

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 15th November 2023 at 4.30pm in Skills Park and via MS Teams

Present: Angela Cross-Durrant (Chair), Julie Kapsalis (CEO/Principal), Rory Boggett, Giuliana Pieri, Lynn Reddick, Nick Vaughan-Barratt.

In Attendance: Andy Cowan (Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality, Nicki Adams (Assistant Principal Quality & Innovation, Lisa Moynihan (Assistant Principal Learning Support & Learner Experience), Susanne Wicks (Head of Governance).

1	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies for absence were received from Nadine Guy, Charley Johnson and Slavina Kalendzhieva.
2	Declarations of Interest
	The CEO/Principal declared that she is an unremunerated Director of Nescot Enterprises Ltd. (NEL).
3	Appointment of a Vice-Chair of the Committee
	The Chair advised that the Search & Governance Committee agreed that it would be helpful for each committee to appoint a vice-chair which may help with succession planning, although the vice-chair would not necessarily have to become Chair, but could mentor and support a newly appointed Chair. She invited any committee member interested in the role to speak to her directly.
4	Minutes of the previous meeting and Matters Arising
	a The Committee approved the minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting held on 7 th June 2023.
	b Matters Arising The Committee noted that all actions had been discharged. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that, at the recent AoC Conference, it had emerged that enrolment for T Levels had been consistent across all provisions, with numbers generally too low to form a cohort, leading to a deferral of the start date. That was the case at Nescot, but the start can only be deferred once, or the DfE may seek to clawback any funding given for specialist equipment.
5	Student Enrolment 2023-24
	The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality presented his report which was circulated prior to the meeting. He reminded the Committee that when evaluating the annual enrolment process, it's important to reflect not only on student numbers but also on the efficiency of the process, which

was largely unchanged from last year. He confirmed that a staff survey has been undertaken to seek views on any improvements that could be made, and an Enrolment Planning Group has been established.

The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that there are no specific areas of concern, nor groups unable to run, but group size remains the key driver to maximise efficiency, and he will continue to work with the Director of Finance and the Acting Head of MIS to identify all opportunities to achieve in-year efficiencies. The Committee welcomed the news that the number of FE students enrolled was over plan, even after a small number of withdrawals. They also noted that, in contrast to some anecdotal information provided by other colleges, there has not been a large increase in new students who need to resit their English and Maths GCSE exams.

The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality confirmed that apprenticeship starts were very positive and the levels of applications for Electrical, Plumbing and Carpentry were high. However, the challenge is not around recruiting students but staff to deliver the courses. To that end, managers are reviewing job descriptions for teachers and assessors, which may be amended to ensure that course delivery, off the job and progress reviews can all be done. The Committee noted that recruitment of staff in these subjects is a challenge for the sector, not just in Nescot.

The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that although the number of 16–18s is higher than last year, the numbers across subjects is variable. For example, Art & Design have not recruited to plan, although there is no intention to close groups. However, as part of curriculum planning for next year, colleagues will be encouraged to consider reforecasting as well as thinking creatively about reasons why some courses may not recruit to plan and what can be done to make the offer more attractive. In the meantime, where there is space available, it may be used by other curriculum areas. In response to a question, he reassured the Committee that all subjects have the resources they need in terms of equipment and space, but timetabling and staffing may need to be adjusted to ensure that the space is being used in the most efficient way.

In terms of areas of concern, the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality highlighted the reduced number of adult learners enrolled, but reminded the Committee that enrolment will continue through the year.

The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality acknowledged that HE numbers remain the highest risk, and the cost-of-living increases have undoubtedly had an impact on recruitment, as two-thirds of the cohort are adult learners. The Assistant Principal Quality & Innovation added that there will some further in-year starts which are fully costed, but advised that forecasting needs to be improved in future. The Chair noted that accurate forecasting can be challenging; if numbers are under-estimated

	<p>then chances to recruit may be missed, but if they are over-estimated then targets will be missed. She suggested that setting a band rather than a number may be helpful. The Committee noted that the new Commercial Director, who started in September, will pull the various strands of recruitment together which should help.</p> <p>NVB asked if the decline in HE numbers in FE settings over recent years can be rectified and the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality responded that it's hard to know. He suggested that Degree Apprenticeships may be the way forward and that the FE sector should seek to work in partnership with universities and other colleges.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>College Performance Reports</p>
	<p>a <u>Performance Update Report</u></p>
	<p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality presented his report which was circulated prior to the meeting. He highlighted that, in line with other colleges, there has been a decline in overall achievement but Nescot has seen an improvement in pass rates, which evidences that, if students remain in college and attend regularly, they will achieve. He pointed out that the biggest risk is around retention, particularly of those young people also undertaking additional qualifications such as GCSE English and Maths, and emphasised the need to ensure that all learners are on the right course and that the most appropriate qualifications are on offer, which will be part of the curriculum planning process.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality shared the Risk Indicator Dashboard (RID) with the Committee which is a function of the Pro-Monitor software which enables staff to add a RAG rating for every single student. He advised that at the end of last year, there was no tool in place to enable accurate forecasting of end of year outcomes and success, but the RID will be populated and updated regularly and enable teaching teams to make learner-based judgements about all students, track their profile across the course of the year and identify action or intervention needed. In addition, managers can access the RID data at a granular level. The Chair welcomed the introduction of the RID, noting that it would ensure that there are no surprises at the end of the year. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality flagged that the aim of RAG rating students through the year is not to be punitive but to use the data to make changes or target support where appropriate.</p> <p>NVB asked about the risks around data protection, as staff can access information about all students via the Pro-Monitor software, even those they do not teach. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that this is standard practice across the sector but undertook to discuss this further with the Head of IT and the Data</p>

	<p>Protection Officer and to report back. Action: Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality</p>
b	<p><u>Draft SAR and QIP</u></p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality gave a brief introduction to the revised format for the SAR and the Chair welcomed any questions or comments. LR welcomed the new format and the Committee agreed the new, succinct approach was very welcome.</p>
7	<p>Higher Education Matters</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Quality & Innovation presented her report which was circulated prior to the meeting. In doing so she focussed on the summary provided and welcomed comments and questions.</p> <p>With regard to retention, the Chair noted that Level 3 progression has been a challenge for some time and sought an explanation for that. The Assistant Principal Quality & Innovation explained that progression varies according to curriculum area. For example, it is positive in Animal Management but less so in Sport. She suggested that this could be because of the design of the offer, and that a modular offer may be more attractive. The Committee noted that the Level 4 Media and Performing Arts qualifications are a USP for Nescot and should be marketed more widely as schools are not equipped to offer the portfolio-building courses that Nescot can, which support students looking to apply for prestigious art schools. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality added that the HE programme for Media and Film will be carefully scrutinised as part of curriculum planning to ensure it's viable for next year and beyond. He agreed that there is a need to work with every single Level 3 student to encourage and support them to think about their future, and to ensure that Nescot is seen as a viable and attractive option for their Level 4 education.</p> <p>LR suggested that high quality careers advice should be given to students as well as ensuring that the whole culture of the college is built around raising aspirations and ambition for learners. The Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience confirmed that progression talks have been scheduled to take place by the end of term, and students will be tasked to consider their future, with the aim of setting targets and discussing ambitions in the spring term.</p> <p>Pointing to the NSS Survey outcomes, GP asked about the 64.8% satisfaction rate for Organisation and Management, noting that it can be a tricky measure in all settings. The Assistant Principal Quality & Innovation advised that it is challenging to pinpoint the exact reasons but reassured the Committee that changes in staffing should have a positive impact. She advised that this would continue to be tested through student surveys and via the Student Council which would be meeting next week.</p>

	<p>The Chair asked about feedback on CPD and if it is sought from both teachers and students to establish any correlation between the quality of CPD and its impact on teaching and learning. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality agreed this was a good idea. The Assistant Principal Quality & Innovation confirmed that the first set of data from learning walks has been obtained and will inform CPD going forwards.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the appendices, noting that they will be very helpful to those Committee members seeking to learn about the HE provision at Nescot.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Safeguarding Update</p>
	<p>The Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience introduced her report which was circulated prior to the meeting. Matters discussed are set out below.</p> <p>In terms of the new requirements for filtering and monitoring set out in the September 2023 version of ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’, the Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience advised that there is new software in place to ensure that the requirements are met, and that she and the Head of Safeguarding will be working with the Head of IT to determine a procedure for receiving and considering reports produced by the software. She reassured the Committee that any high-risk matters are dealt with straight away and that she meets with the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality, who is also the DSL, on a weekly basis.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience, the Head of Safeguarding, the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality and the CEO/Principal meet every week to go through any safeguarding cases which are flagged as Red.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience set out the revised process for addressing poor attendance with students which complies with the updated requirements in this year’s KCSIE guidance.</p> <p>With regard to the safeguarding data, the Committee noted the increased rate of incidents compared to this point last year. The Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience advised that this is partially due to CPOMS software being well embedded and confidently used by staff. She also described action taken by the Head of Safeguarding to ensure a prompt and smooth handover of safeguarding files from students’ schools which meant that she was very quickly aware of those at risk.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience reassured the Committee that the Wellbeing Team are well supported and advised that external supervision is to be provided to them every half-term. In addition, some Learning Mentor posts are to be created to provide support for those students with SEMH needs which present a barrier to</p>

	<p>learning, which should reduce the need for input from the Wellbeing Team.</p> <p>GP asked if there is any benchmarking data available to compare with other colleges. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that the introduction of CPOMS has enabled high quality internal benchmarking but there is no external data made available. The Assistant Principal Quality & Innovation advised that some subject areas are historically more likely to have higher numbers of students with mental health issues.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged the challenge in collecting external benchmarking data but welcomed the ability of the College to collect reliable internal data in order to identify trends. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that the data are being closely monitored to see if the high level of referrals will level off, and to ensure that support and resources are being allocated accurately. GP welcomed students' and staff confidence to seek assistance and report issues, and NVB observed that the conversation around mental health seems to be very open, particularly among young people. RB agreed that the students talk about mental health openly and engage well with staff in his Team.</p> <p>GP undertook to share some information with the Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience about some work that has been done at Royal Holloway University to make a difference to the learning experience for neuro-diverse students.</p>
9	Learner Voice Update
	<p>The Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience gave a verbal update on learner voice. She advised that the Induction Survey is underway and she would report on the outcomes at the spring term meeting.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience advised that she is working with the PDC to recruit two FE student governors. It is hoped that that two of the newly appointed Class Reps will volunteer. Governors offered to meet any students interested in the role.</p>
10	Safeguarding Policy Review 2023-24
	<p>The Head of Governance advised that, in order to address the timing challenges around the annual updates to the KSCIE guidance and the need for the revised Safeguarding Policy to be in place as quickly as possible in the academic year, the Corporation would be asked to agree a delegation to the Chair to approve the policy subject to their approval in future years.</p> <p>NVB noted that the policy could be inaccessible to those for whom English is not the first language, or who have additional needs and</p>

	<p>suggested that some bullet points be added to the first page to signpost people to help and support available.</p> <p>Subject to an amendment to page 14 (lanyards) the Committee agreed to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.</p>
11	Any Other Business
	<p><u>Visits to College</u></p> <p>LR asked if she should continue to come into College to meet the Careers Advice Team and the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality welcomed her input.</p> <p>NVB advised that he is working with Media students on a TV directing project and undertook to share details.</p> <p><u>Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF)</u></p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality was pleased to advise that Nescot has been allocated funding of almost £1M which will be spent on immersive technology and some revenue funding which will be spent on recruiting some careers staff to work with the Surrey Skills Hubs.</p> <p><u>Teaching & Learning</u></p> <p>The Assistant Principal Quality & Innovation advised that a live report has been created to capture the data emerging from lesson observations. The reports have then informed discussion at CPD days in order to identify any needs and CPD priorities for the year. She advised that this will contribute towards a community of practice and help develop a growth mindset, and will help staff deploy support where needed.</p>
12	Date and Time of the Next Meeting
	Wednesday 28 th February 2024 at 4.30 pm

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm

Decisions:

The Committee:

- Approved the minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting held on 7th June 2023.
- Agreed to recommend the Safeguarding Policy 2023-24 to the Corporation for approval.

Actions

- The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality undertook to look into the issues of data security raised by NVB around access to software which contains information about students and to report back.
- GP undertook to share some information with the Assistant Principal Learner Support & Learner Experience about some work that has been done at Royal Holloway University to make a difference to the learning experience for neuro-diverse students.
- NVB to share details of the project he is undertaking with Media students.