

Minutes of the Curriculum and Quality committee held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020

Present: Emma Jarman (Chair)  
Pradeep Bhardwaj, Simon Cove, Carole Kitching, Monica Lawson,  
Charlotte Mannion, David Panes

With: Adam Fahey, Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality  
Lynne Plested, Vice Principal Higher Education and Curriculum  
Amanda Spanswick, Assistant Principal EMLSH (mins 15-19 only)  
Tracy Scaife, Head of Governance

15. Apologies for absence – none received.

16. Disclosures of Interest – none received.

17. Minutes of the last meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and matters arising – minutes agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising raised as follows:

(a) Minute 5 Results – noted that progression data is still being collated but will be presented to the next meeting.

With regard to quality of partner provision it was noted that partnership matters will be reported in detail to the Business Development, Employer Engagement and Recruitment committee but the Curriculum and Quality committee will also have an interest in their offer and performance.

(b) Minute 9 Curriculum development – noted that the previous issues with livestreaming have largely been resolved. The engagement of learners through livestreaming is followed up with students and assessed when they are in class.

**ACTIONS:** AF/LP to present progression data for both campuses to next meeting 02.03.2020.

18. Risk Management update – Risk Registers received and noted.

With regard to risks for the Institute of Technology (IoT) it was suggested that staffing should be included. The Principal advised that the IoT Risk Register is undergoing a major review and will be presented to the IoT Sub-Group and Resources, Integration and Change committee in January 2021. The curriculum offer for the IoT will not be in competition with the college as it is part of the college and not a separate company and will be fully integrated. We need to ensure there is a pipeline of learners progressing from the college to the IoT.

19. Presentation by Amanda Spanswick, Assistant Principal ELMSH (English, Languages, Maths, Science and Humanities) – received and noted.

It was further noted that the recruitment issues referred to in the presentation relate to both students and staff. With regard to student recruitment the Assistant Principal ELMSH advised that the college needs to use its reputation to push itself in the marketplace and the advantage over

schools it has for pathways to employment. Future Talent Forums will also be a big feature of ELMSH with all areas taking part.

On behalf of the committee, the Chair thanked the Assistant Principal ELMSH for attending the meeting and for the detailed presentation.

***ACTION:*** TS to circulate AS presentation to committee.

#### 20. Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The Principal advised the meeting that the SARs for both North Star and Queens Drive have not yet been through a validation process and are therefore not being presented to the committee. A validation exercise with an external consultant will be held in mid-January. Up to two members of the committee were invited to join the validation and asked to inform the Head of Governance if they would like to be involved. The Principal will advise the committee when the SAR is available for them.

The QIP covers both the North Star and Queens Drive campuses. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality advised that it is a fluid document, constantly being updated. English and Maths at North Star needs improving to bring it in line with Queens Drive. There have been some significant improvements in achievement at North Star in some groups but overall improvement is required. Attendance also needs improving. The trend of attendance for Maths and English at North Star has been steadily improving but there is still more to be done. It was noted that the Plan refers to a 10% improvement in Maths and English and it was asked if this was realistic. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality advised that this is the amount of improvement required to bring North Star in line with Queens Drive. Given ongoing commitment and hard work he does think that the targets are achievable.

Issues have arisen relating to work experience with it being extremely difficult to secure due to the current Covid-19 pandemic. It is hoped that the targets for funding will be relaxed. The Vice-Principal HE and Curriculum advised the meeting that work experience at North Star has been very weak in the past. NS have not previously counted work experience in Study Programme hours, and some programmes are teaching significantly above 540 funded hours which will need to be resolved.

Apprenticeships have not been included in the QIP as the Apprenticeships SAR has not yet been validated. Once the validation has taken place apprenticeships will be included.

Reference was made to online delivery and the success of it, particularly student engagement. The committee felt that it would be good to get a sense of the student experience of online learning.

***ACTION:*** TS to ask committee members for interest in joining SAR validation process; CK to advise committee when SAR will be available to them.

#### 21 Higher Education (HE) update – report by Vice-Principal HE and Curriculum received and noted.

Concerns were raised regarding the Office for Students (OfS) having not yet approved the items they required for merger and the Vice-Principal advised that the risk is small. The curriculum for the IoT is being put together with the anchor partners. The IoT Sub-Group of the Resources, Integration and Change committee is monitoring all areas of the IoT but relevant items could be brought to the Curriculum and Quality committee if desired.

22. HE Performance Report – report by Vice Principal HE and Curriculum received and noted.

The year-on-year fall in recruitment is a concern and there could be many reasons for this. There is work to be done on resources and also in managing the expectations of students. The college needs to be smarter and fully utilise the resources that it does have. Internal progression also needs to be improved. Swindon currently has the lowest rate in the country for progression to HE but the highest for progression to employment. The narrative of HE in Swindon needs changing but it is a very difficult culture to change.

23. Equality and Diversity Annual Report – received and noted.

Some areas of the report will be included within the QIP.

24. Enrichment update – report by Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality received and noted.

The meeting were advised that more work is to be done on enrichment and a more analytical report will be presented to the next meeting, to include a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the programme and the strategy going forward.

***ACTION:*** AF to present further report on enrichment to meeting 02.03.2021

25. Teaching, Learning and Development Strategy – the Deputy Principal advised that work on the teaching, learning and development strategy needs to align with the overall college strategy and will be presented to a future meeting of the committee.

***ACTION:*** AF to present teaching, learning and development strategy to meeting later in the academic year.

26 Professional development update – report by Human Resources received and noted.

With regard to direct study days it was suggested that the title of the course ‘dealing with difficult parents’ should be renamed to better reflect the theme. Concerns were raised that there did not appear to be any support for staff or students relating to emotional resilience. The meeting were advised that this is constantly available through various services and the Principal will ask the Director of HR to provide a note on what is being put in place for staff. The college is recruiting a Mental Health and Well-being Manager to cover both campuses.

Some continuing professional development (cpd) is mandatory, for example safeguarding and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

***ACTION:*** CK to ask TH to provide note for committee on staff well-being training at the college.

27. Outcomes – report by Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality received and noted.

It was further noted that achievement has increased in most areas but there is still room for improvement. Reference was made to the high proportion of partners and whether there was any risk of losing them in the future. The Principal advised that partnerships featured heavily in the reporting pre-merger. The college does have a high number of partners for adults but the college has recently consolidated the number of partners it works with to minimise any risk. The college

also has a dedicated Head of Partnerships. Apprenticeships through partners are being withdrawn with very few apprentices now due to historic poor performance.

The Chair asked if future reports could show college data compared to national data.

***ACTION:*** *AF, LP to show college data against national in future reports.*

28. Curriculum Reporting Framework – item raised by the Chair.

The Chair asked for the Principal, the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality, the Vice Principal HE and Curriculum and the Head of Governance to work together to build on a reporting framework for the committee and present this to the next meeting. The framework should include associated key performance indicators (KPIs) and a timeline showing when reporting will be made against the KPIs. It is felt that the information will be useful for the committee and the senior team. The Principal asked the committee to acknowledge that all of the information requested will not be available to begin with. She added that integrated systems are needed and that there are currently significant system projects ongoing and reporting will improve.

***ACTION:*** *CK, AF, LP, TS to build reporting framework as requested.*

29. Curriculum Strategy – item raised by the Chair.

The Chair requested an early curriculum strategy discussion paper and/or presentation to be presented to the next meeting of the committee which will feed in to the overall college strategy. Following on from the receipt of that report the committee might consider setting up a small sub-group to focus on this area. The Principal advised that there are strategies that the college has to adhere to and these will also be fed in.

***ACTION:*** *AF to provide presentation and/or discussion paper to meeting 02.03.2021 re. curriculum strategy proposal.*

30. Any other business – raised as follows:

(a) Presentation by Assistant Principal ELMISH – the Vice-Chair of the committee stated that he thought that the presentation earlier in the meeting was brilliant. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality advised that the template used would be used for all future presentations.

31. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 at 4.00pm.