

QUALITY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE: 7th OCTOBER 2021

MINUTES

PRESENT	Anthony Smith (Chair), Amelia Sussman, Des Corlis (Staff Member), Simon Horne, Mark Isherwood, Sinem Bozkurt (Student Member), Jennisha Chin (Student Member), Ashton Milton (Student Member)
IN ATTENDANCE	Roy O'Shaughnessy (CEO), Kurt Hintz (Executive Principal), Gary Hunter (Deputy Executive Principal), David Dangana (Director of Quality and Compliance), Jackie Chapman (CCCT Managing Director), Graham Drummond (Director of Governance), Graham Cooper (Clerk)
APOLOGIES	Gemma Simmons-Blench, Asfa Sohail
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	None

The Chair welcomed Sinem Bozkurt and Jennisha Chin, new student members, to their first meeting of the committee and everyone present introduced themselves.

- 1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH JUNE 2021** **Action**
The minutes were agreed as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair.
- 2. MATTERS ARISING**
The committee noted that all matters arising are covered in the agenda for this meeting.
- 3. GROUP QUALITY UPDATE**
The Group Quality Update report was received and considered. The following aspects were noted and discussed:
 - General Qualification results had been released based upon Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs), in line with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and Ofqual guidelines.
 - With respect to A Levels, the achievement rates for 2020/21 had improved further to 83.2%, compared to 79.9% for 2019/20 and 68.8% for 2018/19. This brought achievement to within 3% of the national average of 85.3%. Value added scores had also improved at CIC to 3 (from 5 in 2019/20) and WKC to 2 (from 7 in 2019/20).
 - With respect to GCSE maths and English, a breakdown of grades achieved by subject and college, as well as for the Group overall, was provided. High Grades (Grades 4 to 9) had improved significantly from 35.4% in 2019/20 to 49.3% in 2020/21. Approximately 56% of students who had sat the examinations improved by at least one grade.
 - The committee congratulated the management team on the results, noting these as encouraging, although also noted that A Level achievement rates remained below the national average, which would require attention as part of the 2020/21 Quality Improvement Plan to be discussed later in the meeting. The committee also questioned the meaningfulness of value added scores during the current year, given the TAG process, although accepted that these did show that students had made progress and that the measure was relevant for sector wide comparisons. The committee also noted that the analysis by subject area indicated an absence of meaningful progress in terms of value added in maths, physics and business studies.
 - It was widely expected that a return to examinations in the current year was very likely to result in a dip in value added compared to last year's TAG grades, notwithstanding that, as the Director of Quality and Compliance explained, Ofqual had put in place a framework to allow a period of 'levelling up', with a return to examinations across the board in three years'

time. The Executive Principal provided further explanation, highlighting that students are generally assessed as having performed better when results are based on coursework, and that the TAG process had clearly resulted in grade inflation across the country. It was important to set the targets for next year in this context. He also advised, however, that the extent of the upward movement in the Group's value added scores for A Levels clearly indicated that there had been improvement over and above that element due to grade inflation. He also noted that the mock examinations supported the view that the A Level value added score had improved to around a 5.

- As part of the TAG process, all learners had the opportunity to appeal the grades they received. There had been in excess of 355 Stage One appeals, 64 of which were upheld (albeit 33 of these had been due to a Centre error which was identified on the day the results were released). 38 Stage Two appeals were made to the Awarding Organisations, of which only one was upheld. The committee expressed surprise at the number of Stage One appeals (which seemed high) and also at the number that had been upheld, noting that this might suggest a problem with regard to the quality assurance process. The Director of Quality and Compliance accepted that the volume of upheld complaints had not been acceptable and that where this had been the case, investigations had taken place to identify any specific issues. Where appeals were upheld, there were in relation to administrative errors. There were only a few cases of grades being increased by the awarding body, through appeal.
- With respect to GCSE maths and English achievement, CIC had performed better than WKC and CIC. The committee asked about the reasons and whether there were any learnings from this. The committee also noted that with respect to A Level results, Business, Computer Science, maths, Music Technology and Physics were the worst performing subject areas and asked whether these results correlated with student feedback/satisfaction and/or lower teacher observation grades. The Executive Principal acknowledged these issues, explaining the variances in more detail and highlighting that these were areas included in the Rapid Improvement Plans in the 2020/21 QIP. He explained that the outcomes correlated with the improvements seen in Teaching, Learning and Assessment, with only 3 or 4 teachers now in the performance management process at the CIC Sixth Form Centre. He also highlighted that, with respect to GCSEs and High Grades, the Group's results had previously been above national rates achieved under examination conditions, and it was therefore to be expected that this would again be the case following the re-introduction of examinations this year, with some progress having been achieved in the areas for improvement.
- The committee noted positively, notwithstanding these complicating issues, that the results overall showed an improvement from the last Ofsted inspection.
- The Executive Principal also provided an additional verbal update on the position with the trade unions. The Group had introduced the new TLA policy with effect from 1st August following consultation undertaken last year. This included regular classroom visits by managers to enter classrooms regularly to review the quality of teaching. Alongside this was the 'one thing' teacher self-directed approach to quality improvement, which included access to coaching. The unions had been very supportive of the 'one thing' approach, which was so far working well, but had opposed the policy relating to classroom visits. The unions were also in dispute regarding workloads and the Group's approach to pay. This situation had led to strike action – 2 days last week, 3 days this week and 5 days next week, which overall will have a significant impact on students. The issue was most affecting CBAT (The Centre of Business, Arts and Technology) and CLL [The Centre for Lifelong Learning]. The committee requested that an update report is provided to the next meeting of the committee.
- With respect to student satisfaction, the committee noted the feedback and percentage satisfaction rates for the most recent surveys, as reported, but also asked about the trends. The rates were noted as generally being on a par with the previous year. It was also hoped that these would improve as a result of a return to face to face lessons. The results of this year's post-induction survey showed that a high percentage of students were satisfied with the quality of teaching and learning, with scores typically around 90%. Further straw polls will be undertaken to evaluate the success of measures to address the areas of concern.
- Sinem Bozkurt provided further feedback from a student viewpoint, advising that whilst students were generally pleased to be returning to face-to-face tuition, there had been a degree of disorganisation, especially in the Kings Cross Centre, in relation to room

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allocation/availability and workstations/equipment. She had met with the Head of School to discuss these problems. The Executive Principal acknowledged the issues and provided assurance that these were being addressed, although room capacity was an issue. He undertook to invite the student member to attend a meeting with the Vice Principal to discuss.

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4. APPRENTICESHIPS

A report was presented by the CCCT Managing Director, who, particularly for the benefit of newer members of the committee explained the context – especially the methodology and differences between Frameworks and the more recently introduced Standards, including an explanation of the End Point Assessment process.

The committee noted:

- Retention for 2020/1 was reasonably strong, given the circumstances of the pandemic, at 68.6%.
- Achievement was currently 53.7%, although was likely to increase, since a number of apprentices were still completing the final part of their standard.
- Delays had been caused due to students being furloughed and made unemployed during the pandemic, as they had been unable to gain the experience in the workplace necessary in order to demonstrate competencies. The impact of this was reflected in the difference between achievement for Frameworks (which is not dependent upon final assessments), currently 65.2% and expected to increase slightly as processing is completed - which was in line the national averages, and the significantly lower achievement for Standards at 50% against a national average of 58%, Further explanation was provided of these reasons, and on how apprenticeships in different sectors had been impacted in different ways.
- Overall Achievement was expected to reach c.55%. (with Timely Achievement significantly lower - currently c.32% - due to delays as explained). The national Achievement rate was expected to be about 50% for Standards, but this would not be known until around February.
- The Group's strategy on apprenticeships remains to specialise, reducing the breadth of the offer to areas of high quality that the Group does well, although at the present time there remains a legacy of completing apprenticeships of up to 3 years in areas that the Group has ceased to offer new apprenticeships. Overall, the number of apprenticeships offered has reduced from c. 90 to 35. Going forward, this specialisation is likely to continue, including also a focus on areas where the Group needs to provide progression opportunities.
- The pipeline for apprenticeships is currently seeing higher volumes, especially in areas such as hospitality and construction - as is to be expected as these sectors recover following the pandemic. This is in line with the cautious budget that had been set. Pre-pandemic levels are not, however, yet being seen.
- The committee had previously requested the data reported is split to specifically show 16-18 yr old apprenticeships, which was not included in the report to this meeting, although the CCCT Managing Director explained that during 2020/21, only 15% (153) of the Group's apprentices were 16-18 year-olds and their achievement rate was 70.6%, significantly higher than the overall Achievement rate. This higher achievement was partly due to a higher proportion of them being on the old Frameworks, but also showed that the Group is performing well in this age group.
- The expected overall Achievement rate of 55% compared with a target of 60%. The committee recalled that the Group's apprenticeship provision was one of the aspects that had contributed to the Grade 3 in the last Ofsted inspection and the committee asked whether the management team was concerned about apprenticeships in relation to the expected forthcoming Ofsted inspection, given the current Achievement rate. The Executive Principal assured the committee that the management team recognised the importance of this issue. He advised, though, that there was a wide recognition of the impact of the pandemic on employment and of the delays in completion of apprenticeships. This was expected to moderate Ofsted's view of the data, but Ofsted would wish to be assured that students are getting a very good experience now and that apprentices that have been delayed are now completing in a timely manner. The management team is focusing on being

able to demonstrate this. The QIP provided for later in the meeting set out the areas that let the Group down during the last inspection and the improvements made.

- The committee also asked whether the achievement rate was a factor affecting employers' choice of the Group as their provider for apprenticeships. The CCCT Managing Director advised that employers were not generally concerned, as they know the Group well and have been very satisfied with the online provision and also the return to the classroom. There was an impact, however in relation to organisations such as Local Authorities and the NHS, which go out to tender and often include a minimum Ofsted grade requirement. A Grade 3 precludes the Group from tendering for these contracts, leading the Group to focus on provision for SMEs.

5. ENROLMENT UPDATE

A report was received and considered. The committee noted:

- For 16-18 year-olds, the Group had not reached its target of 9,700 learners, but did expect to reach its contract value of just over 9,000 learners. The shortfall was considered to be partly due to grade inflation arising from the TAG process, with more GCSE students generally achieving grades 9 to 4 and therefore staying at school rather than enrolling at college for Level 1 and Level 2. More data, including numbers for other colleges to show whether the Group has been impacted to a greater or lesser extent, will be available in January and will be reported to the following meeting of the committee. Whilst the Group has not therefore achieved the growth that was hoped for and which would have led to an increase in funding for next year, there was not expected to be any negative impact on funding. Trend data confirmed that there was not a decline in new 16-18 year old learners, which had been a potential concern raised previously. KH
- With regard to AEB funded learners (19 years plus), enrolments were significantly higher than prior year and at c. 97% of target by the end of September. Concerns as to whether adult learners would return post-pandemic had therefore been allayed. The Group earns almost half of its AEB budget from learners that join in August and September and targets had been largely achieved. Overall therefore, whilst there were variances across individual areas, AEB enrolment figures did not give rise to any significant concerns for the College for the current year. There was an awareness that this is not the case for all colleges, some of which have struggled with enrolment. Again, comparative data will be reported to the committee once known, most likely in January. KH
- Whilst AEB learner numbers have grown significantly from 2020/21, this is largely to pre-pandemic levels. There were no concerns regarding the Group's capacity to manage provision for this overall number of students, although it will be necessary to manage resources to accommodate particular areas of growth, Engineering being a particular example. Space availability at the Kings Cross Centre is an ongoing issue, given demand and its already very high level of space utilisation. The Angel centre has also experienced increased demand and the Group is awaiting the outcome of a bid that has been submitted, approved by the Board, to fund construction of additional classrooms.
- Overall average class sizes are 16, the same as prior year. It had been hoped that efficiencies could be delivered by increasing this to 17, but this has not been achieved.

6. IMPROVEMENT PLANS

6.1 2020/21 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)

The committee received the updated 2020/21 QIP and noted:

- Actions fully completed and achieved were:
 - Quality of Education: 10 out of 15 actions, with 5 actions carried over to the 21/22 QIP
 - Behaviours and attitudes: 2 out of 3 actions, with 1 action carried over
 - Personal Development: 1 out of 3 actions, with two actions carried over
 - Leadership and Management: 6 out of 11 actions, with 5 actions carried over
- The Executive Principal provided further detail of the areas where improvements have not been fully achieved and are to be carried over for further improvement, as set out in the QIP and also highlighted specifically the summary of progress achieved since the last inspection. He undertook to provide a final short report to the committee at the next meeting once all the data relating to 2020/21 has been finalised. KH

6.2 2021/22 DRAFT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The committee received the draft QIP for 2021/22. The committee welcomed the clarity of focus of the QIP and noted the key areas for improvement carried forward from the 2020/21 QIP as just explained, as well as new actions identified:

- Quality of Education:
 - Overall and Timely achievement of Apprenticeships
 - A level and technicals value added
 - Continuing to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Centre for Business, Arts and Technology (CBAT) at CANDI & Kings Cross Centre (KCC) at WESTKING Science, Business, Foundation Learning,
 - *New action:* to improve functional skills pass rates, had been added.
- Behaviours and Attitudes:
 - Further improve attendance rates on maths and English programmes.
- Personal Development
 - Increase the proportion of study programme learners who engage in work placements, particularly those on academic programmes.
- Leadership and Management
 - Continue Rapid Improvement Action Plans (RIAP) to provide support and supervision to curriculum and corporate service areas identified through the SAR validation process:
 - 1) BIR RIAP (Exams)
 - 2) CBAT- reduced number of areas in RIAP including; Health & Social, Care, Business, IT, Functional Skills
 - 3) KCC - reduced number of areas in RIAP including English and maths.

Also included in the report were targets, which the Executive Principal explained further, including that the Alps target, on which he invited the committee's view as to whether this should be a 4 rather than a 5 as stated in the paper. The Committee discussed this target and agreed to accept the management team's recommendation, if after further consideration, it concludes that 5 is itself a sufficiently stretching yet achievable target.

The committee sought, and was assured that teaching staff are aware of targets for achievements rates etc, which the Staff Member confirmed.

The Committee **APPROVED** the 2021/22 Quality Improvement Plan

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The committee received for information a copy of its terms of reference, with amendments as previously discussed. These have been considered by the Search Committee and will be recommended for approval at the Group Board meeting on 22nd October.

With respect to membership, the committee noted the intention to seek two new members to replace those who have recently stepped down from the committee.

8. QUALITY CALENDAR 2021/22

The Committee received and noted a copy of the Group's Quality Calendar.

9. FUTURE MEETINGS

Friday 26th November 2021 9:00 – 4:00pm [Full day re SAR validations]

Thursday 27th January 2022 5:00pm

Tuesday 15th March 2022 5:00pm

Thursday 12th May 2022 5:30pm

Tuesday 28th June 2022 5:30pm

Signed as a correct record: _____

Professor Anthony Smith