

QUEEN ELIZABETH SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum & Standards Committee held on Thursday 15th September 2022

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

Ref:		Actions
25/22	<u>Appointment of Committee Chair</u> Following a request for nominations, the Committee unanimously appointed Mr Kipling as Chair of the Curriculum & Standards Committee.	
26/22	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> There were no declarations of interest.	
27/22	<u>Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th May 2022</u> The minutes were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.	
28/22	<u>Matters Arising</u> None other than those to be covered later in the meeting.	
29/22	<u>Curriculum & Quality Developments 2022-23</u> Mr Fisher highlighted three key curriculum and quality developments, which are to be covered in more detail under other items on the agenda: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>40 hours additional funding</u> In order to receive additional funding, all post-16 providers are now required to deliver an extra 40 hours of activity time per student (annual minimum of 540 hours to become 580 hours), which must meet specific criteria. Providers are required to account for how the 40 hours are used in 2022-23, but will not be required to do so in future years. QE already delivers over 600 hours, but is still required to deliver an additional 40 hours, as it is not possible to claim for work already taking place. 2) <u>Removal of Level 2 provision</u> The College has provided Level 2 courses for a number of years for students who have not achieved the qualifications required to 	

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	<p>study at Level 3. The decision has been made to remove this programme, except for GCSE Maths and English for students wishing to resit.</p> <p>3) <u>End of the Course Support programme</u> It has been decided to refresh the approach used to support and develop courses and bring the Course Support programme to an end.</p>	
30/22	<p><u>OFSTED Enhanced Inspections/Meeting Skills Needs</u></p> <p>Mr Job summarised the new OFSTED Enhanced Inspections, which will begin in September 2022. All FE colleges (except those that have academised) will undergo an additional element of inspection, carried out by an additional inspector, focusing on how well providers are meeting skills needs and preparing students for the world of work. A sub-judgement will be made on this area, but it will not be a limiting grade. All colleges will undergo a full inspection between now and 2025 (QE last had a full inspection in 2012). All QE Course Quality Improvement Plans this year will include a standard target focusing on developing students' skills for learning, life and work.</p> <p>Mr Kipling stated that one of the issues with making a judgement on meeting local skills needs might be understanding which geographical location the College should be meeting the needs of. Mr Job explained that so far, the only Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) to be completed in the local area is the one for the Tees Valley, which was part of the pilot scheme.</p> <p>Mr Kipling asked if the College is represented in the Tees Valley Combined Authority. Mr Fisher explained that the CEO of Darlington College is the post-16 provider representative for Darlington but it is important for QE to work with the Combined Authority.</p> <p>Mr Kipling added that in sending a large number of students into Higher Education, the College is meeting national and international skills needs, rather than focusing on purely local skills.</p> <p>Miss Barratt asked how the College is preparing staff for the full five day inspection. Mr Job and Mrs Amarawansa explained that existing College quality assurance processes, including Course Self Assessments and Subject Quality Reviews, are very much in line with OFSTED inspection processes and staff will, therefore, feel prepared as a result of engaging in them.</p> <p>Mr Baker informed governors about the ways in which the College is working to develop students' skills including: building relationships with local employers; work related learning and placements; the College's Job Ready programme; explicitly addressing skills with students so that they are fully aware of the skills they are developing (using the Skills Builder programme) and working with Course Leaders to develop a common approach to skills development across the College.</p> <p>Mrs Bates explained how the College's new 'Guided Independent Learning' (GIL) programme, adding of an additional hour of guided learning to students' timetables per week, will increase their skills development and support life-long learning, whilst also fulfilling the DfE's '40 hours' requirement.</p> <p>Miss Barratt asked how big a journey students will need to take in order to be able to articulate how their skills have developed over time in a confident and fluent way. Mr</p>	

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	<p>Fisher explained that the first step will be for the College to pin-point what it means when referring to 'skills' and for this to be shared with, and understood by, students and colleagues.</p> <p>Mr Kipling asked how the College plans to address the fact that some students disadvantaged by not having had as many opportunities to develop their skills. Mr Fisher explained that students will be able to use the Skills Builder programme to help bridge this gap and that other measures currently under discussion will also be put in place. Mr Kipling suggested the North East Raising Aspirations partnership would be another useful resource to provide opportunities for students who are at a disadvantage.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the update.</p>	
31/22	<p><u>Qualification Results</u></p> <p>Mr Waite provided a summary of the Qualification Results for 2021-22 and explained that although the results are very strong, they are not as high in comparison with national benchmarks as they were in 2019. He explained that the College's performance is strong against sixth form college sector benchmarks, but that some subjects are not performing as highly. The meeting discussed the results and Mr Waite explained that College's new quality processes will benefit subjects looking to improve their outcomes for students.</p> <p>Mr Kipling asked what proportion of GCSE Maths and English students increased their grade profile by a whole grade or more. Mr Waite replied that it was approximately half of the student resitting GCSE Maths and the majority of students resitting GCSE English, with several increasing their profile by two or three grades.</p> <p><i>[confidential references to individual subjects redacted]</i></p> <p>Miss Barratt asked if the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students has widened this year. Mr Waite explained that students in receipt of free college meals have made more progress than in previous years but students with higher prior attainment have performed more strongly than those with lower prior attainment, for many reasons. Miss Barratt acknowledged that periods of remote learning might have had a greater negative impact on those with lower prior attainment.</p> <p>Mr Kipling asked the senior team to please pass on thanks from the Committee to colleagues for all their hard work in supporting students to achieve a set of results they should be proud of.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the Qualification Results update.</p>	
32/22	<p><u>Subject Enrolments</u></p> <p>Mr Job referred to the Year One enrolment figures by each subject in September 2022 and explained that, at around 1,100 students enrolled into Year One classes, overall numbers have not been negatively affected by the removal of Level 2 provision.</p> <p><i>[confidential references to individual subjects redacted]</i></p> <p>He explained that following a review of Level 2 provision, it was felt that although many students had been successful, students would be better served by providers specialising in</p>	

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	<p>Level 2. QE will focus on Level 3 provision, with all students enrolling onto at least one A Level course.</p> <p>Mr Kipling asked if colleagues are aware of any reasons why some subjects have seen a significant increase or decrease in uptake. Mr Job replied that a trend towards students wanting to work in the creative industries might have had an effect and that some subjects make greater use of social media etc. in their recruitment activities, whereas other subjects could learn from this good practice. Mrs Snowball added that the Art department has a high number of followers on Instagram and they make sure to update their content regularly, which may have contributed to their successful recruitment.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the Student Enrolments report.</p>	
33/22	<p><u>Whole College Quality Improvement Action Plans 2021-22</u></p> <p>Mr Job referred to the Whole College Quality Action Plans 2021-22 and explained that, in the main, actions have been achieved with a small number being carried over into this year's plans. He outlined College priorities so far for 2022-23, which will each have a corresponding action plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent quality – high expectations with high support • Attendance • Retention • Meeting skills needs • SEND support and provision • Personal development – preparing students for life in modern Britain <p>Mrs Bates explained the rationale behind the move away from Course Support to a process that encourages continuous improvement for all subjects. The intention is that all subjects will be working to improve, and be supported in this, not just those subjects included in the Course Support programme. This will also empower Course Leaders to further develop the leadership and management aspects of their roles. Mr Fisher added that this will produce a more consistent approach to quality improvement across the College.</p> <p>Mr Kipling confirmed he feels this is a good move, which should empower departments, and added that there is a lot of evidence to support strength based approaches such as this, as opposed to deficit models.</p> <p>The Committee accepted the Whole College Quality Improvement Action Plans 2021-22.</p>	
34/22	<p><u>Terms of Reference</u></p> <p>Mrs Wade referred to the updated Curriculum & Standards Committee Terms of Reference, which had been circulated at the meeting, and explained that the changes brought the TORs in line with current practice.</p> <p>Mr Kipling agreed that the new TORs are clear and accurately reflect the work of the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee approved the Terms of Reference for the next 12 months.</p>	
35/22	<u>Confidentiality</u>	

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	Reference to individual subject areas is to remain confidential.	
36/22	<p><u>Date of the next meeting</u> Mrs Wade asked the Committee if a meeting time of 5.00 pm is still convenient and it was agreed that it is.</p> <p>The date of the next meeting is Thursday 26th January at 5.00 pm.</p>	

Summary of Actions:

Ref:	Action summary	By whom