

**LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday 1 May 2024 at 6.00pm**  
**Board Room, Coulsdon Campus**

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**MINUTES**

<b>Present:</b>	Andy Wilson (Chair) Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO) Louise Cretton Ian Valvona Martin Bentham Yvonne White (Staff Governor, Coulsdon) Belen Villacis Fernandez (Student Governor, Coulsdon) Peter Flew (Co-opted member)
<b>Attendees:</b>	Martin Silverwood, Principal, Coulsdon Sixth Form College Rob Bates, Vice-Principal, Young People and High Needs Natalie Garner, Vice-Principal Adults, Vocational and Skills
<b>Observers:</b>	Edwin Dhauke, Senior Manager, South London, Kent and Sussex Place Based Team
<b>Clerk:</b>	Clare Mitchell, Director of Governance

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Kevin Oakhill (Co-opted member), Terrance James (Staff Governor, Croydon) and Nezia de Roche (Student Governor, Croydon).</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>As Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor, Academic Portfolio Development and Dean of the School of Education, University of Roehampton, Peter Flew declared an interest in relation to HE provision at Croydon College.</p> <p>HE was not one of the agenda items for this meeting.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meetings</b></p> <p>i        Minutes of the Coulsdon Campus LQC Meeting held on 31 January 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 31 January 2024 were <b>agreed</b> as a correct record.</p> <p>ii        Minutes of the Croydon College LQC Meeting held on 13 March 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 13 March 2024 were <b>agreed</b> as a correct record subject to an amendment to the final sentence of the HE item so that it read as follows:</p> <p><i>The Committee <b>discussed</b> the update on HE provision and <b>noted</b> the OfS' provisional decision to impose a new specific condition of registration in the form</i></p>

	<p><i>of a 'Notice to improve student outcomes', which was a less rigorous specific condition than that in place previously.</i></p> <p><b>Action: DoG to amended the minutes of the Croydon College LQC meeting on 13 March 2024</b></p>
4.	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes not on the Agenda</b></p> <p>The Committee <b><u>noted</u></b> the updated action list.</p>
5.	<p><b>Key Issues Report</b></p> <p>The P&amp;CEO presented the report. The College was over contract on its 16-18 provision by 111 students. Funding for these students would be included in the 2024/25 funding grant. The College was over budget on its GLA adult skills provision. The College had been awarded £306,911 as in year growth but if there continued to be significant demand for in-year starts for ESOL, for both 16-18 provision and adults, it would not be possible to meet this demand without additional funding.</p> <p>The attendance strategy was being reviewed for 2024/25. Current attendance for 16-18s overall was 84% against an 83% target. Attendance figures were lower at the Coulsdon Campus. Upper sixth students at the Coulsdon Campus would not be included in the attendance figures once their exams had begun.</p> <p>Student retention was a concern in some areas. Achievement targets in BETP were at risk because of poor retention. Actions were in place to support as many students as possible to achieve. Additional support was being provided to a number of teachers in this area and predicted achievement would be closely scrutinised. BETP was also an area where it was hard to fill teaching vacancies and some of the staff recruited needed to be upskilled. ESOL was also an area where retention was also a concern. However this was less of a risk as achievement was usually strong in this subject.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair expressed concern that attendance was falling at the Coulsdon Campus as attendance was a key part of Ofsted's judgement on behaviour and attitude and asked what actions were being taken to tackle this. The P&amp;CEO explained that it was difficult to change patterns of attendance this late on in the year. Monitoring attendance was less straightforward at the Coulsdon Campus than at the Croydon Campus as students studied a range of subjects and had more than one tutor.</p> <p>The CP reported that new systems to be introduced in 2024/25 would improve staff accountability for students' attendance. Tutorials would also be rescheduled so that they did not take place at the start/end of the day. There were also plans to link bursaries to attendance at English and maths sessions.</p> <p>Enrichment activities would be timetabled to encourage students to remain on campus. However a recent survey had shown that 75% of students across both campuses had caring responsibilities and or jobs, which limited their opportunities to engage with enrichment. The Executive would ask more granular questions on students' caring and work responsibilities outside College in the next QDP survey. The results would be reported to the Summer Board meeting and circulated to LQC members once they were available.</p>

**Action: Executive to ask more granular questions on students' caring and work responsibilities outside College in the next QDP survey**

**Action: P&CEO/DoG - QDP results to be reported to the Summer Board meeting and circulated to LQC members once they were available.**

The number of agency and interim staff had reduced now that permanent staff had been recruited to a number of vocational areas. This would improve staff accountability for addressing student attendance. The CP was asked to provide data on the percentage of students who were not attending because they were unwell against the percentage of students who were not attending for other reasons. The CP noted that there was a link between poor attendance and poor teaching. This needed to be addressed if necessary through performance improvement plans.

**Action: CP to provide data on the percentage of students who were not attending because they were unwell against the percentage of students who were not attending for other reasons**

The Committee asked for attendance reporting in 2024/25 to include the percentage of students attending fewer than 70% - 80% of lessons. Attendance would be a key focus for the LQC in 2024/25. The Committee emphasised the importance of a clear narrative on attendance for Ofsted.

**Action: Executive to provide more granular data on attendance to the LQC in 2024/25**

The Committee asked if lower attendance at the Coulsdon Campus would impact on achievement. The CP reported that poorer attendance mostly related to tutorials and English and maths sessions. Attendance at core subject sessions was in the region of 85% - 90%. Student performance at mock examinations had remained high and he expected that predicted outcomes would be achieved.

The Vice-Chair emphasised the importance of having permanent staff in post to drive improvements. The P&CEO reported that the quality team would have permanent team of staff in post from 21 May 2024. Two Heads of Learning posts remained vacant at the Coulsdon Campus. Recruitment was underway but it was unlikely that permanent staff would be in place before the start of 2024/25.

The Committee asked for an update on students' perceptions of safety. The P&CEO reported that the QDP data from November 2023 had shown that students felt safe on both campuses. However, students felt less safe outside the College, particularly at the Croydon Campus. There had been further violent incidents close to the Croydon Campus. No students had been involved. The Chair of the Board and the P&CEO were meeting with the Council and would be emphasising the need for provision of a secure area for students at the rear of the Croydon Campus. They were also due to meet the local police lead and would ask for further assistance to address security issues. Classroom scans were taking place, which improved students' perceptions of safety. As part of the development of the new strategic plan, discussions were taking place about the College taking part in outreach activities to address some of the security issues in the external environment.

The Committee emphasised the need for communication with students to explain the benefits of attending tutorials and suggested that tutorials could be more interactive with students leading tutorials with facilitation from the teacher.

	<p>The Committee <b><u>discussed</u></b> the report.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Single Improvement Plan (SIP)/ Improvement Plan (IP) Update</b></p> <p>The P&amp;CEO explained that the version of the SIP and IP provided as part of the papers had been updated for the April case conference with the DfE. There was little change in the RAG ratings of the SIP priorities but more of the underlying actions in the IP had been completed. SIP priorities could only be closed by the FEC and this would not happen until progress had been assessed at the next stocktake visit in June.</p> <p>The P&amp;CEO explained that the College did not receive formal feedback from case conferences but the Chair of the Board reported that the latest discussions had been more supportive of the College.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair expressed concern that the information provided did not provide assurance to Governors that sufficient progress was being made. The number of priorities rated amber was concerning. The P&amp;CEO reported that the FEC expected priorities to be rated as amber until all the underlying actions had been completed. An amber rating did not mean that the College was not making progress.</p> <p>The SIP priorities which were particularly of concern related to meeting the attendance target for 16-18 year olds, which had been discussed earlier and employer engagement which was too variable across the College. Some of the improvements would need to be embedded in 2024/25 e.g. changes to the tutorial framework at the Coulsdon Campus.</p> <p>ED commented that from the DfE's position it was positive to see Governors challenging progress against the SIP. The RAG rating of the SIP priorities should be linked to the completion of the underpinning actions set out in the IP.</p> <p>The Committee <b><u>discussed</u></b> the update on the SIP and the IP.</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>National Achievement Rates 2022/23</b></p> <p>The P&amp;CEO reported that national achievement rate tables had been published on achievement in 2022/23 for post 16 provision and apprenticeships for the first time since the pandemic. The data provided was for Colleges in the vicinity of Croydon College and related to the 16-18 age group only as study programmes were similar across Colleges.</p> <p>There were a number of factors that affected achievement rates across Colleges. Some College achievement rates were improved considerably by the inclusion of a large number of entry and level 1 Awards and/or non-regulated provision. The proportion of students studying English and maths and individual College approaches to whether students studied GCSE or Functional Skills impacted significantly on achievement. A significant number of students at Croydon College studied Functional Skills, which was the most appropriate decision for the individual student, but pulled down achievement rates compared to students studying for GCSEs.</p> <p>The measures taken by other Colleges to improve achievement rates were entirely within the funding regulations but were not used by Croydon College.</p>

	<p>The Chair emphasised the importance of enrolling students on the correct course in 2024/25 and managing behaviour and attitudes effectively from the start of the year to improve both retention and attendance. The P&amp;CEO reported that overall retention was expected to be between 91% and 92% for 2023/24.</p> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the report.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Student Governor’s Report</b></p> <p>The Student Governor for the Coulsdon Campus reported that she had been focusing on her examinations so had had less time to engage with other students. However, she had nothing negative to report. Students had reported very positively on the university fair. She was very aware that attendance at tutorials was a significant issue. She hoped that next academic year the Student Governor and the Student Executive would have closer links with learning areas so that more specific feedback could be provided. Changing the timetabling of tutorials so that students were not expected to come in for a tutorial session that was not linked to either their subject lessons or enrichment activities should improve attendance. She also proposed that there should be rewards for students in the highest attending areas e.g. trips, which were popular with students.</p> <p>The Student Governor offered to provide support and mentoring to the 2024/25 Student Governor at the start of their first term.</p> <p>The Committee thanked the Student Governor for her valuable contribution during the year and wished her well in the future.</p> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the report.</p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Deep Dive – Student Context at the Coulsdon Campus</b></p> <p>The CP introduced the report. The profile of students at the Coulsdon campus was not typical for a sixth form college. A high proportion of students studied vocational qualifications and there was a higher than usual cohort studying L2 qualifications. Students’ average GCSE scores were much lower than at most sixth form colleges and fewer students were studying only A Levels.</p> <p>The number of high needs students was relatively low with the majority of high needs students having mental health difficulties.</p> <p>Students travelled an average of 5-6 miles to attend College and most of the students were geographically closer to the Croydon Campus. Students were keen to study in a new area and increase their independence. The Committee asked if there was any correlation between distance travelled and attendance. The CP stated that there did appear to be a correlation between the two.</p> <p>The Committee asked how this very useful data would be used. The CP pointed out that the report set out a number of actions that the Executive would be undertaking in response to this data. One of these related to rebalancing the number of L2/L3 students with an increasing emphasis on recruiting L3 students. Many L2 students could be better supported at the Croydon Campus. This data had also been fed into the development of the new strategic plan. The Committee noted that there was a tension between the differences between the offerings of the two campuses and the need for increase harmonisation. This needed to be addressed through the new strategic plan and any accompanying marketing strategy.</p>

	<p>The Committee noted that part of the attraction of the Coulsdon Campus was that it would accept students onto L3 courses with lower GCSE scores than many school sixth forms and L3 students could study both A level and more vocational qualifications. L3 courses at Croydon College had a clear vocational aim and the two campuses were complementary to one another.</p> <p>The Committee emphasised the need for a one College – two campuses approach, with Coulsdon campus students understanding what they gained from being part of Croydon College e.g. cross campus student facing services such as safeguarding and student experience. There needed to be increased collaboration between the two campuses to spread good practice in teaching and learning.</p> <p>The Committee asked for a report on the student context at the Croydon Campus at its next meeting. Discussions on the student context at both campuses would continue into 2024/25 when the results of the summer examinations would be known.</p> <p><b>Action: Exec to bring a report on the student context for 16-18 year old students at the Croydon Campus to the next meeting</b></p> <p><b>Action: Exec to bring context data on adult students at the Croydon Campus to a future meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Exec/DoG discussions on the student context to continue into 2024/25 when the results of the summer examinations would be known</b></p> <p>The Chair noted that students at the Coulsdon campus were prepared to travel to access an offer that they could not get elsewhere and emphasised the need for them to receive as much support as possible in order to achieve their qualifications.</p> <p>The Committee <b><u>discussed</u></b> the report.</p>
10.	<p><b>Post Meeting Evaluation</b></p> <p>Members noted that it had been helpful to have a shorter agenda and more time for discussion. The Chair asked for any further comments to be sent to him prior to the next meeting.</p>
11.	<p><b>Dates of Future LQC Meetings</b></p> <p>Wednesday 19 June 2024 6pm to 8pm <b>in person – Croydon Campus</b></p>
12.	<p><b>Other business</b></p> <p>The Vice-Chair asked whether the College had considered its response to the Cass Report on gender identity. The P&amp;CEO reported that the DfE had issued specific guidance on this issue to schools and colleges prior to the Cass Report. The DfE’s guidance had been reviewed by the College. The DfE would need to decide whether to revise its guidance in the light of the Cass report.</p>

*Approved as an accurate record by the Learning and Quality Committee at its meeting on 19 June 2024*

*Clare Mitchell  
Director of Governance*