



QUALITY OVERSIGHT GROUP: 23rd MARCH 2021

TELEPHONE CONFERENCE MINUTES

PRESENT	Shane Chowen (Chair), Amelia Sussman, Sanna Jordansson, Gemma Simmons Blanch, Desmond Corlis, Ashton Milton, Simon Horne
IN ATTENDANCE	Kurt Hintz, Gary Hunter, David Dangana, Jackie Chapman, Roy O'Shaughnessy, Graham Drummond
APOLOGIES	Mark Isherwood, Sarah Ebanja, Anthony Impey, Precious Agyei-Boateng, Luke Willmoth

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2021 were received. In terms of accuracy, it was noted that item 5 (apprenticeships) had not been discussed and that this would be made clear in the minutes.

Action

GD

With the exception of the above amendment, the minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

With respect to item 3 and the agreement that Gemma Simmons-Blanch would share with the Executive Principal, her experience of using a systems (S24) which tracks usage of online platforms by students during lessons, this had not yet been done. Gemma agreed to do this prior to the next meeting.

GS-B

3. OFSTED MONITORING VISIT

A report summarising the findings of a recent monitoring report by Ofsted was received. The following was noted:

- The Group was judged to have made 'reasonable progress' with respect to improving quality since the last full inspection in January 2020;
- The option of having another monitoring visit prior to the next full inspection has been chosen. It is likely that this will take place in the first term of the next academic year;

Members discussed the process of the monitoring visit and noted that all activity including the observation of lessons had taken place online. Samples of student work were sent through via email. The inspection team included three inspectors. Due to the restrictions of conducting this visit as a remote exercise, members endorsed the decision to have another monitoring visit. It was noted that it is likely that the Group's next full inspection will take place around Easter time next year.

Lastly it was noted that Ofsted have conducted around 15 monitoring visits recently across the country, nearly all of which have concluded in an overall judgement of 'reasonable progress'.

4. GROUP QUALITY UPDATE

A quality update report was considered and received. The following was noted:

- A return to face to face teaching has started since the 8th March, in line with the Government's easing of lockdown restrictions. 12,000 lateral flow tests have been taken by students with only 10 resulting in positive tests; these students are now self-isolating;
- At 88.5% the overall attendance rate is in line with the Group's target of 88% and is 2.1% above the rate in 2019/20;
- The overall retention rate is 95.6% which is 1.6% higher than the same time last year;
- At 76%, attendance for level 2 maths and English is still a concern however this represents an improvement as compared to the previous year;
- Achievement rates are expected to be in line with the previous year, with the majority of qualification outcomes determined through the Teachers Assessed Grade (TAG) process;

Issues surrounding the Teacher Assessed Grade process were discussed and the following was noted:

- With respect to A levels and GCSEs, students are to be informed within the next week about how the TAG process will operate. It is envisaged that assessment will be complete by the end of May, at which point students will have completed their course;
- For year 12 students, a process of lost learning mapping will take place to identify gaps in learning and the summer term will be used to catch up on learning;
- The outcome of qualifications rests on professional judgements made by teachers, who will need to support these judgements with evidence.

When asked, the student member (who is in year 13, studying A levels) identified no major issues, however he did highlight that at this stage students do not know what to expect with respect to assessment. It was reconfirmed that clarity in this regard would be provided within the next week.

With respect to A levels, a question was asked about the use of predicted grades and also how the Group intended to deal with the use of standardised assessments, which are in the public domain. In answer to both of these questions, members noted that the emphasis of the process was one of competency based assessment as opposed to a traditional end of year unseen exam approach. It was further noted that internal moderation will play a key role in ensuring that students get a fair grade and additional subject specialists are to be employed to support this process and support the decision making of teachers who have recently qualified. Lastly, it was noted that an extensive training programme is also in place.

With respect to Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) the importance of internal moderation was emphasized. It was further noted that for functional skills multiple opportunities to sit the exams will be provided.

Members noted that the TAG process will involve substantial input from teachers over the next two months, but will also provide considerable professional development.

A further question was asked about whether opportunities to do a repeat year for students under the age of 19 would be offered and it was noted that in the main this would not be made available. For students who are on Educational, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) the pandemic might impact on the amount of learning they will receive; the funding for these students is claimed from local boroughs and the programmes of study often follow a Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) methodology.

Finally, members asked questions about the curriculum and learner experience scorecard which had been appended to the report and the following was noted:

- The retention rate of 76% for apprenticeships should be highlighted as amber (not green);
- In 19/20 the overall retention rate for functional skills and ESOL had been high (95.1% and 93.2% respectively) however corresponding achievement had been low. It was noted that this had been caused by the Centre Assessed Grade process and the availability of assessment opportunities. It is anticipated that for this year, achievement rates will fall within pre 19/20 profiles.

5. APPRENTICESHIPS

This item was considered directly after the minutes. A report was considered and received. The following was noted:

- At the time of the most recent learner number submission to the funding agency there were 1432 active CCCG apprentices; of these 706 are due to complete this year;
- For this academic year there are 1352 starts in scope, of which 706 are showing as continuing; overall retention has dropped from 78.2% to 76% compared to the last learner number submission date. It was further noted that due to the pandemic the number of starts across London has fallen and the fact that the Group has attracted this number of new apprentices is impressive and represents 24% of the total numbers of starts in London (previously the Group's number of starts had been 7%);
- Around three quarters of the Group's apprentices are now on standards schemes (as opposed to frameworks). The achievement of standards have logistical problems because the End Point Assessment (EPA) has three parts to it (Professional discussion, Knowledge exam, portfolio showcase) and there is more risk of the apprentice dropping out after they have completed the parts leading up to this stage (this is the main cause of the drop in retention compared to

previous years). For example, a number of apprentices on the surveying standards scheme have left without the achievement of their EPA because they have achieved a level 3 qualification as part of their studies, and used this to progress to University;

- The Group aims to progress 340 of its apprentices who on standards to the EPA stage by 1st May.

Members recognised the challenges associated with the delivery of apprenticeships, however the issue was raised about how many apprentices are progressing to their intended destination (whether this is in relation to employment or further study) regardless of whether they had achieved the EPA stage. The committee were of the view that this would give an important lens on the success of the Group's apprenticeship offer as compared to just the achievement data associated with the EPA completion. It was agreed that this destination data would be provided at the next meeting.

JC

A question was asked about whether advice and guidance are provided about apprenticeships in other areas of the Group, when students are making course choices. It was confirmed that course advice is provided by curriculum experts who often have expertise in apprenticeships as well; however it was noted that there are very few opportunities for applicants to study apprenticeships who are not in work; currently there are only 8 opportunities.

A further question was asked about possible growth areas for apprenticeships and it was noted that construction represents the biggest growth opportunity. The Group works with employers to gauge demand and is responsive to genuine market signals within the employment market. It was further noted that with respect to Hospitality the level of demand has been negligible during the pandemic however the Group will become a trailblazer with respect to culinary arts apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships and it is expected that within the next 12 to 18 months this will generate considerable demand, assuming that the Governments roadmap for the removal of pandemic restrictions continues.

With respect to apprenticeships in general it was recognised that the decision as to whether to include a qualification within a programme of study that is not part of the EPA is a decision made as part of the business planning process, and is informed by the views of sector bodies.

It was noted that the next meetings were scheduled as follows:
Thursday 13th May 2021 at 5:30pm
Monday 28th June 2021 at 5:30pm

Signed as a correct record: _____

Shane Chowen