

QUEEN ELIZABETH SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum & Standards Committee held on Thursday 19th May 2022

Present	Mr A Teague, Chair Mr T Fisher, Principal Mr S Heath Mr C Kipling Mrs V Snowball Mr C Wiper
In attendance	Mrs T Amarawansa Mr M Baker Mr L Job Mr I Waite Mrs N Wade, Acting Clerk
Apologies	Mrs J Barrett Mrs J Hillyard

Ref:		Actions
13/22	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> There were no declarations of interest.	
14/22	<u>Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th January 2022</u> The minutes were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.	
15/22	<u>Matters Arising</u> There were no matters arising other than those to be dealt with under items on the agenda.	
16/22	<u>Whole College Quality Improvement Action Plans</u> Mr Job referred to the Action Plans and explained that they are linked to actions on the Whole College Improvement Plan and are discussed regularly at SMG meetings. He introduced the new Tutorial Action Plan, which has been created to further prepare students for life in modern Britain. Mr Heath highlighted several 'ongoing' actions on the Data Management Action Plan and questioned if the plan is over ambitious or under supported. Mr Waite, Mr Baker and Mr Fisher provided explanations for why specific actions have not yet been completed including issues with benchmarking data and explained that some actions will be completed in the coming weeks. Mr Teague asked how the plans are monitored for effectiveness. Mr Job explained that the plans are reviewed each month at SMG meetings where impact is assessed and next	

Ref:		Actions
	<p>steps are considered. Some actions then feed into other action plans, including Course Level QIPs.</p> <p>At the request of Mr Teague, Mr Job provided an overview of the new Tutorial Action Plan and explained that has been created to help prepare students for life in modern Britain though developments in the tutorial programme and more widely throughout the College.</p> <p>Mr Teague commented that the plans are very comprehensive and the Committee accepted the Whole College Action Plans.</p>	
17/22	<p><u>Attendance & Retention Data</u></p> <p>Mr Waite referred to the attendance tracking document explaining that attendance is currently below pre-pandemic levels and that Mr Baker has developed the Attendance Action Plan in response to this.</p> <p>Mr Heath asked how current levels of attendance compare to previous years and other similar institutions. Mr Fisher replied that QE attendance is usually relatively high at around 93-94%. Attendance data at post-16 is calculated slightly differently at different institutions so is not always possible to find suitable benchmarking data. Part of the reason seems to be low attendance at the start of the year due to COVID and increasing mental health issues. Many of the actions on the action plan have been completed and although it hasn't completely rectified the situation, it might have been worse had these steps not been taken. Additional strategies for tackling attendance issues next year have been developed.</p> <p>Mr Kipling added that in his role he has seen similar patterns of attendance across various institutions, with attendance in the Autumn Term over 3% lower than usual. A small proportion can be accounted for by COVID and associated shutdowns, but it leaves 2-3% unaccounted for.</p> <p>At the request of Mr Teague, Mr Baker provided an overview of the Attendance Action Plan, explaining that increased communication with parents/carers and increased focus from Guidance Directors and Progress Tutors has helped to close the attendance gap, but plans are in place to further improve attendance levels.</p> <p>Mr Waite summarised the retention tracking document and explained how retention feeds into the College's overall Qualification Achievement Rate ('pass rate' x 'retention rate' = QAR). In the years that students were awarded CAGs and TAGs, retention was very high whereas this year's retention levels are slightly lower than those pre-pandemic, but not a cause for concern.</p> <p>Mr Kipling asked for details of where leavers have gone to and Mr Baker explained that destinations include: providers closer to home; starting work or apprenticeships; taking time out due to mental or physical health issues and some choosing to restart at QE.</p> <p>Mr Teague asked if the dip in retention would cause issues financially. Mr Fisher replied that the College had benefitted from higher retention rates in recent years and that budgets are looking reasonably healthy for future years.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the Attendance and Retention Data report.</p>	

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18/22	<p><u>March Progress Point</u></p> <p>Mr Waite summarised the internal assessed and projected grades and explained that students projected a 'U' grade have received interventions from Guidance Directors; those predicted 'below target' have specific actions on Voyager to complete and that all students are asked to set SMART targets following each assessment point. Course Leaders of coursework subjects have also considered performance against target grades and performance looks good overall. Mr Job added that other interventions include contacting parents and additional monitoring of Course Level QIP actions, plus additional interventions that will be put in place next year.</p> <p>Mr Teague asked if there have been any surprises in the results, specifically with those subjects not in Course Support. Mr Job explained that there weren't any particular surprises but those subjects predicting low pass rates are given extra interventions and actions on their QIPs.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the March Progress Point report.</p>	
19/22	<p><u>Course Support Updates</u></p> <p>Mr Job referred to the Course Support documents and described the process of Course Support, which involves regular meetings between SMG, Curriculum Directors and Course Leaders; weekly meetings between Curriculum Directors and members of SMG to review subjects in Course Support and ongoing records of progress completed by Curriculum Directors. There is consistency in the level of support across the various subjects but also some flexibility so that support is tailored to the specific needs of each subject.</p> <p>Mr Heath commented that it is good to see this ongoing support and Mr Teague asked if any subjects are resisting the support. Mr Job replied that some subjects embrace it more readily than others but support is provided where necessary to get the best outcomes for students. Mrs Amarawansa added that Subject Quality Reviews bolster Course Support subjects with additional observations, feedback from students and additional strategies. She confirmed that there is still more work to be done but clear progress has been made since January.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the Course Support reports.</p>	
20/22	<p><u>Advanced Information</u></p> <p>At the request of Mr Teague, Mr Waite provided an update on the Advanced Information received from exam boards and explained the process for students who miss exams. He said that some subjects have been given more clarity on areas of content to be examined than others and Mr Job added that exam board representatives have been invited into College to meet with Course Leaders to provide further clarity.</p> <p>Mr Teague asked if there have been any issues in finding exam markers and Mr Waite replied that there has been a big drive on recruiting markers, adding that several colleagues working at QE mark for exam boards, which provides additional insight for the benefit of QE students.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the update.</p>	

Ref:		Actions
21/22	<p><u>Indicative Student Numbers for First Year Courses in September</u></p> <p>Mr Job explained that the report, produced by Mr Hargrove and Mr Hunnisett, gives a general indication of predicted student numbers for September, but that students will be asked again for their subject preferences post-Bridging, which will provide an even clearer indication of numbers in subject areas. We currently have 1885 applications for September, which is higher than the 1848 received by this time last year, and the number of students who've confirmed their Bridging subject choices is also higher than usual.</p> <p>Mr Heath and Mr Teague commented that numbers look very encouraging, particularly given the increasing number of alternative options available.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the Indicative Student Numbers report.</p>	
22/22	<p><u>Update on Senior Management Roles</u></p> <p>Mr Fisher described recent changes in senior management and how they will impact this committee specifically. Mrs Amarawansa has been appointed to the new role of Vice Principal (Student Support and DSL) and Mrs Bates, who worked at the College previously, has been appointed to the role of Assistant Principal (Teaching and Learning). Mr Hargrove has announced his retirement and an advert has been placed for a Vice Principal (Finance, Resources and Information).</p> <p>Mr Fisher explained that in previous years, the Curriculum & Standards Committee would focus on outcomes and the now disbanded Student Committee would focus on other aspects of the student experience. In order to reflect the broader interpretation of 'curriculum' now commonly in use, which includes safeguarding and preparing students for life in modern Britain, it is proposed to broaden the remit of this Committee to include these additional aspects. This proposal has been discussed and recommended by the Search & Review Committee, and brought to this Committee for approval.</p> <p>Mr Teague agreed that this is a good idea and the Committee approved the proposal to broaden its remit.</p>	NJW
23/22	<p><u>Confidentiality</u></p> <p>Details of specific subjects in Course Support are to remain confidential.</p>	
24/22	<p><u>Date of the next meeting</u></p> <p>To be confirmed</p>	

Summary of Actions:

Ref:	Action summary	By whom
22/22	Update Terms of Reference for the Curriculum & Standards Committee ready for Committee/Board approval,	NJW