



Standards Improvement Committee Minutes

Meeting held on Tuesday 12th June 2018 at 5.30pm in Room 301

Members present: Mark White (Chair), Phil Cook (Principal), Dan Johnson, Deborah Merrett (co-opted member)

Officials: Liz Boynton (Head of Quality), Mick Hickey (Deputy Principal), Joanne Scott (Pre-employment & Skills Manager), Tracy Thomas (minutes)

Apologies: Rebecca Hodgson (Vice Chair) and Sarah Thompson (Clerk)

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. A round of introductions was made.

SIC18/15 Agenda Item 1 – Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was **agreed** to approve the circulated minutes of the Standards Improvement Committee meeting held on 29 March 2018.

Updates against agreed actions were **noted**.

SIC18/16 Agenda Item 2 – Sector Based Work Academies (Presentation)

The Pre-employment & Skills Manager, Joanne Scott (JS) provided information on Sector Based Work Academies. Participating employers must have identified a vacancy and be willing to guarantee an interview on course completion. An overview of the course, which included pre-employment training, skills training and interview preparation, was provided and members noted that Stockton Riverside College had utilised the scheme and successfully recruited through it (a list of employees was provided). JC would liaise with the HR Department, as the SRC Principal was keen to ensure that, where the scheme was not being used in College, a conscious decision had been made not to do so.

A case study on Redcar and Cleveland Care Academy, which had completed 12 learners, was discussed and members noted that one particular learner had received five job offers. Statistics, including the areas with higher than national average unemployment rate, were provided and it was estimated that a six week programme with ten learners had a potential financial value of c. £15k to SRC. Financial value to the learner was also discussed, as was the process of sourcing

partners. It was recommended that JS provide an overview of the scheme's recruitment success at SRC for the Whole College Management Team and JS undertook to liaise with the Vice Principal Corporate Planning and Performance to facilitate this. In response to a governor enquiry, members were advised that the Director of Marketing would approach Stockton Borough Council about the scheme's potential. The SRC Principal requested a copy of the presentation and undertook to forward this to Russ McCallion, HR Director at PD Ports and SRC governor.

Discussion ensued around devolution and funding potential from the education/adult education budgets; along with the current landscape of provision in the area and the 'life-changing' potential for learners. JS described a strong working relationship with Job Centre Plus. A governor commended the scheme and noted its potential for helping to improve the psychological wellbeing of unemployed members of society.

Members **noted** the contents of the presentation.

SIC18/17 Agenda Item 3 – College Performance Progress and Accountability Measures

The Head of Quality spoke to her report which noted good progress in all areas. Members were reminded that progress was measured against minimum standards (MS) as opposed to targets. College performance at 19+ maintained significant improvement on the MS threshold as did apprenticeships. The College was well within thresholds on all measures (of which there were many) for 16-18 and 'A' Levels had shown significant improvement. An investigation had been undertaken which had established that Prince's Trust provision had not been recognised as a "stepping stone qualification" to English and maths (this would have raised SRC's low ranking in this area amongst local colleges). The Deputy Principal pointed out some improvement in figures for English and maths as a result of removing Prince's Trust, although this was not as pronounced as had been reported on at 12th May 2018 meeting. In part, this was ascribed to data complexity. It was anticipated that the position would be improved upon in the next academic year. The Chair was reminded by the Deputy Principal of the need to recognise that Prince's Trust candidates could have a negative effect on measured performance of the College and the Head of Quality was asked to remind governors of this in the covering report of the next published data.

Members **noted** the contents of the report.

SIC18/18 Agenda Item 4 – English and maths Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal spoke to his report and governors were informed that projected achievement rates, based on staff reporting, were good. Predictions were above the national rate for 16-18 year old learners, adult learners and functional skills learners. Retention rates had risen and there had been a marginal improvement in attendance. It was noted however that, on average, one in five learners were still not attending each session; though it was felt that the structure of these qualifications militated against movement in any dramatic direction towards a higher level. Whilst it was felt that results would still be higher than the national rate, discussion centred on the difficulties of making mathematics relevant to learners. It was felt that results did not accurately reflect efforts being taken to make improvements in this area and a governor queried whether problems, which were identified at performance review and raised with managers, were being effectively fed back to staff. The Head of Quality felt that they were and identified key areas where effective management had had a significant impact. Staff, in general, were said to be acutely aware of the need to improve attendance in these areas.

The Deputy Principal gave an overview of the difficulties of engaging young learners, many of whom had a vocational focus, with English and maths at GCSE level and whether it was appropriate to do so.

Members **noted** the contents of the Plan.

SIC18/19 Agenda Item 5 – NETA Quality Improvement Plan Update

The Head of Quality reported ongoing improvements in the NETA Quality Improvement Plan, with a significant increase in items RAG rated green; indicating good progress overall. Management improvements were evident and although learner voice outcomes still showed some level of dissatisfaction, this was often legacy related. Responses now indicated that learners were aware that their voices were being heard.

At Level 3, attendance had improved by around 5%. Level 2 attendance continued to be problematic, in part due to historical errors in information and guidance. Work was ongoing for English and maths with interventions in place which included 1-2-1 learning. There would probably be a dip in apprenticeship timely achievement rates although these were expected to be above national rates.

A learning walkthrough would be arranged at NETA for Deborah Merrett.

The Chair reported that Stockton North MP, Alex Cunningham, had commended Liz Boynton on the level of support she had provided at NETA.

There was some discussion around the future of NETA at RCC. It was agreed to invite David Laycock to Standards Improvement Committee on 7th November 2018 for a short presentation on his work at NETA. Members also discussed the relationship between RCC and TTE and the SRC Principal advised members that he would be in attendance at an awards ceremony at TTE in the near future. Liz Boynton was commended by the SRC Principal for her work at NETA.

Members received and **noted** the update.

SIC18/20 Agenda Item 6 – Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) Monitoring

The Deputy Principal spoke to his report and members were asked to note the HLA monitoring action plan which showed good progress in the achievement of actions as at 25th May 2018. It was felt that HLA provision had been introduced and delivered on a disaggregated basis with low numbers of learners in particular areas and insufficient resources. The focus of the plan was on monitoring and tracking of learner progress and the Deputy Principal expressed confidence around progress moving forward. Those offering HLAs to SRC staff were now reportedly more aware of the importance of good information, guidance and support. It was felt to be a matter of pride to SRC to ensure successful outcomes for HLAs. The action plan was felt to provide the opportunity of more insight into performance which would indicate the level of support required for each apprentice.

Members **received** and **noted** the report.

SIC18/21 Agenda Item 7 – Performance reporting for FE college groups and multi-site colleges Government consultation

The Deputy Principal spoke to his report and updated members on proposals being made by the Department for Education to “improve information for learners, strengthen accountability and support quality improvement by changing the way performance is measured for FE college groups and multi-sites”. This would enable generation of data that was college specific within a group and, it was felt, give a clearer view of performance of one college against another. The consultation paper considered a variety of mechanisms and SRC had replied to the consultation in favour of the proposed changes.

The paper led to discussion around the practicalities of running the same courses at different sites within the group; whether figures would be site or group figures and

how courses would be run and data collected. The Principal undertook to meet with the Deputy Principal and Head of Quality to discuss this along with other quality and staff development related issues.

In response to a question from the Chair around how innovation is shared amongst the group, the Deputy Principal described a “learning fair” mechanism with three learning coaches and Angela Stevenson, Learning & Teaching Development Manager (AS) participating as an observer. Sharing within departments was facilitated by walk-throughs. Sharing across sites was felt to be crucial. The Chair stressed the importance of gleaning fresh ideas from outside of the organisation and this would be discussed at a future meeting. It was recognised that NETA had been invited to the learning fair, though not, as yet, in a sharing capacity. The English department were said to be working with local schools to share good practice.

SIC18/22 Agenda Item 8 – Inspection and review arrangements update

The Deputy Principal spoke to his paper which suggested that SRC would be visited by Ofsted in late 2019. Their findings would influence the timing of future inspection. It was felt that QAA review activity was uncertain, that it would be necessary to monitor this and that a higher level of scrutiny may be expected from the University. DM felt that the most recent monitoring report would stand SRC in good stead and it was, indeed, felt to be timely. The SRC Principal, however, urged caution against complacency whilst acknowledging significant progress. Discussion centred on progress at RCC where retention was felt to be steady though systems not yet fully embedded or robust.

SIC18/23 Agenda Item 9 – Learner Health and Wellbeing: Briefing Paper

A report, which had been prepared by Mark Moore and circulated prior to the meeting, was briefly discussed. Governors were pleased to hear that the report would be presented to FE Corporation on 5th July 2018.

SIC18/24 Agenda Item 10 – Learning Walks (verbal)

Verbal updates on learning walks carried out by Deborah Merrett (DM) and Rebecca Hodgson (RH) were provided. DM reported that she had visited SRC Bede on 11th June 2018. Although class sizes were small due to the time of year, students were described as “a credit to themselves and to the college”. A group of very confident learners, across a range of courses, who knew where they were, where they needed to be and how to get there was described. Pen presentations were mentioned as a highlight of the walk through and the ethos and culture of the site were felt to be impressive.

Similar findings were reported by RH via email and presented by the Head of Quality in her absence.

Both governors felt that it would be useful to re-visit the site during a busier period and that governors should continue with walk through activities on a termly basis.

The Head of Quality described a significant amount of work around teaching and learning having been undertaken at the site and noted a more transparent culture due, in no small part, to the efforts of AS.

The SRC Principal reported that Ben Robinson had been employed as Campus Principal at SRC Bede and urged the quality team to engage with the new Principal at an early stage.

SIC18/25 Agenda Item 11 – Self Assessment Report (SAR) and Master Targets (Quality) Schedule

The Head of Quality spoke to her report and governors received proposed schedules for the production of the College FE SAR, HE SED and quality master targets. Self-assessment judgments would be reported to FE Corporation in the usual way. Self-assessment for 18-19 based on next years' performance would be a common group self-assessment. The HE SAR process was described as much smaller in scale, under the direction of the Head of Quality, the Head of Health, Care, Childcare and Education, Rebecca Wolfe and Karl Johnson, PAL, HE (KJ) would produce a single SAR. In response to a governor's enquiry about how SAR validation would work at RCC, the Deputy Principal advised that a validation meeting would be arranged, that would include the designated Vice Principal Curriculum and Development and Campus Principal Redcar.

SIC18/26 Agenda Item 12 – Committee membership – student representation (verbal)

The Deputy Principal provided a verbal update. When conducting a review of HE provision, reviewers from the QAA had asked what arrangements had been made for students to feedback their views on quality to the Corporation. There was already student representation at FE Corporation and it was recommended that members approve student membership to Standards Improvement Committee to ensure there was a voice for HE students, in overall performance and quality monitoring systems.

Governors noted the recommendation and **agreed to recommend** the appointment of a Student Governor to Standards Improvement Committee at the next FE Corporation meeting.

SIC18/27 Agenda Item 13 – Any Other Business (verbal)

The SRC Principal provided an update on senior staff interviews and appointments as follows:

Senior Post Holders:-

Mick Hickey, Executive Director, Quality & Standards

Phil Hastie, Executive Director, Planning & Infrastructure

Fiona Sharp, Executive Director, Finance

Senior Management Team:-

Jason Faulkner, Campus Principal, Redcar

Ben Robinson, Campus Principal, Bede

Mark Flannery, Director of Marketing

Gary Potts, Director of Business Engagement

NETA MD, Phil Blewitt was now a member of the SRC Senior Management Team.

The post of Campus Principal, Stockton would be advertised shortly with a view to appointment in August.

The HR Directors at SRC and RCC were both retiring.

Mandy Morris had been appointed Vice Principal Curriculum and Developments.

Daniel Johnson addressed his last meeting of the Standards Improvement Committee and thanked members for the past ten years and, in particular, thanked the Deputy Principal and Director of Quality for the time they had taken to further his understanding of student surveys etc.

SIC18/28 Agenda Item 14 - Approval of Documents for Public Inspection

It was **agreed** that the agenda and approved minutes would be made available for public inspection. All other items were deemed to be confidential

SIC18/29 Agenda Item 12 – Date and time of next meeting

7th November 2018 at 5.30pm

(The meeting ended at 7.10 pm)

Signed.....(Chair)

Date.....