

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING – 01.07.2024**

PRESENT: P Lynn (CG and Chair), C Cannon (CO), R Davies (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), D Still (Staff Governor), 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), M Telling (Group Business Development Director), P Watt (AP), C Yule (AP).

OBSERVING: A Hassack (future CG).

IN ATTENDANCE FOR RELEVANT ITEM: S Beesley (AD), C Duggan (AD).

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** - S Lane (CG), M Gardiner (Apprenticeship Quality Manager), P Stone (Director of HE), J Tait (CG), R Walsh (English and Maths Innovation Manager).

A Hassack was welcomed to the meeting ahead of his formal appointment on 11 July 2024.

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

- 3. Minutes of Meeting of 12.03.2024 and 10 June 2024** (Curriculum Planning) were both approved as correct records.

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

5. Principal/CEO Verbal Overview and Risk Summary

Z Lewis updated on the recently considered risk registers which showed increased expectations on departments resulting in more amber ratings countering any potential complacency post Ofsted. She also gave a positive update in relation to staff turnover (5% lower than last year) and the effect of a possible change of government on the qualification reform risk.

In addition, whilst Access to HE and Hair and Beauty had end of year intervention reports for this meeting, she confirmed both were now out of intervention which may result in fewer reports required at the December meeting.

6. QIP/Development Plan Update

O Rodley detailed progress against the five areas for improvement, three of which were on track and two which had remained amber (progressing) all year (Initial Assessment and monitoring of learner progress and persistent absenteeism). For initial teacher assessment there was still a need for greater consistency and further scrutiny of persistent absenteeism showed the highest rates were with lower level learners. He outlined the tailored targets to further progress with persistent absenteeism for next year.

More widely, O Rodley confirmed that the 30 cross college AfIs were all either complete, on track or progressing.

Committee questions and discussion included: whether there were any concerns re A Level drop out this year with confirmation that the provision felt in a stronger position this year (as evidenced through improved retention, attendance and progress measures) with an overall feeling that exam papers had seemed fair which would hopefully transfer into better results; absenteeism generally and at each level with full discussion of the strategies employed (including the trauma led approach to behaviour management) with this remaining on the QiP for next year; absenteeism within Inclusive Learning and the understanding and support with barriers to attendance (support being individualised against a generally lower attendance starting point) with further actions identified, targeting and monitoring (by College and the Committee) also rolling over into next year.

7. Quality of Education – Intent

B Robinson drew attention to early conversations amongst FE+ on the possibility of bringing back a Teesworks Skills academy type model.

Questions and discussion included: the potential benefits and also drawbacks of a skills academy model for local employers; and further detail on the centralised Retrofit pricing model.

8. Quality of Education – Implementation

T Pierce presented a positive picture of teaching and learning over the year highlighting the improvements: checking for understanding; marked work (though this would be still a high level action for next year); and the emerging area for improvement relating to exit routines (positive lesson ends) which would be developed through CPD and early lesson visits. More widely greater consistency across the College would be a continued focus.

She also outlined the recruitment and retention initiatives from the DfE for the new academic year which the College would be supporting, the further development of excellent teachers with the Advanced Teacher Scheme, alongside continuing to support early careers teachers.

Discussion included: continued improvements and developments post Ofsted; the strong integration of the Taking Teaching Higher Strategy into College culture and high engagement in CPD which had transferred well into teaching practice; and digital skills CPD (including AI) to better support workload.

P Lynn recommended the AI podcast for governors who hadn't seen it.

P Lynn, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated staff on the collegial and positive cultural atmosphere which had been created post Covid.

9. Quality of Education – Impact

O Rodley detailed progress against the seven metrics including: 0.8% improvement in attendance; positive achievement predictions for all provision types (except Adults which was slightly under); satisfaction rate of 95% on learner exit survey (up 5% on last year) and an outline of the largely positive learner destination outcomes (albeit with some pockets of development within Adult education and some study programmes).

National Achievement Rates (NARTs) information had also been shared showing that College performance was above national rates in almost all key metrics at both 16-18 and apprenticeships.

He also drew out learner progress which would remain on the QiP next year despite most learners making good progress, as there were pockets of further improvement within some A Levels and T Level qualifications.

Finally, O Rodley outlined the changes in respect of destinations data which was being captured in a different way and which had given some more 'unknown' outcomes and higher NEET figures within Adult destinations.

Discussion and questions included: reasoning for number of A Level students working below expected levels (aspirational targets and cautious predictions) and general approach to target setting on student motivation; the difficulties of achieving English and Maths resits nationally and the comparative positive outcomes for the College cohort; and the differing approach across Europe which extended Maths and English study up to 18 as a matter of course.

Clarification was sought on the apprenticeship student survey (figures) and department actions.

O Rodley highlighted an exciting time for quality improvement with a general stable picture and positive curriculum reviews in virtually all areas.

10. Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes

A Adamson gave an update to her report in two areas i) social action projects which had increased by 25% over the past year. She also highlighted the award received by the A Level team in this area ii) success on the College application to the Turing scheme which would allow students to go to Seville, Bali and Kenya over the course of next year. She also drew out the wider planned approach within PDBA for the forthcoming year.

The range of enrichment activities, particularly the work experience opportunities abroad was commended.

Governors' questions and discussion: detail of what the Turing funding would cover for students; and the possibility of rolling out the scholarship scheme pilot (outlined at the last meeting) beyond Engineering in the future (and reasons for the pilot within that area).

11. Provision for Learners with High Needs

C Duggan gave a comprehensive overview of the provision including improvements with attendance, progress and retention.

The supported internship was discussed by the Committee including the MC Futures Programme. In addition, the strategic partnership between MC, the local authority and specialist secondary schools was also outlined and discussed with strong potential for this to impact national developments/policy.

12. End of Year Intervention and Support Department Reports (Presentations)

12.1 A Levels

P Lynn, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated the team and students on the Year 12 Community Impact Award.

C Yule outlined progress against QiP actions giving more detail on areas of progress (A Level pass rate and high grades and A Level Science performance).

Governor discussion and questions included: clarification on progress figures; whether any A Levels had been dropped or added (1 in each case resulting in the same number of overall A Levels offered); science A Levels and reasons for difficulties and actions for improvements; student engagement with Thrive and plans for developing this; and wider soft skill development with the introduction of VESPA which would be fully launched through Thrive in September.

12.2 Engineering

P Blewitt and D Payne detailed progress against the 8 areas of improvement for 2023-2024 (some of which were amber as the impact was not yet known) including: progress with work placements and collaborative work with the placements team; and attendance developments to support future improvements.

The Committee discussed recruitment and retention of staff in some detail including: how best to onboard staff; more middle leader support; the importance of recruiting and retaining quality; recruitment competition both within the FE sector and industry and CPD; and support for new staff.

12.3 NSG Engineering and Construction

P Blewitt drew out progress against the 7 Afls – in particular progress in relation to Construction retention and achievement; team restructure (to improve clear accountability), teaching and learning focus, and College investment in the department.

The positive national achievement rate of the Department was highlighted, although the department strived to improve further.

12.4 Inclusive Learning – C Duggan outlined the purpose and cohort of the provision. He then updated the Committee highlighting that whilst significant progress had been made against the 6 areas for improvement, Marked Work and Feedback remained the main area for further development and gave the reasons for this and continued focus on this into 2024-25.

12.5 Access to HE

J Barwell reported positive progress against all areas of improvement (all either achieved or on track).

12.6 – Hair and Beauty

S Beasley presented excellent progress in all but one area - GCSE English and Maths student progress, which would continue to be a focus for 2024-2025 including reducing class sizes so that more support could be given to students.

13. Provision Type Reports

13.1 Apprenticeships

O Rodley reported positive achievement rates within the Apprenticeship Accountability Dashboard (green on all measures) and detail of shortlisting for national awards for the faculty. P Lynn congratulated M Gardiner and the team.

A Adamson left the meeting

13.2 English and Maths

T Pierce drew out the work with faculties over the year particularly the use of Century Tech which would be increased for the coming year and work with supporting moderation. Overall exam attendance had been very good and well supported by C Duggan's team.

The Committee discussed the increase of student anxiety going into exams over the year including support and ways of developing this further for students going forward.

13.3 T Levels

J Barwell gave a positive update on the progress and implementation of T Levels across the College highlighting: greater consistency in teaching and learning and assessment; improvements with Year 1 retention; better attendance; positive placements; great staff development including staff being regular guest speakers at national conferences; and good feedback on the foundation programmes.

Discussion and questions included: the embedding of T Levels within the College including work with awarding bodies and scaling up challenges; parental views and understanding of the T Level offer (which was mixed); learner progress gradings in year 1 and 2 clarification and limiting effect on final results for students; the benefit of the higher entry grade for T Levels over the past year; Engineering assessment issues; IAG improvements; DfE strategy going forward for T Levels; the difficulty of T Level achievement due to the entire dependency on end of two year grading; and better university understanding of the qualification despite low UCAS points value of qualification.

13.4 Education Programmes for Young People

Staff stability was discussed including ongoing staff development and support.

13.5 Adult Learning Programmes

R Gray drew out some key highlights including: a strong year for Multiply with high progression onto functional skills; bootcamps wave 5 and some detail in relation to Project S.

The Committee commended the faculty particularly in relation to the breadth of the offer and learner achievements and destinations.

13.6 Subcontracted Provision

R Gray gave detail to the small cohort of subcontracted provision.

She also highlighted the approval on the NEMCA framework which would go to the Corporate Services Committee for approval.

The Committee sought assurance on the spend of the contracts.

13.7 NEETS

R Gray reminded the Committee of the continuation of support in this area (duty of care) despite the ending of the funding and highlighted a very positive year.

R Gray and Z Lewis detailed the new 14-16 opportunity with My Place for the Committee due to come to fruition around October half term.

Governor questions and discussion included: NEET figures for Tees Valley which were shared; referral process for the 14-16 initiative (not led by the College); the necessary qualifications for teachers to give effective IAG and bootcamp work to develop this to L4 level; and wider discussion on the increase in NEETS (including the change in the collation of the figures).

14. Committee Review of Top Risks

The Committee concluded that the risks remained as detailed under Item 5 with staff shortages being the biggest potential disrupter, particularly within Engineering which was being closely risk managed and monitored.

15. Date of First Meeting 2024-2025

P Lynn drew attention to the change of day of meetings for 2024-25 with a move to Tuesdays to better ensure governor attendance. The first meeting was Tuesday 3 December 2024 at 2pm.

16. Any Other Business

P Lynn thanked everyone (staff, governors and students) for their contributions over the academic year and wished all a good break.

The meeting closed at 4.53pm