

QUALITY OVERSIGHT GROUP: 26th JANUARY 2023

TELEPHONE CONFERENCE MINUTES

PRESENT Anthony Smith (Chair), Amelia Sussman, Desmond Corlis, Simon Horne, Nicole Morgan, Gemma Simmons Blanch, Angela Herbert

IN ATTENDANCE Kurt Hintz, David Dangana, Jackie Chapman, Graham Drummond

APOLOGIES Mark Isherwood, Asfa Sohail, Roy O'Shaughnessy, Priscilla Nantongo, Tim Milasevicius

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and then passed on his congratulations to teaching staff and members of the senior team for the achievement of a grade 2 Ofsted inspection, which had taken place prior to the Christmas break. He commented that this outcome would allow the organisation to build on this success and take up opportunities that had not been available whilst operating under the 'requires improvement' grade. Congratulations were also passed onto members of the committee for providing support and challenge over the last three years.

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Action

The minutes of meetings held on 11th October 2022 and 25th November 2022 (SAR Validation) were received and accepted as an accurate record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

All matters arising were included within the agenda.

3. GROUP QUALITY

A report which included the outcomes of the Ofsted Inspection which had taken place in December 2022 along with the quality improvement plan was received.

Whilst the committee recognised and commended the many positive comments that were contained within the draft Ofsted report, the Chair asked the executive team to concentrate their summary of the report on the areas for improvement and 'learning points' that had been identified as part of the Ofsted inspection. The following was noted:

- The College had received a grade 2 across all themes and provision types. It had also received a 'strong' for meeting skills needs, for the which the leadership team was particularly proud. The report provided comment that 'in many curriculum areas, leaders and managers involve employers and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of the curriculum'. It was further noted that inspectors had closely scrutinised the contents of individual courses and how employers had inputted on the delivery and design. Whilst not explicitly included as an area for improvement stated within the report the senior team are of the view that further improvement is possible to ensure that every course has employer input in their design and delivery;
- Other areas for improvement across the organisation are as follows:
 - The way in which exams are delivered and prepared for needs to improve;
 - Apprenticeship achievement rates need to improve;
 - The consistency with which personal social development is delivered needs to improve – for example the importance of 'British values' should be taught to adults and apprentices to the same quality as the way in which they are taught to younger students;
- Whilst the report was highly complementary of the way in which the organisations works with employers there was one comment that 'on a minority of occasions, leaders and governors do not check closely enough on how well subcontractors ensure that apprentices have enough opportunity to apply their learning at work';

The committee welcomed these comments from the executive team and before the Chair allowed members to ask questions, he commented that now that the Group had achieved a grade 2 it was important that governors and leaders ensured that the organisation remained aspirational and that the trajectory of improvement continues. He also asked about how senior leaders and staff in general are to continue to be held accountable for ensuring that this trajectory of improvement continues. The Executive Principal commented that in his view this trajectory and the environment of accountability is to be maintained by the establishment of a programme of external validation, with particular focus on the self-assessment process.

The Chair then asked members to provide challenge and comment. The following views were noted:

- Whilst there is a considerable amount within the report to be proud e.g. curriculum design and assessment, some of the commentary particularly the areas for improvement are bland and generic;
- The achievement of 'strong' for skills needs is to be celebrated as it is fundamental to the mission of Further Education;
- Whilst the aspiration of achieving an 'outstanding' grade is commendable and could be a mechanism to drive further improvements, considering the financial challenges facing General Further Education (GFE) Colleges its achievement may be unrealistic. However, it is important to ensure that the organisation does not 'coast', because this might lead to a deterioration of performance rather than an improvement. Targets within the quality improvement plan could be used as a key reference in this regard;
- A question was asked about whether this committee had sufficient oversight of the quality of teaching and learning delivered by subcontractors. Whilst it was noted that the primary oversight responsibility of subcontractors rested with the audit committee, it was agreed that the quality of teaching and learning delivered by these organisations should be reported to this committee.

JC/GD

It was the view of the staff governor that it was important to maintain the approach to leadership and management, to ensure that further improvements are made.

In response to the issue of whether the College should aspire to achieve an outstanding grade the Executive Principal commented that a more realistic strategy might be to target particular areas to be outstanding, for example High Needs provision is close to outstanding status, however resources are a key factor in this area and local authorities (through which funding is channelled) are looking to make savings. Another area for achieving outstanding might be in the teaching and learning delivered through the skills academies.

The contents of the quality improvement plan were noted by the committee.

4. HIGHER EDUCATION – TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK SUBMISSION

A summary of the College's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission, along with one of the final drafts were considered and received. The following as noted:

- The final version of the TEF document had been submitted the previous day and therefore was included within the report pack for information purposes;
- As had been reported to the committee at its meeting in October only 45 students had been in scope for the official NSS survey for which only a 50% satisfaction rate had been recorded. These 45 students only represent 10% of the College's HE cohort. Further student feedback has been sought via the use of student focus groups which has been more positive in nature. Students have also been the opportunity to input on the contents of the final document.

The committee welcomed the narrative within the document that made reference to the organisation's mission and purpose. It was further noted that the College's track record in meeting the needs of students from an ethnically diverse background had been strengthened within the final document.

5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Director of Governance explained that there was sufficient scope within the committee's schedule to carry out deep dives into particular aspects of teaching and learning or college life. The following areas were suggested as possible areas for the committee to carry out deep dives:

- The performance of skills academies;
- The ability of the College to meet the needs of vulnerable students e.g. high needs and the impact on funding decreases;
- How the student voice is listened to.

It was agreed that the Executive Principal and the Director of Governance would discuss possible topics before the next meeting.

GD/KH

It was noted that Angela Herbert had visited the College recently to explore issues surrounding ethnicity, particularly the performance of black boys at the College. It was further noted that safeguarding posters did not include contact details of black members of staff which might help with some students needing to raise a safeguarding issue. Safeguarding issues surrounding gender were highlighted on posters but there were no examples of issues surrounding race.

6. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

A report was noted and received.

7. ACRONYMS

A report was noted and received.

It was noted that the Executive Principal had visited Luminare in Leeds for three days. The Chair asked him to provide some feedback from the experience. The following was noted:

- The visit had been useful in comparing practice particularly with respect to business planning processes;
- Luminare have kept the local college identities of the sites within their group – this confirmed that CCCG's current approach to branding is the right one;
- The pay to income ratio at Luminare is lower than CCCG and this gives them the ability to provide additional service delivery;
- Heads of School at Luminare are given a high degree of autonomy which is something that CCCG may consider pursuing in the future.

It was noted that this was Gemma Simmons Blanch's final meeting. Gemma was thanked for the enormous contribution she has made to the oversight and scrutiny provided by this committee.

It was noted that the next meeting will take place on the 14th March.