

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE**  
**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING – 12.03.2024**

**PRESENT:** P Lynn (CG and Chair), M Gaze (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), D Still (Staff Governor), J Tait (CG), and L Woods (CG).

**OFFICERS:** A Adamson (VP), J Barwell (AP), P Blewitt (AP), Z Foster (Clerk), R Gray (AP), T Pierce (AD), B Robinson (DP), O Rodley (VP), P Watt (AP),

**IN ATTENDANCE FOR RELEVANT ITEM:** S Beesley (AD), C Duggan (AD), M Gardiner (Apprenticeship Quality Manager), J Laidlaw (HE Data and Quality Manager), L McKenna (HE Quality Recruitment and HE Support), P Stone (Director of HE), R Walsh (English and Maths Innovation Manager).

**Key:** CG – College Governor, CO – Co-opted Governor, DP – Deputy Principal, VP – Vice Principal, AP – Assistant Principal, AD – Associate Director, Head of T & L – Head of Teaching and Learning.

1. **Apologies for Absence** - C Cannon (CO), S Lane (CG), C Yule (AP).

2. **Declarations of Interest** – no declarations.

3. **Minutes of Meeting of 04.12.2024** – approved as a correct record.

4. **Matters Arising** – no matters arising.

**5. Principal/CEO Verbal Overview and Risk Summary**

Z Lewis outlined the key risks relevant to the meeting and in light of the recent Ofsted visit: continued work on consistency across all provisions; continuous improvement (avoiding complacency); skills shortage staffing; and a continued focus and support of staff.

**6. Ofsted Inspection Update**

P Lynn gave congratulations to all involved on behalf of the Governing Body.

Z Lewis, B Robinson and O Rodley gave a brief appraisal of the highly rigorous process (the outcomes of which had reflected the College SAR judgements). The draft report had been received and final amendments were being quality assured with expectation that the final version be ready for publication within a few days.

Discussion including staff mood post Ofsted; and the single recommendation from the report.

**7. QIP/Development Plan Update**

O Rodley detailed progress against the five areas for improvement, three of which were on track and two progressing (Initial Assessment and monitoring of learner progress and persistent absenteeism).

Persistent Absenteeism was discussed in some detail including: where the persistent absenteeism was prevalent (Level 2 learners) and possible reasons for this; lack of correlation with particular geographical areas for the College (albeit further analysis needed); lack of college benchmarking data (though AoC was compiling some attendance data) though noting that anecdotally the College was doing well comparatively; the social contract between parents and educational institutions and possible effect on attendance; and possible aftermath effects of Covid on attitudes to attendance.

Action by O Rodley/ B Robinson – to add any relevant postcode analysis to persistent absenteeism and impact on progression work.

## **8. Quality of Education – Intent**

B Robinson highlighted the STRONG provisional Ofsted judgement showing the close alignment with the skills requirements of the local and national economy.

He also highlighted the College's success with winning the AoC Beacon award for Excellence in Careers and Enterprise and P Lynn, on behalf of Governors, congratulated the team.

Z Lewis gave an update on progress with FE+ in respect of curriculum coverage across Teesside which would result in a number of recommendations. Collaboration through the IoT was also highlighted as were the strong Employer Boards and progress against the accountability statement.

Questions and discussion included: the impact of curriculum reforms (specifically fewer courses) on ensuring curriculum provision was appropriate for the local skills requirements of employers and ways in which the College were dealing with this generally and through the TVCA (which allowed for greater flexibility to tailor options); Apprenticeships both nationally and locally in terms of success and numbers, the role of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), and the need to respond to the requirements of SMEs in the Tees Valley region (including transferable/soft skills).

## **9. Quality of Education – Implementation**

T Pierce gave an update on the continued focus to develop greater consistency across the College including: lesson visits; Teaching and Learning CPD and impact, and support for new teachers (including the Preparing to Teach bootcamp).

Governors who had been on a walkthrough ahead of the meeting gave their positive feedback which evidenced the impact of the interventions and support.

Discussion included: learning walks and improvements in practice observed; the value of the Preparing to Teach bootcamp for new-non education industry specialist staff; and the role of employers in continuing to develop young people.

## **10. Quality of Education – Impact**

O Rodley highlighted a generally positive picture with attendance, achievement, retention, and destinations all improved on the previous year. An update on progress was given noting that there was further moderation required in some areas.

Discussion included: the complex nature of NEET figures; and reasons for improvement in parental survey responses.

## **11. Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes**

A Adamson appraised the Committee of the provisional Ofsted judgements in both areas (outstanding).

Governors' questions and discussion: how students were responding to the 'You're awesome' cards; how well Thrive has been implemented throughout the College; and workload and support for personal tutors.

11.1 Work Placement Strategy paper – A Adamson drew out some of the secured funding for work placements overseas and of future bids for more; the impact of the Grofar programme; and overall workplace achievement.

Governors discussed in detail the ongoing and increasing challenge of meeting the workplace targets both currently and when there are a higher number of T Levels (both internally and for the FE sector as a whole).

## **12. Provision for Learners with High Needs**

A Adamson outlined the outstanding provisional Ofsted judgement for the 151 learners with high needs in the College (of which 77% were based cross college with the remaining 23% in the Inclusive Learning Department).

Governors received an update on the new staff structure which was working well and the complications and progress of funding was also discussed.

## **13. Department Reports (Presentations)**

- 13.1 A Levels** - R Stainthorpe gave a comprehensive overview of progress against the key areas for improvement, progress and impact on emerging in year issues, and highlighted future developments,

specifically in relation to T Levels and wider curriculum reform. She also detailed the Ofsted inspection experience for the provision which had been very positive.

Governors gained assurances on the rate of progress for the provision including the successful use of Uplearn for students.

- 13.2 Engineering** - P Blewitt and D Payne detailed progress against the five key areas for improvement, progress and impact on emerging in year issues, and highlighted future developments specifically the integration of engineering and TTE staff from September 2024 on the main site.

A full discussion took place on staff retention and ongoing recruitment; and the T Level occupational practical assignment particularly the assessment specification and the difficulties and complexities of this (including budget, timing and staff training)

- 13.3 Progress paper on Inclusive Learning** - C Duggan outlined progress for the 224 students highlighting: the profile of the students; approach to attendance; safeguarding; the four provision types; the Supported Internship programme developments; staffing, and curriculum planning.

Further detail was given on the staffing structure.

- 13.4 Progress paper on Hair and Beauty** - S Beesley presented a much improved and more stable year for the provision overall. She also updated on all areas of the QiP.

Governors discussed Apprenticeships in some detail, noting the success of the reintroduction of Catering. The more stable position within the Hairdressing provision was also discussed and of the local need for a hairdressing apprenticeship.

The Committee then **approved** the formal request to open up the recruitment for the Hairdressing Apprenticeship.

#### 14. Provision Type Reports

- 14.1 T Levels** – J Barwell detailed success rates, expansions for 2024-2025 (including more foundation programmes) and progress with placements.

Governors discussed: the T Levels programme now it was three years in; any potential impact of Government change on qualification reform (specifically the programme of further defunding of Level 3 courses), the value of T Levels for a specific cohort of students; and the remaining concern in relation to greater roll out for a wider number of students.

- 14.2 Education Programmes for Young People** – P Watt detailed success rates, expansions for 2024-2025 (including more foundation programmes) and progress with placements.

Governors discussed: the T Levels programme now it was three years in; any potential impact of Government change on qualification reform (specifically the programme of further defunding of Level 3 courses), the value of T Levels for a specific cohort of students; and the remaining concern in relation to greater roll out for a wider number of students

- 14.3 English and Maths** – R Walsh presented his report highlighting the improved November resit results.

Discussion included: the reasoning behind and impact of the move to a different awarding body for Maths resits and an update on the improved usage of Century Tech and of supporting CPD for staff.

- 14.4 Apprenticeships** – M Gardner presented her report which showed improvements across all areas which was consolidated by the provisional Ofsted judgement (outstanding). She also drew attention to the apprenticeship accountability framework which was green across the board.

Governors discussed staffing particularly in relation to Engineering.

Governors congratulated the Department on their Ofsted judgement.

- 14.5 Higher Education** – P Stone detailed that all actions on the QiP were making good progress, albeit some were a little more drawn out (.e.g B3 data).

Discussion and questions included: attendance measures and targets and how this differed for HE in relation to impact on progression; the use of AI including complexities for assessment and also use of by staff and related CPD (both within HE and the wider College).

L McKenna informed the Committee of a recent case in law (that of Natasha Abrahart) in respect of student protection at HE level. The impact and considerations of this case were discussed in full by the Committee.

It was noted that a change to how the HE provision would be reported was likely to be proposed for 2024-2025 with further detail coming through at the May Strategic Planning Day.

- 14.6 Adult Learning Programmes** – R Gray gave an update against QiP actions for the Committee and gave an account of the Ofsted inspection which had resulted in a provisional outstanding grade.

Governors discussed ESOL, destinations and the range of positive case studies from the provision.

Governors congratulated the Department on their Ofsted outcome.

- 14.7 Subcontracted Provision** - R Gray detailed progress for the three current subcontractors all of which was on track.

Governors questions included: the new subcontractor and integration with College systems and the use of regional manager meetings.

- 14.8 NEETS** – R Gray presented the first NEETs report in respect of the new programme – Skills for Training, Employment and Personal Success (STEPS) both in terms of progress and also future developments.

Questions were focused on the funding (via TVCA), numbers, and initial feedback (which had been very positive).

Action by Z Foster to adjust the agenda so that provision type reporting was fairly rotated.

## **15. Committee Review of Top Risks**

It was agreed that the risks identified at the start of the meeting (*item 5*) remained the focus.

## **16. Date of Next Meetings 2024**

- Monday 10 June 2024 at 5pm – Curriculum Planning (Full GB and Committee members)
- Monday 1 July 2024 at 2pm

## **17. Any Other Business**

None taken.

*The meeting closed at 5.45pm*