

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION & STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 3 DECEMBER 2018 AT NEWCASTLE COLLEGE

Present: Alan Aston, Karen Dobson, David O'Neill, Lesley Rollason (Chair), Lynsey Shearsmith, Francis Tunney

In attendance: John Prescott (Clerk), Carol Thomas (Director of Curriculum & Performance), Carl Riding (Assistant Principal: Strategic Employer Partnerships)

18.3.1 NSCG Performance 2017-18

Karen Dobson gave a presentation on this year's performance which identified the performance at both centres individually along with the overall picture. She advised that the ESFA will publish data for the Group and separate sites next year. Ofsted have stated that for 2019-20 they will inspect the whole College, but in subsequent years this may change.

In 16-18, level 1 performance is very good and, although there is a slight drop in franchise performance, the whole college result remains above the headline rate. Level 2 shows an improving picture at Stafford, with the whole college again being above the national average. Level 3 non A Level provision for Stafford is 95% and for NULC 94.6% with high numbers of students, therefore, a very pleasing result. Members noted the issues relating to the A2 at NULC and Karen advised that our results for the 2 year linear A Levels are better than those for much of the sector, but there is no standard approach yet with some schools and colleges still offering AS. Our current year 2 retention is better than the previous year and we are higher than the expected headline rate. All level 3 shows that we are above the headline rate except in franchise which is again a very good result with large numbers of students involved. 16-18 All performance shows an improvement from last year and Karen confirmed that we are very pleased with this result with over 7,500 students in this area.

Members noted the 19+ information. At level 1 there is a drop in performance and starts at Stafford, reduced from 366 to 68 due to measures taken by the College to reduce areas of this provision with the focus now on English and Maths and ESOL to secure improvements in performance. Overall Group performance has increased and we are substantially above what is already a very high benchmark. Carol reported on some of the actions we are taking to ensure that students are ready to embark on longer GCSE courses. Karen explained that there is an additional complication coming in future with the introduction of the need to tender for students who come from areas with a devolved budget, which may lead to a further withdrawal of provision. Level 2 is disappointing at Stafford, with issues relating to retention in English and Maths and members noted the initiatives introduced to ensure improvements in this area. 19+ Level 3 overall is expected to be around the national average with areas requiring focus already identified and work underway. 19+ overall is expected to be above the national average this year, with strong franchise performance and from our data

we can see that Stafford is where we need to focus for improvement.

In overall Level 1 all ages, performance at Stafford has had a negative impact. All Level 2 is good everywhere and very good as a whole College. Karen advised that English GCSE results were good and better than anticipated, but Maths was disappointing in terms of results, however, progress in Maths is strong. All L3 is very strong and far in excess of the national average for both sites.

Under overall achievement for education and training we see strong performance, edged up from what was a very high point last year, to 89.3% this year, once again placing us in the top 10-20 of colleges nationally.

Karen drew attention to apprenticeship achievement with performance going back 5 years and the different age categories. The dip in the 24+ line in 2015-16 was due to the issues with subcontracting at Stafford which have now been resolved. Carl advised that much time has been spent since merger resolving Stafford's issues, resulting in a substantial recovery. Merged data shows improvements generally, with a slight dip at NULC in 2016-17, but recovery at both campuses last year resulted in a really strong performance and very little difference now between the two campuses. We are above the overall benchmark in performance at both sites. Carl advised that the 2018-19 year is the last year when any legacy issues from Stafford will impact on our data. Going forward, Karen reminded members of the complications arising from the introduction of the levy and non-levy contracts, with other partner activity thrown into the mix, and the transition from frameworks to standards.

Recruitment in apprenticeships was discussed and Karen advised that we are targeting more of our own finishing 18 year olds for whom an apprenticeship could be a viable option. Gareth Hughes, our Schools Liaison Manager, will be working with the Work Based Learning Team to raise the profile of apprenticeships internally and in school sixth forms externally.

Timely apprenticeship achievement was considered which again shows all achievement above the national average. Carl added that overall achievement was 11% and timely was 11.7% above the national average and members noted that this involves c1700 – 2000 learners on programme working with c250 employers.

Karen then drew attention to the papers tabled which showed the NICDEX league table. She explained that NICDEX is devised by FE Week and, as well as performance, looks at student and employer satisfaction and positive destinations information. Members were delighted to note that the College has been ranked joint second nationally.

Members thanked Karen for her presentation and congratulated the College on the achievement information and also on the NICDEX results.

Members noted that where we were disappointed in a few of the A Level grades, we are working hard with the staff teams involved in order to ensure that they are fully engaged with the new two year programmes.

Karen advised that performance wise at Stafford, we are seeing the results of improvements at an earlier stage that we had hoped for and she commended the staff there on their engagement and commitment resulting in the improvements to date. As years move on and our reputation grows we expect to see further progress in the quality and calibre of the students who come in to Stafford. We have reconsidered some of the A level entry requirements which have been low in the past and the new Head of Faculty, Shelley Brown, is driving getting the team to work together and move forward positively.

Karen confirmed that one student last year got into Cambridge to study Archaeology but the other student previously mentioned to the Committee did not achieve the required grades. There were some good university entrants, however, on analysing the figures we can see that the grades let them down. Early entrants for Oxbridge this year are 3 with interviews at Cambridge and 6 applicants to Oxford: 4 with interviews, 1 rejection and 1 awaiting a response. One student has been interviewed at Liverpool for Veterinary Science and 2 students are applying for medicine.

18.3.2 **Apologies for Absence**

Received from Jeremy Pert and Lesley Morrey.

18.3.3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

18.3.4 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 June 2018**

Approved as a true record of the meeting.

18.3.5 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

18.3.6 **NSCG Learner Data Report**

Carol took members through the first Learner Data report for the current academic year.

Group retention is extremely high at just under 98% and A Level retention has been added by month, showing year 1 of a 2 year linear course, and year 2 – which shows 89.5% retention from year 1 to year 2. The Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA) with whom we are now working have looked at this situation nationally and around 87.3% is the anticipated benchmark. Non A Level retention by month is very high.

Retention by curriculum area was noted compared to the situation at this point last year. There are 13 areas with higher student numbers and 7 slightly lower. We have lost some students this year due to behavioural issues, and from analysis we see that these are from some of the Stoke schools.

Members considered the predicted achievement, pass rate and retention for the current year against headline rates, broken down by age. Current retention and last year's pass rate would give us an overall 94%, although this is early in the year we anticipate that retention figures will settle down as time goes on.

Members considered attendance by curriculum area, which is very good in most areas, along with the volume of students on Maths and English and their attendance, and the areas of concern highlighted in red.

Members noted the Art and Creative Studies TLAR information and the results of the teaching observations. Carol reported on the newly banded Grade 2 observation grade which we are hoping will result in some further improvements and members were advised that the TLAR provides a much greater scrutiny of all activities within the whole area, not simply the observation grades. Discussion took place about how Teaching and Learning could be graded outstanding if Assessment is graded as requires improvement and Carol advised that the full report does contain a significant breakdown which shows all aspects considered.

It was agreed that it would be useful to provide a sample of the full TLARs for members to view at a future meeting.

Members noted the results of the latest learning walks and noted the recommendations. Carol reported that all recommendations are followed up to ensure that we have taken them on board.

Members considered the levels of student satisfaction at both sites, taken from the latest student survey which had been completed by 4367 students.

Carol reported that safeguarding and prevent data presentation has been tweaked to provide better clarity with a comparison of 2017-18 with 2018-19 data. Members noted the key areas in 2018-19 and Carol advised that suicide and self-harm are now reported separately. Lynsey advised on the different aspects of referrals and support that the team deal with and reminded members that there is counselling provision at both sites to help students in need of support.

Students in receipt of financial support were considered and members noted the volume of students involved who claim the bursary payment across both sites along with those receiving support and those coming in to college with EHCPs.

Maths and English outcomes were considered. GCSE English results were very pleasing but Carol added that we were disappointed in the GCSE Maths results, particularly in high grades. Karen advised that we have submitted more students this year for the November resits, working with all students and then identifying those ready for the resit nearer to the time. Attendance for the exam was very good. Members noted the huge numbers of students retaking GCSEs this year at 3432 which is a significant challenge to the College and Carol advised on the work to improve the grades going forward.

Members noted the latest work based report which has been taken from the new Smart Assessor system and provides information on retention, attendance and overall performance. Carl advised that further work will be done on the report to

reflect a more accurate picture although the picture is very positive overall with apprentices who come to NSCG having the benefit of great facilities and very good teaching. The progress dashboard provides a useful guide and it was agreed that this will be refined and updated as the year progresses.

Carol provided an overview of some of the future changes with the transfer from QCF to RQF, the introduction of T levels and the work placement requirements and she explained some of the issues nationally with the new BTEC qualifications. Members noted the planned introduction of the 5 new Extended Certificates as a valid option in a 2 A level/1 Certificate model.

Carol advised on the progress to date with work experience which is being financed through the Work Placement Capacity funding following the College's successful bid. We have also been approved to be a Centre for Excellence for Maths for which we will receive a proportion of the national pot of funding to enable us to work on initiatives to support this important area.

Members noted the latest student successes and congratulated Karen on her nomination for the TES FE Leader of the Year award.

Staff development and training sessions in October were noted and the tasks and mandatory training for teams of staff to engage in during the CP Day in October.

HE attendance was considered and members were pleased to note the increase in directly funded students. Carol outlined the new HNC courses on offer for which we already have strong cohorts in some areas. We have applied to register with the Office for Students (OfS) and Carol explained that only 190 of the 400+ applicant organisations have so far been approved. She outlined the areas that the OfS are looking for in order to meet the conditions of registration and members noted that key is the need to demonstrate that you meet consumer expectations.

18.3.7 Feedback from Members' Attendance at AoC Events

No events had been attended since the last meeting.

18.3.8 Any Other Business

It was agreed that Carol will provide all Corporation members with the updated list of activities available for this academic year.

18.3.9 Date and Time of Next Meeting

19 March 2019 at 4.30 pm at Newcastle College