



Croydon
College



COULSDON
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE



Croydon
University
Centre

CROYDON COLLEGE LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday 16 March 2022 at 6.00pm
Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

- Present:** Andy Wilson (Chair)
Jean Cook
Soumick Dey – from 6.30pm
Lucia Guetcherian (Staff Governor, Croydon Campus)
Andreea Ilac (Co-opted Member, HE Student Executive Officer)
- Observer:** Louise Cretton (Co-opted External Member TBA)
- Attendees:** Martin Silverwood, Vice Principal, Education and Quality (Items 1-9 and 14)
Fadia Clarke, Vice Principal, Training, Skills and HE
Alfred Cardona, Head of Learning and Quality (Items 1-9 and 14) – from 6.15pm
- Clerk:** Clare Mitchell, Director of Governance

1.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO) who was attending an open evening at the Coulsdon Campus. Soumick Dey would be joining the meeting from 6.30pm.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Louise Cretton to the meeting as an observer and invited her to contribute to the meeting. Louise would be proposed for appointment as an external Co-opted member of the Croydon College LQC at the March Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Student Governor for the Croydon Campus, Alex Fox, had stepped down. A replacement was being sought.</p> <p>Item 14.i would be undertake immediately following Item 9 so that the VPE&Q and the Head of Learning and Quality, who were both attending external conferences, could then leave the meeting.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes of Meetings</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.</p>
4.	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes not on the Agenda</p> <p>The Committee noted the completed action list. The VPE&Q confirmed that all of the Committee's comments on the SAR had been accepted.</p>

5.

Key Issues for the Committee to Consider

The VPE&Q introduced the paper under the following headings:

Attendance and punctuality

Attendance rates at the Croydon Campus were just under 93%, a 6% increase on the figures reported to the Committee in November 2021. Attendance was higher for adults than 16-19 students. Punctuality was high at 97%.

Attendance rates in the School of English, Maths and Skills and Life were at 80.6% as a result of lower attendance at GCSE English and maths and 16-19 ESOL classes. Generally, attendance was higher for vocational courses than for English and maths GCSE. Heads of School and Curriculum Managers were closely monitoring attendance issues and taking action on any gaps identified between attendance by School at English & maths classes, when compared to attendance at vocational classes.

Looked after children (LACs) and care leavers had been identified as a group with lower overall attendance and this would require specific intervention.

Enrolments and progress against KPIs

The College has been successful in recruiting to their mid-year start courses. As a result, the College was only four students short of its 2021/22 funding target.

Applications were open for the T levels running at the Croydon and Coulsdon Campuses from 2022/23. The T level in Engineering at the Croydon Campus was expected to meet its target of recruiting 20 students. Curriculum planning had been completed for 2022/23 using EMSI data and local market intelligence. The Croydon Campus would be offering a BTEC in e-sports from 2022/23, and would be the first South London College to offer this qualification. The University of Roehampton was offering a degree in e-sports, which would be a progression routes for students completing this qualification.

The Croydon Campus was on target for a Grade 4 ALPs score, which was a significant improvement on the Grade 5/6 achieved in the previous year. The Committee asked whether this improvement extended to vocational courses. The VPE&Q responded that there were a small number of vocational courses that still had low ALPs scores, but vocational provision as a whole was in a much better position.

Work experience (WEX) was an area that required more focus. Opportunities for face-to-face work experience needed to be increased. There were concerns about the performance of the team in finding industrial placements. The College had now involved an external organisation (CER) to try to meet the targets set by the Capacity Development Fund.

Achievement and Progress Measures for English and Maths

Achievement in GCSE English had increased by over 30% between the November 2020 and November 2021 sittings. Achievement in GCSE maths had declined over the same period. The VPE&Q confirmed that the GCSE maths results for November 2021 were lower than the benchmark for similar Colleges. However, the results from the January 2022 mocks showed a better position, which was more in line with benchmark. The tuition fund was being used to support those students with the greatest need prior to the Summer exams.

	<p>The Committee noted that attendance in the School of Building, Engineering and Technical Professions was the lowest of all the Schools at 79%. There had been some staffing issues in the Building team and the Committee asked if the situation was improving. The VPTSHE reported that a Construction Curriculum Team Leader had now been appointed. This School had the highest number of L0 and L1 learners and some of the most vulnerable learners in the College. There was an issue with assignment submission and the Tuition Fund was being used to target support to individual students to support achievement. Practical workshops were well attended but theory classes were less popular with students. The feedback from the recent Ofsted visit to the Skills Boot Camp provision had included positive feedback on many of these teachers but some needed support to make theory classes engaging. It was likely to take 12 months to see significant improvements in this area.</p> <p>The results of the November 2021 QDP survey were very positive for the Croydon Campus with responses in Quartiles A and B. 91% of students were satisfied with the quality of their teaching and learning. 93% of students reported that they felt less safe at the Croydon Campus. Staff on duty rotas at both campuses had been issued with maps and had been engaging with students to identify any areas where students felt safe. Outside the Library on the first floor had been identify as an area where large numbers of students congregated at the Croydon Campus. To address this, additional charging points for phones etc. had been provided inside the library.</p> <p>The Committee congratulated the Executive on the very positive QDP scores for the Croydon Campus.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the key issues identified in the report.</p>
6.	<p>Safeguarding Interim Report 2021/22</p> <p>The VPE&Q introduced the report, which covered the whole College. A dedicated Safeguarding team was in place with staff at both campuses from 9am to 5pm and emergency telephone numbers were available.</p> <p>The November 2021 QDP survey identified that 90% of young people (93% of students at Croydon and 80% at Coulsdon) said they felt safe at College and 87% of students knew who to ask for help (90% at Croydon and 75% at Coulsdon). This was below the benchmark identified in the survey, but compared to this point last year there had been a 14%-point increase at Coulsdon for students knowing who to ask for help.</p> <p>There had been a 43% increase in confidential referrals made to the Safeguarding & Wellbeing Teams when compared to the same point last year: 408 at Croydon and 221 at Coulsdon, of which the majority were for Mental Health & Wellbeing concerns. This reflected the challenges students were facing in terms of the return to campus and sitting formal examinations.</p> <p>1190 students were receiving financial support to access their learning (671 at Croydon and 237 at Coulsdon). Retention of students in receipt of financial support was 97%. Fewer students were claiming free school meals than expected so the College was publicising their availability.</p> <p>Five applications for enrolment had been declined by Safeguarding Panels. There had been two referrals to the LADO; both had resulted in no further action.</p>

	<p>New safeguarding recording software was now in place (CPOMS), which provided a robust and effective centralised system for tracking and monitoring safeguarding incidents and associated follow up actions. It also enabled more granular reporting.</p> <p>The Lead Governor for Safeguarding reported that she met termly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, with HR, to review the Single Central Record and attended Safeguarding Monitoring Meetings and that the College had robust safeguarding arrangements in place.</p> <p>The Committee commented on the increase in mental health referrals and asked whether the College’s links with the South West London NHS Mental Health Trailblazer project was a result of this or whether the timing was coincidental. The VPE&Q explained that the College had already been working with the Trailblazer project but the supported offered through the project had been increased this year in response to the increase in referrals. Member of the Safeguarding Team had also received training in recognising and providing support to students with mental health issues. Other external agencies such as Off the Record were also invited into the College to support students.</p> <p>The Committee asked whether any links had been identified between mental health referrals and areas with lower attendance. The VPE&Q indicated that there was some evidence of this at a course level e.g. in Access to Science where a number of students had struggled with the intensity of the programme and needed additional support to re-engage and catch up. The HE Student Executive Officer indicated that she was not aware of any safeguarding concerns from an HE perspective.</p> <p>The Committee <u>discussed</u> the interim safeguarding report for 2021/22.</p>
7.	<p>Staff Survey Action Plan</p> <p>The VPE&Q introduced the action plan that had been developed to address the key issues raised in the Staff Survey. The action plan had been developed with input from staff focus groups, the staff forum, the BEN network and unions. The action plan covered seven areas as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication & Involvement 2. Staff Development 3. Collaboration 4. Workload & Wellbeing 5. Change Management 6. Organisation & Planning 7. FREDIE (Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Engagement) <p>Many of these actions were already in place, such as moving to in-person staff meetings, peer-to-peer staff awards, and building HR people planning into the academic planning process.</p> <p>The Committee commented that given the low level of staff morale across the FE sector, responses in most areas were reasonably positive. However, there were a few areas where the responses of College staff were as much as 11% below benchmark e.g. development and communication and involvement. The Committee’s view was that current action plan was very wide ranging and the actions should be targeted at addressing the areas that were most significantly below benchmark.</p>

	<p>The VPE&Q reported that he met regularly with the Head of HR to review progress against the relevant areas of the action plan. The DoG explained that the HR fell within the remit of the Finance and Resources Committee, and that this Committee would be monitoring progress against the action plan.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the staff survey action plan.</p>
8.	<p>Student Governor's Report</p> <p>The Chair noted that the role of Student Governor for the Croydon Campus was currently vacant and asked if the HE Student Executive Officer had any comments. The HE Student Executive Officer welcomed the introduction of HE level apprenticeships. She also indicated that there were some issues with attendance with the move to face to face teaching, as some HE students had become very used to learning online. The VPTSHE noted that attendance rates for HE provision were between 86% and 87% overall, so this was not a widespread issue.</p>
9.	<p>Operational and Quality Improvement Plan (OQIP) 2021/22</p> <p>The Committee noted the update on progress against the OQIP for 2021/22 for Strategic Objectives 1, 3 and 4.2.</p>
10.	<p>Higher Education (HE)</p> <p>i <u>Notes from HE Group meeting on 1 March 2022</u></p> <p>The Committee noted the notes of this meeting. The VPTSHE reported that the Office for Students (OfS) had lifted the enhanced monitoring conditions imposed on the College's HE provision in December 2019 and that the College had been awarded provisional TEF. This was a recognition of the improvements in the College's HE provision.</p> <p>ii <u>Update on the OfS B3B Action Plan and HE Performance</u></p> <p>The Committee noted the update and the progress that had been made against the B3B action plan, particularly in the areas of continuation and outcomes for HE students. Progression, measured by the number of HE students progressing into managerial jobs or postgraduate study, was just below benchmark and actions were in place to improve this further by the end of the academic year.</p> <p>In terms of National Student Survey results, the College was in the top 10% of HE providers nationally.</p> <p>iii <u>OfS Consultation on Quality and Standards – Implications</u></p> <p>The VPTSHE reported that the OfS was consulting on changes to the B conditions (Quality and Standards) of registration. Another consultation was taking place alongside this one, on constructing student outcome and experience indicators for use in OfS regulation, and on the future of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).</p> <p>The OfS was proposing that sector benchmarking would be used to inform the assessments of a higher education provider's performance in respect of the student outcomes and experiences it delivered. The benchmarking process,</p>

	<p>would, to an extent, take into account the mix of students at the provider or the provision being offered.</p> <p>The consultation opened on 20 January 2022 and ended on 17 March 2022. The College would be responding through the AoC. A summary of responses to the consultation would be published in Summer 2022.</p> <p>The report summarised the implications of the proposed changes for Croydon College as a small provider of HE courses. The OfS would use four years' data for the period 2017/18 to 2020/21 when assessing providers' performance against the proposed thresholds. For the College, this data would include some HE courses that had either closed or were being taught out. Full time first degrees provided by the College did not yet meet the continuation and completion thresholds proposed by the OfS and there was a risk that HE provision might be subject to further restrictive conditions.</p> <p>The VPTSHE informed the Committee that providing the level of improvement achieved last year continued, then the College's HE provision should meet the OfS proposed thresholds in one year and exceed them in two years.</p> <p>The Committee noted the implications of the proposed consultations and asked the VPTSHE to report back to the Committee with further information at its next meeting.</p> <p>Action: VPTSHE to report back to the Committee with further information on the outcome of the OfS consultation on Quality and Standards</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Apprenticeships</p> <p>i <u>Apprenticeship Strategy</u></p> <p>The VPTSHE presented the Apprenticeship Strategy, which had first been developed in May 2021 to inform the review of the apprenticeship offer for 2021/22. This review had been based on the profile of employers engaging with the College, local labour market information (LMI) - industries, occupations, and sector skills profile and the level of skills gap in the borough.</p> <p>The majority of the College's apprentices came from larger STEM employers. This review had resulted in an increased focus on engaging SMEs, particularly in the professional market where there were significant vacancies and skills shortages at Level 4 and above. The apprenticeship department was small for the size of the College and need to grow. 2021/22 was the first year that the department was meeting its income target.</p> <p>The Committee asked how the College intended to engage with individual SMEs to increase the number of apprentices. This could be time consuming, as each SME was only likely to want to train one or two apprentices. The VPTSHE explained that the College was setting up sector specific forums for SMEs to encourage collaboration and would offer to recruit apprentices on behalf of SMEs. The College would also use its existing links with SMEs through HE provision and work experience and the Council's links with SMEs.</p> <p>The Observer queried why the H&SC apprenticeship provision, which was re-opening, had been closed. The VPTSHE explained that the College had struggled with completion rates previously as apprentices had left without reaching the required achievement levels in English and maths. To address this, a new delivery</p>

model was being introduced; H&SC apprentices would need to complete eight weeks of maths and English tuition and reach the required level before being eligible to start their apprenticeship. The VPTSHE noted that Croydon Health Services NHS Trust had been very supportive of the College's apprenticeship provision and of the nursing degree. The main area where the NHS Trust might be able to assist was in finding placements.

The Committee noted that the student numbers projected for each framework were small and asked whether these numbers were economically viable. The VPTSHE clarified that numbers included in the paper were for new starters and there would also be students continuing onto the second year of their apprenticeship. A flexible delivery model had been developed so that smaller classes could be run, provided the contribution to central costs did not drop below 35%.

There were two main risks relating to the quality of apprenticeships. The first related to Strategic Risk 1.2 *"Outcomes for all main student groups are above national average and positive value added and / or distance travelled is achieved"*. Timely accreditation of apprentices was below the national minimum level performance and this was a key risk for the apprenticeship department. The VPTSHE reported that she was working closely with the Director of MIS to ensure that both MIS team and apprenticeship management team had a good understanding of how apprentices were entered for their end point assessment (EPA) and how qualification could be claimed in a timely manner. Assessors' contracts had been amended to incorporate a requirement for timely achievement rates and progress was monitored at monthly review meetings.

The second main risk to the apprenticeship department was the quality of the apprentices' overall learning experience. Despite the high level of achievement, attendance rates and level of employers and apprentices' satisfaction with the quality of the training, the deep dive review conducted by the Head of Quality highlighted some concerns related to the learning experience and apprentices' grasp of the wider curriculum themes. To overcome this, the VPTSHE had appointed a Head of School with a background in quality improvement to work closely with the team on quality improvement strategy. A detailed QIP for the apprenticeship department was already in place and a second deep dive was planned for April to review the impact of QIP.

The Committee noted that the Apprenticeship Strategy had been reviewed at the Finance and Resources Committee but, as it was more in the nature of a five year plan, was not on the agenda for approval at the Board meeting on 30 March 2022.

ii Apprenticeships – Update on Progress, Curriculum and Quality

The VPTSHE reported that overall achievement for apprenticeships was 10/11% above the national average. However, timely achievement had been significantly impacted by the pandemic and required improvement. Attendance rates were generally good but attendance at L2 maths and English sessions was lower for STEM apprentices. Action had been taken, including bringing this to the attention of individual employers, to ensure that attendance at maths and English classes was prioritised. In the recent QDP survey both the professional and STEM apprenticeship areas were received responses in Quartile A.

Engagement with existing employers was strong and an employer survey was being launched. An internal deep dive had identified a number of actions that needed to be prioritised ahead of Ofsted inspection of this area in order to ensure the department achieved a "good" rating.

	The Committee noted the paper and the evidence of improvement in some areas.
12.	<p>End of Year 2020/21 Report – AEB Funding, including Subcontracted Provision</p> <p>The VPTSHE introduced this report, which covered ESFA funded adult education provided to students outside London via distance learning. These courses were provided either by the College direct or by its subcontractor. The level of subcontracted provision would be reducing in line with ESFA requirements. The outcomes of the quality assurance of both the in house and subcontracted delivery were positive.</p> <p>The Committee noted the report.</p>
13.	<p>Policies</p> <p>There were no policies due for consideration at this meeting.</p>
14.	<p>Committee Risk Register – Strategic Risks 1, 3 and 4.2</p> <p>The Committee noted that there was significant overlap between this and the OQIP at item 9.</p> <p>There were as an error in the scoring for SR 3.3 and the version of Risk 4.2, which was included in the papers for this meeting, had not been updated. The correct version of risk 4.2 had been reviewed by the Finance and Resources Committee on 2 March 2022.</p> <p>It was agreed that the risk deep dive for the June meeting of this Committee would cover preparation for the delivery of T levels in 2022/23, industrial placements and WEX issues.</p> <p>Action: VPE&Q/VPTSHE – risk deep dive for the June 2022 meeting to focus on preparation for the delivery of T levels in 2022/23, industrial placements and WEX issues at both campuses</p> <p>The deep dive on apprenticeship quality risks was covered under Item 11.i.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the updates to the relevant Strategic Risks and agreed to recommend them to the Audit Committee for consideration.</p>
15.	<p>Post Meeting Evaluation</p> <p>The Committee commented that the meeting had been well chaired and thanked the Executive for their contribution. Louise Cretton thanked the Committee for making her feel welcome.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that its performance was good.</p>
16.	<p>Dates of Future meetings</p> <p>The Committee noted the dates as follows:</p> <p>Wednesday 29 June 2022</p>

	<p>It was agreed that this meeting would take place online via Teams and the November 2022 meeting would take place face to face at the Croydon campus.</p> <p>Action: DoG to arrange for the June 2022 Croydon LQC meeting to take place online and the November 2022 meeting to take place face to face at the Croydon Campus</p>
17.	<p>Other Business</p> <p>There were no items of other business.</p>

Approved as an accurate record by the Croydon College Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 29 June 2022

*Clare Mitchell
Director of Governance*