



CURRICULUM AND QUALITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2022

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29 September
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Closed

Present: Mike Welsh (MW – Chair)
David Alexander (DA – Principal and CEO)
Aneela Ali (AA)
Carol Davenport (CD)
Sarah Stewart (SS)
Michael Wood-Williams (MWW)

In attendance: Deni Chambers (DC – Assistant Principal)
Tracy Foreman (TF – Assistant Principal)
Helen Hepple (HH – Assistant Principal)
Kevin Marston (KM – Assistant Principal)
Andrew Robson (AR – Assistant Principal)
Chris Toon (CT – Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality)
Ivan Jepson (IJ – Director of Business Development & Planning)
Jeremy Cook (JC – Deputy Principal: Finance & Resources)
Nadine Hudspeth (NH – Director of Marketing, Communications, Health and Safety, Student Services and Corporate Admin)
Richard Ward (RW – Head of Quality Improvement)
Emma Moody (EM – WBD, Clerk)

CQ/113 Chair's Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest

MW welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Darren Heathcote (DH).

There were no conflicts of interest declared. Members were reminded to declare any conflicts that arose during the meeting.

CQ/114 Minutes of the last meeting dated 12 May 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12 May 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

CQ/115 Matters Arising / Action Log

The action log was noted.

CQ/116 Safeguarding Learners

The report was presented by NH (in DH's absence).

NH noted that the safeguarding policy had been reviewed by external legal advisers and separately quality assured by a specialist consultant.

NH noted the augmentation of the College safeguarding team during the year and the further training and development received by those team members. Opportunities were being taken to reflect and learn and consider best practice, to further improve College ways of working.

The safeguarding steering group is now established and meeting regularly, MWW attends as safeguarding governor and that group is working well.

In the last year, the PSD programme has been changed, recognising the issue last picked up by OFSTED, ensuring local issues can be picked up promptly including focus on county lines.

NH noted the strong links being maintained with the local agencies, statutory and safeguarding partners.

Student survey reports were positive – with 98% of students reporting that they felt safe in College.

MW asked if the safeguarding steering group looked at breakdown of referrals by curriculum area. NH confirmed it did, and they also looked at referral by protected characteristic. Apprenticeship referrals are looked at separately too. MW asked if the apprenticeship referrals could be specifically shown with the report going forward and this was agreed. NH confirmed that the same referrals process is followed for apprenticeship.

SS asked what proportion of students complete the survey. AR confirmed the proportion of completion was high, although did not have the actual percentage to quote, but would be able to confirm outside the meeting.

CD asked about the mandatory training, which show high rates of completion. CT confirmed that processes were in place to ensure any colleagues requiring to complete were contacted to progress this and ensure compliance.

Action: Future safeguarding reports to confirm referrals are broken down by curriculum area, protected characteristic and for apprenticeships.

Action: Student completion rates to be confirmed at the October 2022 Board Meeting.

The Committee recommended that the Board approve the Annual Safeguarding Report and in doing so, recommended that the Board approve the updated versions of the following policies:

- ***Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy***
- ***Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy***

- **Prevent Policy**

CQ/117 Curriculum and Quality Strategy Update

A presentation was delivered by CT.

CT had undertaken high level research across other colleges and only few had a curriculum "strategy" as opposed to an improvement or curriculum plan. CT has worked through the development of a format for the College curriculum strategy.

CT presented a one page visual to Governors and spoke to the presentation.

Governors welcomed the report and the ambitions within the strategy. AA noted that Governors would like to see key indicators such that the Governors could track, monitor performance and understand impact. This was agreed by members.

EM said it would be helpful, presentationally, to ensure clear linkage between this curriculum strategy and the College's overall strategic plan. CT confirmed this was already the plan that was in place and being progressed at Executive Team level.

The presentation was noted.

CQ/118 OFSTED – College preparation and planning

CT had recently provided all governors with a half hour briefing session on the new OFSTED framework and the role of governors as part of this. CT led a discussion around the preparation and planning taking place following on from this, in advance of inspection.

CT was preparing a briefing note for Governors which would be shared following a further presentation on the detailed preparation work for OFSTED at the conference next week.

CD stated that she would welcome the briefing paper on OFSTED for Governors. CD stressed the support needed for staff at curriculum leader level and ensuring they were able to reflect accurately what they did and why to OFSTED. MW agreed and noted that it was important for curriculum leaders to be able to operate in a culture where they were able to discuss what they did and consider any possible areas of improvement if identified on an ongoing basis.

The discussion was noted.

CQ/119 2021/22 Year to Date Performance Report

The report was presented by AR.

AR highlighted the challenges regarding attendance during the year as there continued to be disruption arising from covid lockdown restrictions. AA asked if the College had assessed if there was anything else (particular factors) preventing the students from engaging. AR said there was a detailed consistent approach across the College, and this included analysis of reasons for non-attendance. This identified certain issues (for example, other commitments of students or individual motivational issues) and this data is available to managers.

SS asked about bench-marking against other colleges. MW said that this pattern in relation to attendance would, in his view, be sector wide, but the College trajectory was improving and the committee would continue to monitor this.

AR noted that national rates for performance and achievement were not yet available. College performance was strong, but not quite as high as certain previous years in 16-18, but various factors had impacted this, including attendance. 19+ was stronger, and the

rate was currently at 90.2%. AR confirmed overall figures for achievement ought to be around 87-88%.

CT noted that the issue for 16-18 was largely retention but that these figures reported represented learner completion rates.

A level performance appears to reflect that across the FE sector. The College continued to perform in the middle grades but retained ambition to ensure students achieve more of the higher grades (A*-B).

AR reported that the College was performing well in BTEC and higher than the 2021 national rate (which was based on teacher assessed grades).

The report was noted.

CQ/120 DfE Statutory guidance to review how well the education or training provided meets local needs

The report was presented by CT.

CT highlighted the duty to review, a new duty on Governors to review that the College provision was meeting local skills needs, with this having been included as a provision within the new Post 16 Education and Skills Act assigned into legislation during May 2022. The duty is triggered by a new Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) being undertaken or otherwise every 3 years.

CT also reported that the DfE had confirmed the College would be part of a north east LSIP covering the Gateshead, Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside areas – and that the employer representative body leading the LSIP would be the North East Automotive Alliance (NEAA). The NEAA had called the first meeting of the LSIP for the following day and this would discuss local skills priorities. DA confirmed that IJ would attend this meeting on behalf of the College. An update on this would be provided at future Committee and Board meetings.

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This would enable the College to be part of the development of this area of responsibility.

Action: DA/IJ to provide an update following NEAA LSIP meetings at future Committee and Board meetings where appropriate.

The report was noted.

CQ/121 Bootcamps – Contract and Progress Update

The report was presented by DC.

DC noted the delivery and quality of bootcamps had been inspected by OFSTED and judgements were high.

DC noted the significant improvement work but noted that the College now had a plan to further improve destination performance so that it met the expected standards as now being advised by the DfE.

The College had reflected on the first phase of the bootcamp delivery and taken some remedial action to make improvements where this was possible, including ending its relationship with a particular partner.

DC highlighted the ongoing challenges in this area and work being undertaken to drive improvements.

MW asked how confident DC was that the College would meet the 55% minimum standard set by the DfE for Wave 2 relating to positive destinations. DC said the College would do what it could but this was likely to prove challenging, but was confident that by Wave 2 extension, the College may be able to deliver at this level. DC confirmed there would be no financial clawback but the College would not meet the target to claim the final 10% of the funding. This would not have a resultant impact on resource elsewhere.

There were wider benefits achieved through the delivery of the bootcamps, including relations with local partners.

AA asked about marketing and comms around the bootcamp project. DC said that the College had spoken with partners, but there was a balanced approach required to this with other providers working with the College to deliver bootcamps in other areas of the region. DC said that discussions with employers did not always materialise into jobs at the end of the programme and the College was going back and challenging those employers to ensure that the bootcamps led to real outcomes for learners where at all possible.

The report was noted.

CQ/122 Quality Assurance of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Teacher Academy

The report was presented by RW.

The paper outlined the key activities undertaken during the development week in June 2022 and development priorities for the coming year as informed by the College strategic plan.

RW highlighted the level of engagement with curriculum staff throughout the week, which was positive and included sub-contractors also.

Plans for 2022/23 were set out in the paper and would continue to be rolled out for staff throughout the year.

The report was noted.

CQ/123 Higher Education - Performance Update

The report was presented by AR, who highlighted key aspects of the report and the areas of challenge throughout the year.

DC highlighted that games and sport was an anomaly for the year where performance had dipped due to circumstances pertaining to covid but was expected to improve again in the next year's data.

The report was noted.

CQ/124 Risk Register

The report was presented by JC, noting the format and content of the risk register was being reviewed and revised currently.

The report presented included the strategic risk register in the format that had been provided to governors throughout 2021/22 and also showed the updated strategic risk register structure that content that was being developed to support delivery of the new College strategic plan. JC advised that the next committee meeting ought to expect the presentation of the register in new format only.

The risk register is aligned at a strategic level rather than being focused on the improvement actions arising during intervention and so has a more concise number of strategic risks aligned with the new College strategic plan. Further work would be the inclusion of further mitigation actions and identifying forms of assurance gained against each risk.

The register would go to the Audit Committee on 9 November and then be recommended to Board for approval.

JC highlighted the key risks within the direct remit/oversight for the Committee. MWW asked about the process by which the risks had been identified as the key strategic risks. The Audit Committee would wish to see more detail on the process of the register's development.

DA noted that the College had over 17 operational plans and had reviewed risks to consider those which were considered key at a strategic level. There was cognisance that risks may move between operational and strategic. DA and JC would also speak to the audit committee about the risks that were not included.

MWW asked about the process which would ensure that the committees had some oversight of risks that straddle strategic and operational, so Governors had awareness of this. DA noted that the new Director of Governance and Compliance could work with the Audit Committee and College Executive Team to consider the way in which the risk register could be further developed.

MW noted with caution that it was important for the risk register to remain strategic rather than for the register and governors to stray into operational territory.

CD questioned the high level of probability attributed to each risk and whether this was appropriate in reality. Whilst the likelihood may change throughout the year, the probability was generally high.

Action: New Director of Governance and Compliance to work with the Audit Committee and College Executive Team to consider the way in which the risk register could be further developed.

The report was noted.

CQ/125 2022-23 Enrolment report

The report was presented by CT.

This week has seen numbers of leavers and joiners start to stabilise. CT highlighted the challenges faced by a significant number of students in relation to their mental health and their ability to remain in the College environment. A certain number of leavers represented this demographic of student, where the College could not cater for their needs.

Governors noted they were pleased with the current status and enrolments were positive.

The report was noted.

CQ/126 Any other business

There was no other business.

CQ/127 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 24 November 2022 at 10.00am.

