

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION & STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT 4.30 PM ON 8 JULY 2024 IN THE BOARDROOM AT STAFFORD COLLEGE**

Present: Alan Aston, Sam Barber, Craig Hodgson, David O'Neill, Lesley Rollason (Chair), Francis Tunney

In attendance: Andy Bailey (Head of Compliance and Governance), Georgina Barnard (Director of IoT), Gavin Barker (Assistant Principal), Shelley Brown (Director of Curriculum and Performance), Denise Dunn (Assistant Principal), Carl Riding (Director of Work Based Learning and Estates), Jeremy Pert (as an observer)

- 24.2.1 Shelley introduced the College's new CPD Manager, Cassie McLelland, and Co-ordinators, Heather Rushton and Alex Brown, who have recently taken up their posts and who have made a really strong start.

They presented information on the position to date and their plans going forward, covering the following key points:

- The timeline in the development of CPD since November 2022, trialled in A Levels in the 2022-23 academic year, with a new approach and improvements year on year culminating in a bespoke approach following feedback from staff.
- A pilot on some of the new approaches was then further undertaken in January 2024 in Skills and Technology and Professional Studies, alongside faculties having CPD Champions.
- The buy in from staff and the culture change has been pleasing. The staff see that the new approach is relevant to what they need rather than a one size fits all offering.
- For the newly amended CPD proposal for 2024/25, programmes will be tailored to what particular areas need for both managers and staff in order to capture individual and organisational needs.
- Delivery is via bespoke options to cater for all ranges of experience in the teaching staff. The Teaching School programme provides nurturing and support for both unqualified, newly qualified and teachers who are early in their career. This includes personal touches and extra elements to support their needs, again based on feedback received.
- Faculty staff are given the opportunity to choose 12 sessions through the academic year from a range of offerings, dependent on the needs identified. Each faculty has a programme which differs at each site. In addition, Curriculum Managers will direct CPD where needed on a case by case basis.

- The approach helps staff to feel connected and work together across areas and share different approaches, information and knowledge with each other. Many sessions are interactive, not teacher led.
- The Aspiring Leadership Programme has been developed to move appropriate staff into and through the levels of management roles within the College.
- Teaching and Learning Coaches and Curriculum Managers and Leaders will also participate in CPD, based on individual needs.
- Aspects of the CPD offer arise from issues identified through QoERs, staff appraisals etc.
- It is felt important to be able to close the loop and measure the impact that the new approach is having which will be sought through QoERs, student voice, teacher feedback etc.
- Peer observations will play an important role giving colleagues the opportunity to watch each other teach, share ideas etc. In addition self-observation and reflection on what went well and what could be improved will be key.
- Innerdrive, an online platform, has been purchased by the College where blended learning can be offered focussing on strategies to use in the classroom – classroom management, resilience etc.
- The Teaching and Learning Forum will be recommenced, again to facilitate staff sharing practice, discussing their approach etc. An NSCG Podcast is also planned.
- Two other programmes will sit alongside; a Tutor programme and also an Induction programme which will review the current system and develop a rolling programme of appropriate training.
- CPD champions will be sought from faculties to help with the delivery and facilitate the programme (as per the trial in 2023-24).
- Curriculum Managers will advise their staff to identify appropriate sessions that they think should be attended but staff will also identify their own needs and use the online booking system that is to be rolled out.

Lesley asked about the anticipated end point for the development of staff, and Cassie advised that it is envisaged that the needs of staff will constantly evolve and progression will keep changing, as new trends are introduced, in order to remain up to date and stay ahead of the curve.

Shelley added that very useful information was gathered through the pilots undertaken and it was incredibly pleasing to see areas traditionally difficult to engage completely on board and providing really positive feedback.

Lesley queried whether the Ofsted skills agenda would be included and it was noted that the skills element is being embedded into the programme.

Shelley confirmed that the College has previously offered mandated CPD but the new approach is more meaningful to individual needs and, therefore, is showing far greater buy in and success.

It was agreed that a progress update will be provided to the Committee later in the year.

#### **24.2.2 2023-24 Predicted Achievements and Ofsted Preparation**

Shelley drew members' attention to the predicted achievement data, compared with last year's and that for 2018-19, which was before CAGs and TAGs were used during the disruption of the Covid period.

Members were very pleased to note that the overall predicated achievement rate is currently a very strong 90.5%.

Shelley noted that through drilling down, we are aware of individual courses which give cause for concern and we have a robust plan to address these issues.

Members noted that there are a few areas where we have seen a decline eg in Skills and Technology, although it still remains above the national average, and Shelley confirmed that the various issues leading to this have been identified and are being worked through. Members were reminded of the position with Early Years and Health and Social Care at Stafford which gave cause for concern last year, but Shelley was pleased to confirm that following intervention and support, these are now standing at 90.1% achievement.

Some issues with retention were highlighted.

Predicted A Level high grades for 2023-24 were discussed and members noted that some areas underestimate the prediction, whereas other areas overestimate, but in general Shelley confirmed the expectation that this will come in around 55% (59% the previous year) (including Criminology elements and the EPQs)

Attendance for 2023-24 has been a focus throughout the year and Shelley reported that our overall position is strong against the sector at around 89%. Pleasingly we measure up well against the Sixth Form Colleges Association data. Members noted the link between strong attendance and high grades.

Discussion took place about persistent absences and the various struggles with parental attitudes, students who had high absenteeism when at school, students with caring responsibilities etc and members noted that the College teams work hard to pick up and deal with absences and provide support where possible.

The curriculum focus going forward was considered and it was noted that the defunding of Level 3 qualifications could possibly be affected by the new Government, but Shelley confirmed that the College is planning to

push forward with moderate growth in T Levels with c750 enrolments in September.

Adult provision will be a focus, linking with our IoT offer, and plans are also in place to look at working with adults around the LSIP priorities at an offsite venue once a suitable location has been identified.

In English and maths work will continue to strengthen our performance.

AI and the different strands of this eg staff use, student use will need to be a focus. It was noted that for students AI is a huge opportunity and we need to educate them about how to use AI ethically and appropriately. This will be undertaken through our skills development and professional preparation sessions and through tutorials.

For staff, Teachermatic has been developed which is a framework overlaying chat GBT and which allows staff to create resources and plans of work very efficiently.

Members noted that AI is one of the most significant developments which could change the landscape of education and help with staff workload although it was noted that any work generated through AI does need to be carefully checked. Craig added that the mind-set of the user needs to be changed from creator to editor.

Members noted the new branding and approach to skills development – Skill Up, Stand Out – consisting of ten key skills we want students to develop whilst they are with us with evidence tracking throughout their journey at college where students self-evaluate followed by validation by the staff. This will highlight where any additional support and interventions are required. Gavin confirmed that the two consultants had been really impressed with this approach and considered it to be one of our USPs.

Be Xtraordinary is another branding bringing together all the Xtras activities under one easy to identify banner.

Members all commended the excellent work of the College's Marketing team in pulling this new branding together so professionally.

Shelley went through the activities undertaken over the past 12 months to ensure we are fully prepared for Inspection, both in terms of areas we feel are strong, and those we have identified as needing extra support.

Alan referred to possible bespoke governor training and it was agreed that this could be explored. Shelley confirmed that the governor sessions will be strengthened from September. Andy added that the ETF training platform, which is now receiving very positive reviews across the sector, is now available for all governors.

Shelley outlined the Ofsted preparation plans for over the summer where crib sheets for staff, governors, managers and employers will be developed now we have all the intelligence we need and can provide the most up to date information. The Curriculum Strategy, SAR and QIP will be finalised.

She confirmed that the biggest priority for teachers will be to settle the students in at the start of the term. The first week will concentrate on all the induction activities, so that everyone settles in quickly and teaching can commence as soon as possible.

Francis asked about when Ofsted will start looking at this year's results instead of last year's. Shelley advised that Exeter College had been inspected in October 2023 and they had used the previous year's data but also had summary updated information prepared in readiness, although the validated data is not available until Christmas.

Student briefings will be commenced in September.

Shelley stressed the importance of making a strong start to the new academic year.

#### **24.2.3 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Sarah Burns and Mark Ormerod. Jeremy Pert was in attendance as an observer and was welcomed to the meeting.

#### **24.2.4 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **24.2.5 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2024**

Approved as a true record of the meeting.

#### **24.2.6 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **24.2.7 Self-Assessment Report & Quality Improvement Plan**

Shelley confirmed that the SAR has been tweaked since the previous version considered by members, with the addition of the introduction. She reminded members that this relates to last year and moving into an inspection year we will be tweaking this document further as appropriate.

Members considered the plan and felt that the last sentence needs to be strengthened so that the document finishes with a strong statement regarding the strategically focussed Board. Shelley agreed to revisit this.

Alan queried the fact that it is a self-assessment document but contains no areas for improvement and it was noted that, following the comments made at the last meeting, the strength of some of the wording has been amended along with the inclusion of A Level areas (Chemistry/Maths and GCSE English and Maths) and a reference to some vocational provision.

Jeremy asked if we could include references to meeting the local skills need which was agreed.

Shelley drew members' attention to the latest QIP which has been developed from the curriculum teams' own area plans. This follows the

model used by Exeter for their inspection, with a RAG rating which shows clear actions. Members noted that the QIP is broken down into the same sections as the SAR, RAG rated at 3 progress points in November 2023, February and July 2024 which shows the process of review undertaken and demonstrates the journey at progress points throughout.

Shelley confirmed that this is currently being finalised and an updated version will be presented to the Corporation. She asked for any further tweaks to be passed to Joy.

#### **24.2.8 Learner Data Report**

Members had considered the Learner Data Report in advance of the meeting and the following queries and points were raised:

- Attendance is showing improvement following the significant amount of intervention undertaken.
- The efforts of the Work Placement Team in securing students' work experience was commended.
- The significant number of applications received for 2024-25 was noted and Craig explained that we are constrained by physical capacity. Following last year's growth we are already at the limits accommodation and teaching resource wise. We have recruited 50 new teachers but in order to protect the quality of our offer and the experience we are able to provide to students, the decision was taken to close to new applications in June. We are aware that this is a risk to the College, but it is felt that continuing to accept applications would be a greater risk. Craig confirmed that we will honour those offers already made and will review the position after GCSE results day.
- We are already working to create extra classroom accommodation and Craig advised on the discussions with the DfE as there is significant growth expected in Stoke, Newcastle and Stafford according to the ONS. The increase in T Levels and associated teaching hours, alongside the increase in maths delivery, further compound the issue. Jeremy queried whether Ofsted would look at this differently and that it might be better to offer provision to meet LSIP demands, looking at other local providers' offer and closing off courses where students can go elsewhere. Craig advised that there is significant unmet demand in Staffordshire for certain curriculum strands, eg electrical engineering where recruiting staff is a problem and specialist accommodation is needed. The main issue is a capacity problem with such significant levels of growth and the lack of forward planning by the DfE is something that they need to address, and is not considered to be an individual college problem. He felt strongly that the College's approach should be to continue to offer a broad-based curriculum.

#### **24.2.9 Election of new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee**

Andy advised that this is Lesley's last meeting as Chair of the Committee, although she will be attending Corporation next week. Everyone thanked

Lesley for her contributions and for expertly Chairing the Committee over the years.

Andy drew attention to the question of the new Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee and outlined the proposal for Alan Aston to be elected as the new Chair; **this was considered and agreed.**

In light of the consequent vacant Vice Chair position, Andy outlined the proposal for Francis to be elected Vice Chair; **this was considered and agreed.**

#### **24.2.10 Any Other Business**

There were no items of other business.

#### **24.2.11 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

To be confirmed as part of the 2024-25 Meetings Calendar