GATESHEAD COLLEGE
EDUCATION WITH EMPLOYMENT EDGE

CURRICULUM AND QUALITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2024 4PM TO 6PM – MAIN MINUTES

GATESHEAD COLLEGE

Governors	Type	Initials	Attendance	Apologies
Carol Davenport	Chair / Independent	CD	X	
David Alexander	Principal / CEO	DA	X	
Michael Wood-Williams	Independent	MWW	X^*	
Aneela Ali	Independent	AA	X	
Claire-Jane Rewcastle	Independent	CJR		X
Richard Wensley	Staff Governor	RW	X	
Will Berridge	Student Governor	WB		X
Morgan Penaluna	Student Governor	MP		X
Lisa Crichton-Jones	Independent Governor – *Not a Committee member*	LCJ	X*	
Clerk				
Nicola Taylor	Director of Governance & Compliance	NT	X	
Presenters				
Chris Toon	Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality	CT	X	
Jeremy Cook	Deputy Principal: Finance & Resources		X	
Nadine Hudspeth	Director of Brand & Learner Experience	NH	X	
Richard Ward	Head of Quality Improvement	RW	X	
Darren Heathcote	Head of Student Services and Customer Experience	DH	X^	
Suzanne Cunningham	Assistant Principal	SC	X	
Tom Bradley	Assistant Principal	TB	X	
John Deary	Assistant Principal	JD	X	
Lucy Collins	Lead Practitioner	LC	X^	

*Attended via Teams / ^Attended for part of the meeting

CQ/193 **1. Chair's Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

Apologies were noted from: CJR, MP and WB. The Committee **agreed** that the meeting was quorate. It was noted that MWW would be late in attending.

It was noted that LCJ was attending the meeting as part of the open invitation to all governors to attend other committee meetings throughout the year.

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

CQ/194 2. Minutes of the last meeting dated 23 November 2023

The Committee **reviewed** the main minutes from the previous meeting and **agreed** that they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

The minutes were approved.

CQ/195 3. Matters Arising / Action Log

NT presented the action log and highlighted that there had been a number of actions completed, and a number not yet due. There was one action outstanding and this was expected to be closed the next day which related to legal advice on OFS compliance of the College's Admissions Policy. This action would therefore be retained on the action log until reported as complete.

The action log was noted.

CQ/196 4. Quality Improvement of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Learner Focused Approached to Quality Improvement

Ahead of RW presenting his report, RW introduced LC, a Lead Practitioner, who provided a presentation to the Committee which covered project activity relating to supporting Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This included resources within the Teacher Academy microsite, the delivery of sessions / activities, linking with other SEND related projects across the College, and supporting the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

The Committee queried the following:

- The challenge of Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) not being up to date – it was agreed that this was difficult, and the Committee noted the College didn't always receive EHCPs in advance of learners joining the College. It was expected for process improvements to be implemented on this nationally.
- Support for Lead Practitioners – it was noted that Lead Practitioners were given autonomy for their projects however worked closely with other staff. Lead Practitioners were given 1.5 days per week remission from teaching, with RW directing and supporting project areas.
- Preparations to deal with future needs – the College was implementing a training plan based on a skills scan regarding knowledge and confidence of staff within SEND. Quality reviews continued to monitor progress of learners with EHCPs, and reviews continued to link back to EHCP outcomes.
- Tracking of the utilisation of resources – it was confirmed that this was possible however the transferring of resources to SharePoint would improve analytics and would allow the College to better respond to need.

The Committee **noted their thanks** for LC's presentation and work within this area.

RW presented the report and noted that the College continued to measure and monitor learner voice. Positive feedback had been received, along with higher response rates.

RW was working with staff within Student Services to receive feedback on the way learners were understanding questions as part of the survey, with it being noted at the last meeting that questions relating to recommendation of courses could cause confusion. The College was also looking to translate learner surveys into learners' first languages.

The Committee <u>queried</u> the following:

- The reduction in students suggesting they had an induction period at the start of their course – it was confirmed that this would be covered with the Learner Voice group as no issues had been highlighted as part of the Learner Journey Reviews so this would be explored further.

- The inclusivity of Freshers activities – it was noted that there had been internal discussion regarding this, with some feedback from learners suggesting this was too noisy or too busy for them to engage. Some immediate adaptations were made during the week however this would be considered further for future events. It was hoped the Student Leadership Group would look at ways to improve this going forward and to consider different audiences. The importance and focus of inclusivity for all was noted.

The Committee **<u>formally recognised and endorsed</u>** the introduction of the surveys in a range of languages to improve inclusivity.

The report was noted.

CQ/197 5. Safeguarding Update

DH presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The introduction of the Welfare and Wellbeing Team, and the positive feedback received to date. There was a member of the team based at each campus and the team had responded to over 170 referrals since the start of the academic year. The new Safeguarding Manager would be invited to a future meeting.

    Action: NT to make arrangements for Safeguarding Manager to attend a future meeting.

    <u>The Staff Governor (RW)</u> noted the positive impact the Welfare and Wellbeing Team had made.

- There had been a slight reduction in safeguarding referrals to date, compared to the previous year. Two referrals had been made in relation to apprentices and this involved the College working with their respective employers and external agencies.

    The Committee **<u>took assurance</u>** that referrals relating to apprentices were being made.

- Improved reporting of referral "type" aligned to the language used within Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). The new reporting system also allowed for location to be recorded which would provide further analytics to consider / respond to.

- The College continued to work closely with the Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Office (LADO).

- Any negative feedback from learners relating to safeguarding within learner surveys continued to be monitored and promptly investigated.

- The Safeguarding Steering Group continued to be attended by MWW as the Safeguarding Link Governor.

- Compliance with Safeguarding training was positive, with any non-compliance followed up.

The Committee <u>queried</u> the following:

- Sexual related referrals – DH provided reassurance of the College's work regarding sexual safety and the College's zero tolerance approach towards any sexual offences / incidents.

- Initiatives to prevent learners wishing to self-harm or the feeling of low mood – it was confirmed that sessions were delivered to learners regarding suicide awareness and prevention, and there was also an initiative relating to looking after friends which was to be developed further. It was noted resilience had been a key topic, and that learning facilitators were now able to make referrals to the newly implemented Welfare and Wellbeing Team who could respond promptly.

    The Committee **<u>took assurance</u>** of the positive mental health support in place for learners.

The report was noted.

CQ/198   6. Careers Advice and Guidance Annual Report

DH presented the report which covered:

- The College's strategic commitment to high quality careers advice and guidance, linking with the College's ethos of 'Employment Edge'.

- The College's delivery of Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG).
- How the College monitor performance (including learner feedback).

DH highlighted the College's compliance with its statutory duty, and compliance against the Gatsby Benchmarks, noting there were some challenges with the benchmark of '*Integrates records of a learner's participation in careers programmes at previous stages of the learner's education (including their secondary school) where these are made available*' due to learners coming from a range of different schools / providers and thus not always being able to obtain this information.

DH noted future developments which included the Head of Student Services collaborating with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) on a careers impact project to enhance the scrutiny of Colleges' careers programmes alongside two other colleges, and that the Head of Student Services and the Vice Principal Curriculum & Student Services from Education Partnership North East (EPNE) were leading the local college's 'Careers Hub' which was established and previously led by the Local Education Partnership.

The report was noted.

CQ/199   7. Performance Report January 2024

CT presented the report and highlighted the following:

- In relation to attendance, this was a national challenge, specifically in schools. The College had faced some attendance challenges as this point in 2022/2023 however worked hard to improve this position. The College continued to ensure clarity of expectations from the start of the year.
    MWW joined the meeting

- Retention rates for 16-18 were positive; 5.5% higher than 2022/23 and 6.1% higher than the national average. For 19+, retention had gone down by 1.1% from 2022/23 but still 3% above the national average.
- An apprenticeship achievement rate of 69% was expected, which would be 1.2% below 2022/23, but still in excess of the government's target of 67%.
- The College had noted a different demographic within its ESOL provision this academic year which included some challenging behaviours and impact on attendance. Expectations were being reinforced and learners supported where possible.

The Committee <u>queried</u> the following:

- The behavioural challenges within ESOL – it was confirmed that the College was working with a range of different agencies and considering targeted support where relevant. Work was also being undertaken with staff to ensure concerns could be responded to accordingly and to facilitate adaptions to different challenges.
- Any particular themes relating to the level of complaints within Healthcare and Sport – it was suggested not however noted that these departments contained the largest numbers of learners and therefore expected to receive more complaints than other departments due to this.

The report was noted.

CQ/200   8.   Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Update

CT presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The report set out progress to date against each of the 9 identified Areas for Improvement (AFIs). The RAG rating on the QIP related to the achievement of the overall objective; 6 were amber (on target / not yet complete and no risk to delivery in year) and 3 were green (complete).
- The College had a recent FE Commissioner visit as part of an active support review where positive verbal feedback had been received with the written report expected by April 2024. The work relating to the improvement in Apprenticeships was highlighted as an area of national best practice.

    The Committee **<u>noted</u>** the improvement journey in apprenticeship provision and provided thanks to the work of the staff within this area.

The report was noted.

CQ/201   9.   Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)

TB presented the report which set out the implementation plan and resourcing of Higher Technical Qualification (HTQs). TB noted the alignment of the provision with the College's ethos of Employment Edge, and the continued creation of positive working relationships with industry. TB highlighted the successful capital and revenue bid from the DfE, along with proposals for spend.

The Committee <u>queried</u> the following:

- Risk associated with implementing a new qualifications and model of delivery – it was suggested that this model was an extension of current Level 2 qualifications offered, and therefore likely to be minimal risk.

- The longevity of the provision – it was confirmed that there was a programme to develop the provision over the next couple of years with robust validation and planning.
- Challenges of staff delivery – it was noted that teaching staff would require a qualification at least one level higher than their delivery and staff would be supported to achieve this where required. The College was looking to work with delivery partners for this.

The Committee noted the following:
- The alignment to employer skills needs within the region.
- The investment in the region by ensuring learners were skilled and work ready.
- The digital and technical elements of the qualifications.

The report was noted.

CQ/202   10. Strategic Risk Register

JC presented the report and highlighted the following:
- *Covered under a confidential minute.*
- The Operational Risk Management groups had completed their 2nd cycle of meetings and were proving to be beneficial to discuss potential challenges. Areas of discussion included curriculum reform, devolution, the Flex Job Apprenticeship Agency (FJAA) register, travel to learn / work, bootcamp provision and the apprenticeship sign up process.
- In relation to the horizon scanning section of the risk register, the Executive Team were continuing to enhance this and were going to create more distinction of potential timings and internal / external factors. This would be presented at the April 2024 Board meeting.

The report was noted.

CQ/203   11. Any Other Business

The Chair noted that all Board members had been invited to attend compulsory training relating to Special Educational Needs (SEN). This was taking place on Wednesday 20th March at 4pm as an online session, however would be recorded for those unable to join. The Chair encouraged all Committee members to attend and added a reminder that the Committee carried out the link role for SEN.

Action: All Committee members to attend SEN Training on Wednesday 20th March or catch up with recording post-session.

CQ/204   12. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 6 June at 4pm.