

<b>Meeting/Committee</b>	<b>Quality &amp; Standards Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 5pm (via Google Meet)

## 1 Declarations of Interest and Eligibility

The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.

## 2 Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

### Attendees:

Jennifer Worsdale	Chair
Heather Barnett	
Veronica de Bruce McCoy	
Katie Curtis	
Katie Asgari	
Jason Austin	
Shirley Collier	
Jason Lancaster	(Stoke on Trent College)
Deborah Gray	(Grimsby College)
Janet Pryke	

### In attendance:

Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Deputy Principal/CEO
Maxine Bagshaw	Director of Governance
Cheryl Martin	Assistant Principal
Rebecca Blackman	Assistant Principal
Sally Steadman	Director of Marketing & Learner Recruitment
Daniel Stanbra	Director: Adult education and Contracts
Andrew Birch	Head of Higher Education

### Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Angela Bates, Claire Godfrey and Carol Stanfield.

## 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

There were no matters arising.

#### **4 Actions Progress Report**

Committee were happy to note the content of the update provided and it was agreed that any outstanding actions would roll forward to the next meeting.

#### **5 Scrutiny of the SAR 2020/21**

The Deputy CEO led on this item and welcomed everyone to the meeting and round table introductions were made. She took the opportunity to thank everyone for giving up their time this evening. She explained that this scrutiny meeting was intended to be an opportunity for open and honest dialogue on the draft version circulated in advance of the meeting. She welcomed challenge and scrutiny and explained that any amendments requested and/or suggested at this meeting will be made next week ready for presentation to the Quality & Standards Committee meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December. This will give a further opportunity for review and validation followed by presentation to full board on 15<sup>th</sup> December. This therefore means that there are two further meetings giving an opportunity for review and feedback before finalisation. The intention tonight is to work through the provision types and then the governance section before reviewing the overall findings and judgements proposed.

She reminded everyone present that the provision type findings and proposed grades will influence the overall judgements to be agreed. The draft SAR was then taken in individual sections.

##### **1) Education programmes for young people (page 31)**

Attendees were invited to ask questions and/or make observations. These included:

- In relation to the covid response the last paragraph makes some really clear national statements. It would be useful to more specifically know what it is about the pandemic that caused the RNN difficulties.
- In the second paragraph there is a reference to the fact that school prior attainment grades are not accurate. One member of the group asked whether it was better to talk about skills and knowledge.
- A challenge was that there is nothing included within the section on SEND and nor is there anything about punctuality.
- In relation to the last paragraph it was agreed that it was not clear enough in terms of what has driven the problems e.g. staff vacancies and poor teaching practice.
- In terms of the top level data it is less clear what is happening in a number of areas, e.g. sport and public services and professional services, when compared with the challenges summarised in relation to engineering and construction.

Staff, in responding to the request for more detail on specific covid issues, explained that there were a number of aspects but were clear that these explanations were given without any blame nor making any excuses. Information provided was:

- Largest level of digital poverty was for construction and engineering students. Not all had devices prior to the pandemic. Whilst RNN worked hard to provide devices it was not as quick in this area as in others.
- Staff in construction didn't necessarily have all the necessary digital skills prior to the pandemic. In some areas of provision staff had started more successfully to develop digital skills which meant that staff in construction

and engineering were not as well placed when the country moved to lockdown.

- Position has been impacted by staff vacancies. There were some vacancies that existed at the point of the pandemic and it proved to be very hard to fill during the pandemic, therefore learning experiences were not as detailed as in other areas. This led to gaps and lost learning with some areas being greater than counterparts.
- In some areas of provision there were no allowances or adaptations permitted therefore students struggled to pass the end of year exams. Many developed the practical skills required but the end of the year was the challenge.
- For those who had to undertake end of year exams the achievement rate was 5%-10% lower than in the previous years.

A challenge from the group was that the college needs to be more specific about the infrequency of assessments and the impact that this had on the year end. In terms of the impact on Level 1 and Level 2 learners the group agreed that it would be helpful to be really clear in terms of student numbers/percentages. All agreed that teaching online was much more difficult in construction than in other areas and felt that this needed to be acknowledged.

Staff reminded that the document is where the college is self-assessing now. It was agreed that there was a need to tease out more about education recovery and what has been done and is being done in the autumn term. Committee suggested a need to link to skills and knowledge rather than just grades on arrival.

A question and challenge from one member of the group was in terms of digital poverty and whether it was possible to articulate what the college did whilst sourcing devices i.e. what steps were taken to fill the void. Another suggestion made was that the document should reference the gender data and the disparities i.e. boys seem to be doing worse and this could be to do with provision types.

Group urged staff to ensure that education recovery explanations are focused on knowledge, skills and behaviours. They felt it was important to have more reference to gender position. Group queried the percentage of the curriculum not awarded TAGs and felt that it would be useful to include the statistics and unpick the potential impact of this further.

In terms of a grade the proposal is that this is a 'good'. Deputy CEO expressed the view that it is important to be able to articulate why and clearly state what is evidencing this. Group did not feel that this was as yet really clear in this section. Group were reminded that the SAR period is between September 2020 and November 2021. Group were advised that learners are telling staff that the position is good but they accepted that there was a need to provide more examples and evidence. It was explained that student comments are gathered from deep dives, learning walks and specifically talking to learners. In relation to the learners who didn't achieve, the view expressed was that the college can evidence skills, knowledge and behaviours and that this is the case even in engineering and construction. Motor vehicle as a provision type did really well.

Committee were advised that staff are also really positive regarding the return to site and the levels of student motivation. Staff definitely see, feel and hear the positives from students. There is a lot of work in place to capture starting points and progress. Students feel more confident to articulate their development. There is good behaviour in the majority of areas. Some good attendance and punctuality.

Committee were reminded that the college has been shortlisted for a Beacon award and there are also learners who are through to the world skills competition. This tells the college that learners are getting a good experience and are developing their skills.

A challenge from one member of the committee was that there are a number of references to 'most' and 'large numbers'. They asked whether it is possible to have the actual numbers and percentages. Committee felt that there should be more included about learner voice. It was confirmed that the college has a learner rep in every area of provision and every class. An observation made was that staff should see the outcomes from learner rep meetings as soon as possible. Staff who undertake meet and greets are more clearly seeing that students know their starting points and how to progress. Challenge from the group was that knowledge, skills and behaviours has to be the key focus.

External members of the group agreed that this section of the document reads solidly as a good but that they would also want to see what next i.e. what is required to get to outstanding.

An observation made by a number of members of the group was that throughout the whole document there is continuing reference to construction and engineering and also challenges in terms of sport provision. As this represents a significant proportion of provision they questioned whether this would impact on the grade and felt that there was potentially some inconsistencies in terms of evidencing a good. In terms of the size of provision it was explained that construction represents 30% but that this is because there is a very high proportion of these students who are also enrolled for English and Maths. If motor vehicle was taken out of engineering then this would really reduce the percentages and, as a consequence, staff do not feel that this should sway the grade. A challenge from the group was to take a 'glass half full' rather than a 'glass half empty' approach. They felt that statements within the document could be more positively articulated.

Suggestion made was that throughout the whole document the college better articulate what needs to be done to get to outstanding. It was acknowledged that the college has really high expectations for all learners and that this may therefore encourage staff to focus on the negatives rather than the positives.

Deputy CEO made the observation that the key word within the EIF is 'consistently' and she asked whether the college is confident in relation to this. She posed the question: 'is the college consistently better than last year?' and the answer given was yes.

Construction and engineering equals 25% of students therefore a significant proportion. A challenge from the group was whether or not the college has fully bottomed out the issues i.e. staff, quality of teaching and learning, online delivery.

One member of the group asked whether curriculum areas complete their own SARs and, if they do, what grades have construction and engineering posed. It was explained that curriculum managers complete position statements and also have quality improvement plans. Based upon improvements this academic year it was felt that there was sufficient evidence, and that the college had done enough, to get over the line with the current learners. Staff believe that students are developing skills at pace and this is aided by lots of face to face delivery. Students are developing digital skills in a very supported way i.e. on site. Staff do not believe that, in the areas of construction and engineering, the college is near to being outstanding but that provision is sufficiently over the line to be good.

A suggestion made was that the document could talk about 'further improvement' and not just improvement. Attendees did not feel that the level of improvement seen/has happened was coming through in the document.

## 2) Adults

Committee again noted that comments were made in terms of construction and engineering and agreed that it would be helpful to clarify size and proportionality. It was explained that there were 63 starts in 2020/21 out of a total of 7,300 starts, therefore adults represented a very small percentage and minimal provision.

One member of the group made reference to the use of the word 'inconsistent' when talking about tracking personal skills and behaviours and they asked for clarity in terms of exactly what the problems are. It was explained that tracking was clearly evidenced through QA processes but that there was inconsistency in relation to the methodology of tracking i.e. how it is captured. What the college wants to achieve is consistency no matter what the type of provision whether it be full time, part time etc. One member of the group suggested that if tracking has no impact on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and behaviours then it shouldn't need to be referenced in the SAR. Staff all agreed that this was an example of high expectations and in reality is just an area for improvement. Group felt that it was possible to 'flip the comment' and state that the college has been really proactive in terms of developing the tracker.

Committee did not feel that there was enough said here in terms of education recovery and they felt that a statement should be included, together with a judgement regarding impact of the activity. Group asked whether it is possible to pull out more in terms of the impact on the community i.e. community learning.

A challenge from one member of the group was that, where we are saying it is too early to see/show impact it would be helpful to say when this will be seen as this would then give greater confidence.

Group considered the proposed grade and were happy to agree.

## 3) Apprenticeship provision (page 38)

This is an area where the proposed grade is requires improvement. Committee were happy to support that grade and other aspects considered and discussed were:

- College has taken the proactive step to establish a separate apprenticeship delivery task and finish group
- In relation to the JTL contract, it would be useful to know proportionality and more specifically the issues
- In terms of 'off the job', talk more about impact rather than proportionality
- More could be included about end point assessment readiness and preparation
- There is reference to on site/coaching of behaviours – more could be said in relation to this
- This section sounds quite positive within the text but is this what inspectors will see when they visit?
- In relation to JTL is there any way of sectioning this off and explain the impact and thereby unpicking what the issues are regarding subcontractor provision versus RNN delivery.

Committee were given information regarding the JTL context and it was explained that the subcontract relates to historic issues where the college was not able to recruit to tutor vacancies in electrical engineering and therefore this led to delays in delivery. JTL had made promises in terms of their ability to take on historic learners however they did not get up and running as quickly as envisaged which has led to further delays particularly for the priority group identified of 54 who were out of funding. There are a further 70 learners with end dates up to 2024. It was explained that the theoretical delivery at RNN is good but that the issue was on site practicals that RNN could not deliver/support. Committee felt that there was a better way to phrase/position this argument. Committee were advised that of the learners taken on by JTL only 4 achievements have come in which was described as a real body blow and not what the college was expecting or had been reassured in relation to. A challenge from the committee was in terms of the use of the words 'assurance' and 'reassurance' as these are very different.

Committee made the observation that the JTL subcontract reads as a real significant issue and appears to be front and centre. They questioned whether it merits such significance given that the college only started the contract with them at the end of last year. They asked whether it is possible to break this down by curriculum areas and levels. They felt that more data needed to be included within the section to tease out the positives as well as the negatives.

Committee supported the grade proposed of requires improvement.

#### 4) High needs (including vulnerable)

Observations and suggestions made by the group were:

- why is the grade proposed not outstanding as there is very positive narrative. On reading this section it wasn't clear what was wrong/isn't being done.
- On page 41 in the third paragraph there is reference to learner support assistants and 'most tutors' one member of the group asked whether there was a story here that wasn't being told fully.
- Page 42 makes reference to retention on the flex provision and the number of withdrawals. Group asked whether these learners responded differently to others as a result of the pandemic.
- There seems to be a very positive impact of structured support i.e. in terms of student confidence and independence. Group suggested that more specific examples could be given.
- Challenge from one member of the group was that there is very limited reference to EHCPs
- In the final paragraph there is no reference to digital device access as part of the digital strategy
- One member of the group felt that there was some contradictory and repeated paragraphs
- Suggestion that there needs to be more said about educational recovery
- Staff have clearly done a lot to re-establish relationships upon return and this could be more clearly articulated
- Section could benefit from more being said regarding the impact on lives i.e. what these students can do now that they couldn't do before
- Need to say more about families. Reference could also be made to staff upskilling required to move the provision online.

Staff indicated that they did not feel that this area was yet at outstanding and explained that the college has moved a long way from the social curriculum that it used to be and is now much more project based however this has been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Impact is not yet fully there. There is no

doubt that the college is developing skills but the link with work related skills is not yet outstanding.

Committee were happy to agree the proposal that the grade for this section is good.

#### 5) Governance (page 28)

Comments and observations made were:

- At page 28 the second paragraph from the bottom makes reference to the board 'agreeing' the strategic plan. All felt that it should be more strongly worded in terms of 'developing and creating'. They asked that the wording be strengthened so that it was less passive.
- Group felt that there could be more said about the 'so what' and the impact. They acknowledged the strengthening of challenge and felt that there was more that could be done in terms of impact i.e. on performance, culture etc.
- Group all agreed that a key focus for the year is maximisation of skills of those now on the board and they asked that this be picked out in the QIP and particularly the how. They felt it was important to make use of the broad range of skills available at the right point in time.
- It was noted that FEC are visiting this month and then ESFA next month. One member of the group asked whether there is any hard evidence from the FEC regarding progress.

Group were happy to support the proposal that the judgement for this section be significant progress.

#### 6) Safeguarding (page 29)

The proposal is that the judgement be 'effective' and this was agreed. Observations and comments were:

- It would be useful to have some local context of the operating areas e.g. context of extremism.
- One member of the group made the suggestion that the college look to use R-PPL which is free software which alerts in terms of self-harm searches.
- College could make more of the 'together all' initiative and mental health support
- Any references to safe working practices should detail the over and above activities and expectations rather than the norm
- In paragraph 4, local public health authority is the correct reference
- There are some 'norm' examples but there is lots more that goes above and beyond this which could be referenced
- Add in feedback from students e.g. same sex student groups, concerns regarding the external grounds, sexual harassment and violence.
- More to say about the impact locally and dangers to personal safety. More that the college can do in terms of sexual abuse.

#### 7) Quality of education

Observations and comments made were:

- This section talks a lot about achievement rates but it should be more to do with knowledge, skills, behaviours and impact.
- Not clear on the diagnosis of functional skills and what the issues are here
- PPE is described but should be a norm
- Is there more to be included about destinations and progression



- When talking about intent in the second paragraph the reference to 'all provision' should be aligned to LMI and what employers say and need. It should specifically be about Rotherham and not about Ofsted.
- Page 12 indicates that 'in a minority of subjects... lack of ambition'. It is not clear how mitigation is addressing the problem.
- There seems to be a disjoint between recruitment and development and clarity regarding starting points needs to be made
- What appear to be missing are the strategic decisions made i.e. the intent. Why does RNN offer what it does.
- In terms of curriculum intent what are the decisions made and why
- Impact should be aligned to the start of the paragraphs
- Tease out teaching and learning and pedagogy. How staff are using skills.
- What are leadership and management doing
- Focus should be on knowledge, skills and behaviours
- When talking about construction and engineering there is reference to prior entry qualifications – are we saying that learners are the issue. Is it more about lost learning and educational recovery.
- Talk about the use of 16-19 tuition funding
- College has really carefully assessed Q-Tags and practical assessments and not just GCSE's.
- Group felt that using the phrase 'recognition of more to be done' is not as blunt as some of the other comments included.

Deputy CEO then summarised what it means to be good from the position of the EIF particularly in terms of ambition, implementation etc. Do learners know more and can they do more from their starting points. A challenge from the group was that proportionality here is the key i.e. the weaker subjects versus the stronger. If the college feels that there is substantial and sustained progress then it is going to be important to pick out evidence and examples. College needs to be able to demonstrate that it knows current learners. In terms of impact, college needs to be able to say how learners are making progress specifically because ... There is more that can be said in terms of the differences that the college makes to peoples lives – this is all levels and in all curriculum areas. As an overall observation group felt that this section could be stronger.

Group were happy to support the overall grading proposed as good.

#### 8) Behaviour and attitudes (page 18)

Observations and comments made were:

- Attendance is referred to 'low'. As this is such a big part of this section would it impact on the overall grade. Can we show the 21/22 improvements.
- Punctuality should be referred to as this should link to positive student attitudes previously highlighted as a strength
- Make stronger links to the impact of attendance data and the impact of developing skills
- Talk about careers support received and how this has impacted upon behaviours and attitudes
- Potentially consider including depravation index data. This is all about moving learners from their starting points i.e. the journey. Could articulate more how we polish the 'rough diamonds'.
- Should be possible to compare with school data e.g. attendance and clearly articulate how the college has moved individuals forward.

Deputy Principal again summarised what good looks like in the EIF. Committee were happy to support the proposed grade of good.



#### 9) Personal development (page 20)

Observations and comments made were:

- There is reference to 'almost all learners model positive British values well' – where have these comments come from. It was explained that they are all direct quotes from the deep dives.
- More that could be included about the positive impact of CEIAG
- College is a very inclusive environment and more reference could be made to this
- Say more about what we do well and potentially what we take for granted. These are very much the positives.
- Deputy Principal summarised what good looks like in the EIF and the committee were happy to support the proposed grade. Deputy CEO expressed the view that in this area it feels that the college is on the cusp of a tipping point to outstanding.

#### 10) Leadership and management (page 23)

Group were reminded that there is a weighted judgement in this area and this is the quality of education. Comments and observations made were:

- In terms of the move to lockdown it has been acknowledged that some tutors found it harder than others and the group questioned whether leadership and management supported enough to aid the transition. Staff responded by saying that:
  - A lot of teams did an incredible amount to support each other
  - College had already started the blended delivery journey in some areas. These were ahead in terms of experience and very quickly supported others.
  - There was a lot of 'hand holding' by the quality teams as well as them maintaining the day job.
  - Pastoral teams were very proactive to make sure activities and issues were logged. This was a very comprehensive approach.
  - Leaders and managers did support the shift but is it explicit enough within the document.
  - Leadership and management is at every level within the organisation. Tease out the work that the curriculum teams did and particularly so in terms of work in communities.
- Staff were really engaged with the hard to reach areas and learners, particularly as a result of connectivity and devices. Staff went above and beyond on an individual basis e.g. providing hard copies of papers where it was relevant.
- Staff felt fully supported and worked over and above
- Teams bonded more in the response
- Staff worked more hours
- Document could include more about staff upskilling opportunities and the take up in relation to this. This is performance management from a very positive point of view.
- In terms of apprenticeship provision the college needs to unpick more of the decisive action taken and the impact
- Proportionality here will be important.

One member of staff expressed the view that there have been significant improvements in terms of apprenticeship provision over the last 6 months. This includes interventions and challenge to staff as well as support. He believes that the college is now starting to see improved feedback from learners and employers.

- Group agreed that it was important to articulate when the college expects to get to see impact evidence. This clearly highlights when provision needs to be reviewed again and to do something differently if the results are not as expected. In terms of apprenticeships the aim is to make a real change in culture as well as performance. Challenge here was to know the tipping point.

Committee considered the recommended grade of good and were happy to accept this.

#### 11) Overall effectiveness (page 9)

Deputy Principal referred to the EIF and explained that there is a best fit approach. Key aspects noted were:

- Quality of education needs to be at least good
- All types of provision to be good or outstanding, however in exceptional circumstances colleges can have one RI if there is evidence of rapid improvements.
- All key judgements to be good or outstanding, again with one exception as an RI if there are rapid improvements
- Safeguarding has to be effective

In terms of apprenticeships the college will need to show convincingly that students are getting a good quality of education and experience. She challenged in terms of whether staff know it, see it and hear it. Staff expressed the view that there are the right plans in place but that it is not quite where it needs to be.

A challenge from the group was to reflect on the areas and aspects that are better than good. They felt that possibly in this area the college doesn't do itself justice and undersells what it is doing. More could be said about what is being done at each of the campuses. They felt that the focus was on areas for improvement rather than what the college does well. More could be said in terms of construction provision.

One suggestion made was to include position papers as appendices as this would give more examples. One member present questioned whether there was a need to establish a task and finish group to look at construction provision in the same way as apprenticeship delivery. An observation made was that construction and apprenticeship provision seems to be a challenge for the whole sector. This was acknowledged but staff explained that RNN expectations are so high that it could be the case that staff are too hard on themselves.

As an overall observation group all agreed that what was important was that the SAR is really about RNN as a college.

#### **6 AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

#### **7 Date and time of next meeting**

This was confirmed as Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 at 5pm.

**The meeting closed at 7.15pm**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date \_\_\_\_\_

