

BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE
QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 MARCH 2018, 5.00PM
IN ROOM 204 ON THE UNIVERSITY CENTRE CAMPUS

Present: N Farley (in the Chair) Independent Member
A Parmley Independent Member

In attendance: P Howard, PDH Advisory Limited (Clerk to the Corporation)
K Coughlan, Director of Quality and Standards
S Hughes, Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum
C Dunn, Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement

1. Chairman and quorum

Neil Farley 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.

The Clerk advised the Committee that L Wareing had recently accepted a further two-year appointment as co-opted subject specialist to the Committee and the Committee expressed its gratitude for her continuing support to the Corporation.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from H Broughton and L Wareing.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 December 2017 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

4. Mid year reports

(a) Student attendance

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to summarise student attendance for the year-to-date and to outline the actions taken to address any issues. She noted that attendance at B&FC is in line with averages for General Further Education Colleges but that it remained below internal targets and is being monitored and reviewed closely.

In response to a question from A Parmley, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum provided an overview of the structure of a typical college day, and confirmed that a register is taken within the first five minutes of every session. Any students who arrive later than five minutes after the start of the session are recorded as having been late. N Farley noted that student type will also influence attendance, with those who are released by their employer to attend college more likely to have a higher rate of attendance. The Director of Quality and Standards also noted that there are a number of students whose attendance is improving on a weekly basis as a result of continued engagement by the college.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

(b) Retention

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report to summarise B&FC's retention strategies and to provide an overview of performance against this metric. She noted that FE student retention had improved by 0.1% in comparison with the previous year and that the College is forecasting achievement of 96.1% retention for the year. With regard to HE courses, the Director of Quality and Standards noted a slight in-year reduction in retention, although an increase during the remainder of the year is anticipated.

A Parmley commented that an integral part of retention is to ensure that students are enrolled on the correct course for them. The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum agreed with this observation and noted that there is a six-week window at the start of the year for further education students to transfer courses if they wish.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

(c) Apprenticeships

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report to update the Committee on in-year progress with apprenticeships. She noted that all apprenticeships are tracked using an e-portfolio which enables a real-time overview of each student's progress against targets to be monitored. Following discussion, it was agreed that an additional performance metrics of 'minimum level of performance' should be included in future iterations of the report.

N Farley drew the Committee's attention to recent national communications advising that progress with apprenticeships had been slower than planned, and a discussion around apprenticeships from an employer's perspective was held.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

(d) Value-added and attainment

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report to update the Committee on the current value-added and attainment scores and also noted that scores for level 3 technical level and level 2 qualifications would shortly be released. She noted that, increasingly, this information is being used as a proxy measure for performance and highlighted the fact that B&FC also measures this information for 19+ students which is not compulsory.

The Committee noted the progress made in respect of English and maths performance and requested that a further update be provided to the next meeting.

ACTION: Director of Quality and Standards

The Committee **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

(e) Learning, teaching and assessment observations

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report to update the Committee on progress with learning, teaching and assessment observations to date. She confirmed that, as at 17 January 2018, 96% of graded observations had been scored as either outstanding or good. 262 observations had been completed, of which 10% related to entry-level sessions, 64% were further education sessions, 24% were higher education sessions and 3% were observations of non-funded learning sessions.

With regard to the table on page 3 of the report, N Farley requested that further context be provided in future versions of the report to outline the targets. With regard to the variation in observation completion, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum advised that some areas had experienced challenges around releasing staff to undertake observations towards the start of the year but confirmed that this had improved since the date of writing the report.

The Director of Quality and Standards commented that the creation of a database had enabled near-instantaneous sharing of good practice and identification of priority areas for engagement. In response to a question from A Parmley, the Director of Quality and Standards provided an overview of the manner in which staff are supported in the event of a grade 3 or 4 observation.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

(f) Student satisfaction

The Director of Quality and Standards presented a report to advise the Committee of the outcome of three surveys that have been completed during the year-to-date, and a summary of actions that have been taken in response was provided.

With regard to maritime students, the Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum noted that students often wish to know what ship they will be allocated to for their placement, however the College is often unable to provide this information as allocations are done by the shipping companies who often do so shortly before the placement commences. In an effort to address the feedback from students, information packs about each of the ships have been commissioned and students are advised at the start of the course that placements are not confirmed until close to the date of placement.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

5. External examiner's report

The Vice-Principal for Higher Education and Student Enhancement presented a report which confirmed that academic standards continue to be secure and that the quality of learning opportunities effectively supports achievement and success. She thanked L Wareing *in absentia* for the comments she had provided by email.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

6. English and mathematics update

The Vice-Principal for Quality and Curriculum presented a report to summarise in-year progress against the English and mathematics curriculum. Steady progress was noted, with some good improvements being noted in relation to functional skills. In response to a question from A Parmley, the Director of Quality and Standards noted the challenges around handwriting and writing stamina in the English assessments, as students are often not used to writing for extended periods of time.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the report and noted the content.

7. Date, time and venue of next meeting

The next meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee will be held on 15 May 2018, 5.00pm on the University Centre Campus.