

**Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Colleges Quality & Improvement Committee
held at 4pm on Thursday 27 May 2021
Meeting via Microsoft Teams**

Present

Sue Dare (Chair)
Nigel Duckers
Shakira Martin

Apologies

Theresa Quinton
Deborah Johnston LSBU Pro-Director for Education

In attendance

Fiona Morey	Executive Principal
Wayne Wright	Deputy Principal
Philip Cunniffe	Assistant Principal Curriculum & Learner Services
Monica Marongiu	Assistant Principal Curriculum & Innovation
Clare Dignum	Head of Teaching & Learning
Jacqueline Mutibwa	Clerk to SBC Board

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the Committee Members to the meeting and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. The Chair welcomed Wayne Wright, the new Deputy Principal of Lambeth College. The above apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interest

No member declared an interest in any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising

The Committee reviewed the action sheet from the previous meeting. The Committee discussed some matters arising from the student perception of the College Autumn survey report 2020/21.

- One of the main areas of weakness identified that needed improvement, that learners felt least satisfied with and was below QDP benchmark concerned 'receiving feedback within two weeks of submitting the assignment'. The Committee noted the difficulties of managing remote learning i.e. assessments

and providing reasonable feedback within the required timescale. It was noted that the issue was about the interpretation of feedback as this was done in different ways and that the survey question should be reviewed in order to have a more meaningful response.

- High Needs Students (HNS) was a key area that needed improvement as the overall perception rating of HNS across various sections was less positive than that of their non-HNS cohort. The Committee asked that the actions identified to address the issues needed to be incorporated in the Quality Improvement Plan and implemented.

5. Deputy Principal's Report – In-Year Predicted Achievement, Retention and Attendance

The report provided an update on predicted achievement, retention and attendance for the current academic year and an analysis of drop out rates for learners.

The Committee discussed:

- the arrangements for awarding qualifications for the end of the academic year 2020/21 in line with the Ofqual directive and awarding bodies.
- the predicted drop in 2020/21 achievement compared to the previous year which was linked to low student engagement in remote learning during the 3rd lockdown. English, Maths and Attendance remained areas of concern especially for 16-19 year olds. The breakdown of the achievement and attendance by faculties and age groups was noted. Overall retention rate was positive at 96.3% and in line with last year's performance.
- the analysis of drop out rates for students as requested by the Board at its meeting on 4 May 2021. The drop in retention rate for 16-19 year olds was an area of concern which was mainly due to the adverse effect of the lockdown and the inability to adapt to online learning as adult students. The Committee noted the reasons for the student drop out which were set out in the report.

The Committee acknowledged the various support and initiatives that the College had put in place to help students stay on track and improve outcomes.

6. English and Maths

The report gave an overview of 2020/21 predicted achievement and attendance in English and Maths and actions in place to improve the outcomes.

The Committee discussed:

- the overall attendance performance which was 72% against a target of 85%. Attendance remained an area of concern especially for GCSE 16-18 classes despite the significant work undertaken to improve attendance and outcomes.

- the 2020/21 predicted achievement was 68% which was below last year's performance, the College's KPI of 82% and below National Average of 72.6%. Overall retention was positive at 94%.

The Committee noted that English and Maths remained an area of concern. It asked that further work was undertaken to improve the outcomes and also close the performance gap between the Functional Skills classes and the GCSE classes on achievement and attendance.

The Committee noted the actions and developments that were being undertaken to improve the performance in English and Maths.

7. Recruitment and Marketing Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the student enrolment journey and recruitment.

The Committee discussed:

- the 2020/21 enrolment figure which was below the target and last year's performance due to uncertainty during the pandemic and the challenging economic climate. The Committee noted an update on applications for 2021/22 and the internal progression process.
- an update on the structured approach to increase student enrolment through the Student Journey Project which was underway. An external consultant had undertaken a review of the College's recruitment process i.e. the student journey from application to enrolment. The recommendations had been adapted including the appointment of Kathy McCormack as the project lead on recruitment and growth. The aim of the 12-month project was to deliver an improved student admissions process i.e. improve applicant experience, increase recruitment and conversion of applications to enrolments and improve retention of new starters post 42 days.

The Committee noted the work being undertaken to improve the student admission process and enrolment figures including engagement activities, working with Lambeth Council and the summer campaign 2021/22.

8. Curriculum Strategy 2021/22

The Committee was provided with the College's approach to curriculum planning for 2021/22 and preparations for 2022/23.

The Committee discussed:

- the curriculum planning priorities and targeted areas for growth set out in the report. The new provision included; Adult gateway (London recovery), Gateway

college offer (ESOL, English, Maths and digital skills), a new L3 computing course, Health Skills Centre at Tabard Street and a range of new apprenticeships working closely with LSBU on the business planning and a joint approach to the delivery and management. The Committee noted a brochure of Southwark Health Skills Centre offer attached to the report.

- the curriculum plan which was aligned with SBC strategy. The proposed curriculum plan for 2021/22 was largely the same as the current offer except for the fashion course that had been removed from the curriculum but there would be growth in vocational provision and apprenticeships
- the curriculum planning at London South Bank Technical College, Vauxhall. Work was underway in partnership with LSBU on the development of a range of L4 qualification offers. Preparation work was being undertaken on the launch of the curriculum offer and the opening of the STEAM centre in September 2022.

The Committee endorsed the approach taken on the curriculum planning for 2021/22 and that it was recommended to the Board for approval at its meeting in July 2021.

9. Teaching, Learning & Assessment Report

The Committee was provided with an update on Teaching, Learning & Assessment work undertaken since the last report in February 2021.

The Committee discussed:

- the delivery models after the 3rd lockdown and the return to face-to-face learning. Focus was on the practical/technical skills which students couldn't develop when learning online and that extra classes had been provided. Dual delivery was a challenge for teachers delivering in class though there were benefits of using online delivery as students could access learning from anywhere on their phones or laptops.
- the feedback from the recent student survey on online learning. In comparison to the July 2020 survey (first lockdown period) the findings were positive. Students experienced closer relationships with their teachers/LDCs, social connections had been built in the learning and feeling isolated/missing friends and not being motivated were no longer barriers to engagement in learning. Majority of students had received feedback from their teachers, though assessment and feedback remain a significant challenge for teachers when delivering online. The assessment policy would be reviewed in order to manage the students and staff expectations. Students were happy with the quality of online learning though they preferred face-to-face learning. Synchronous learning was mentioned as a barrier to learning and the pace of online learning was an area of concern that needed to be considered so that it was not too fast for students. The findings helped analyse the improvements made since the first lockdown in July 2020 and consider further improvements for the future.

- the analysis of the observations of teaching & learning activity i.e. strengths and areas for development against the EPIC teaching standards, in particular those that link to the areas for development identified by Ofsted in their last inspection (May 2019) set out in the report. The main significant change from last year was assessment for learning in lessons, an area for development and a challenge of online learning.
- the Unseen Observation model that had been explored. Participants' feedback on the pilot model was positive and that it was a tool for reflection and development compared to traditional observations. The approach would also prepare teachers for the Ofsted deep dive discussions.
- the CPD programme that had been delivered in the 2020/21 academic year in response to the findings from the staff survey on the impact of the pandemic (July 2020). The Committee noted the positive work that was being undertaken on CPD activity which would be shared at the Teaching & Learning Conference in August 2021. 98% of teaching staff had attended the CPD programme.
- future teaching/learning delivery. Different approaches to delivery in terms of flexibility and innovation would be considered bearing in mind issues concerning students access to technology and staff working arrangements. Online delivery would continue post covid however, students preferred face to face learning. The planned delivery for 2021/22 would be included in the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy 2021/22 which would be presented to the Board for approval at its meeting in September 2021.

The Committee noted that the College had been shortlisted for a TES FE award for the CPD delivered last academic year, including the training offer in response to Covid19 in the first lockdown. The 16-18 ESOL team had also been shortlisted in the 'Support for Learners' category for their ESOL Work Experience Project, run in partnership with Spiral. The award ceremony for the finals would be held on 28 May 2021.

10. Ofsted and FE Commissioner's Visits

The Committee discussed the College's preparations for Ofsted inspection and the FE Commissioners visit.

The Committee noted:

- the preparation work for the next Ofsted visit which was anticipated in the autumn term 2021/22. It would be the College's first inspection under the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF) which was significantly different from the previous inspection framework. Work included trustees undertaking 'learning walks' with students and the proposal for linking trustees with faculties. It was noted that Mee Ling Ng, SBC trustee had attended the student conference on 20 May 2021.

- the rescheduled FE Commissioners visit to undertake a progress review specifically linked to the College's special designation (section 28) status and unique FE/HE Group model would take place on 30 June/1 July 2021. The visit would focus on finances and managing the deficit. A schedule of meetings had been set up and that key documents would be shared ahead of the meeting.

11. Apprenticeship Progress Report

The Committee was provided with a progress report on the apprenticeship delivery which included the predicted outcomes and progress made against key Quality and Improvement Plan actions.

The Committee discussed:

- the predicted drop in 2020/21 achievement to 68% compared to the previous year (72%) which was mainly due to furlough and redundancies associated with the pandemic. The achievement data tables which included direct and sub-contracted delivery were noted. Sub-contractor provision performed better than direct delivery which was improving despite the effect of the historic poorly performing programmes.
- an update on progress made against key Quality Improvement Plan Actions. Work continued on the review of the apprenticeship delivery which included: developing the organisational structure, revised college strategy and procedural documents aligned to the newly established group structure and implementation of the Skills Coach role. The significant change in delivery was the introduction of the Skills Coach role to replace the current lecturing which would enable the apprenticeship pathways to be embedded in the curriculum. The delivery approach was aligned to the LSBU group model and would improve the quality of the apprenticeship experience and outcome. It was also a cost-effective model compared to the current one.

The Committee noted the business planning for apprenticeships in 2021/22 and progress made on the apprenticeship delivery.

12. Adult Gateway Progress Report

The report provided an update on the Adult Gateway faculty provision, performance and developments.

The Committee noted:

- the student enrolment on the Gateway course was 249 which was below the target (316) due to difficulty in recruiting teaching staff on some of the programmes. The predicted achievement was 85%. Attendance performance was currently at 72.3% against a target of 87% which was due to low learner engagement in remote learning during the 3rd lockdown. Retention was positive at 95.4%.

- an update on the Lambeth Youth Hub, Clapham Centre and the opportunities offered to the unemployed people (19-24yrs) in partnership with the Job Centre Plus and Lambeth Council. The College had enrolled 200 unemployed learners, 9 had got jobs. The facility provided summer courses, support with job search and other health and welfare support/services.

The Committee noted the Gateway faculty developments in particular the effective engagement with employers and the community on the curriculum design and development. It was also noted that emotional resilience workshops had been included to the faculty portfolio due to the lockdown situation and its effect on mental health.

13. Sub-Contracting Monitoring Report

The Committee was provided with an update on the College's 2020/21 sub-contracting activity.

The Committee noted:

- that the Board at its meeting on 18 November 2020, discussed and approved the subcontracting delivery policies (supply chain fees and charges) and the five subcontractors to deliver AEB provision in the non-devolved areas for the 2020/21 academic year.
- that in 2020/21, the College had continued to benefit from effective subcontracting which included extending its provision into new sector areas and widening the accessibility for students.
- a summary of 2020/21 subcontracted performance and the contract and quality monitoring arrangements in place. The Committee noted an update on the recommendations from the 2019/20 subcontractor controls audit. The 2020/21 subcontracting controls audit was scheduled for June 2021.

There was discussion about the subcontractors' performance, the Committee asked about the Learner's view on quality assurance and that a more quality focussed report should be provided to the Committee.

The Committee noted the work being undertaken on the monitoring and quality assurance of sub-contractors.

14. Quality Improvement Plan

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) set out the College's operational objectives that must be achieved within the academic year along with the progress made. The QIP 2020/21 was a working document, which provided an update on areas for improvement identified in the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2019/20, actions that had been brought forward from QIP 2019/20 and those identified by Ofsted during the

inspection carried out in May 2019. It detailed the actions put in place by the College along with the progress made during the academic year 2020/21.

The Committee reviewed the plan and discussed the key areas for improvement which relate to ensuring that staff place a greater emphasis on developing students' mathematics skills, during implementation phase, in order to support them in their studies and prepare them for employment or further study (and reinforce embedding of English). There was concern about the progress being made to improve the area of work based on the predicted achievements which were below NA benchmark and below 2019/20. Several actions were in place to address the matters.

The Committee asked that the plan should show the actions that had been undertaken to address/mitigate the risks from red to green. The Committee noted the progress made on the Quality Improvement Plan 2020/21 and the challenges in achieving some intended outcomes due to the pandemic situation and lockdown that had resulted in adapting various approaches to curriculum delivery and assessments.

The Committee asked that the plan show the actions

**Date of next meeting
Wednesday, 22 September 2021**

Confirmed as a true record

..... (Chair)