



STANDARDS AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting on Thursday 9 June 2016

Present:	Mr J Kirk (<i>Chair</i>)	Governor
	Ms N Cuffy	Governor
	Ms M Moore	Governor
	Ms S Overton-Edwards	Principal
In Attendance:	Mr J Bagley	Vice Principal Curriculum
	Mr N Leivas-Mistry	Vice Principal Quality
	Mr R Mansfield	Clerk

Ref.		Action
Q/16/23	<p>Item 1 – Apologies for Absence: An apology for absence was received from Lesley Hammond. The meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
Q/16/24	<p>Item 2 – Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items: There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.</p>	
Q/16/25	<p>Item 3 – Minutes of previous Meeting and Matters Arising: The minutes of the meeting on 21 April 2016 were accepted by the Committee as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Kirk. Naz Leivas-Mistry confirmed that the Quality Manual had been amended as requested.</p> <p><i>The order of business was for various reasons amended with the agreement of the meeting. Items are however recorded in agenda order in these minutes.</i></p>	
Q/16/26	<p>Item 4 – Student Performance: <i>4.1 Improving the Reporting of Student Performance and Progress</i> Naz Leivas-Mistry gave a brief oral statement about the future reporting of student performance and progress in the light of the discussion under Item 6 (see below), which had just taken place. He planned to 'open up' the Committee to receiving more than just quantitative data, and to draw upon a variety of sources, including work scrutiny, student surveys, focus groups and learning walks. Nelista Cuffy commended the use of thematic methods. Robert Mansfield reminded the Committee of its</p>	

responsibilities for the governance of the quality of the education provided by the College. He advised that future presentations of the qualitative information just outlined needed to make clear what was good (or better), what required improvement and what action was taken or planned. John Kirk agreed that the Committee must not be swamped in unqualified anecdotal evidence.

The Committee noted this statement.

4.2 Student Destinations

Naz Leivas-Mistry prefaced the presentation of a paper on student destinations in 2014/2015 by reminding the meeting of the difficulties in tracking destinations. These related especially to the timing of enquiries, the method of approach and the veracity of the responses obtained. The College had a continuing tradition of securing a high level of returners. The majority of leavers had moved on to 'positive' destinations, most commonly to higher education (about 40%) or other further education (nearly 10%). (There was some criticism of the College for not sending more students to 'high tariff' universities – the majority chose DMU. However this was in keeping with the national trend for students to opt for locations close to home in order to reduce their future indebtedness.) The main subjects studied at university by College students were Business Studies, Law and Computing. There was as yet no evidence of any upsurge in STEM subjects, despite the recent emphasis given to them in schools. The destinations of about 30% of leavers were for various reasons not known / not recorded. The majority of the remainder were in paid or voluntary work or apprenticeships etc. Less than 1% were recorded as not in education, employment or training.

Naz Leivas-Mistry also presented for the first time an analysis of student withdrawals, as the College's retention rate had recently declined. The reasons were very diverse. In some instances withdrawals had been for positive reasons, such as entering employment. The largest single factor had been poor attendance. When questioned about this, he explained that this category included both students who had dropped out of their courses and those who had been removed by the Principal for poor attendance.

The Committee received the paper on student destinations.

Q/16/27

Item 5 – DFE Data:

Naz Leivas-Mistry presented Department for Education Data relating to the College, explaining that he had thought it right to do so in the light of advice given at a recent OfSTED conference. However he had concluded, after study of the data, that they were more relevant to schools than to sixth form colleges. The data for the

College pertained to students aged 16 to 18 years only, and therefore gave an incomplete and misleading picture.

The meeting noted the DFE data.

Q/16/28

Item 6 – Lesson Observations 2015/2016:

James Bagley presented a paper on lesson observations during the current academic year. The context was very significant. OfSTED had ceased the grading of lessons, and nationally colleges were moving away from this practice. Teachers' pay was now linked to performance; it had taken almost all of the year to agree the local arrangements for this. Concurrently the College had been reviewing its quality assurance cycle and was seeking to move towards a more 'triangulated' approach.

In 2015/2016 less than 1% of lesson observations had been graded. (The grades awarded in 2014/2015 had not provided accurate reflections of outcomes for learners.)

The College now had an agreed lesson observations policy. This provided for a maximum of three observations of which a maximum of one might be graded. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) regarded learning walks as the only appropriate type of observation. 2015/2016 had been a year of transition. The College was seeking to increase the number of learning walks and to use other interventions and methods of assessment.

Nelista Cuffy said that surely there should now be a greater focus on learning. James Bagley agreed. Nelista Cuffy asked how the quality of learning was reflected in performance-related pay. James Bagley replied that the stance taken by the NUT was that teachers were not accountable for the quality of learning on the grounds that this was subject to factors many of which lay outside the control of teachers. Nelista Cuffy said that this sounded very dangerous, and the Committee expressed its surprise and concern that teachers' representatives apparently saw them as unaccountable for results.

James Bagley said that nevertheless observations and learning walks had taken place, and had led to interventions to share good practice or address weaknesses. John Kirk asked what tools were available to ensure that teaching and learning were effective and of a high quality. He believed the College now had the opportunity to find a conciliatory way forward, provided that learning walks were conducted. James Bagley agreed. There had been high levels of perceived threat associated with previous practice, and it was now necessary to attempt to handle this issue in a supportive way.

The meeting received the paper on lesson observations.

(The next items of business taken were items 8 and 9.)

Q/16/29

Item 7 – Learner Voice:

Naz Leivas-Mistry reported that the firm that had provided the *Easiquest* software used for student surveys in previous years was no longer in business. The College was therefore now using different software (QDP). The advantage was that QDP were able to benchmark the College's results against their national database. As this was the first year of use of the QDP software it was not possible to compare the College's latest results with those of preceding years.

The response rate to the survey had dropped significantly, and a meeting was to be held the next day to explore the reasons for this. The profile of the respondents was broadly in line with that of the College's student population, although there were substantial differences in response rates between faculties.

As compared with national benchmarks, the College's scores were significantly less favourable in respect of:

- Lessons starting on time
- Lessons being interesting
- Receiving fair and respectful treatment
- Feeling safe at College

and more favourable as regards:

- Being asked for own views.

Naz Leivas-Mistry advised the meeting that the benchmark data came mainly from GFE colleges who had been using the QDP survey for some years, and could be presumed to have addressed any issues revealed. The meeting expressed surprise that certain aspects previously seen as College strengths now appeared to be the reverse. Naz Mistry said that the scores on these issues were strongly positive, but not as positive as those of most other colleges. John Kirk said that he looked forward to seeing the action planned.

The meeting received the report on the learner voice.

NLM

Q/16/30

Item 8 – External OfSTED Quality Validation:

Naz Leivas-Mistry informed the Committee that the College was in discussion with Marina Gaze, a highly respected former member of OfSTED, with a view to arranging an exploratory visit by her to the College. John Kirk said that he strongly supported taking advice from current and recent Inspectors. He asked that Marina Gaze should meet with the whole Committee during her visit. It was essential that the College had evidence to support its own assessments and associated practices.

Naz Leivas-Mistry said that a culture change was needed in order to move forward the College's quality. It would be necessary to pave the way carefully for the visit of an OfSTED Inspector. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that she hoped that the forthcoming change of lead negotiator for

the NUT might open the door to a different style of relationship. She believed that there was common ground in wanting the best outcomes for students.

The meeting received this report.

Q/16/31

Item 9 – Strategic Plan 2013/2016 – Progress against relevant Targets:

Suzanne Overton-Edwards presented a report of progress against the strategic targets due for review by the Committee. In particular she reported that the target relating to work experience should be achieved, and that there remained work to do in respect of independent learning. In reply to Nelista Cuffy she listed various College activities and events in 2015/2016 that had engaged the community.

The meeting received this report.

Q/16/32

Item 10 – Notes of the Performance Improvement Group:

10.1 Meeting on 5 May 2016

John Kirk presented the notes of the meeting of the Performance Improvement Group on 5 May 2016. The Group had been pleased to note that the Mathematics team had found comparing predicted and actual results for 2014/2015, as requested by the Group, illuminating and helpful. The Group had more concerns about Sports and Public Services. James Bagley said that a new manager had been appointed and there was optimism about student recruitment for 2016/2017.

John Kirk said that the GEMEG students were a small cohort, whose interest was in football rather than academic study. GEMEG had acquired a fresh understanding of the importance of attendance and achievement. Naz Leivas-Mistry reported that, following the meeting on 5 May, GEMEG had produced a very good paper that had been discussed at a further meeting with College managers. He assured the meeting that, were this to be necessary, there was a clear process by which the College could bring the agreement with GEMEG to an end next year. Hamid Ravat had been designated as the single point of contact with GEMEG in order to improve the management of the relationship.

The Committee received the notes of the meeting of the Performance Improvement Group.

Q/16/33

Item 11 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:

The date and time of the next meeting would be determined as part of the planning of the cycle of meetings for 2016/2017.

Q/16/34

Item 12 – Any Other Business:

There was no other business.