

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Quality and Equality Advisory Committee,
West Thames College, held on Wednesday 11 October 2017**

Present Mr B Armstrong (Chair)
 Ms T Aust (Principal)
 Mr J Bolt
 Mrs Charanjit Singh
 Ms A Patterson

Also present Mr J Allen (Clerk)
 Ms K Lehmann
 Mr G Baker

The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m.

WELCOME, APOLOGIES, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

1. There were no apologies. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate. There were no declared interests against any of the agenda items.

MINUTES

2. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (Paper 1).

MATTERS ARISING

3. The only action point from the previous meeting was to make available a comparison of actual achievement rates against predicted achievement rates and to make this available to the Committee. It was confirmed the forecast of an overall achievement for the College of 85% that was reported to the May meeting of the Committee was very much in line with the final achievement figure of 86%. It was agreed for each curriculum presenter at the SAR validation meeting in November to be asked to report on their year-end forecast and their actual year-end achievement.

RECRUITMENT UPDATE

4. An update was given on recruitment. The following key information was presented to the Committee:

- The College is below on 16-18 recruitment compared with last year and against the funding allocation given for 2017-18. The Committee were reminded that 16-18 recruitment last year exceed the funding allocation and, therefore, the allocation for 16-18 numbers was increased for 2017-18. Against the allocation of 2,093, current recruitment was at 1,993. There will be no direct impact on funding for this year, but due to lagged funding, the impact will be in 2018-19 when a lower allocation will be given to the College. To address the current recruitment shortfall there will be planned starts for October, January and April, along with on-going ESOL recruitment throughout the year.
- For 19+, recruitment is in line with recruitment for this time last year and there are no concerns in meeting the funding allocation.

- HE numbers are below target which was expected. However, what was not expected was the downturn in recruitment for the specialist make-up HE programme that has always recruited well.

5. The Committee asked for the views of the Executive on the reasons for the lower recruitment. In response it was reported the level of competition for students is very intense, from schools, free schools, training providers and FE Colleges. This competition is against the backdrop of a continuing demographic decline in 16-18 year old numbers.

6. The Committee sought assurances on what plans were in place to deal with the competition. In response it was reported the College has invested in a new website which has been well received. The capacity of the marketing function is being reviewed and additional resources will be made available if required. The critical element is the need to change the College's approach which has in the main relied on students to come to the College rather than a more proactive approach from the College to follow up on students from their initial enquiry/application. Marketing material is well designed and the messages being told in marketing campaigns are very good, but the College needs to be 'more in your face' in its marketing approach. In terms of the use of social media, feedback received from students was that the College presents itself well on Twitter, but needs to be more visual and to make better use of Instagram. It was also noted that the College needs to use its students more to promote the College.

7. It was agreed to keep the Committee regularly updated on marketing matters.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

8. The Committee received a copy of the '*Performance Monitoring Report*' (Paper 2).

9. It was agreed that as most of the targets in Goal 1 related to achievement rates that was subject to a separate agenda item, to defer any detailed discussion on achievement rates to the next agenda item.

10. The one 'RED' assessment reported to the Committee was on attendance. The final attendance figure for 2016-17 is 2% lower than at the same point last year - at 84% compared against 86%, and well below the set target of 90% for 2017-17. It was reported to the Committee that raising attendance remains a key curriculum priority monitored weekly through CGEQ to support the College attendance strategy.

11. It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

INTERIM ACHIEVEMENT RATE REPORT

12. The College report '*Interim Review of Achievement Rates 2016/17*' was received (Paper 3). It was confirmed final achievement rates for 2016-17 was still work in progress. The report detailed the current position as of 02 October and it was noted there are still a number of results to be processed.

13. The terminology used to report results has recently changed. Success is now achievement, retention remains the same and what was achievement is now reported as pass rate.

14. The key categories for the reporting of results were confirmed as follows:
1. 2 broad categories of results are: Classroom Based Learning (CBL) which includes functional skills and Apprenticeships.
 2. Results will be reported by age and by qualification type.
 3. Results will be reported for English and maths qualifications.
 4. Results will be reported by timely as well as overall achievement; most significant for Apprenticeship provision because for CBL the focus is overall achievement so we can report on retention and pass rates too.

Classroom based education and training (CBL)

15. Classroom based education and training (CBL) represents the greatest proportion of provision at the College with 9,031 leavers in 2016-17 compared with 7,954 leavers in 2015-16.

16. The inclusion of functional skills and the need for students to gain a grade C or above in GCSE maths and English, has continued to have significant impact on the balance of provision at levels 1, 2 and 3. In 2016-17, the College had 62% of the provision at level 1 (this includes entry level), 25% of the provision at level 2 and 13% of the provision at level 3.

17. The current position for CBL Education and Training as at 2nd October 2017 was as follows:

- Achievement for 2016-17 is 86% which is 4% above the achievement rate in 2015-16 and is 4% above the National Rate (NR) of 82%. This places the college achievement rates for 2016-17 in the top 20% of 29 London colleges for all ages and 16-18 students and in the top 25% for 19+ students.
- These results show an increase in achievement rates and a return to the high achievement results recorded over the past five years. The most significant increases are at level 1 (5459 leavers) now at 89% compared to 85% in 2015-16 and at level 2 (2526 leavers) now at 78% compared to 74% in 2015-16. For most Directorates the achievement rates are in-line with, and in some areas above the predictions that were made in May, although a detailed analysis at individual qualification aim will be carried out to ensure a rigorous process for calculating predicted achievement in 2017-18.
- Retention rates in 2016-17 were 95% an increase of 1% compared to 2015-16 and are 3% above the NR of 92%.
- The pass rate is currently at 90% which is 3.0 % above the final pass rate in 2015-16 and is at the NR of 90%.
- For 16-18s, the college achievement rate is 82% which is a 3% increase compared with achievement rates in 2015-16 and 3% above the NR of 78%.
- The key strength is achievement at level 1 (2157 leavers) which shows a 7% increase from 2015-16. Achievement is currently at 84% against a NR of 76%.

- The achievement rates for level 2 (2526 leavers) have also increased by 2% compared to 2015-16. Achievement is currently at 76% showing a steadily increasing trend over 3 years and 1% above national rates.
- The key area of concern for 16-18s are achievement rates at level 3 (816 leavers) which are now at 87%, a decline of 2% compared to 2015-16. However achievement rates at level 3 still compare favourably with the NR of 85%.
- For 19+ students the college achievement rate (4470 leavers) is 90% which is an increase of 3% compared to achievement rates in 2015-16. This compares favourably with the NR of 86%.
- The key strengths for 19+ are at level 1 (3302 leavers) where achievement rates have improved by 1% to 92% against a NR of 88% and also at level 3. Achievement rates at level 3 (203 leavers) have risen from 85% in 2015-16 to 87% in 2016-17 although student numbers at this level are comparatively small.
- The area of concern for 19+ achievement rates are at level 2 (939 leavers). Although achievements rates have improved and are now at 82%, an increase of 8% compared to 2015-16 they are still 4% below the NR of 86%

English & Maths

- Results in English and maths have improved for both functional skills and GCSE when compared to 2015-16.
- In 2016-17 achievement results for GCSEs (707 leavers) grades A* to C are currently 26% compared to 21% in 2015-16.
- Functional skills results have improved by 4% from 68% achievement in 2015-16 to 72% in 2016-17 and are currently 1% above the NR.
- Achievement rates for functional skills at entry level are currently at 91% compared to 86% in 2015-16 and against a NR of 79%. Achievement rates at level 1 are currently at 55% compared to 51% in 2015-16. Achievement rates for level 2 functional skills have improved by 16%, increasing from 35% in 2015-16 to 53% in 2016-17 but remain below the NR of 57%.

Timely Achievement for Apprenticeships

- In 2016-17, the College had 131 timely leavers. The current timely achievement rate as at 2nd October 2017 is 35% which is 14% above the timely achievement rate for 2015-16. Although this shows a significant improvement it is still below the NR of 59%. However, there are still a number of results which have not yet been fully processed and this figure is expected to rise to 40%.

18. The Committee noted and agreed the following key areas for improvement in 2017-18:

- Further improve achievement rates for English and maths for all ages.

- Increase Timely Achievement rates for Apprenticeships.
- Bring underperforming areas up to required standards including Health and care, Construction, Travel, sports and public services, Work and study courses for 19+, particularly at level 2.

19. The Committee placed on record its appreciation and thanks to all College staff for the excellent student outcomes for 2016-17. The Committee was pleased that the downturn in results for 2015-16 was just a one-year setback, with 2016-17 results being slightly above the outcomes for 2014/15.

RISK REGISTER

20. The College report '*Risk Register*' was received (Paper 4), highlighting the areas of focus relevant to the Committee. The Audit Committee had requested that each Committee be asked to review if there are sufficient and robust sources of 'Independent Assurances' against each risk that falls under the terms of reference of the Committee, and if identified 'Governor Oversight' arrangements are adequate and fit for purpose.

21. The Clerk advised that the Committee could also add to the Risk Register if any new risks were identified through discussions during the meeting. The Committee agreed no new risks were identified through discussions.

22. The Committee agreed that the risks discussed at this meeting are confirmed in the Risk Register – these being learner attendance and achievement rates in English and maths. The Committee was satisfied with the 'Independent Assurances' against each risk.

23. It was confirmed that the impact of lower 16-18 recruitment would be reported on in the Risk Register that will be an agenda item at the forthcoming Finance Committee. It was agreed that as recruitment also impacts on curriculum, for the risk of lower than planned recruitment to be included in the Risk Register that comes to this Committee.

24. It was **RESOLVED** to note the 'Risk Register'.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. There was no other business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 08 November 2017 @ 14.00: SAR (Validation Meeting)

Wednesday 07 February 2018 @ 1800

The meeting closed at 7.10 p.m.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chair)

SUMMARY ACTION LIST

3	It was agreed for each curriculum presenter at the SAR validation meeting in November to be asked to report on their year-end forecast and their actual year-end achievement	8/11/17
7	It was agreed to keep the Committee regularly updated on marketing matters	On-going
23	It was agreed that as recruitment also impacts on curriculum, for the risk of lower than planned recruitment to be included in the Risk Register that comes to this Committee.	7/2/18