

BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE
QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (“the Committee”)
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 MAY 2020, 5.00PM
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present: K Gilmour (in the Chair) Independent Member
H Knight Independent Member (until Minute 9)
A Parmley Independent Member (from Minute 5)
L Wareing Co-opted Subject Specialist

In attendance: K Coughlan, Director of Quality and Standards
C Dunn, Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement
H Fogg, Director of Higher Education
S Hughes, Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum
D Young (Clerk to the Corporation)

1. Chair and quorum

K Gilmour took the chair and noted that due notice had been given to all Committee members and that a quorum was present. Accordingly, he declared the meeting duly convened and constituted.

2. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no opening declarations of interest.

The Chair declared an interest in the item HE Curriculum Development (at minute 11 below), to the extent that candidates at his organisation were scheduled to join one of the courses the following year. However, this did not preclude the Chair from participating in the discussion for that item.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 April 2020 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

5. Quality and standards scorecard

The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum summarised the results of the circulated dashboard showing progress against a number of quality metrics.

The Committee discussed and raised questions on the possible 'Hawthorne effect' in the context of new online learning and the potential challenges with tracking not only student attendance but also participation and engagement. In response, the Director of Quality and Standards and the Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement provided further detail on the platforms, tools and initiatives B&FC was utilising currently and in the longer term to monitor attendance and engagement effectively.

The Committee noted the content of the dashboard.

6. 2018/19 National Achievement Rate Tables

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise the headline figures for Further Education and Apprenticeships from the National Achievement Rate Tables (NART) published by the ESFA on 29 March 2020, and reminded the Committee of the purpose, approach and context of the annual NARTs.

Following a suggestion from A Parmley and feedback from the other Committee members, it was resolved that additional detail and commentary would be included in future reports to contextualise the data whilst maintaining the essential focus on the measurement of impact, intent and implementation.

ACTION: Director of Quality and Standards

The Committee congratulated B&FC on the positive results.

7. HE Retention Report

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise B&FC's HE retention which the Committee discussed in detail.

The Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement and the Director of Quality and Standards provided additional detail and context in respect of the specific areas explored during the Committee's discussion, including on the potential factors driving the results; the engagement with and support provided to students; B&FC's future aims and objectives, key performance indicators and targets; and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic thereon.

The Committee received the report and noted the content.

8. Future of Learning

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to update the Committee on B&FC's recent development of digital learning, including the issues raised by and the consequences of the unprecedented reliance thereon; B&FC's immediate response during the transitional period; and the longer term planning and investment.

The Committee discussed the report at length, including the importance of enhancing vital social human and emotional interactions and maintaining a sense of community when using on-line learning. The Committee also addressed the importance of student access to the necessary technology, equipment and support; and the wider national issues regarding the availability and effectiveness of technology.

The Director of Quality and Standards provided an overview of B&FC's support and engagement with students, and the diverse range of good practice adopted at B&FC to promote student engagement, participation and interaction in a structured manner.

The Committee thanked and congratulated the team for the excellent report, and was assured of the high-quality learning, teaching and assessment within B&FC in the immediate and longer term.

9. Overview of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Findings

The Director of Quality and Standards introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda to inform the Committee of the learning, teaching and assessment findings from the lesson observations, learning walks and deep dives carried out in 2019/20.

The Committee discussed the report and considered the new initiatives in learning, teaching and assessment, which included priority areas for growth as a consequence of the current pandemic.

In response to questions and comments raised by the Committee about the long-term sustainability of digital and virtual teaching and learning which had been a consequence of the pandemic, the Vice-Principals and Director of Quality and Standards updated the Committee on the progress with the development of B&FC's operational and governance frameworks and refreshed quality management cycle, which would enable standards and standardisation to be shared across the new ways of working and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to be assured.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair commended B&FC for implementing new and innovative methods to continue to deliver high-quality learning, teaching and assessment.

10. Apprenticeships Update

The Vice Principal for Quality and Curriculum presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to provide an overview of apprenticeships performance including B&FC's National Achievement Rate 2018-19 position, the achievement forecast for 2019-20 and apprenticeship reforms, which the Committee considered.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding B&FC's line of sight for the apprenticeship achievement rates to reach the upper decile level, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum reminded the Committee of the context for B&FC's positive performance overall thus far and the expected strategies to enhance B&FC's results to bring them to the level required to be in the top 10%.

The Committee received the report and noted the content.

11. HE Curriculum Development

The Director of Higher Education presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to provide an overview of the HE curriculum development, which the Committee noted was reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure both its continuing fitness for purpose and its alignment with local, regional and national priorities.

The Director of Higher Education reported on the validations that had taken place in-year; the continued enhancements to curriculum development processes and systems to assure the rigour and quality of programme documentation; and the continued review and refinement of the validation process for higher and degree apprenticeships.

In response to questions and comments from L Wareing regarding digitalising and future proofing the delivery of teaching and learning, without compromising the essence of the curriculum and the ideal offering over the longer term, the Director of Higher Education confirmed the blended provision of teaching and learning in place and the focus and scrutiny of this going forward.

The Committee congratulated the team on an excellent report which provided great insight in B&FC's work and opportunities.

The Committee received the report and noted the content.

12. English and Mathematics Report

The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to provide an update on English and mathematics in 2019/20; to share forecast data on GCSE and Functional Skills English and mathematics; and to update the Committee on the latest information on learning, teaching and assessments, including lesson observations.

The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum reported on the positive progress overall with Mathematics and English working remotely during the period, and the encouraging Functional Skills achievement forecast and GCSE performance for 2019/20.

The Committee noted that in view of the cancellation of GCSEs and other external exams, Ofqual guidance on grading and completion of GCSE mathematics and English qualifications in 2019/20 had been published and similar guidance for Functional Skills qualifications was awaited.

The Committee received the report and noted the content.

13. Date, time and venue of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 6 October 2020 at 5.00pm, via teleconference should it not be possible to convene the meeting in person at University Centre.