

Standards Improvement Committee Minutes

Meeting held on Thursday 9th June 2022 at 5.30 pm, Redcar and Cleveland College H202 and via Teams

- Governors:** Sam Beel (Staff Governor), Phil Cook (Chief Executive and Group Principal), Vanessa Housley, Katy Ludgate, Dot Smith (Chair), Anne Vickers and Gary Wright
- Apologies:** Simon Wood and Mark White
- Officials:** Phil Blewitt (NETA Managing Director), Jason Faulkner (College Principal Redcar and Cleveland College), Lesley Graham (College Principal Stockton Riverside College), Phil Hastie (Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure), Erika Marshall (Group Director of Marketing), Gary Potts (Group Vice Principal Business, Innovation and Partnerships), Ben Robinson (College Principal Bede), Sarah Thompson (Clerk to the Corporation), Peter Wood (Interim Group Director of Quality) and Sam Young (Governance Support Officer)
- In attendance:** Lesley Monaghan (Head of FE Directorate Territorial Team – North, Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA))

The Chair welcomed attendees who had joined the meeting, both in person and on Teams; she then introduced Lesley Monaghan, Head of the FE Directorate Territorial Team – North for the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who had been invited to attend the meeting.

The Chief Executive shared the news of the recent sudden death of Mick Hickey, former Group Executive Director Quality and Standards, and explained that a card would be sent to Mick's family on behalf of staff and governors. Governors and officials shared anecdotes, agreeing that Mick would be fondly remembered.

SIC22/20 Agenda Item 1 – Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the Standards Improvement Committee meeting held on 18 February 2022 had been circulated and were **approved** as an accurate record.

Members considered the actions arising from previous meetings; all actions due had been completed or were on the agenda for the meeting, with an ongoing action for report writers to articulate risks more fully in all reports. The College Principal Stockton Riverside College (SRC) gave a verbal update on the ongoing action to report on the Construction, Professional and Service Industries (CPSI) Department Improvement Plan; a new Head of Department had taken up post in January and was working well with the team, with improvements seen in attendance for both 16-18 and 19+, including tutorials. A new Programme Area Lead (PAL) Construction, Engineering and Design (CED) had also been appointed and would take up post in July.

Members commented positively on the Gender Innovation in Engineering (GINE) project presentation circulated with the meeting papers and it was noted that, following the success

working with Preston Primary School, the team would be starting work with another primary school. The Managing Director NETA reported that three or four headteachers had expressed interest following the team's presentation at the Education Matters group. He also highlighted work on sourcing correctly fitting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including overalls, for girls in Key Stages 3 and 4. The increase in current applications from girls for 2022 was noted. Vanessa Housley, who had facilitated the Education Matters presentation, thanked the Managing Director NETA and the NETA team for their responsiveness and for accepting the subsequent invitation to a Sutton Trust roundtable event at short notice. The Managing Director NETA added that they were hoping to use some of the bp funding for school engagement work in Redcar to extend the GINE project and members commented on the positive outcomes from both GINE and The Girls' Network.

Progress against actions was **noted**.

SIC22/21 Agenda Item 2 – Ofsted Update

An inspection update, including a draft copy of the Ofsted inspection report and the group's draft response, had been circulated with the meeting papers.

The Chief Executive reported that he had communicated the Ofsted inspection outcomes to the Further Education Commissioner, Shelagh Legrave, who had responded that staff should be proud of the outcomes. He added that he was aware that staff expectations and aspirations had been high with, Outstanding set as the target; in his feedback following the inspection he had therefore reminded staff of the journey from SRC's Requires Improvement grade in 2012, Redcar and Cleveland College's (RCC's) Inadequate in 2017 and NETA's poor financial and quality position five years ago. He added that, in 2019-20, no Etc. provision had been self-assessed as Outstanding and the journey from there had been clearly manifested by those areas now graded Outstanding – behaviour and attitudes; personal development; leadership and management; and education programmes for young people – though the group had just lacked the 'wow' factor to be judged Outstanding overall. He added that the inspection outcomes laid a strong foundation for the group, with the next Ofsted inspection scheduled for several years' time.

A staff governor commented that the experience of staff at RCC had been in marked contrast to the last Ofsted inspection; knowing the improvements made since then, staff had not been panicked or worried and, although they would have liked Outstanding across the board, they had been excited by the result.

The Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure, and Ofsted Nominee, commented that the draft report read well and particularly reflected on the inclusion of the word 'transformed'; he explained that, having received the draft report the previous day, the group had five working days to respond with comments. Grammatical and factual errors were being collated and would be included in the feedback; for example, Etc. had not established the Girls' Network and not all participants were from disadvantaged backgrounds. The group would also request some changes to phrasing; for example, 'a rigorous governance model is in place', rather than 'leaders have in place a rigorous governance model'.

The Interim Group Director of Quality then highlighted the positive comments on the impact of the group on people's lives and the community and added that, as well as encouraging parents to want their children to study at one of Etc.'s colleges, the report would also make a positive impression on existing and potential stakeholders.

A member felt that the inspectors had enjoyed their time at Etc., had been at ease [REDACTED].

The potential impact of the inspection coinciding with A Level exams at Bede was discussed, with a member noting that inspectors could have missed evidence of meta cognition in action and Bede's influence on teaching practice across the group. The College Principal Bede agreed that there could have been an element of this but that inspectors had been aware of the timing of the inspection and handled it appropriately. He added that Bede staff had been proud of what they had achieved and felt that they were working for an Outstanding provider. The Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure highlighted that inspectors had been impressed by Bede and that their observations there had contributed to the Outstanding grade for education programmes for young people. The Chief Executive reminded governors that they would need to remain focused on the areas for improvement and weaknesses identified by Ofsted.

The Chair commented on the strong performance from governors who had contributed to the governors' session with Glenise Burrell, the lead inspector for Leadership and Management. They had covered work across all committees and led a conversation which had demonstrated that governors had a strong awareness of the full range of student experience.

The timing of the report's publication on the Ofsted website was discussed and members noted that it would usually be published 38 working days after inspection, with the group having five working days to raise any complaints following receipt of the final report. In response to a member's question, the Group Executive Director Planning and Infrastructure explained that the intention was to initiate a dialogue with Ofsted around the two areas for improvement listed, particularly as one had not been discussed as an area for improvement during the inspection. The Chief Executive confirmed that a communications plan was in place to coincide with publication of the report and would be framed within the group's Tone of Voice.

Members **noted** the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection and that, following a dissemination event, governors and staff would be notified about changes to inspection from September 2022.

SIC22/22 Agenda Item 3 – Updated Self Assessment Report

The Interim Group Director of Quality presented the circulated SAR, updated following Performance Review (PR) 6. Given the timing of the Ofsted inspection, members agreed that there was no need for further comment or discussion.

Members **noted** the updated SAR.

Erika Marshall left the meeting.

SIC22/23 Agenda Item 4 – Quality and Performance Update 2021-22

The Interim Group Director of Quality presented the circulated update on quality and performance.

4.1 – Group Performance Outcomes 2020-21

Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR) had now been published and included a smaller number of qualifications than usual due to the use of teacher and centre assessed grades during the pandemic, with, for example, A Level qualifications not included; QAR rates for the group for retention and achievement compared well against national rates (NR). The Interim Group Director of Quality highlighted that apprenticeship achievement rates for 2020-21 had been +[REDACTED]% on the NR, continuing a three-year trend above NR; he added that the [REDACTED]% drop in achievement nationally reflected the national impact of the pandemic on apprenticeships.

4.2 – Key Performance Indicators

The report included progress against in year key performance indicators (KPIs) for 2021-22, including 16-18 and 19+ attendance, education and training retention, and apprenticeships. It also provided an outline of staff development plans for the following academic year and the Interim Group Director of Quality highlighted that the continuing professional development (CPD) model would incorporate four key elements – reflective practice, individual research projects, collaborative research work and a focus on embedding practice and on celebrating success. This approach aimed to move from compliance to pedagogy and creativity. Learner voice plans for the following year would build on the model currently in place which combined formal mechanisms for student engagement and naturally occurring opportunities to capture learner voice. The Interim Group Director of Quality also outlined plans to reduce consultancy input in the curriculum review process to enable middle managers to develop their expertise through increased involvement in review teams; he added that Ofsted had recognised the strength of the middle leadership team.

A member commented on the national context of falling 19+ attendance as learners were having to make a choice between work and education and asked how, if we expected the economic situation to get worse, the group could minimise hardship for young people, citing the Poverty Proofing service offered by Children North East. A member agreed that the pressures from cost of living increases and travel costs would get worse and noted that although the Association of Colleges (AoC) lobbied nationally on these issues, there was work to do locally. The College Principal RCC highlighted the successful use of Learner Support Funds in overcoming financial barriers; he added that the group strategies on tackling missed learning had been noted during the Ofsted inspection but that more work was needed to capture and share best practice. The committee discussed the use of student voice activities and focus groups to gauge student awareness of the support available and whether the same remote delivery strategies developed during the Covid pandemic could be developed to make access to education easier for learners by reducing travel and time costs. The Interim Group Director of Quality agreed that he would initiate discussion by the Senior Management Team (SMT) on levels of student awareness of the support available and assurance mechanisms for

evaluating the impact of this support on attendance, and would also consider including this as a Group Improvement Plan (GIP) focus in 2022-23.

Members **noted** the update and that the group continued to maintain its strong position in relation to the latest published national rates.

SIC22/24 Agenda Item 5 – Group Improvement Plans

The Interim Group Director of Quality presented the circulated report and the four GIPs on Apprenticeships, Missed Learning, Teaching and Learning, and Value Added, updated following Performance Review (PR) 6.

A member asked whether all actions in the GIPs would be completed by the end of the year or whether some would be carried forward to the next year; the Interim Group Director of Quality explained that the PR9 update, delayed due to the Ofsted inspection, would be available shortly and that the aim was to close as many actions as possible by the end of the year. He added that some would be carried forward due to being longer term themes.

Apprenticeships

The Group Vice Principal Business, Innovation and Partnerships confirmed that all actions would be complete following PR9, with the exception of the employer feedback response rate; despite the actions taken, the response rate to the employer survey remained lower than would be liked and the action would be rolled over to the following year.

Missed Learning

The Interim Group Director of Quality highlighted that actions taken through this GIP, both in terms of wellbeing and resilience and teaching and learning, had been acknowledged by Ofsted inspectors; he was therefore confident that the GIP was having an impact. Members discussed how long learners might continue to need support for missed learning, with one member referencing National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) findings that the impact had been very significant in early years, with a lower impact on older students, and that there were variations between curriculum areas; the most significant impact had been on disadvantaged learners. It was noted that consideration would be given to how long a Missed Learning strategy would need to remain in place.

Teaching and Learning

The Interim Group Director of Quality highlighted that the themes of the Teaching and Learning GIP would probably change for the following year, with more emphasis on staff development; the actions from this year's GIP would be closed by the end of the year and new themes developed for 2022-23.

Value Added

The College Principal Bede commented that he had been pleased with the progress made on the Value Added GIP, noting that it was closely linked to the Teaching and Learning GIP; he added that consideration would be given to whether to continue a separate Value Added GIP or whether value added should be an impact target within the Teaching and Learning GIP. He commented that Bede results were anticipated to show positive value added but that this

would only be measurable following this year's A Level results; he then added that initial A Level exam nerves had subsided once the exams started.

Members **noted** the update and that the 2021-22 GIPs would be closed down after PR9 and improvement themes would be confirmed through the group's self-assessment process.

SIC22/25 Agenda Item 6 – Areas for Improvement Update

The Chair thanked college principals for their comprehensive progress updates on areas for improvement not included in GIPs. The College Principal Bede highlighted, in particular, the increase in applications to Sutton 30 universities, especially from disadvantaged learners, which evidenced the successful strategies to raise aspirations and develop the resilience of students in a post-pandemic world.

Members **noted** the update, which gave them assurance that areas for improvement identified in college SARs, but not included in GIPs, were being successfully addressed.

SIC22/26 Agenda Item 7 – Subcontracting Quality Monitoring including Subcontracting Standard

The Group Vice Principal Business, Innovation and Partnerships presented the circulated report providing information on the quality data and monitoring activities for subcontracted provision, including actions taken in preparation for the introduction of the ESFA's Subcontracting Standard, mandatory for 2022-23. He added that he had been pleased with the positive feedback on subcontracting in the draft Ofsted report and that the quality of provision had been triangulated by inspectors who had talked directly with subcontractors.

He reported that contracts for apprenticeships with Teesside University and Flexi Training were being wound down due to quality issues, with no further contracts. Achievement and retention for apprenticeships delivered through Teesside University had been affected by COVID-19, with apprentices withdrawing from programmes to concentrate on their roles as senior managers. Work was ongoing to build engagement with the employer to ensure apprentices subcontracted to Flexi Training were supported to achieve their end point assessment (EPA).

In response to a member's question, the Group Vice Principal Business, Innovation and Partnerships confirmed that the audit of subcontracted provision had been clean and that external assurance audit certificates would be issued to both the ESFA and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) by the 31st July 2022 deadline.

Members **noted** the update.

SIC22/27 Agenda Item 8 – Higher Education Update

The College Principal SRC presented the circulated report prepared by the Group Head of HE and Skills who had been unable to attend this re-arranged meeting; she highlighted that he now had responsibility for all higher level prescribed provision in addition to Teesside University franchised provision. The report included data on attendance, retention and forecast achievement and an update on progress against areas for improvement from the 2020-21 HE Self Evaluation Document (SED). The College Principal SRC highlighted that

achievement was forecast to be above NR across the board and starting to come back in line with pre-Covid rates. Following changes to the Ofsted framework for inspecting Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and in preparation for Etc.'s inclusion in a future Ofsted inspection of Teesside University's ITE provision, an external consultant quality review of ITE had taken place in April. This had been broadly positive though discrepancies in the quality of mentoring at Stockton and Redcar had been highlighted and, as a result, a specific improvement plan had been devised in collaboration with the delivery departments and the central Etc. quality team.

In response to a member's question, the College Principal SRC explained that Etc. ITE trainees were mentored by Etc. staff and that, in order to improve mentors' engagement with the training programme, it had been decided to close recruitment to ITE provision at Redcar and consolidate provision at Stockton; this would allow a stronger emphasis on the quality of mentoring. A member commented that high quality mentoring was crucial for ITE so it was important that take up of mentor training was maximised. The College Principal Bede highlighted that there were three ETF (Education and Training Foundation) accredited Advanced TLA (Teaching, Learning and Assessment) mentors at Bede and that Judith Myers, Head of Sixth Form, had developed a mentoring strategy; he added that they would be keen to share best practice.

A staff governor commented that mentor training tended to start at the busiest time of the academic year and that moving it forward to August could help to increase participation. The College Principal RCC added that the mentors at RCC, selected for their vocational expertise, may have had less academic experience.

The College Principal SRC confirmed that the results of this year's National Student Survey (NSS) were due to be released on 6th July and would be circulated to committee members; as the internal survey results for this cohort had been positive it was anticipated that the NSS results would show an improvement on 2021. A member asked if HE students' concerns raised in previous learner surveys had been addressed and the College Principal SRC confirmed that a dedicated HE common room, with kitchen facilities, had been provided at SRC, with catering outlets also open in the evenings.

The Chair asked the College Principal SRC to pass on the committee's thanks to the Group Head of HE and Skills for his report and members **noted** the update.

SIC22/28 Agenda Item 9 – Governor Teaching and Training Walkthroughs

An update on learning walks completed, with governor feedback, had been circulated; committee members were also encouraged to consider undertaking learning walks and to highlight their value to all governors. The Chair commented on the positive feedback received from Rachel Beeken following her first learning walk at SRC in March 2022 and encouraged members to arrange further walks in the next academic year. The Chief Executive added that governor involvement in learning walks and frequent meetings with staff and students had been noted in the Ofsted inspection report and that governor participation also demonstrated to staff the value governors place on teaching and learning.

Members **noted** learning walk feedback and the importance of arranging learning walks and encouraging all governors to undertake these.

SIC22/29 Agenda Item 10 – SAR and Master Targets Schedule

The Interim Group Director of Quality presented the proposed timelines for the 2021-22 self-assessment and 2022-23 quality master targets process; as the self-assessment process had been well received by staff this academic year it was proposed that this would be rolled over to 2022-23. He clarified that, due to the Ofsted inspection, the initial training to managers would now be delivered on 22nd June rather than 8th June.

In response to a member's question, the Interim Group Director of Quality confirmed that SAR validation would take place during the first two weeks of September and that governors would be invited to attend, alongside SMT.

Members **approved** the timeline for self-assessment and master targets.

SIC22/30 Agenda Item 11 – Any Other Business

The Chair noted that this had been the last Standards Improvement Committee meeting for three valued colleagues, Gary Potts, Ben Robinson and Katy Ludgate, and, on behalf of the committee, thanked them for their work and wished them luck in their new posts. There were no further items of other business.

The Chair thanked attendees for their reports and contributions.

SIC22/31 Agenda Item 12 - Approval of Documents for Public Inspection

It was **agreed** that the agenda of the current meeting be made available for public inspection; supporting documents, with the exception of the report for agenda item 9, were all deemed confidential for reasons of commerciality. Minutes would be made available following approval and consideration at the next meeting.

SIC22/32 Agenda Item 13 – Dates, times and venue / format of future meeting

The following dates were agreed for 2022-23:

6 October 2022, 5.30 pm

1 December 2022, 5.30 pm

23 March 2023, 5.30 pm

15 June 2023, 5.30 pm

Venues and formats for these meetings were subsequently discussed with the Committee Chair and circulated to members.

SIC22/33 Agenda Item 14 – Key Themes

The following key themes were identified:

- Update on Ofsted inspection held 23 to 26 May and consideration of draft report received and suggested amendments; very positive comments from inspectors re curriculum delivery, student support and leadership and management were noted

- Updated Self Assessment Report
- Reviewed quality and performance data and discussed the impact of current financial pressures on 19+ attendance and retention
- Group Improvement Plans (GIPs), updated for PR6, and overview of areas for improvement not included in GIPs, with SMT leads confident that all actions in the GIPs and areas for improvement not included in GIPs would be complete by end of academic year.
- Subcontracting quality monitoring, including positive feedback by Ofsted on strong partnerships with subcontractors
- Higher Education update including outcomes of external consultant review of Initial Teacher Education in preparation for Teesside University Ofsted inspection
- Approved proposed timelines for 2021-22 Self Assessment process and 2022-23 master targets

(The meeting ended at 7.15 pm)

Approved at a meeting held on 6 October 2022