



## Standards Improvement Committee Minutes

Meeting held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 5.30pm in Room 301

- Members present:** Mark White (Chair), Rebecca Hodgson (Vice Chair), Phil Cook (Principal), David Craig, Dan Johnson and Deborah Merrett (co-opted member)
- Officials:** Mick Hickey (Deputy Principal), Jason Faulkner (Vice Principal, Curriculum), Sarah Thompson (Clerk), Tracy Thomas (minutes)
- Observer:** Dot Smith (Governor, Redcar & Cleveland College)
- Apologies:** Liz Boynton (Head of Quality), Michelle Elliott (Director of Business Development), Mark Flannery (Director of Students), Heidi Lindsay

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

### **SIC18/1 Agenda Item 1 – Appointment of Vice Chair**

Rebecca Hodgson was appointed Vice Chair

### **SIC18/2 Agenda Item 2 – Minutes of Previous Meeting**

It was **agreed** to approve the circulated minutes of the Standards Improvement Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

Updates against agreed actions were **noted**.

### **SIC18/3 Agenda Item 3 – NETA Quality Improvement Plan**

The Deputy Principal spoke to his report reflecting upon historical factors around the delivery of provision and staffing; which would impact upon timely achievement rates but, around which, actions had been taken to facilitate recovery. The 2017/18 recovery plan was felt to address key issues identified at self-assessment. The new management team at NETA were described as “focussed and committed to driving improvements” with morale high and a marked desire to drive change evident.

Confidence was expressed in terms of government funded provision at NETA. Inferior data collection procedures were being addressed in order to effectively monitor provision and it was felt that this, along with changes to staffing, would

drive an improvement in quality. In response to a governor enquiry, the Deputy Principal reported that although staffing issues had been resolved to some extent, there were still one or two problematic areas where further training was required. Members discussed the appropriate level of graded observation at NETA and were advised that performance monitoring was taking place.

#### **SIC18/4 Agenda Item 4 – Bede Update**

A report was presented by the Deputy Principal which outlined progress at Bede as at March 2018. Improvements in value added were noted to be around “stretch and challenge” and “differentiation”. However, it was felt that the greater degree of choice, provided by the introduction of more vocational provision, would also facilitate improvements in value added.

Progress monitoring and target setting had been intensified and although retention had been low for year one of the linear A level courses last year, it was hoped that the re-introduction of a one year AS level course would ensure a more favourable position moving forward. In response to a governor enquiry about underlying reasons for low retention levels on the two year linear programme, the Deputy Principal could identify no key rationale for this. Discussion centred on the view of HEIs of the new structure and it was felt by the Deputy Principal: Curriculum that their re-introduction would not be negatively viewed. The benefits of the one year programme, which provided “exit points”, thereby encouraging student commitment, were highlighted.

Governors were assured that Andrew Panayi had been providing an excellent care-taking function at the college and that there were now two members of the central management team steering “vocationalisation”. Work was being undertaken by the Director of Marketing around this. The Deputy Principal offered some level of assurance to governors around course selection. The Vice Principal: Curriculum provided an example of the benefits of vocational pathways to learners and stressed the importance of offering learners the appropriate advice and guidance.

#### **SIC18/5 Agenda Item 5 - English and maths Improvement Plan**

The Deputy Principal provided an overview of his report advising members that an advanced practitioner had been appointed in maths.

Projected achievement rates for English and maths were described as “very positive” and above the national average; this was also said to be true of functional skills. Predictions (which had been refined along with the system for scrutinising progress) were positive for achievement and attendance showed slight improvement. There was some discussion around low attendance rates across the

sector and the various steps that were being taken, college wide, to address the issue; including addressing timetabling and staffing factors which were felt to contribute to poor attendance. Members were advised that significant progress had been made in the area but a complex picture of comparison with other colleges was provided. The Vice Principal: Curriculum was confident that the SRC approach of using a wide range of diagnostic assessments to ensure the right learner was on the right course, was effective. A governor sought assurance that suitable exam boards were being selected for vocational learners and was advised that the college had changed from Pearson to City & Guilds to facilitate progress to Level 2 more effectively. Members were advised that a larger awarding body ensured the appropriate level of support.

A governor requested clarification as to the value added by the advanced practitioner post. The Deputy Principal felt that a more differentiated approach allowed learners to develop more quickly and, although this was felt to be very much an area of “marginal gains” presently, there was some suggestion that this may be considered more significant by Ofsted at a future date.

Governors were advised that SLT were in negotiations with the Department for Education regarding its policy on the measurement of progress; given the significant Prince’s Trust cohort at SRC.

#### **SIC18/6 Agenda Item 6 – Progress against PIAP (Performance Improvement Action Plan)**

The Deputy Principal presented the plan and asked members to note the level of detail which had been made possible by the Head of Quality monitoring progress and having HoDs monitor individual learner progress; facilitating prediction around achievement rates. The PIAP was noted to have 55 programmes currently against around 30 last year and was now incorporated as a monitoring tool rather than a summary document. Good progress overall was indicated by the report with 44 out of 54 programmes having demonstrated improvement and having the potential to result in achievement rates at or above the national rate. It was felt generally that the majority of courses responded well to being added to the action plan. The Chair was assured that the Deputy Principal was comfortable with the direction of travel of the PIAP.

#### **SIC18/7 Agenda Item 7 – Enrichment Update**

An “imaginative and interesting” enrichment programme was reported to members. The Deputy Principal had identified numerous successful cross college events and developing systems for monitoring participation and facilitating intervention where necessary. The Pro-monitoring system was being utilised to more scientifically capture enrichment and target those areas requiring

improvement. Student and council meetings at Bede had been discussing upcoming events and work was being undertaken to develop a cross college systematic approach to encouraging greater levels of participation. Members stressed the importance of capturing events and gathering feedback from learners.

A governor requested an update on the enterprise programme and was advised that enterprise was now embedded as culture within the curriculum. However, it was noted that not all enterprise activity was captured and that work with ProMonitor was ongoing to ensure that “cultural experiences” were identified. The Deputy Principal: Curriculum responded to a question from the Chair around cross-department interaction and felt that departments were, to some extent, working within isolation but that, due to the size of the departments and the capacity for competition therein, this was not problematic. Opportunities for departmental interactions were available at the various festivals organised throughout the academic year. The logistics of SRC Bede were felt to offer more opportunity for inter-departmental experience due to timetabling. The SRC Principal, whilst commending staff for their excellent efforts in respect of enrichment and enterprise, expressed concern that activity was under-reported. Both the SRC Principal and Chair had been disappointed to learn that a local dignitary had visited college without their prior knowledge.

The Deputy Principal was asked for an update on any work being undertaken throughout the year around mental health. Members were advised that teams were trained in mental health support and very conscious of its importance; with Student Services pivotal in this respect. The Deputy Principal undertook to update governors more fully at a later meeting on this important matter and to invite Mark Moore, the new safeguarding lead, to attend the next meeting of the SIC.

A governor suggested that promotion of enrichment activities could be utilised as a marketing tool to attract learners. It was felt that staff generally under-promoted events seeing them as part of their “usual” calendar. The Chair reflected that he had recently sent thank you letters to members of staff and had received positive feedback on these. SLT were asked to consider the importance of recognising the efforts of staff involved in extra-curricular activity and encouraging them to report on and promote this.

#### **SIC18/8    Agenda Item 8 – Higher level apprenticeship performance**

The Deputy Principal spoke to his report and noted that although recently under-performing, predictions were now more positive. A range of difficulties had been identified as hindering previous progress including staffing problems and lack of durability in this respect. Provision had also suffered from having a small cohort.

Learner progress was being monitored to ensure that staff were given the impetus to succeed within timescales set out. There was discussion around the necessity for timely intervention and ensuring that staff were aware of “escalation routes”.

The Chair requested a follow up report at the next meeting of the SIC and the Deputy Principal undertook to provide same.

#### **SIC18/9 Agenda Item 9 – Destinations**

The Vice Principal: Curriculum reported that in 2016/17 93.5% of learners left the College to a positive destination.

The destinations report showed that figures for 16-18 year olds were 92.5% which was slightly down on the previous year. However, members were advised that more time had been spent chasing up withdrawn learners to ensure a more accurate picture of overall destinations.

Retention issues at Level 2 Travel & Tourism, Level 2 NETA and Level 3 SRC Bede and NETA had impacted destinations.

There had been an improvement in destinations for adult learners.

The Prince’s Trust were reported to be making year on year progress.

Using the Department for Education metric destinations for Key Stage 5 learners was 87% which was the best in the Tees Valley.

Discussion centred on the availability of comparative data and the Chair stressed the importance of accessing this wherever possible and requested a report at the next SIC on Sector Based Work Academies.

#### **SIC18/10 Agenda Item 10 – Learning Walks**

The Clerk asked members to consider whether learning walks were still considered a valuable tool for governors and to propose a lead governor with whom staff could discuss protocols and procedures.

Rebecca Hodgson was appointed lead governor for Learning Walks.

#### **SIC18/11 Agenda Item 11 – Committee Operation (verbal)**

Members were asked to comment on recent changes to committee operations with some changes having been made to the format of reports and certain matters now

being brought to the SIC rather than FE Corporation, e.g., enrichment, performance improvement action plan. Governors were satisfied with both.

The Chair requested feedback from observer, Dot Smith who reported that she had enjoyed the scope of the agenda. Ms Smith applauded the SIC for its broad remit; which had not been limited to Ofsted and 16-18, but had incorporated NETA, SRC Bede, The Skills Academy and Higher Level Apprenticeships with equal importance. The provision of tables and KPIs alongside summary reports had been welcomed and, in particular, Ms Smith had found the enrichment paper useful. One area for improvement was identified as Ms Smith, pointing to the NETA plan, felt it would be useful to rag rate progress against actions with a little more specificity.

**SIC18/12 Agenda Item 12 – Any Other Business**

David Craig, who was in attendance at SIC for the last time, shared his thoughts on the evolution of the committee, which had broadened its outlook since incorporation to provide added value. Mr Craig had hugely enjoyed being part of the group and thanked The Deputy Principal and SLT for their rigour and enthusiasm; commending them for their engagement with governors.

Mr Craig identified NETA as an area requiring clarification in terms of the required level of governance and members were asked to consider reporting procedures and access to papers.

The Chair reflected upon a long and fruitful relationship with Mr Craig whom he had met, along with Ms Merrett, more than 20 years ago and described the governor as having been pivotal and critical to the success of the college. The group applauded Mr Craig’s engagement and commitment to the college and to the SIC.

**SIC18/13 Agenda Item 13 - 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

**SIC18/14 Agenda Item 12 – Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at 5.30 pm at SRC Teesdale

*(The meeting ended at 7.20 pm)*

**Signed**.....**(Chair)**                      **Date**.....