

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Quality and Equality Advisory Committee,
West Thames College, held on Wednesday 08 February 2017**

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

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

The meeting commenced at 1800.

WELCOME, APOLOGIES, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

MINUTES

54. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (Paper 1).

55. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the SAR Validation Meeting held on 09 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (Paper 2).

SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING

56. The following updates were made available in the 'Summary Action List' (Paper 3) on those actions points carried forward from the last meeting:

Min	Action	Update provided at the meeting
28	SAR Validation meeting needs to be used by the Committee to unpick the issues in each of the curriculum areas and to ensure the proposed curriculum quality improvement action plan is fit for purpose to address areas identified for improvement.	Completed at the SAR Validation meeting held 09 November 2016
29	It was agreed for the SAR meeting that it would be useful to present success and achievement results in two formats, one reporting on results including functional skills and GCSE and the other reporting on results excluding functional skills and GCSE.	Completed at the SAR Validation meeting held 09 November 2016
35	Risk Register: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A separate risk for English & maths 	Two risks have been added to the Risk

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff turnover and appropriately qualified staff. To inform the Committee if there is any impact on curriculum delivery arising from any of these potential staffing issues. 	Register – an agenda item at this meeting.
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57. It was **RESOLVED** to note the '*Summary Action List*'.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

58. The Committee received a copy of the '*Performance Monitoring Report*' (Paper 4).

59. Before conducting a review of the report, it was **AGREED** to change the reference 'Requires Improvement' in the progress column to read 'Work in Progress', as work is still in progress to seek improvement and to address the area of development identified through self-assessment. The use of the phrase 'Requires Improvement' has the risk of implying that no action has been, or is not being, taken to address the area for development.

60. In reviewing the '*Performance Monitoring Report*', it was agreed to focus the Committee's attention on those parts of the report where 'Work in Progress' is stated, along with other key areas such as Prevent and safeguarding and employability.

61. To improve English and maths remains a top priority. The Committee welcomed the update given on the visits arranged to two Colleges who are exemplar centres of good practise for the delivery of English and maths. Both these Colleges have been very successful in turning around previous poor performance through innovative approaches to the promotion and delivery of English and maths. It was **AGREED** to receive at the next meeting a report on the two visits to be conducted and what actions the College will be taking following the visits.

62. Although recruiting English and maths teachers remains a challenge, tailored individualised support has been put in place for teachers and progress is being closely monitored. The College's English and maths strategy is being implemented through the English and maths forum and GCSE meetings.

63. A College wide campaign 'It's all about ME' is about to be launched to promote the importance of maths and English to students across the College and to understand and overcome students' barriers to achieving.

64. Against the target of 90%, attendance is currently at 85.5% compared against 89% for the same period last year. It was confirmed improving attendance remains a top priority for the Executive and is also a key curriculum priority subject to weekly monitoring.

65. The College attendance strategy consists of the following key elements:

- Weekly attendance forums
- First register call
- Parental involvement from the outset
- Letters to students/parents if attendance falls below 90%.
- Weekly agenda item at CQEG and with Director/CQTM one to ones.

66. An 'On Time on Target' attendance campaign was launched in January. Student representatives have reported that this campaign is popular with students and is encouraging students to attend and to be punctual. The impact of attendance strategies are most noticeable in Hair, Beauty and Specialist Makeup and Visual, Performing Arts and Media where attendance has increased over January.

67. The Committee asked if good practice from better performing curriculum areas is being shared with other curriculum areas. It was confirmed that the new Director for Hair & Beauty focused extensively in January on engaging with parents on attendance matters and this resulted in significant improvement in student attendance. The approach and strategies taken by this Director has been shared with other Directors who are now being asked to implement a similar strategy.

68. One area where work is in progress is to improve achievement rates through more robust tracking systems. The prediction of achievement rates last year was not particularly strong with predictions impacted by poor Functional Skills results and results on some Level 2 courses. Last year was the first year of examinations as against course work, and some students found the language of the examination questions difficult to understand. More focused CPD work has been a key priority with teachers to help them to better explain to students the use of language for examinations.

69. The other key priority to improve achievement rates is to ensure that there is correct and robust monitoring of student progress and accurate achievement predictions. It was confirmed an audit was recently conducted focusing specifically on in-year progress.

70. The Committee sought further assurances and asked they key question 'How can the Committee be assured on the robustness of the monitoring of student in-year progress?' In response it was confirmed the audit drilled down to students at course level and that the outcomes were reported to the Executive and cascaded to Curriculum Directors.

71. It was **AGREED** to make the available the progress report that was presented to the Executive following the conclusion of the audit on student in-year progress.

72. Improving recruitment and the quality of apprenticeships continues to be a priority. The Committee welcomed the positive partnership development with Chelsea and Westminster NHS Trust for apprenticeship delivery and the recruitment of apprentices.

73. The Principal reported on a very positive employer breakfast event held today at the Skills Centre resulting in some positive leads on potential new apprentices which are being progressed.

74. A key marketing focus is updating the Colleges website to promote the concept of applying for a career rather than just a course, with the website giving an indication of possible job outcomes and salaries that could be achieved after completing the course. The Committee welcomed this focus on employability, and asked if the College had reliable destination data to promote to new applicants. It was confirmed the College uses an external agency to follow up on student destinations. It was **AGREED** to make available at the next meeting an update on student destination outcomes.

75. The Prevent and safeguarding actions to ensure a safe and harmonious environment were on track and no issues of concern were reported to the Committee. The student governor spoke positively on the on-line safeguarding and Prevent activity that is on Moodle and is delivered in tutorials. The activity helps students to evaluate their understanding of safeguarding and Prevent and assists them in the planning of their next steps.

76. The Committee placed on record their appreciation of the much improved facilities and learning environment at the Skills Centre following the recent Governors strategy meeting that was held there.

77. Following a through review of the '*Performance Monitoring Report*' was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

FINAL ACHIEVEMENT RATES 2015-16

78. The College report '*Final Achievement Rates 2015-16*' was received (Paper 5).

79. Final achievement rates for 2015-16 have now been confirmed internally. The terminology used to report results changed this academic year; success is now achievement, retention remains the same and what was achievement is now reported as pass rate.

80. Classroom based learning represents the greatest proportion of provision at the College with 7,966 leavers in 2015-16. 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 a significant impact on the balance of provision at levels 1, 2 and 3. In 2015-16, 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.

81. The overall achievement rate for 2015-16 is confirmed at 82%. This is a decline in overall achievement rates of 3% compared against the overall achievement rate for 2014-15.

82. The overall achievement rate is in line with the National Rate (NR) of 82%. The Committee noted that the National Rate is still based on 2014-15 data and 2015-16 data has yet to be published. The expectation is for the National Rate to drop in line as a result of the inclusion of Functional Skills and GCSE maths and English.

83. Overall retention is 94% which is the same as 2014-15 and is 2% above the NR of 92%.

84. The overall pass rate 87% which is 4.0% below the overall pass rate in 2014-15 and is 3% below the NR of 90%.

85. For 16-18s, the overall achievement rate is 79% which is a 2% decline from 2014-15 and is 1% above the NR of 78%.

86. The key area of concern is achievement at level 1 which shows a sharply declining position from 2014-15 (2,024 leavers). Achievement is 77%, which is a 6% decline from 2014-15 but is 1% above the NR. This is largely due to functional skills.

87. The achievement rates for level 2 have increased slightly by 1% since 2014-15. Achievement is currently 74% which is at the NR.
88. The strength for 16-18s is at level 3 which shows an improved position on 2014-15 and is above the NR by 4%. Level 3 has risen by 1% and is currently at 89% (895 leavers).
89. For 19+, the overall achievement rate is 87% which is 2% below the 19+ achievement rate in 2014-15 and is 1% above the NR of 86%. Achievement rates at level 1 are at 91% having declined by 1% from the previous year but are 3% above the NR.
90. The key area of concern achievement rates at for 19+ students are at level 2. Achievement rates at level 2 are 74% having dropped by 11% in 2015-16 and are 12% below the NR (726 leavers). These declining rates are at level 2 largely due to poor achievement in functional skills which was 34% (140 leavers).
91. The strength for 19+ is at level 3 where achievement has risen from 77% in 2014-15 to 85% in 2015-16 which is 3% above the NR (365 leavers).
92. As well as reporting success by the three main categories as College we also look at the results by Subject Sector Area (SSA) Of the 11 SSAs a high proportion of areas have made good consistent progress in improving overall achievement rates but in a minority of SSAs progress has been inconsistent and achievements rates have declined. Significant improvements have been made to overall achievement rates for Science; 93%, ESOL; 92%, and Engineering; 89%. Achievement rates remain high and above national rates for Business 89%, Retail 89%, Supported Learning; 92% and Arts; 89%
93. In 4 SSAs achievement rates have declined; Health and Care 77%, Construction 77%, ICT 82% and Leisure 84%.
94. Overall achievement rates in Functional Skills English show a significant decline of 11% and are now at 57% compared to 68% in the previous year and are below the NR of 67%. However, overall achievement rates for maths have increased by 1% in 2015/16 to 67%.
95. Apprenticeship provision has continued to grow with an increased number of apprenticeships being delivered by the college in 2015/16 rather than through subcontracted partners by working with key employers like Nissan, LBH and Aramark. In 2015/16, there were 178 apprenticeships that had been delivered by the college. Although the college is now delivering more apprenticeship frameworks directly unfortunately timely achievement rates and overall success rates have declined and are low. Timely achievement for apprenticeship provision, declined in 2015/16 to 23% which is significantly below the 58% provider group rate and below the college's target. Overall achievement for apprenticeship provision has also declined to 57% against a national rate of 70%. Inconsistent achievement in functional skills has contributed significantly to the very low timely achievement rates and a decline in overall achievement. The number of apprentices taking functional skills increased in 2015/16 with an additional 40% of enrolments across English, maths and ICT. Ineffective tracking has also had a negative impact on achievement for some frameworks along with inconsistent diagnostic assessment.
96. The Committee noted that the key risks and issues arising from the final achievement rates for 2015-16 are being addressed through the range of actions outlined in the *'Performance Monitoring Report'*.

97. It was **RESOLVED** to note the '*Final Achievement Rates 2015-16 Report*'.

RISK REGISTER

98. The College report '*Risk Register*' was received (Paper 6), 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.

99. 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.

100. The Committee further agreed that the areas for improvement discussed in length at this meeting were addressed in the Risk Register, these being: achievement rates; attendance; tracking and monitoring of student progress; and English & maths.

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

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

102. There was no other business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

103. Wednesday 21 June 2017 @ 18.00

The meeting closed at 19.30

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair)

SUMMARY ACTION LIST

Min	Action	Review Date
59	Performance Monitoring Report: To change the reference 'Requires Improvement' in the progress column to read 'Work in Progress'	21/6/17
61	To receive at the next meeting a report on the two visits (English & maths) to be conducted and what actions the College will be taking following the visits.	21/6/17
71	To make the available the progress report that was presented to the Executive following the conclusion of the audit on student in-year progress.	21/6/17
74	To make available at the next meeting an update on student destination outcomes.	21/6/17