

MINUTES OF THE QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD REMOTELY ON 29TH NOVEMBER 2022 AT 5PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present:	Michele Bacon	External Governor
	Karen Banks	External Governor
	Megan Burns	Student Governor
	Tom McInerney	External Governor
	Ryan Turner	Staff Governor
	Sarah Worsley	Student Governor

In Attendance:	Thalia Bell	Deputy Principal (Curriculum)
	Alan Brown	Assistant Principal (Quality)
	Catherine Shaw	Clerk to Governors

The Clerk welcomed all attendees to this first committee meeting of the academic year, with a warm welcome extended to the new Student Governors and introductions were made.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Jayne Edwards (External Governor) and Jennie Roe (Head of Pre-A Level English and Maths). The meeting was quorate.

2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None declared.

3. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

In accordance with procedure, Michele Bacon was appointed as Committee Chair for 2022/2023.

4. **MINUTES** (*previously circulated*)

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st June 2022

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting.

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2022 be **approved** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

To review the action log and to consider any matters arising from the minutes (*previously circulated*)

The Deputy Principal was pleased to report that very good progress was being made in in the Foundation Studies Department and close monitoring continued to take place.

Resolved - The Committee **noted** the progress made on all matters contained within the action log.

6. CURRICULUM PRESENTATION

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Head of Pre-Advanced English and Maths was not in attendance.

Resolved: This agenda item was **deferred** to the next Quality and Standards Committee meeting.

7. SAFEGUARDING

7.1 Safeguarding Update 2022/2023

The Deputy Principal presented a report on safeguarding issues and drew the Committee's attention to the ways in which the College (i) identified risk, (ii) helped learners and (iii) managed risks. She drew the Committee's attention to the following key aspects:

- Health and Wellbeing - 690 referrals had been made with areas of concern encompassing anxiety/low mood, bereavement, learners subject to multi-agency involvement and responsibilities associated with being a young carer.
- Safeguarding – 196 referrals had been made with areas of concern including suicide ideation/attempts, domestic violence, child exploitation and sexual harassment.
- Local and national risks - these included the on-going impact of Covid-19, neglect, deprivation, terrorist/extremist behaviours, knife crime, child exploitation and mental health issues. The Committee discussed the impact of these risks on the College with a focus on referrals made in respect of child exploitation and suicide ideation/attempts.
- RAG rated College action plan was presented with assurance been given that this was subject to continuous monitoring.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the quantity and complexity of safeguarding referrals, together with the impact on the students and staff. Numerous questions were raised by Governors and responded to by the Deputy Principal. During discussions a Governor asked about the potential impact of workload on staff members. Governors were advised that an excellent team was in place and counselling support was available to colleagues, as required. The Student Governors commended the level and quality of pastoral support on offer to students at both Riverside and Cronton Colleges.

Resolved: The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

7.2 Safeguarding Policies 2022/2023

The Committee reviewed the College's safeguarding policies and the proposed amendments.

Resolved: The Committee recommended approval of the (i) Safeguarding Children's Policy and (ii) Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy to the Board.

8. CURRICULUM REPORT

The Deputy Principal provided an update to the Committee encompassing key performance indicators (KPIs), curriculum priorities and recruitment to date in respect of the current academic year. She advised that KPIs from 2021/2022 were cross-referenced in agenda item 9. The Committee was provided with anonymised data relating to:

- Learner numbers – total to date was 3,584 (all ages). This comprised of 2,267 at Cronton, 1,221 at Kingsway and 96 at CRMZ. A detailed report on recruitment had been presented by the Principal at the last Board meeting, with a further follow up report to be provided at the next Board meeting on 12th December 2022.
- Learner attendance and retention – strong indicators were evident in both aspects, which were broadly in line with the previous year.
- High Needs learners – in 2022/2023 the College had 141 high needs funded learners against 144 places (plus an additional 10 places for subcontractors) and 149 students had Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) across the three campuses.
- Potential vulnerable learners – there was an increase in the number of potentially vulnerable learners in the current academic year. This included learners identified as being either a looked after child, care leaver, young offender, young carer or a transitioning learner.
- Open Evenings – an increased number of visitors had attended open evenings compared to 2021/2022 data.
- Bursary applications – the Board had approved the College management request to increase the bursary threshold level to ensure all steps were taken to reach and support disadvantaged learners. The College continued to monitor all bursary and loan facilities.
- Industrial placements and work experience – the capacity and delivery (CDF) targets for 2022/2023 was 300, of which 89 must be at Level 2 and the remainder at Level 3.
- Maths and English updates – achievement rates were lower than in the previous year. Examinations had taken place in 2022, as opposed to the teacher assessment grades (TAGs) and centre assessment grades (CAGs) that had been used in 2021.
- Destinations – overall the data presented positive outcomes.
- Apprenticeships and work-based learning – achievement rates (overall and timely) had dropped slightly compared to the previous year which was predominantly due to the impact of Covid and subsequent delays in assessments. National average data was awaiting publication.
- Higher Education – increase of 31 students enrolled in 2022/2023 compared to 2021/2022.
- Curriculum changes and additions – T Levels and further exploration of a future mixed programme offer was to be undertaken.

A discussion took place with numerous questions being raised and responded to. In response to a question raised about the potential impact on staffing requirements as 16-18 student recruitment had been lower than expected, the Deputy Principal confirmed that specific subject areas were not adversely affected. The impact of under-

recruitment broadly meant a reduction of two or three students across a range of classes.

Resolved: The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

9. COLLEGE'S SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR) 2021/2022 AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) 2022/2023

The Assistant Principal presented this comprehensive report and highlighted the following aspects:

- Grade – overall grade remained as outstanding.
- Achievement rates 2021/2022 – there had been a decline in line with the national picture, though pleasingly College results remained above the national average. A number of factors had appeared to influence the decline in data which included student attendance, an increase in reported mental health issues, high staff absence relating to Covid and a challenging GCSE cohort in terms of ability.
- The College's vision, values and strategic aims, performance data in each subject, quality assurance processes, equality and diversity key performance indicators, safeguarding provision and financial health.

In conclusion of the SAR, three areas for improvement were identified and formed the basis of the QIP. These were to (i) to further improve the quality of education for learners in the Foundation Studies Department and to ensure the more confident learners made rapid progress, (ii) further improve the quality of education for the small minority of course/apprenticeships that were not yet outstanding and (iii) develop organisational focus and capacity to further meet the local skills needs. A summary of the action plan was presented to the Committee and further discussion took place. In response to a question raised by a Governor, the Deputy Principal confirmed that in the region of 260 staff members responded to the Staff Survey, which equated to approximately 55% of the workforce.

Resolved: The Committee **recommended approval** of the SAR 2021/2022 and QIP 2022/2023 to the Board.

10. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

To receive the Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2021/2022

The Deputy Principal presented this report to inform the Committee of the equality and diversity measures for the College against retention and achievement results. She highlighted the following aspects:

- Achievement in 2021/2022 – 87.3% (against 89% in 2020/2021).
- Retention in 2021/2022 – 91.6% (against 92.5% in 2020/2021).
- Progress and close monitoring had taken place against the protected characteristics and the wider protected groups such as looked after children, young offenders and young carers; those cohorts were included in the resulting action plan for 2022/2023.
- Action Plan 2022/2023 – focus on (i) the provision of greater inclusion support and progress within the wider college and Foundation Studies department, (ii) closing the gap – to raise the achievement of females, especially those who were from disadvantaged backgrounds, (iii) closing the achievement gap between widening participation (WP) and non WP learners, (iv) 19+ learners receiving financial support to establish reasons for underachievement compared to their

counterparts and (v) achievement and retention of young carers to ensure that pastoral and financial support remained priority areas of focus.

A discussion took place. In response to a question raised, the Deputy Principal confirmed that students themselves influenced the action plan in a sensitive and discreet manner. Examples presented included providing financial assistance via the bursary scheme to obtain uniform if deemed appropriate, taxi journeys to and from work placements and use of on-site laundry facilities. A lengthy discussion ensued concerning those learners who were eligible for free meals, though did not claim them due to a perceived stigma of using vouchers to purchase a meal, as opposed to paying by cash. It was noted that this appeared to be a significant barrier, though the College had no discretion in the way the government scheme was administered.

Resolved: The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and resulting action plan which was to be subject to future monitoring by the Committee.

11. QUALITY ASSURANCE

11.1 To receive a report on areas subject to close monitoring 2022/2023 (previously circulated)

The Assistant Principal advised the Committee of the five subject areas under close monitoring by College management. Evidence to support this intervention included outcomes from induction surveys, walkthroughs and schemes of work. In addition to the standard College review processes these areas were to receive termly quality reviews and more frequent/targeted walkthroughs. The Assistant Principal was pleased to report that two areas subject to close monitoring in 2021/2022 had been removed from the process after having secured pleasing improvements. A discussion took place.

Resolved: The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

11.2 To receive a report on the outcomes from the walkthrough review week in November 2022 (previously circulated)

The Assistant Principal informed the Committee that 322 walkthroughs had taken place during the week beginning 7th November 2022, which resulted in 82% RAG-rated green and 98% rated green or amber. The departments subject to the walkthroughs included A Levels, Access, Adult Basic Skills, Construction, Counselling, Early Years, Engineering at Cronton, Engineering at Kingsway, Foundation Studies, Hair and Beauty, Hospitality, Health and Social Care, Sport and Public Services, Visual and Performing Arts, Vocational Business/IT/Sciences, Pre-Advanced Maths and English and Apprenticeships.

The outcomes from the walkthroughs correlated with the QIP 2022/2023, together with the preceding agenda item detailing the subject areas under close monitoring.

Resolved: The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

12. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS (previously circulated)

The Assistant Principal presented a report which informed the Committee of the number, type and outcomes of the complaints received in 2021/2022. A five-year trend was included in the report for illustrative purposes with a steady decline in official complaints being evident. The Assistant Principal provided an overview of the process from an initial concern being raised to escalation of an official complaint. The Committee

received assurance of a transparent complaints process with thorough investigations taking place.

The Assistant Principal provided an overview of a recent written compliment that had been received relating to the Foundation Studies Department. A discussion took place, with the Committee welcoming details of compliments received.

Resolved: The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and commended the College on the low number of official complaints received.

13. LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLANS (LSIP) & THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

The Deputy Principal delivered a presentation which focused on:

- Skills for Jobs White Paper, subsequent funding/accountability consultations and the accountability agreement guidance recent published by the ESFA.
- Overview of the requirements - Governing bodies were required to undertake regular reviews of how well the education or training provided by the college met local needs, in particular needs relating to local employment. Boards should undertake a review at least every three years, or when a new LSIP is published, if earlier. The responsibility of the curriculum offer continued to rest with the Board.
- The duty came into force on 28th June 2022. Accountability agreements were due to be introduced in 2023/24 and should reflect any actions governing bodies have agreed to take as a result of a review.
- College preparation – all curriculum areas were being subject to an audit and links continued to be established with key stakeholders.
- Collaboration continued to take place with the colleges in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) through the Association of Liverpool City Region Colleges (AoLCRC) and the Chambers of Commerce. £2.6m had been secured to enable the LCR colleges to collaborate on the Green Agenda. £435k had been granted to Riverside College to develop hydrogen technology. An overview of the hydrogen technology offer was provided.

Resolved: The Committee:

- (i) **noted** the contents of the presentation
- (ii) **approved** that the slide deck was to be circulated to all Board Members for information purposes

14. POLICIES

14.1 Learner Involvement (*previously circulated*)

The Committee reviewed this policy and the proposed amendments.

Resolved: The Committee **recommended approval** of the Learner Involvement Policy to the Board.

15. COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION 2021/2022

The Clerk referred to the draft Committee self-evaluation of performance which provided a narrative on the following aspects of its performance:

- Attendance levels were reported at 94.5%, against a target of 80%
- Membership details

- Terms of Reference
- Summary of Committee activities during 2021/2022
- Suggested areas for development

The Committee reflected on its performance throughout the 2021/2022 academic year. A suggested area for development was to include a student voice agenda item to enhance stakeholder engagement. The Clerk advised that this was under discussion with the Chair of the Board, Principal and the Student Governors. There were no areas of concern identified and the Committee was satisfied that it had fully complied with its statutory obligations and terms of reference.

Resolved: The Committee **approved** the self-evaluation of the Audit Committee’s Performance in 2021/2022.

16. ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE BOARD

A discussion took place.

Resolved – the following items were to be presented to the Board at its next meeting on 12th December 2022:

- Safeguarding Update
- Curriculum Reports and Close Monitoring
- College’s Self-Assessment Report 2021/2022 and QIP 2022/2023
- Policies recommended for Board approval

17. DATES OF FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Resolved - The Committee **noted** the following meeting dates:

- Board – 12th December 2022
- Strategic Planning Workshop – 10th February 2023
- Quality and Standards Committee – 7th March 2023¹

The Deputy Principal advised that several questions had been raised by Jayne Edwards (External Governor) prior to the meeting and the Deputy Principal had incorporated responses during her commentary on the relevant agenda items. The Clerk was to ensure that these responses were communicated to Jayne.

The Chair thanked all attendees for their attendance and contribution at the meeting. There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 6.55pm.

Signed: Office copy signed by Michele Bacon
.....

Chair of Quality and Standards Committee

Date: 13th March 2023
.....

¹ Subsequent change of next meeting date to 13th March 2023