

Minutes of a meeting of the Quality Working Group held on Thursday,
11th October 2018 at 5.30 pm in FO27 of the College

Present: Michael Priestley (Chair); Tanya Crofts; Robin Talbot

Apologies: John Dunn; Helen Johnson

Also present: C Nattress (Principal); K Wilson (Deputy Principal);

05/18 Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

06/18 Quality Improvement Plan 2017-18

It was noted that there were still elements to be closed off.

In respect of learner tracking, work continued on tracking student progress to ensure consistency. There had been a lot of qualification changes and refreshed assessment profiling, which required to be refined.

There were three areas where it was acknowledged that there was under-performance and where there had been insufficient impact.

- The first was hairdressing: A member of staff had now left and a new recruit would start shortly;
- Level of engagement with Business, and in particular at Level 2, was disappointing and there had been a significant qualification refresh for this year.
- Finally, there had been 3-4 learners on the level 1 Carpentry and joinery course who shouldn't have been on there... IAG and induction was being better used.

On a more positive note, the range, content and depth of professional development for Teaching and Learning was paying dividends, with a raft of initiatives underway, including developments in digital learning, which were having a significant impact. This required to be sustained in the coming year.

The staff response to safeguarding and prevent was particularly pleasing with high confidence levels in the quality of the service. It was asked whether there had been any analysis of students on the register being retained, or analysis of looked-after children. This data would be available in the Safeguarding Annual Summary Report at the November Board meeting.

In discussing Mental Health issues as part of the safeguarding agenda, it was raised whether the college could make contact with Healthwatch Cumbria who are trying to contact as many 16-18 year olds as possible. In response to questioning, it was noted that some counselling did continue over the school holidays on at-risk basis.

It was asked whether progress weeks had had an impact on performance for student tracking. It was felt that there had been a positive impact, but that there were instances still where there was a need for refinement and consistency.

In respect of Functional Skills for English and maths, it was asked what lessons had been learned for the coming year. It was acknowledged that learners had not been as engaged as they could have been. Specialist teachers were being used this year and timetabling had been changed.

It was asked whether the strategy of taking students earlier into the GCSE framework was likely to pay dividends. It was felt that it was a mixed bag, with pass rates slightly down, but that the impact could only be assessed further down the line when learners had made sufficient progress.

It was felt that the focus this year was on a mindset change, particularly for maths, engaging with new ways of learning, with more tailored ALS support. The funding for maths would help kickstart the process.

It was asked how the College was faring with other Colleges, including Cumbrian Colleges. At this stage it was felt that Lakes College was average nationally, but that the specialist maths funding meant that we could look at best practice elsewhere in the country.

07/18 SAR Process: Emerging Trends

The Director of Care, Art and Service Industries (CASI), summarised some key strengths:

- Health and Social Care had seen some staff changes. This had resulted in a big improvement for performance management, with sustained results, and Childhood studies moving from RI to Good. In particular, Childhood studies had embraced innovative approaches to teaching through LC2.
- Of particular note was the excellent partnerships in health, childhood and care sectors, which was of great benefit for employability.
- The nurse cadets, now in its fifth year, continued to go from strength to strength. 100% went on to University and signs of diversification and specialisation were apparent, with one learner moving into physiotherapy and another specialising in theatre nursing in the past year.

Turning to Service Industries:

- Catering, with their links to employers and industry standard expectations, was moving from Good to Outstanding.
- In respect of Hair and Beauty, strengths lay within beauty.
- There had been big improvements in public services with a lot of fine tuning and good impact on value added.
- Following some in depth discussion, it had been decided to leave Art and Design at good, rather than outstanding. It was felt that they were a bit over-cautious at times. It was recognised, however, that it was really nurturing environment with a highly effective teaching team.
- Strengths in English and maths, would be the change in course leadership which was bearing fruit, and the stronger performance in English.

While recognising that there were good employer links in health and social care, it was noted that the progression data in the KPIs was not wholly reflecting that strength and it was asked why there should be this discrepancy. It was thought that a number of factors were at play, including the demand for qualifications at a higher level and that a number of learners were distance learners.

Areas for Improvement for Casi included:

- While nurse cadets were performing strongly as Level 3, other Level 3 courses in Health were not as strong, and Level 2 in childhood studies had also under performed. These areas for improvement largely pertained to the members of staff who had left.
- Employer involvement in apprenticeships, where apprentices don't come into college, was an area for development.
- Hair provision was in need of re-building, but there was clarity over what needed to be done and a new teacher was starting shortly.
- Progression from 2 to 3 was being considered in public services....a change of qualification had been implemented to return the fun to learning, the BTEC being quite dry.

- In respect of Art and Design, growth at HE was an area for development and would be included in the QIP.
- English and maths attendance is acknowledged as an AFI across the board. However, particularly for maths, changes to the way in which it is taught and changes to behaviours regarding English and maths was a key priority under the revised course leadership.

It was asked how improvements would be addressed and confirmed that each COL will have a Quality Improvement Plan.

It was asked whether the learner surveys for maths could be expected to improve, it was confirmed that this was all part of the restructuring in that area and that changes in approach and staff would improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The Director for STEM continued with the strengths and weaknesses for that directorate:

- For Engineering, there was strong leadership and strong outcomes, with strong monitoring of progress and excellent subject expertise, leading to good and better Teaching and Learning.
- Motor Vehicle has seen some real improvement in teaching and learning following management input, and they were particularly adept at embedding functional skills in the curriculum.
- Apprenticeship provision was strong as confirmed by the Ofsted inspection.
- There was a pleasing number of female tutors now in construction and an innovative use of digital learning.

Asked to give examples, the example of real time feedback to students in electrical engineering or the practice of digital completion of pre-lesson questions, which then formed the basis of feedback and discussion in lesson was quoted.

While acknowledging that there was strong engagement of parents and carers in engineering, there was some challenge around whether this was a key strength or an expectation. Given the number of students with an Education and Healthcare plan in this area, and the level of engagement, it was felt that this was beyond usual expectations.

Continuing with strengths:

- It was felt that accountancy was performing much better, with new course leadership and greater focus, stability and changes to teaching style.
- Business management apprenticeships were strong and with an innovative team in computing, employability was strong.

Reflecting on areas for improvement:

- There had been a significant turnover of staff in construction and with strong nurturing of a new team, it was anticipated that this would pay off next year.
- There were poor outcomes at Business Administration at Level 2 and Level 3 had not been great. It was felt that the curriculum did not stack up and with a change from Btec to City and Guilds for this year, that better results could be anticipated.
- Some of the theory-based lessons in Computing could be improved and made more engaging.

Turning to the Director for Teaching and Learning at the NCfN, under whom Higher Education for STEM subjects fall,

- There had been a strong start with the Level 3/access programme being seen as a route into a nuclear or science degree, or degree apprenticeship, and confidence in this progression (although too early to formally profile). It was an attractive offer for those who didn't take the right STEM subjects at school or those who leave 6th form after a year.
- There was a comparatively large cohort of female students at this level, around 30-40%, which following some reflection, was acknowledged as a strength.
- Further development of the curriculum would see a civil engineering degree introduced in January (approximately 23 students), which had seen significant input from employers.

In considering Areas for Improvement:

- It was felt that learners need to take more pride in their work, recognising the standards which would be expected of them in the workplace.

- The challenge of recruiting suitably qualified staff remained an issue and there was a recognition that 'growing our own' could be part of a solution or training up practitioners into educationalists, which is where the Teacher Training Funding could have an impact.

Overall, the Committee reflected on the proposed gradings. They asked whether, given some areas were moving to outstanding, whether some of the gradings could not follow suit.

It was felt that there were inconsistencies still, which needed to be ironed out, before they could begin to recommend a higher grading.

The Committee was content with the findings (as presented).

The meeting closed at 1920h.

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