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EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8th February 2016 in the Board Room, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present	Dave Underwood Bindu Arjoon Richard Atkins Rachel Hutchinson Abbie Lawless Craig Marshall Martin Owen Emma Webber	Chair
Observers	Philip Bostock	
Apologies	John Bunting Elaine Hobson	
In Attendance	Barbara Sweeney John Laramy <i>Item 5.2 and 5.3 only</i> Jennie Hamilton <i>Item 6 only</i> Gemma Noble <i>Item 5.1 only</i> Tim Burnham <i>Item 4 only</i> Julie Skinner <i>Item 5 only</i> Malcolm Walsh	Clerk to the Corporation Vice Principal Head of Safeguarding, Welfare and Student Experience (SWSE) Head of People Learning Support Manager Assistant Principal Assistant Principal

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

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting, including those attending as observers. At this the last meeting of the Principal, the Chair thanked him for his significant contribution during his tenure. Over that time the increased focus on the quality agenda and the College's improvement in outcomes had been significant.

Apologies were received.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2015, as circulated,

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were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Update on External Verification: Blocks for 2015/16

The update was received and John Laramy, Vice Principal, reminded the Committee that it had requested assurance that the number of blocks had been reduced, but that it was too early in the cycle to report this outcome. However, a visit from the Pearson, who oversaw BTEC qualifications, had been exemplary. Because of the current curriculum changes, a number of adjustments had been made, including moving to different awarding bodies. Such transition took time to bed in, with the consequential impact on the first year's results. John was confident that the quality team was working well in overseeing the required changes, but that it might take time before there was a reduction in blocks. The Committee asked how the team was preparing for the changes, and John assured Governors that going back to basics served as a check on areas of challenge and that, where necessary, there was additional intervention.

There were no other matters which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda

Julie Skinner, Assistant Principal, joined the meeting for item 4 only

4. Higher Education Update

The report was received, which updated the Committee on progress against actions arising from the Higher Education Review of 2015. It also provided details of areas of good practice. The report was taken as read and in responding to questions, Julie confirmed that, whilst not a big issue, inspectors had identified awareness of the appeals process. This was now clarified in the handbook, but it was important to keep the issue in perspective so early after enrolment.

Given that some of the recommendations referred to process and not just impact, the Committee sought assurance about the frequency with which the action plan was monitored. Julie confirmed that the HE Strategy Group monitored provision. With an income of circa £3m, HE now made a significant contribution and systems were more robust. The Committee agreed that it should monitor the action plan at the start of the academic year to approve the proposed direction, and at the last meeting of the year to review progress.

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In addition future reports should include recruitment data, qualifications, range of provision and developing trends so that the Committee could scrutinise HE provision in the overall context of the College and thereby assess resource needs. As an area of potential growth, including degree apprenticeships, HE justified enhanced scrutiny at strategic level.

The Committee noted the report.

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5. **Holistic**

Tim Burnham, Learning Support Manager, joined the meeting for item 5.1 only. Malcolm Walsh, Assistant Principal, joined the meeting for items 5.1 to 5.3 only.

5.1 Learning Support Update

In addition to the circulated report, a PowerPoint presentation was received, highlighting the key issues within the report.

Tim illustrated trends in demand for pre enrolment interviews using a graph, which showed a levelling off due to early intervention through the use of application forms with partner schools to help identify potential learners. Because of financial constraints, 1:1 Study Skills support had also plateaued as more support was provided to classes through enablers. The significant increase in examinations, in part due to the required English and maths programmes, had impacted on the department, with an anticipated increase of 30% in 2015/16, as those student needing to continue to study the subjects to achieve level 2 included a high proportion of those needing additional support.

Turning to high needs students, Tim defined these as learners requiring support costs over £6000, and for whom the College received an element of Devon County Council (DCC) top up funding. There were administrative challenges to managing high needs students, including forecasting and providing ongoing detailed support costs to DCC, as submissions were made at the start of the academic year, although learners' needs might change. Maintaining the appropriate level of support was also challenging.

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) replaced "Statementing" in the schools' sector. Furthermore, eligibility had increased to 25 years, where there was a need to consolidate learning funding to that age. It was important for the College to identify and assess needs accurately, and be sure that it could deliver, as the assumption was that the College should accept all learners unless DCC was notified otherwise. Workload was significant, assessments taking half a day, and with over 60 learners. Not all EHCP learners attracted high needs student funding. Whilst plans were received from schools, reassessment was required before they joined the College. Any therapies required, such as speech therapy or physiotherapy, even though health related, were included in education needs, despite the fact that the College did not employ therapists. Therefore careful assessment was critical.

The Committee commended the comprehensive report. Because resources were being cut despite increasing demand in high needs and EHCP learners, the department must be agile, with structural adjustments to remain fit for purpose as needs changed. The impact of changes, such

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as reduced 1:1 Study Support, was being monitored. Progress as well as outcomes was important. Transition must include effective communication between the schools and College. Furthermore, learner support provision influenced parents' choice of post 16 education.

The Committee noted the significant reduction in funding over the past 6 years and agreed to

Note the report.

Jennie Hamilton, Head of Safeguarding, Welfare and Student Experience (SWSE), joined for item 5.2 and 5.3 only

5.2 Prevent Update

The report was received and Jennie summarised the key messages using a PowerPoint presentation. She confirmed that in the On-Course Survey, 98% of students had reported that they felt safe. This enhanced the College's reputation both internally and externally. To achieve this rating and to comply with statutory requirements, the College had worked hard with the many safeguarding challenges, particularly radicalisation and sexual exploitation. The focus was on learners' wellbeing but also to mitigate risk. Jennie summarised the governance structure for safeguarding and Prevent, with Elaine Hobson as the Board's named Governor, Malcolm Walsh as the Senior Leadership Team lead and Jennie as the single point contact. Under her there was a team of five safeguarding (included Prevent) College contacts. The focus was on raising awareness cross-college.

Monthly meetings of the Prevent Strategy Group had effected real traction over the past three months, and Jennie was confident that any external inspection would commend real progress. Driven by the Prevent Risk Assessment and Prevent Action Plan, this live document was RAG rated. Jennie recommended that the Committee and Board receive regular updates of the document. Training had been rolled out across all 900 staff a quickly as possible to equip them with essential knowledge and skills. The second phase was to train other workers and main contractors. In collaboration with Business Solutions an on-line package was being developed for delivery to apprenticeship employers and host families. The Policy on Guest Speakers would be received by the Committee in due course.

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Student awareness campaigns had included material on the plasma screens, Prevent and British Values tutorials, and very positive debates and discussions, demonstrating that the agenda was becoming well embedded. The Student Representative Committee was very active, with poster campaigns and bulletins. Anonymous electronic refers were available for anyone with concerns, with a positive message of supporting

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vulnerable learners.

Jennie confirmed that there was very positive partnership working, and close links to the Police and Multi-faith Chaplaincy, where the Colleges Chaplain served as a signpost to representatives of other faiths.

The Committee commended the report and the progress to date. Had it been put to the test? Jennie confirmed there had been a number of referrals and that the Prevent Team had been effective in making the students safe. In all cases they had been issues of safeguarding.

The Committee commended the report and agreed to

Note the update.

- 5.3 Tutoring Enrichment and Welfare annual review
The report was received and Jennie highlighted key issues.

Tutorials

Jennie reminded the Committee that tutoring was central to the core offer. It was highly valued and tutors were rated by students as helpful and supportive. The tutorial programme was mapped to British Values to support embedding that agenda. The impact of the fortnightly student bulletin, whose circulation included apprentices, was invaluable and provided regular updates on Prevent and Equality and Diversity.

Welfare

1602 students were accessing financial support in some form such as bursary or care leavers' funding. There had been an increase in care leavers and retention was strong, the College having worked hard to facilitate transition and support. There was also an increase in 19+ learners accessing financial support and excellent retention of pupil premium students, helping to drive up achievement in these learners.

Enrichment

There was a 23% increase in students participating in enrichment, with increases of 5% in attendance and 2.3% in retention. Over 185 had signed up for voluntary programmes, equating to 993 volunteering hours. Jennie was collaborating with Business Solutions to increase work experience, and working towards a single record to avoid duplication of employer vetting checks.

The Committee commended the report and Jennie's progress over a short time in post as Head of Department. The Committee also commended the Learner Engagement Officer on her work in engaging students.

The Committee noted the report.

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Gemma Noble, Head of People, joined for item 6 only

6. **HR Policies**

The report was received and Gemma updated the Committee on the changes to the received HR Policies. Each was due for biennial review and, taking each in turn, Gemma confirmed the rationale for the amendments to the previous version.

The Committee agreed to Approve the following:

a) Disciplinary Policy, subject to changes recommended by the Search and Governance Committee

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b) DBS Procedure

c) Probation Procedure

Vote: Unanimous

7. **Teaching and Learning**

7.1 Subcontractor Quality Update

The report, providing an update on each of the College's subcontractors was received and John confirmed that the value of subcontracted provision had reduced from circa £2m, seven years ago to a current value of circa £130k. Whilst the College continued to follow a strategy to minimise the number of subcontractors delivering learning, there was a need to prepare for Government changes where funding would go direct to employers. Therefore it was prudent to engage with a limited number of employers. In order to mitigate risk the College had utilised a number of contingency days from its internal auditor to review subcontractor provision. A revised risk register would be received at the next Audit Committee.

The Committee also considered the risk of larger employers providing their own training, and a potential fall in future recruitment. It was important to maintain quality as a key driver for attracting learners.

The Committee agreed that it was important to maintain strong relationships with employers and agreed to

Note the report.

7.2 Intensive Care Progress

The report was received and taken as read. John confirmed that the Senior Curriculum Group (SCG) had recommended that two additional subjects be included in the Intensive Care process.

The Committee noted the report.

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7.3 Retention, Attendance and Punctuality Update

The report was received and was considered. Although early in the academic year, John confirmed that removing the Student Attendance Monitors had not impacted on attendance. Indeed there was now greater clarity on what constituted attendance and absence. Retention was strong and testament to the professional and purposeful start to the academic year.

The Committee discussed the presentation of data and requested small refinements, with entries flagged when cohorts were small.

The Committee agreed to

Note the report.

8. **Minutes/ reports for information**

The following reports were received and **noted**:

8.1 Safeguarding meeting – 11 December 2015 - draft

8.2 Equality and Diversity and British Values (EDBV) update

8.3 HR Update on Teaching Staff Qualifications

8.4 Internal Inspection Reports – Art and Design

The inspection had taken place from 19th – 21st January 2016. The final report was still in draft but was very positive, with the external inspector rating the faculty as Outstanding.

8.5 E4L minutes

The minutes were received. It was confirmed that, whilst it was still important for the College and Exeter Secondary Schools to work in partnership and to maintain a dialogue, the forum was under review, having achieved its original aims.

8.6 Risk register

To be considered further at the next meeting

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9. **Dates of Next meetings**

Monday 25th April 2016

Monday 6th June 2016