

Meeting of the Quality and Curriculum Working Group

Thursday 23rd January 2025 at 4 pm

Seminar room 1

Minutes

Present: Andrew Lord (Chair), Neil Boggin (Governor), John Mansergh (Governor) Mary Osmaston (Co-opted Governor)

In attendance: Richard Evans (Deputy Principal for Education and Standards) DPES, Tamara Breeze (Director of Governance and Compliance) DGC, Kelli Horner (Head of Quality), Neal Banner (Head of Inclusion Services)

98 **Apologies for Absence:**
Kelvin Nash, Kevin Boles, Mike Seaton

99 **Declaration of Interests**
None

100 **Minutes from the Meeting 5th December 2024**
The minutes were then accepted as a true and accurate record.

101 **Quality Improvement Plan update**
Deep dive discussion into action 6

102 **EHCP and High Needs Focus**
Neal Banner attended the meeting to provide a report from ALS (Additional Learning Services) CPR (Curriculum Performance Review) He explained that the department had been renamed 'Inclusion Services' in line with current policy developments.
The committee noted the current structure of the department and acknowledged the future plans to improve consistency of services for all learners with additional learning needs. Neal outlined the journey of learners from prospective student, through application, interview, transition and into student life, at every stage of the process the college team were involved with learners and promoted choice and inclusion. For example, close relationships with local schools allowed SENCO's to attend year 11 EHCP reviews to ensure the correct guidance was provided about college to the students and to align EHCP targets with educational success.
The governors asked whether the curriculum teams were robust in acting upon information shared by inclusion services. Neal explained that the closer the relationship between the departments the more consistent the approach. There were some very positive examples of this close working, such as, Animal Care.
Student satisfaction for learners with high needs was generally very good however it was lower for English and maths in comparison to their vocational programme. The team explained that sometimes the learning assistant who supports individuals also attends English and maths with them, but this is not always the case. Where the learning support is consistent the learners expressed higher levels of satisfaction. This was often not possible as vocational groups were spread across several English and maths levels.
Learners only spent approx. 1 ½ hours with their tutors in these subjects, which meant that it was more difficult for learners to form relationships with them, but also gave the staff very little time to fully understand the needs of each learner. To address that difficulty the department had recently introduced a new initiative; where the inclusion services team create a summary of three adaptations to best meet the learners in specific classes and share these with teachers.

Neal summarised the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the department:

SWOT Analysis:	
<u>Strengths</u> Experienced professionals Inclusive culture Collaborative working (HoF/IP)	<u>Weaknesses</u> Inconsistencies in approaches Application of support strategies - some areas Platform doesn't support clear communications between Inclusion and curriculum
<u>Opportunities</u> Department reform Inclusion led provision Highly flexible support – Assistive Technologies Curriculum Performance Reviews Links with specialist providers – best practice Improving links with feeder schools	<u>Threats</u> Quality of reports from county Retention English & maths provision

When mentioning the relationships with local schools, governors suggested that teachers from those schools may benefit from speaking to current students at the college to gain more insight into the reality of the student experience, thereby allowing them to provide better advice and guidance to their current students. They noted that an open morning for all local SENCO's was planned for February.

Governors asked whether local networks were used to benchmark the department's performance against other colleges and were satisfied that that was the case as the college worked with the FE4 and AOC networks. NB had visited Oldham college recently to receive support in planning departmental changes.

The group discussed how success was measured and the quality team explained that in addition to the monitoring of attendance and retention success rates of those learners with EHCP's and those with identified needs were considered in the SAR process. The VPS explained that learners with EHCP's had high success rates, but they did not achieve high grades, so this was therefore an area to concentrate on. The governors questioned whether the learners were achieving their desired destinations and whether the college had adequate systems for recording this. The Quality manager discussed how the achievement of those with EHCP's was discussed in each faculty curriculum performance review.

The group engaged in a discussion about whether learners with additional needs stayed at college longer than was necessary because they felt comfortable there. Learners with EHCP's are only funded for one sideways move therefore although an additional year may be needed to consolidate skills a learner would not stay and remain at the same academic level for several years as this would not be accepted by county. The governors asked whether in the negotiated observation process the coordination of the learning assistant and the adaptation of teaching and learning was a consideration. The quality manager provided assurance that asking the teachers who in the group had any HCP and what their targets were was part of the observation of teaching. Neil Banner was thanked for his contribution and left the meeting.

Deep dive into QIP action 6, 'Not all learners with high needs make good progress towards their EHCP targets or receive effective adaptation in their classes.'

This QIP action had five intended outcomes. One of these was RAG rating as green and the other four were rated as 'amber'. the outcome stating teachers in Vocational Studies were supported to know, understand, interpret and implement inclusion plans that meet the needs of the learners in their classes, had been achieved and this was recognised in the Ofsted monitoring visit of October 2024. The committee gained assurance that work was ongoing

towards the achievement of other objectives and that the manager and all team members were aware of their QIP and working together to achieve the outcomes. The working group discussed when and how progress would be measured and decided to revisit the plan on the 24th June.

The VPES had updated the QIP format after feedback from the last board meeting and asked for the opinion of the group- the addition of half termly milestones were acknowledged as positive.

103 **Student Satisfaction Survey results and actions**

There had been an increase in the response rate for the survey from the 16-18 year old learners to 90.7 this was attributed to HoQ's tenacity. The group noted that rates for other types of learners were below KPIs and outlined steps to improve responses, such as alternative timing and the HoQ had held focus groups to gather the information required. The most dissatisfied students were the Higher Education learners. Their main complaints were regarding accommodation. The group asked whether the new accommodation in the Westmorland campus would improve that, but they were surprised to hear that the additional classrooms on the campus totalled 10, but the portacabins had been removed and an exams room established that resulted in a net gain of just one classroom. The team stated that it was only after the next phase of development that the learners at MRC would see a real difference.

104 **The main thing – departmental key priorities**

The HoQ summarised the progress of departments against their identified main development target. Governors noted that the scope of the 'main things' was very broad and lacked consistency, therefore it was difficult to ascertain comparative progress. However, four departments were noted as unable to progress due to staffing difficulties. There was a direct correlation between staffing and lack of quality improvement. The group questioned the regularity of the monitoring and whether there was sufficient pace in the process.

105 **Update on WMC- emerging themes**

The team reported that the campus felt like an educational space, but it was so large that it really needed more students to feel full. The governors were reminded that the February strategy day would be held there for them to experience the space and meet learners and staff. Tailgating incidents (where members of the public have followed learners into the campus) were noted as a concern to be followed up at the board meeting.

106 **Any other business**

Chair of A and R questioned whether any quality risks should be escalated to the A and R committee and the group discussed whether the change of Principal could impact negatively on the quality improvement agenda, it was agreed to add this to the risk register.

Date of next meeting; 4th of March 2025