

Approved

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th December 2015 in the Board Room, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present	Dave Underwood	Chair
	Bindu Arjoon	
<i>From item 4</i>	Rachel Hutchinson	
	Craig Marshall	
	Martin Owen	
	Emma Webber	
Apologies	Richard Atkins	
	John Bunting	
	Elaine Hobson	
	Abbie Lawless	
Observers	Philip Bostock	
	Steve Campion	
In Attendance	Barbara Sweeney	Clerk to the Corporation
	John Laramy	Vice Principal
<i>Item 4.1 only</i>	Emma Fielding	Assistant Principal
<i>Item 4.4-4.7 only</i>	Julie Skinner	Assistant Principal
<i>Item 4.4-4.7 only</i>	Rob Bosworth	Assistant Principal

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest.** Action

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. He particularly welcomed Philip Bostock and Steve Campion as observers.

Apologies were received.

Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest

2. **Minutes**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2015, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2015, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. **Matters arising**

3.1 Quality and Resource Review Days (QRR)

Approved

At the invitation of the Chair, John Laramy, Vice Principal confirmed that the QRR had gone well and been perceived by Heads of Faculty as the most robust ever. There was the highest number of grade 1s ever and rigor was demonstrated by the improvement of a faculty from good to outstanding, validated during internal inspection, when assessed by an external Ofsted inspector. All issues raised by SLT had already been identified by Heads of Faculty and were being addressed. The Committee commended the maturity of the process.

The Committee noted the update.

3.2 Higher Education Review Update

This item was deferred until the February 2016 meeting. However, John updated the Committee on key issues, confirming that an HE Strategy Group had been formed and was progressing the action plan.

4. **Quality Assurance**

Emma Fielding, Assistant Principal, joined the meeting for item 4.1 only.

4.1 A level Value Added

Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT) comparison
The report was received and Emma reminded Governors that the new Ofsted framework focussed on five Department for Education (DfE) metrics, including measuring the progress of learners. The College had moved to measuring Value Added through the robust methodology which was the A Level Performance System (ALPs), and which encouraged the use of the most challenging national benchmarks.

Emma highlighted the tension between high success rates and high value added scores. Having visited a number of institutions, it was evident that there was often a negative correlation between the two. This was due primarily to retention issues. There was a moral element to retaining students. Rather than dropping out, they might achieve, albeit modestly, so supporting success rates. However, this would have a negative impact on value added scores. In colleges where students were not encouraged to stay on if not achieving, those who did so were the better motivated, and achieved higher value added scores. As an inclusive College, with high success rates and strong emphasis on attendance and retention, strong value added scores were going to be challenging. However, the current Government emphasis on value added meant that potentially the educational character of the institution needed to be reviewed, requiring careful scrutiny by the whole Board.

Emma update the Committee on the College's three year strategy: to improve added value scores without compromising success rates. The aim was to achieve an ALPs provider score of 4 at As and A Level. Another

way of raising value added scores was through lowering entry requirements, but this challenged the College culture of 'right student right course'. The interrelationship was complex. There could be large swings in metrics and an improvement in a small number of students could have a significant impact.

Emma demonstrated the MIS tracker, a live system to monitor students' progress at key assessment points in the academic year against agreed aspirational grades. Students could monitor their own progress and therefore take ownership. Expectations were set against national benchmarks. The system ensured that there was standardised practice and that lecturers across a student's curriculum monitored the same information. This was being rolled out, starting with the AS intake, for students to monitor their own performance. However, all staff could access the system and were using it to support assessment and to adjust target setting for learners at key stages.

Student awareness of aspirational target setting and the tracker facility was through a number of presentations at the start of the year. Targets could be raised if too low. A culture of high expectations was the key to improvement and achievement of high grades. Results from the first year of implementation were encouraging. Governors asked about the process to change courses and were assured that this was carefully managed.

The changing landscape of linear A Levels would impact. The Committee considered the importance of continuity of staff teaching over the two years. The impact of this was not uniform and was more important in some subjects than others. If a student changed teachers during the course, was the value added score measuring the teacher or the learner?

The Committee noted that there was a fine balance between success and value added scores, with high grades, retention and the appropriate choice of course all in the mix. However, it was all about achieving the best outcomes for individual learners.

The Committee noted the report.

4.2 Impact of teaching hour contracts

The update was received and John confirmed that the biggest impact was when there was a change of staff between years, as it made incremental 'year on year' improvement difficult.

The Committee noted the update

4.3 Impact of Business Efficiency Group

The update was received. For a modest investment there could be a change in staffing of A Level provision. The outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the funding allocation had been

Approved

awaited before exploring this further. However, it was clear that a one size fits all model was not appropriate and that different elements of provision might require different teaching styles.

The Committee noted the update.

Julie Skinner and Rob Bosworth, Assistant Principals, Assistant Principal, joined the meeting for items 4.4 to 4.7 only.

4.4 Intensive Care update

The report was received and taken as read and Julie invited questions. She confirmed which subjects were in the Intensive Care process. The Committee considered the impact on A2 of poor AS level outcomes. There was also discussion on functional maths and whilst still above the national average, there were a number of issues nationally which were impacting on maths outcomes. Improvement Practitioners (IPs) were working with staff across the College. Finally Governors considered the Outpatient process. Was this a step down from Intensive care, or a route to Intensive Care? It was proposed that the work on value added might remove the need for the Outpatient process.

The Committee agreed to:

Note the report.

4.5 College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2014/2015 and Quality Improvement Plan(QIP) 2015/2016

The report was received including the full SAR 2014-15, the Executive Summary and the Quality Improvement Plan for 2015/16. John reminded the Committee that it was its responsibility to scrutinise the SAR and QIP and to recommend it to the Board. He thanked those involved in proof reading the document and invited the Committee to review the document page by page. In addition to inviting comments from Governors, which included recommended changes to text, queries on the presentational details of graphs, requests for greater clarification and the removal of acronyms where possible, John highlighted key issues.

The College was recommending a self-assessment grade of Outstanding for overall effectiveness, which comprised grade 1 for each of the Ofsted criteria: outcomes for learners, quality of teaching learning and assessment and effective leadership and management. Ten of the fourteen faculties were graded outstanding with three good and one requiring improvement. The report under scrutiny was for the year ending 2014, and the faculty requiring improvement had since been incorporated into an outstanding faculty, and was making good progress.

Approved

In recognition of the new Ofsted framework, different types of provision were graded for the first time, with four outstanding and one good. The Committee debated whether the grade 2 was conservative, given that outcomes were better than most providers, but agreed that as a first assessment, a good grading provided room for improvement.

Of the ten business support Departments, eight were outstanding, one good and one requiring improvement. John confirmed that the department requiring improvement had a strong self-assessment at a high level, but that there had been challenges prior to an overhaul of a number of operational systems which should impact positively on the 2015 report.

Outcomes for learners by learner types were scrutinised. Progression was particularly impressive with a new team leader, and a staying on rate of 82% at level 1. Subcontractor delivery had reduced significantly, helping the College to manage funding challenges, sustain quality and mitigate risks.

Quality of teaching and learning was outstanding. The College was rare in sustaining its quality metrics following an Ofsted inspection, particularly given the growth in learner numbers. Observations remained robust. Learner support was difficult to evaluate other than for those with high needs. The Committee considered this at length. Governors were assured that there were other systems to ensure support was in place when needed, such as tutorials, observations and the learner voice.

Leadership and Management was assessed as grade 1. The adoption of the Prevent strategy was considered. Whilst embedding with staff was making good progress, there was still work to do with students and this was recognised by its inclusion in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

Finally, the SAR provided the self-assessment for each faculty, providing the grade and a list of strengths and areas for improvement.

Subject to the recommended changes the Committee agreed to

Recommend the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2014/15 to the Board for approval at its meeting on 11th December 2015

Vote: unanimous

- Quality Improvement Plan

The Quality Improvement Plan for 2015/16 was received and considered. The Committee noted the statutory duty of colleges to implement Prevent training and that training for the Governing Body was included elsewhere, in the Board QIP. The Committee recommended a change to the text to reflect the midterm review of the Strategic Plan with an amended target

Approved

date.

Subject to recommended amends the Committee agreed to

Recommend the Quality Improvement Plan 2015/16 to the Board for approval at its meeting on 11th December 2015

- 4.6 Quality Improvement Plan(QIP) 2014/2015 Outcome
The report was received. John confirmed that where actions had been completed but missed agreed targets, they would be carried forward to the 2015/16 QIP.

The Committee agreed to

Recommend the QIP out turn for 2014/15 to the Board at its meeting on 11th December 2015

- 4.7 Targets for the College
The annual report was received. It provided proposed targets for 2015/16 for provision at all levels in the context of the College's performance in 2013/14 and national benchmarks.

Trainee targets were challenged. Should they be included with apprenticeships or stand alone? Since numbers were small it was recommended to wait until there was a reasonable cohort. The Committee requested a future report to include context, funding and future security.

BHS/JL

The Committee debated at length the proposal to support the drive to improve value added scores by reducing the success targets. Referring to the discussion under item 4.1, there was an acceptance of the inverse relationship between value added scores and high success rates. Reducing the success targets would send out a message to the staff that there was a focus on value added and on the speed at which progress was achieved.

The Committee agreed that it was its remit to drive up quality and that reducing targets was anathema. Was there a model to show the potential increase in value added for a given fall in success rate? Whilst there was no algorithm, there was clear evidence from other institutions. However the potential cultural change was significant, and as a non-delegable responsibility for the quality strategy, must be a matter for the whole Governing Body. There was evidence that the tyranny of working to Government targets had unintended consequences, and such a matter needed time for full Board discussion, possibly at a Board residential.

JL

The Committee agreed that with no Ofsted scheduled there was breathing space to discuss this further on other occasions. However, the approval of

Approved

targets was delegated to the Committee and a decision was required at this meeting to provide working targets for faculties. The Committee agreed that a target unchanged from last year sent a signal of no change. However there was an appetite for flexibility and for a meaningful and balanced debate. Therefore it was recommended that a lower target be approved to send the message that the Board was alert to the issues and that measured and informed consideration was underway. The Chair reminded the Committee that was important to remember to put the individual learner at the heart of any decision.

The Committee agreed to

Approve the proposed targets

Vote: unanimous

5. Holistic

5.1 Student Induction Survey Outcomes

The comprehensive report was received and John confirmed that there was an improvement on every line.

The Committee asked if schools received feedback of the survey. It was agreed that this would be beneficial and could be undertaken with the Exeter Secondary Schools.

The Committee agreed to

a) Note the report.

b) Feedback survey results to the Exeter Secondary Schools

JL

6. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following reports were received and noted:

6.1 Safeguarding meeting – Minutes 9th October 2015

The reports were received and noted.

The Committee sought clarification on what was being done to address the point that 'in general young people were experiencing higher levels of anxiety, with no 'off switch'? Since this issue had been linked to mental health, how was the College supporting students to be able to switch off or at least recognise the importance of being able to. John confirmed that there were a number of measures in place: the College had introduced mindfulness and singing sessions and there was increased focus on "switching off" during enrichment. The student bulletin had been

Approved

introduced and there was a "Blues Buster" campaign scheduled into the College calendar.

6.2 HR Update on Teaching Staff Qualifications

Governors were concerned at the number of unqualified staff not enrolled on training increasing year on year.

John confirmed that at the beginning of the year this was always at its lowest as new staff had not yet taken up places on courses. Despite there being no requirement for staff to have teaching qualifications, the College had decided to train all on a nationally recognised qualification.

6.3 Internal Inspection Reports Hospitality Hair and Beauty
9th - 13th November 2015

6.4 Exeter 4 Learning Minutes

The most recent minutes were received and noted.

6.5 Risk register

7. **Dates of next meetings**

Monday	8	February	2016
Monday	25	April	2016
Monday	6	June	2016