



**Date:** 11 April 2016  
**Venue:** Board Room, City Campus

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Corporation  
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**Present:** Seb Schmoller - Vice Chair (Chair of the meeting)  
Jay Bhayani  
Paul Corcoran  
Edward Highfield  
Pete Norton  
Amy Smith  
John Timms  
Anne Wilson

**In attendance:** Peter Harrison, Assistant Principal Planning and Curriculum  
Enhancement, for agenda item 4.1  
Heather Smith, Executive Director and College Principal  
Sharon Smith, Assistant College Principal  
James Smythe - Deputy College Principal  
Darren Tidmarsh - Executive Director HR and SRIS  
Val Struggles - Clerk to the Governing Body

**Action**

**16/2/1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from James Bangert and Chris Linacre.

**16/2/2 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January and updated action record**

1) Minutes

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2) Matters Arising not included on the agenda

In relation to minute 16/1/11 the Committee was informed that the over-arching report on student survey outcomes will be presented to the next meeting.

**Head of  
Service,  
Quality Audits  
& Standards**

3) Action Plan

The action plan was noted and an updated version will be circulated for the next meeting.

**Clerk**

**16/2/3 Declarations of Interest**

Seb Schmoller declared a potential interest in agenda item 5.2 in view of his position as director of an on-line course development project for Maths.

## Peter Harrison attended for the following item

### 16/2/4 Matters Arising

#### 1 Minute 16/1/12: Curriculum Planning 2016/17

The Committee received a tabled summary of work in progress relating to next year's curriculum planning, which will underpin the preparation of the draft budget to be presented to the Finance, Employment and General Purposes Committee on 25 April 2016. The key issues drawn to members' attention included:

- i) The desired outcomes from the planning process, including maximising opportunities for growth and diversifying income; efficient utilisation of resources; supporting quality improvements
- ii) The constraints associated with core EFA and SFA funding allocations which have been reduced overall compared with the current year. In particular the changes in the SFA funding methodology will make the achievement of the allocation more challenging due to a number of factors and reflects the Government policy to increase apprenticeships.
- iii) The funding allocation for apprenticeships was more than forecast to be achieved in the current year. Achieving growth in the number of apprentice vacancies with employers, but the challenge will continue to be matching good quality candidates wishing to study at the appropriate level with the vacancies.
- iv) The overall planning assumption is that the level of funding and size of provision will remain the same as in the current year but that there will be significant shifts within some programme areas.

During discussion the following matters were raised for further information or clarity.

- i) It was confirmed that in the period between prospective students applying and then enrolling, a more intensive and systematic approach has been adopted to maintain active engagement, thereby ensuring that as big as possible a proportion of applicants enrol
- ii) In relation to apprenticeships, the College seeks to achieve a balance in terms of working with employers, both the significant number of SMEs in the region in addition to the larger organisations. This in the setting that there is usually greater return on effort from working with larger employers, and that staff capacity (skills and knowledge) has to be taken into account. The potential to utilise more fully Governors' connections in the wider community and their knowledge / contacts was recognised, particularly in helping to facilitate the College's initiative to establish Employers' Forums.

16/2/5 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) / Post Inspection Action Plan 2015/16 (PIAP)

Heather Smith introduced the report. She highlighted the following issues for Members:

- i) The high level, over-arching PIAP, prepared in the format advised by the Ofsted consultant, was supplemented by fourteen underpinning action plans (SAPs) which are designed to support for the main improvements identified in the Ofsted Report following the visit in January. One of these covered work experience (SAP12) which the Committee had identified previously as a matter for inclusion on agendas as a standing item. The action plan for English and Maths (SAP 5) will be discussed as a separate agenda item (Minute 16/2/6 refers).
- ii) The level of detail contained within the overarching PIAP, 14 SAPs and the Outcomes Scorecard (targets sheet) was intended to provide the Committee with the necessary assurances that the College is acting on the Ofsted Report. The level of detail provided for this meeting will not be replicated at future meetings, however the over-arching PIAP will provide a tool for the Committee to monitor progress against action and targets.
- iii) The PIAP summarised Ofsted's key findings, a strategic overview of each of the areas for development with the indicative content for the associated SAP, the improvement targets and responsible manager. In relation to Leadership and Management and the effective use of data to evaluate quality, a specific action was the identification and provision of appropriate data to enable Governors to challenge the executive to bring about the necessary improvements in both success rates and teaching, learning and assessment (TLA).
- iv) A number of working groups, with membership including a wide range of staff (practitioners and business support) have been established. In addition, students will be involved in the process through consultation and group membership.
- v) The HMI's first 'support and challenge' visit has been arranged for 14 April during which checks will be made on the appropriateness of the PIAP; the degree of urgency allocated to the actions; an assessment of the level of progress to date and the identification of issues/actions to prioritise. Members requested that at this meeting assurance is obtained and subsequently confirmed to them that the PIAP includes all the issues identified by Ofsted.
- vi) In the interim since Ofsted's visit contact has been made with other peer Colleges, and those who have improved their Ofsted grade, to share information and examples of good practice based on their experience.
- vii) The interplay between the PIAP and the outcomes of the parallel but longer term "Learning Together Review".

College Principal

There was a thorough discussion of the documents, during which the following issues were raised:

- i) To help Governors fulfil their role of monitoring and providing supportive challenge, there was an undertaking to accelerate the next phase of the Governor engagement programme, with an

invitation to Governors to select an area of the PIAP that they wish to focus on during their visit to a department / curriculum area.

- ii) The view was expressed by members and acknowledged by senior managers present that performance management of staff continued to be an unresolved issue. Members sought clarification on how information relating to an individual's performance, in the widest sense, is triangulated and the process by which any under-performance is detected and appropriately addressed, particularly if the required improvement, assuming it can be described, is not achieved. Members stated their expectation that Heads of Learning / line managers at all levels should be playing an effective role in maintaining and developing the quality of the provision for which they are responsible, noting that there are considerable differences in the extent to which this is happening currently. At the same time members noted the need to avoid an unrealistically formulaic process which does not take account of the practicalities of running courses, changes in circumstances or the differing needs of students. In response members were informed that to address current inconsistencies in practice and approach, work has commenced on redefining performance expectations, how to provide constructive feedback through dialogue, and to identify appropriate individualised development and support mechanisms to enable performance (including under-performance) to be improved. A better system has been implemented to track the timely progress of actions to achieve improvements in performance and to address ongoing under-performance across all staff groups. Regular team meetings will be used more than previously to share good educational practice, and to discuss learning and teaching. As part of the data analysis for Governors referred to earlier in discussion a report will be provided of the scale and trend in relation to performance; attendance etc., how these are being addressed and about the impact of actions taken.
- iii) In relation to performance, clarification was sought on the effectiveness of the recruitment process in terms of ensuring the appropriateness / capability of appointees. The importance was emphasised both of the induction process and early identification of a developmental plan to ensure that individuals' skills are invested in during the first 2 to 3 years. Members were informed that the College has signed up to the "Good Recruitment campaign", reset the standards for the selection process, improved induction and engages with new staff from the point of offering a post.
- iv) In response to the question about the frequency students are consulted regarding their TLA experience it was reported that the student survey process is currently being reviewed with the intention of conducting 3 surveys each academic year when a random selection of students will be asked for their views by an external agency. The outcomes of surveys to date are providing a clear steer on where improvements are needed and will be outlined in the report to the next meeting (referred to in Minute 16/2/2.2 above). In addition to this feedback from Learner Voice activities and, importantly, details of concerns raised informally and formally through the complaints procedure can provide early indications of problems (with teaching) that need to be tackled.

- v) Members identified the following information / data requirement to enable them to fulfil their role in terms of
- Tracking the effectiveness of systems
  - Monitoring trend analyses over time
  - Awareness of current 'problem hot spots' and action planned to address these
  - Knowledge of barriers to achieving improvements etc.

College Principal

On the basis of the detailed scrutiny the Committee agreed that the PIAP provides the Governing Body with assurance that the College is acting appropriately on the February Ofsted Report, in a way that is also consistent with the College's own vision and strategy.

## 16/2/6 English and Maths strategy

In relation to the previous item, the Committee received the Maths and English strategy and action plan (SAP 5), covering both the immediate (summer term 2016) and longer term (from September 2016) period. During the presentation the following issues were discussed:

- i) English and Maths provision was identified as requiring improvement prior to the Ofsted inspection. The immediate priority is to expedite action to achieve the necessary improvements in the current academic year. The strategy and plan have been reviewed, strengthened and incorporated within the overall PIAP.
- ii) The Working Group (established in November) responsible for implementing the actions is monitored by the Curriculum and Delivery Steering Group. The Executive Team recently approved a range of new activities aimed at maximising the achievements of this year's student cohorts and there have been some in-year improvements, e.g. better attendance in Functional Skills, but more work is required. In addition to improving attendance and achievement the College needs to demonstrate improvements in respect of the value-added and progress measures.
- iii) There is a greater focus on improving TLA in English and Maths through sharing good practice; supported CPD and working with a consultant Inspector etc. Whilst steps have been taken to contextualise functional skills in vocational programmes, this approach has not been adopted for GCSE due to the nature of the current syllabus. However anticipated changes will provide some opportunity to review delivery. Members were informed that there is scope for some vocational staff to teach maths and English skills and there is evidence that this approach can improve student engagement with the subjects.
- iv) The view was expressed that the hope in the longer term is for a reduction in the number of students enrolling with the College who need to take / re-take a Maths and / or English qualification. A significant challenge continues to be raising students' awareness and change their attitude to recognise the importance of English and Maths. In addition to promoting this at, for example open evenings, the College will work closer with feeder schools and other Colleges where English and Maths success rates have improved.

Governors endorsed the strategy and the action plan as part of the PIAP.

- 16/2/7 Qualification Achievement Rates and the impact on Success Rates** **Deputy Principal  
20 June 2016**
- It was reported that the national report on qualification achievement rates, due to be published in January, was not yet available. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.
- 16/2/8 Report on Apprenticeships** **Deputy Principal  
13 June 2016**
- As requested at the last meeting, a position paper was presented as a precursor to further report and discussion at the Governors' Strategy event on 13 June. Members noted that work is continuing to expand apprenticeship provision and the profile of recruitment has increased.
- In relation to quality an overall achievement rate of 75.5% is currently predicted, which is slightly below target but higher than last year and maintains the College's performance above the national rate (74%). The progress of students who have still to complete their framework will continue to be closely monitored and it is anticipated that the achievement rate will continue to improve.
- In relation to financial performance the College expects to achieve its income allocation.
- It was clarified that sub-contracted delivery is provided by a small number of "niche" contractors, mostly in areas where the College has no provision, with high levels of achievement (e.g. 90% approx.).
- In preparation for the Strategy event Governors received a strategic framework covering 10 themes, the associated key questions and the immediate priorities against which progress will be monitored. At this stage Governors were invited to identify any omissions and to comment on the appropriateness of the breadth and depth of the framework.
- During discussion the following points were made:
- i) Members were informed that by maximising the potential to grow apprenticeship provision, the College could increase income and improve its financial sustainability, particularly if it focuses on the sectors/employers where there will be higher returns on investment.
  - ii) The strategy should include reference to engaging with all Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the Sheffield City region, Trade Associations and draw on staff knowledge and expertise based on their personal contacts in a wide range of sectors.
  - iii) The content of the report could be strengthened by contextualising in terms of the current market, the opportunities to take a different approach and what shape and scale of apprenticeship provision the College would hope to have three years hence.
- 16/2/9 Review of the meeting** **Deputy Principal**
- Members commented positively particularly in relation to the open and candid discussion of the detailed PIAP. The importance and appropriateness of providing the Committee with that amount of detail at this stage was acknowledged and in future there will be some reliance on the Senior Managers to highlight key issues for Governors specific attention.
- Members were invited to submit, outside of the meeting and to the relevant Senior Manager, any issues they identified in preparation for the meeting

which they did not feel had been covered during discussion.

**16/2/10 Any other business**

There were no other items of business

**16/2/11 Date of next meeting**

Monday 20 June 2016 at 8.00 am in the Board Room, City campus.