before higher education provision could be delivered. They also noted that the college was required to work with a number of designated bodies which undertook functions on behalf of the OfS.</p> <p>The Vice Principal summarised the OfS monitoring and intervention arrangements and it was noted that this was carried out with a risk-based approach and included a requirement for self-reporting. Members discussed the reportable events requirements and noted that these were not entirely clear and required a degree of interpretation by providers. The Vice Principal reported that the only reportable event so far advised by the college was the appointment of a new Chair of the Governing Board. The Vice Principal also outlined the lead indicators used by the OfS in terms of monitoring and evaluation. These included the student return, graduate outcomes survey, the individual learner record and the National Student Survey. It was noted that should any of these indicators suggest that issues existed in higher education delivery at the college, the OfS may follow up with intervention activity. Members noted that the new framework provided the OfS with significant intervention powers, including monetary penalties, suspension of registration and deregistration.</p> <p>The Vice Principal also provided a brief summary of access and participation requirements, expectations for quality, standards and outcomes, and demonstrating financial sustainability. The OfS good governance requirements were also discussed, together with student information and accounting requirements.</p>
10 CSM/20/03/10	<p>EMPLOYER & STUDENT FEEDBACK REPORT</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum reported that the independent FE Choices survey showed the college had the highest student satisfaction rates amongst Greater Manchester colleges for the fourth year running. She also reported that this survey had indicated a 6% improvement in employer satisfaction. Members noted that the survey also provided the college with a significant amount of qualitative data, which would help the college focus on further areas for improvement.</p> <p>The Vice Principal advised that early indications suggested that higher education satisfaction rates were improving and that the induction survey and internal NSS survey outcomes supported this conclusion. Members asked when the independent and external NSS survey outcomes would be available. The Assistant Principal advised that these were generally produced at the end of the summer term and would be available for reporting to the committee in the autumn term. Members asked the Clerk to ensure that this survey was included on the autumn term agenda.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk</p> <p>Members reviewed the student and employer feedback for specific areas and commented that, whilst overall data was very positive, some areas still required improvement. The Vice Principal explained that areas with lower satisfaction rates</p>

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	generally reflected areas where there had been staffing instability. She confirmed that the college was working on delivering improvements in these areas.
11 CSM/20/03/11	ANY OTHER BUSINESS There was no further business.
	DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: 5.00pm Tuesday 16 th June 2020
	The meeting closed at 6.55pm