

MINUTES OF THE QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18th JUNE 2024 AT 4:30PM AT KINGSWAY CAMPUS

Present:	Michele Bacon	External Governor, Chair
	Karen Banks	External Governor
	David Copeland	Staff Governor
	Jayne Edwards	External Governor
	Tom McInerney	External Governor
	Lucy White	Student Governor
In Attendance:	Thalia Bell	Deputy Principal (Curriculum)
	Alan Brown	Assistant Principal (Quality)
	Donna Elston	Head of Student Services (agenda item 4)
	Catherine Shaw	Clerk to the Governors

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Sarah Worsley.

2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

David Copeland declared an interest in agenda item 9.1

3. **MINUTES** (*previously circulated*)

3.1 **To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th February 2024**

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting.

Resolved - The minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2024 were **approved** as a correct record.

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

The action log and any matters arising were considered by the Committee.

Resolved - The Committee **noted** that all actions had been completed.

Donna Elston, Head of Student Services & Programme Management joined the meeting.

4. **CURRICULUM PRESENTATION**

Donna Elston delivered a presentation on the student voice across all provision. She highlighted the following aspects within her presentation:

- Strategies to capture the learner voice included (i) feedback from student representative meetings, (ii) evaluation of various thematic questionnaires, (iii) feedback from Focus Group meetings, (iv) one-to-one reviews that took place through ASPIRE weeks in the College calendar, and (iv) twice-yearly 'Have Your

Say' learner voice surveys. Examples of questionnaires were provided and instances cited where feedback had informed change at the College.

- Cause for Concern (CFC) Groups – cohorts were prioritised with specific questions asked to ensure concerns were being addressed to maximise the learner experience.
- Principal's Breakfast – this was an opportunity for the Principal to deliver a presentation on the current position of the College to the Student Representatives (Reps) followed by a question/answer session. This was a successful and informative event.

In response to a question raised, the Head of Student Services clarified the process for the election of Student Reps. A discussion ensued regarding the different surveys that took place, and in particular the evaluation of the Wellbeing Survey which informed the College of a significant number of young carers. This enabled the College to offer support to a greater number of learners that otherwise may not have been identified.

Enquiries were made into the wellbeing of the team in view of the complex referrals they were responding to. The Committee was advised that the team worked exceptionally well in some very challenging circumstances. Each staff member supported each other and group staff sessions were held regularly.

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

The Head of Student Services was thanked for her very informative presentation and she left the meeting.

5. OFSTED (previously circulated)

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair congratulated all at the College on the outstanding Ofsted grading that had been sustained at the inspection in April 2024. Governors commended the staff on this magnificent achievement.

Resolved: The Committee **noted** the contents of the Ofsted Inspection report and that it would feature in the Principal's report at the next Board meeting.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT 2024/2025 (previously circulated)

The Committee considered the importance of this Statement as it set the overall expectations of providers in terms of funding. The Deputy Principal (Curriculum) highlighted the proposed changes since its previous approval in 2023 for the Committee's consideration. The Committee commended the quality of the Statement. During a discussion it was very pleasing to note that at the recent Ofsted inspection the College was judged to be making a strong contribution to meeting skills needs, which was the highest descriptor for assessment purposes.

Resolved: The Committee **recommended approval** of the Accountability Statement 2024/2025 to the Board, subject to a minor amendment for clarification purposes regarding the College's support to reduce the number of people not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

7. SAFEGUARDING

7.1 To receive a report on safeguarding matters in 2023/2024 to date

The Deputy Principal presented a report on safeguarding issues and drew the Committee's attention to the following key aspects:

- Welfare and Concern Referrals – these stood at 907 to date, compared to 925 in 2022/2023.
- Safeguarding Referrals – Out of the 907 referrals to date, 514 of those had met the safeguarding threshold, compared to 579 in the previous academic year. The reporting format had changed to illustrate the actual number of students affected, as opposed to the number of individual incidents that had occurred. The increase in the number of domestic violence related reports was concerning.
- An area of outstanding practice – at the recent Ofsted inspection safeguarding was judged to be effective which was the highest-grade descriptor. Inspectors acknowledged the extensive work undertaken by the Safeguarding Team and its effectiveness featured throughout the report across the range of provision.
- An area of concern – applications from prospective students with complex social backgrounds had increased significantly. In preparation for the 2024/2025 academic year the College had seen an increase for second stage interviews from 110 to 214. A Governor commented on the additional challenges with no additional funding.
- Recommendations to further enhance provision – these included: (i) additional training on Mental Health support for college managers (ii) continue to escalate concerns via multi-agency partners to maximise support for learners, particularly in respect of incidents of domestic abuse and neglect

The Committee was fully supportive of the increased focus on the transition process from school to college for the increasing number of learners with complex needs, though was disappointed to note that no additional funding had been made available to support this.

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

8. CURRICULUM MATTERS

8.1 To receive a monitoring report on curriculum performance

The Deputy Principal provided an update to the Committee consisting of key performance indicators (KPIs), curriculum priorities and recruitment to date in respect of the current academic year. The following key aspects were highlighted:

16-18 Cohort

- Overall attendance was recorded at 88%. Lower attendance levels within the Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 programmes remained a cause for concern. An Attendance Strategy Group was being established to formulate improvement strategies.
- Overall retention was recorded at 91.7%, which was an increase of 2.8% compared to 202/2023 at this point in time.
- Retention by Curriculum Area – all had increased with the exception of (i) Business Development and (ii) Computing and Digital Technologies.
- Curriculum Planning and Reforms including Maths and English Updates – these remained areas of extreme uncertainty given the imminent UK General Election on 4th July 2024.

- Enrolment – the College had seen an increase of more than 400 applications compared to data in 2023/2024 and therefore the application process had been closed.

Adults

- Overall 19+ full time attendance was recorded at 86% which was an increase of 1% compared to the previous academic year at this point in time. Overall 19+ part time attendance was 87%.
- Overall retention on full time courses was recorded at 95.7% which was an increase of 3.4% compared to the previous academic year.
- Retention by Curriculum Area – all had increased with the exception of Construction.
- Curriculum Planning and Reform – the Adult Education Budget (AEB) was to become known as the Adult Skills Fund from 2024/2025. A tightening of ‘tailored learning’ (qualifications that did not have an external awarding body examination or measurement) was anticipated which was likely to have a significant impact as the flexible funding route had not previously been capped.
- Enrolment – To date, adult enrolment had increased by more than 55 applications compared to last year.

HE

- Attendance levels stood at 87% which represented a 2% reduction compared to the previous academic year. Affected curriculum areas had been identified and action plans were being implemented.
- In-year retention stood at 97% which represented a 1% increase compared to last year.
- Enrolment – the number of applications had increased by 32 compared to last year.
- External Updates with HE – Staffordshire University achieved ‘Good’ in all areas of their Ofsted ITE inspection, including Further Education and Skills (FSE). A new Access and Participation Plan was being developed and would come into effect in 2025/2026.

Learners with High Needs and Special Educational Needs (SEND)

Key highlights from the report included:

- Adult support (ESOL, Basic Skills and Apprentices) had been established and the support being offered was being tracked more effectively.
- A Specialist Tutor was in place to lead on assessment of need and planning of support. An initiative had been established to enhance provision for ESOL students which was being delivered by a newly recruited Learning Support Worker.
- Foundation Learning – further work on tracking and assessment has been identified to ensure the College maintained an ambitious curriculum.

Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeship retention was positive with a 2.3% improvement compared to this point in time in 2022/2023.
- Recruitment was buoyant with growth across most areas. In particular, the number of enrolments had increased in Health & Social Care. The College

continued to work with all local NHS Trusts in developing healthcare apprenticeships to assist in addressing recruitment issues.

- Employer Communication – this remained strong, as evidenced at the recent Ofsted inspection.

Skills

- The College was delighted to have been awarded a ‘strong’ grading at the recent Ofsted inspection in meeting skills need. It was noted that highly effective partnerships had been established with a range of stakeholders.

Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF)

- The LSIF revenue project had been completed. The Part 2 capital project was due to commence with the finish date being March 2025.
- The College had worked collaboratively with other LCR colleges and employers to complete seven new modular qualifications in Green and Sustainable Technology; these were currently operating as part of the Test and Learn phase.

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

9. QUALITY ASSURANCE

9.1 To receive a report on areas subject to close monitoring *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal presented this report and provided a progress update on each individual subject area. He summarised as follows:

- It was pleasing to report that the two curriculum areas that had been placed within the Special Measures category had made progress. Both areas had been scrutinised by inspectors during the recent Ofsted inspection.
- There had been an increase in the number of curriculum areas placed in the Closer Monitoring category in 2023/2024, mainly as a result of a previous decline in two-year retention.

In her capacity as the SEND Link Governor, the Chair informed the Committee that she had made a recent visit to the CRMZ and met with Foundation Learning students. This had been a very positive experience where clear improvements had been evident.

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

9.2 Learner Views from the ‘Have Your Say’ Whole College Survey *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal presented and highlighted the following aspects from his summary report:

- Overall, the analysis from the survey evidenced positive responses.
- There was a lower response rate for this second survey of the academic year compared to the first survey. The schedule had been disrupted due to the Ofsted inspection being undertaken at the same time.
- Whilst the response rate did not reach the original target, 1509 learners participated in the survey. As key stakeholders, assurance was provided that learner views were considered as part of the Ofsted inspection in line with the inspection framework.
- Action plans were to be formulated and monitored in respect of any course with a low satisfaction rate.

During the following discussion the Student Governor confirmed that the completion of the survey was actively promoted via a variety of methods across the College.

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

9.3 **Complaints and Compliments** (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal informed the Committee that seven official complaints had been received during this academic year; all of which had been fully investigated. The majority of the complaints related to exam access arrangements (EAA) and an overview provided and they had been upheld.

Three complimentary reports that had been received were shared with the Committee; examples were from (i) a parent, (ii) a student, (iii) member of the public.

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

10. **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)** (*previously circulated*)

The Deputy Principal (Curriculum) presented this report which related to the EDI measures for the College against student retention and attendance data in respect of:

- Gender
- Gender and age
- Age
- Widening participation (WP) and age
- Ethnicity and WP
- Inclusion Support
- Learners an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and High Needs Funded
- Learners with disabilities or difficulties
- Looked After College Learners
- Young Carers
- Learners in and out of borough

The analysis demonstrated that that retention across the College had improved in this academic year which had positively impacted upon all of the protected characteristics tracked for EDI purposes with the exception of inclusion. Learners who either did not receive inclusion support or had an EHCP had a slightly better retention rate.

Resolved: the Committee **noted** the report.

11. **POLICIES** (*previously circulated*)

11.1 **Data Protection Policy**

11.2 **Higher Education Bursary**

11.3 **Student Disciplinary & Suspension Procedures**

The Committee considered the individual policies and proposed amendments to each.

Resolved: The Committee **recommended approval** of policies 11.1 to 11.3 (inc) to the Board.

12. **GOVERNANCE – COMMITTEE MATTERS**

12.1 **FE Corporations Governance Guide** (*previously circulated*)

The Clerk advised that an update had been published in respect of the Prevent Duty and outlined the Board's responsibilities for compliance purposes.

Resolved: the Committee **noted** the report.

- 12.2 **Curriculum Presentations 2024/2025** (*previously circulated*)
Several suggestions were made and considered.

Resolved: The Committee **agreed** for the following presentations to be delivered:

- 26th November 2024– Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- 11th March 2025 – Curriculum/Qualification Reform
- 17th June 2025 – Principles of Great Teaching

13. ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE BOARD

Resolved – in addition to a summary report the following items were to be presented to the Board at its next meeting on 8th July 2024:

- Safeguarding Update
- Accountability Statement 2024/2025
- Curriculum Report
- Student Voice Presentation
- Policies recommended for Board approval

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

- Board – 8th July 2024 at 4.30pm
- Quality and Standards Committee – 26th November 2024 at 4.30pm

Prior to closing the meeting, on behalf of the Committee the Chair expressed thanks to Lucy White and conveyed best wishes for her future.

The meeting was closed at 6:15pm with thanks to all attendees for their participation.

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

Chair of Quality and Standards Committee

Date:26th November 2024.....