

Quality and Standards Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 25 June 2025 at 4:30 PM

Location: Riverside College Halton, Kingsway, Widnes, Cheshire

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| Present: | Katie Anderson Michele Bacon Karen Banks Steph Power | External Governor External Governor, Chair External Governor Staff Governor |
| In Attendance: | Ben Barton Jonathan Bailey Alan Brown Donna Elston Ged Hanley Andy James Catherine Shaw | Vice Principal (Head of Riverside) Head of Cross College Inclusion Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality) Head of Student Services Assistant Principal (Systems Development & Funding) Assistant Principal (Curriculum, Riverside) Head of Governance |

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Millie Hargate, Tom McInerney and Sarah Worsley. The Head of Governance advised that Steph Power would be late arriving for the meeting due to a teaching commitment at the Cronton campus.

Resolved: The Committee noted and accepted the apologies received.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no new declarations made.

Resolved: The verbal update was noted.

3. MINUTES

3.1 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2025 (previously circulated)

Resolved: The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

3.2 To receive a progress report on any matters arising from the previous meeting.

Resolved: The Committee noted the action log.

4. STUDENT SUPPORT

4.1 Safeguarding *(previously circulated)*

An increase in safeguarding cases was reported, with a total of 586 cases compared to 524 at the previous meeting. The Committee was advised that the increase was predominantly attributed to several external factors. It was reported that the use of early intervention strategies was having a positive impact for learners.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

4.2 Wellbeing and Enrichment Activities *(previously circulated)*

The Wellbeing Team had noted an increase in cases related to suicide ideation and domestic abuse. The inappropriate use of online resources was also discussed and the strategies in place to address these issues.

A Governor referred to the monitoring of students who were neurodivergent and asked whether there was any correlation between neurodivergence and the reporting of welfare / safeguarding issues. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) reported that a correlation had been identified and assured the Committee that the team was adept in providing tailored support for students who were assessed as neurodivergent. She reported that the College had undertaken extensive work with educational psychologists to ensure that appropriate support was being provided to assist students.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

4.3 Bursary *(previously circulated)*

When considering this report, the Committee was advised that adjustments had been made in line with the guidance issued to identify students who were likely to be eligible for a bursary. The process had been revised to include a financial assessment and a tiered approach based on course needs.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

The Head of Student Services/Designated Safeguarding Lead was thanked for her reports, and she left the meeting.

5. TERMLY CURRICULUM PRESENTATION

Jonathan Bailey (Head of Cross College Inclusion) provided an overview of (i) the roles within the Inclusion Team, (ii) the changes made to the management of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and (iii) the extensive exam access arrangements required.

A Governor asked whether attendance rates declined during the exam season. The Committee was advised that historically this had been the case. The College had addressed this issue by (i) ensuring students were supported during exams and (ii) staff members who were inclusion support specialists were present in exam rooms.

Resolved: The Committee noted the content of the presentation.

The Head of Cross College Inclusion was thanked for his presentation, and he left the meeting.

6. CURRICULUM AND FUNDING

6.1 Local Needs Duty *(previously circulated)*

The Local Needs Duty and Accountability Statement for 2025/2026 were discussed. In conjunction with this guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) was considered.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

6.2 Accountability Statement 2025/2026 *(previously circulated)*

The Accountability Statement was reviewed with some minor changes being recommended by the Committee. A Governor referred to the government's Net Zero Strategy and potential effect on the 'green agenda' in connection with the Accountability Statement. The Assistant Principal (Curriculum, Riverside) confirmed that green skills and sustainability remained of critical importance and the College was aligning its strategy with the government's industrial strategy.

Resolved: The Committee recommended approval of the Accountability Agreement 2025-2026 to the Board, subject to minor amendments as discussed.

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE

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

The Deputy Principal outlined the progress made and any on-going challenges in relation to the three curriculum areas which were subject to 'closer monitoring.' Foundation Studies (FS) remained in the College's 'special measures' category and reasons for this were provided to the Committee. A lengthy discussion took place which primarily focussed on the number of management changes in recent years within the FS department and the impact this was likely to have on stability. The Deputy Principal acknowledged this and provided assurance that there was support in place for staff members, balanced with robust challenge where appropriate. He outlined the improvement plan moving forward which was supported by the Committee.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

7.2 Learner Voice *(previously circulated)*

The results of the "Have Your Say" survey were reviewed. Governors acknowledged the overall high satisfaction levels which were very pleasing. In the minority of areas where satisfaction levels had declined, further information was sought and received. In response to a question raised regarding how well high needs students felt prepared for their examinations, the Committee was advised that a high proportion of students within the specified cohort did not have externally assessed exams.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

7.3 Complaints and Compliments *(previously circulated)*

A reduction in complaints was noted. This was largely attributed to the proactive management of exam access arrangements which was well-received.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report

8. MONITORING OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

8.1 Attendance, Retention, Enrolments and Suspensions *(previously circulated)*

A Governor queried the reasons for the drop in the retention rate for children looked after (CLA). In response, it was reported that this was a relatively small cohort and there were several reasons for the exclusions. Reasons included transfers to other providers, complex mental health concerns and gaining employment. The Committee was advised that exclusion was a measure of last resort. Governors were advised that the College continued to work closely with Social Care and relevant support agencies. The Committee was assured that situations of this nature were managed in the best interests of the learner.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

8.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion *(previously circulated)*

During discussions the positive impact of the "Know Me to Teach Me" programme was highlighted, particularly in respect of 'widening participation' (WP) learners.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

9. POLICIES

9.1 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion *(previously circulated)*

9.2 Higher Education Bursary *(previously circulated)*

9.3 Student Disciplinary & Suspension Procedures *(previously circulated)*

All policies (agenda items 9.1 to 9.3) were reviewed and any proposed amendments considered.

Resolved: The Committee recommended all policies for approval by the Board.

10. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MATTERS

10.1 Curriculum Presentations 2025/2026 *(previously circulated)*

The schedule for curriculum presentations for the next academic year was discussed.

Resolved: The Committee agreed that the curriculum presentation at the next meeting was to focus on Foundation Studies.

10.2 FE Sector Updates *(previously circulated)*

The Committee considered the key elements of the updated statutory guidance published by the DfE relating to Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers. The Committee received assurance that the College was compliant.

Resolved: The Committee noted the contents of the report.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

12. ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE BOARD

Resolved: The Committee approved that the following items be reported to the next Board meeting:

- Safeguarding
 - Key Performance Indicators
 - All Policies
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13. MEETING REVIEW *(previously circulated)*

Resolved: The Committee noted that any comments regarding the effectiveness of the meeting were to be submitted directly to the Head of Governance by 1st July 2025.

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates were noted:

- **Board:** 7th July 2025
- **Quality & Standards Committee:** 2nd December 2025

The Chair thanked attendees for their participation and the meeting was brought to a close.

Signed.....Office Copy signed by Rachael Owen

Committee Chair

Date.....25th November 2025.....