**Corporation of Sir George Monoux College**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Quality & Performance Committee**

**held on 9 June 2020**

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| **Present** | Alastair Owens (Chair), Caroline Evans, Stephen Jones, Jagdev Kenth, David Vasse. |
| **Participating Observer** | Alan Wells (Chair of the Corporation) |
| **In Attendance** | Holly Bembridge (Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality), Robert Smith (Clerk to the Corporation). |

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| **1** | **Apologies for Absence and Quoracy**    No apologies for absence had been received. The meeting was quorate. |
| **2** | **Declarations of Interest**  None. |
| **3** | **Minutes of the Previous Meeting (11 February 2020)**  It was noted that the draft minutes had been approved by the Chair of the Committee for circulation.  They were approved as a correct record of the business transacted and *prima facie* evidence of the proceedings to which they relate, subject to amendment of Minute 7 (page 5 – penultimate paragraph) to read:  *Lower rates of satisfaction were identified among Black British students, especially those of Caribbean heritage. Although reflective of a national trend, and common to both genders, the issue merits further investigation and focus groups are to be convened for the purpose.* |
| **4** | **Matters Arising from the Minutes (11 February 2020)**  It was reported in relation to Minute 7 that, owing to the public health energency, it had not proved possible to convene focus groups to explore issues arising from the student survey. |
| **5** | **Board Level Risks**  It was noted that the existing board level risk pertaining to the Committee’s remit relates to Agendum 6 below.  It was further noted that additional board level risks, also relating to Agendum 6 below, identified by the College Risk Committee requiring oversight by the Quality and Performance Committee are:  *Use of performance data is insufficient to manage risks.*  *Covid-19 social distancing means that many of the College’s behaviour levers (e.g. blocking cards, or observing the 10-minute rule concerning admission to lessons) will be removed, leading students to fall into unproductive habits.*  *Owing to Covid-19, continuing students will have missed a large portion of education, making it hard for them to achieve well and take forward the full benefit of learning the whole curriculum.*  It was reported that the Risk Assessment for 2020-21 attending the public health emergency will be considered by the Audit Committee at the meeting to be held on 16 June 2020.  No other risks requiring the Audit Committee’s attention were identified in the course of the meeting. |
| **6** | **Online Learning Offer**  A paper prepared by the Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality was received and considered.  It was reported that: |

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|  | **.** | in 2019 the College had moved to using Microsoft Teams, which allows for online video lessons, small group work, assignments and quizzes, and the posting of lesson resources; |
|  | **.** | students and staff had already been commonly using MS Teams to communicate, share resources, and for the setting of homework assignments, and the transition to online teaching was therefore smooth, with online lessons starting seamlessly from March 23 running in the usual timetable; |
|  | **.** | after the Easter break, and in response to feedback from staff and students who often found themselves in cramped circumstances, sharing limited household technology and sometimes with caring responsibilities, online teaching had been resumed with an adapted timetable, cutting 90 minute lessons to 60 minutes, with all lessons happening between 10am and 1.30pm, allowing the College to maintain synchronous teaching whilst limiting its footprint; |
|  | **.** | the student response to this change had been generally positive, with attendance remaining surprisingly good in the circumstances - once leavers are removed from the data, attendance in the week before half term rose by 5% for continuing students, suggestive of both quality and ease of access; |
|  | **.** | during the shutdown, at least weekly teacher training activities – through informal *learning from each other* online meetings, and on a designated forum in MS Teams – are being conducted, supplemented by regular communications from the VP Curriculum and the Learning Coach team focusing on the foundations of good teaching and learning in the context of online lessons; *and* |
|  | **.** | there had been obvious drawbacks to moving all lessons online, with students less productive than in normal times; many participating in lessons without submitting tasks, or submitting less thorough work than they might usually do - students report that they find it hard to get motivated to work without the presence of teachers, and staff have reported that it can be hard to know how well engaged students are, and to quickly check learning, when students are not visible. |

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|  | In relation to quality checks, it was reported that: |

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|  | **.** | it had been consciously decided not to use some of the more intrusive quality-checking measures such as formal observations and walk-throughs during this period since, in asking teachers to respond quickly and adapt their teaching in very difficult circumstances, the College needed above all to harness its ability to work as a team, with appropriate trust and support; |
|  | **.** | however, online teaching creates a visible trail, and curriculum managers had looked at and dropped into lessons to develop a good sense of the online provision; |
|  | **.** | managers had continued to check attendance at lessons, and had stayed in close touch with staff and students, with some running local surveys with their students, sharing the results across the college - a cross-college survey of students will be conducted in the final half term; *and* |
|  | **.** | feedback from parents and students so far from these small-scale surveys is in the main very positive, though cannot yet be extrapolated across the College. |

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|  | The additional risks noted under Minute 5 above were also considered by members.  The Chair expressed, on behalf of the Committee, his appreciation of the very considerable efforts made by the senior leadership team and others to ensure continuity of education for the College’s students throughout the emergency.  In response to comments by members, it was stated that: |

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|  | **.** | weekly telephone calls to students are being undertaken by a broad range of College staff, with the calls being used among other matters to address issues arising from equipment availability and usage; |
|  | **.** | in terms of loan equipment for students, the Principal suggested that the circumstances next term are likely to be more challenging since new students enrolling at the College are less likely to have appropriate home equipment which is, in any event, in relatively short supply, and that in anticipation the College is proposing an increase in its relevant budgetary provisions and supporting lobbying efforts to persuade the government to make a special financial provision in this regard; |
|  | **.** | the difficulty for some students of studying in less propitious home circumstances is recognised by the College and a number of measures are being contemplated to address the issue, notably extended College opening hours and weekend opening, provided they can be resourced; |
|  | **.** | where students are not satisfactorily engaging with the online provision, they will be invited into the College for face-to-face teaching; |
|  | **.** | it was agreed that there are elements of classroom teaching which are difficult to replicate online; |
|  | **.** | the educational deficit following the closure of schools during the emergency is likely to have a longer-term impact on the ability of students entering further education in terms of their adequate preparation for its demands; |
|  | **.** | the telephone contacts are used as an important method for maintaining pastoral support to students; *and* |
|  | **.** | the issue of whether they are well-advised to proceed with university entrance in the current year has exercised some students and parents, with the College’s stance being supportive of students pursuing a 2020 entry to higher education, given the clear advantage to prospective students from universities needing to fill their courses in the context of a temporarily diminished volume of applicants. |

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|  | In response to questions raised concerning College re-opening, it was confirmed that: |

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|  | **.** | the College is currently being reconfigured for social distancing; |
|  | **.** | around two thirds of teachers will be present at the College on a part-time basis from 15 June to convene and hold student workshops; |
|  | **.** | on a daily basis, attendance by approximately 150 students is being provided for; |
|  | **.** | given restrictions on numbers, attendance will be less useful as a measure of quality engagement by students, and therefore the quality of work produced will assume more crucial significance in this regard; *and* |
|  | **.** | a blended offer of online and face-to-face teaching is being planned for the Autumn Term 2020-21. |

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| **7** | **Calculated Grades**  It was noted that students due to sit the examinations in summer 2020 will be awarded a grade based on an assessment of the grade they would have been most likely to achieve had examinations been held, with results issued to this year’s cohort based on a range of evidence and data, including performance in mock examinations and non-examination assessment.  It was further noted that: |

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|  | **.** | all centre-assessed grades will be moderated by reference to a three-year average College performance in each subject with the object of achieving the same national outcome as in 2019; |
|  | **.** | historical data will therefore be prioritised over that submitted by colleges for the 2019-20 year, with trends being for the most part ignored; |
|  | **.** | teaching departments where genuine improvement has taken place during the 2019-20 year will therefore not benefit in terms of the grades awarded to their students to the extent they might reasonably have expected had examinations been conducted in the ordinary way; |
|  | **.** | departments where performance may have fallen during the year will conversely benefit from the arrangement; |
|  | **.** | details regarding an October sitting for those students wishing to improve their assessed grade remain subject to the outcome of a recently closed consultation, but it is not known, for example, if these will be offered in all subjects or just the most popular subjects in terms of number of entries; *and* |
|  | **.** | there will be no grade appeals except by the College against an awarding body’s failure to correctly follow its own procedures. |

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|  | It was additionally noted that: |

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|  | **.** | colleges will not be held to account by Ofsted for this year’s assessed grades and, although there are no details yet available, it is hoped that an allowance will be made in respect of next year’s sittings; |
|  | **.** | a statistical procedure is being followed in deciding how grades are awarded in examined subjects based on an internal assessment of what each student would have achieved had 2019-20 been a “normal year”, together with a rank-ordering of students provided by colleges,, which is moderated by the examining board; |
|  | **.** | in unexamined subjects, where internal assessments are verified by the awarding body, pre-March 2020 data had been submitted, with predictive data presented for later assessments; |
|  | **.** | there are no calculated grades at the end of the first year for students who are following two-year A level courses; |
|  | **.** | the College had followed the boards’ processes with integrity, including the implementation of appropriate measures of internal moderation; |
|  | **.** | the outcomes projected at A Level show an improvement in value-added, which the College considers to be merited since any teacher calculating a value-added score significantly higher than in previous years had been required to submit evidence, with the process resulting in a downward revision of grades in a majority of subjects; |
|  | **.** | vocational value-added is high, matching the College’s previous excellent overall performance; *and* |
|  | **.** | because similar limitations apply to the value of GCSE grades awarded in 2019, particular care will be needed in terms of ensuring that newly enrolled students in September 2020 are placed on the most appropriate courses. |

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| **8** | **Proposed Dates and Times of Meetings: 2020-21**  The following proposed dates and times were approved:  ***Tuesday 22 September 2020 (6.30pm)***  ***Tuesday 1 December 2020 (6.30pm)***  ***Tuesday 9 February 2021 (6.30pm)***  ***Tuesday 8 June 2021 (6.30pm)***  Whether meetings are held face-to-face or using an online platform will depend on the public health circumstances pertaining on the said dates. |
| **9** | **Any Other Competent Business**  None. |