

## Meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Committee

<b>Date:</b>	17 March 2025	<b>Room number</b>	Boardroom
<b>Present</b>	Alex Keay (Chair), Charles Tennant (Vice-Chair), Natalie Davison (Principal/CEO), Akeel Ahmed (AA), Forhad Altafi (Staff Governor) Andy Forbes (AF), Samuel Nelson (SN), Esther Thompson (ET)		
<b>In attendance</b>	Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer) Michael Smith (Faculty Director – Excellence in Learning and the Learner Experience) (MS) Anthony Braithwaite (Director of Student Support) (AB) Lynne O'Meara (Faculty Director English & Maths/Adult Skills) (LO)		
<b>Apologies</b>	Jason Turton (Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality), Paige Summers (Student Governor), Katharina De Vita		
<b>Circulation</b>	Curriculum & Quality Committee, Corporation		

1.	<b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b> The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting of the Committee. Apologies for absence were received from Jason Turton, Paige Summers and Katharina De Vita.																							
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate.																							
3.	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 4 November 2024</b> The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 November 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.  <b>Approved: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 November 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</b>																							
4.	<b>Matters arising</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Agenda Item</th><th>Action</th><th>Responsibility</th><th>Timescale</th><th>Update</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4.</td><td>Committee Terms of Reference to include specific reference to HE Academic Board and Task and Finish Groups.</td><td>CGO</td><td>ASAP</td><td>Complete</td></tr> <tr> <td>8.</td><td>Data to be broken down by subject level for future reports.</td><td>EDHE</td><td>ASAP</td><td>Agreed</td></tr> <tr> <td>11.</td><td>AA to meet with FDAQ to discuss Multiply support.</td><td>CGO/FDAQ</td><td>ASAP</td><td>Options considered - meeting not scheduled as Multiply funding ends in March 2025.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>				Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update	4.	Committee Terms of Reference to include specific reference to HE Academic Board and Task and Finish Groups.	CGO	ASAP	Complete	8.	Data to be broken down by subject level for future reports.	EDHE	ASAP	Agreed	11.	AA to meet with FDAQ to discuss Multiply support.	CGO/FDAQ	ASAP	Options considered - meeting not scheduled as Multiply funding ends in March 2025.
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12.	Governors to be invited to attend Student Focus Groups.	CGO	ASAP	Complete
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- 5. Check-In Discussion**  
The Chair introduced the check-in process and asked all in attendance to highlight one thing they were bringing to the meeting today. It was noted that there would be a focus on support as well as challenge at the meeting to better understand how can Governors can provide support going forward.

- 6. C&Q – Strategic Risk Register**  
MS reported that the focus was on two risk areas: high quality teaching and learning and student and stakeholder experience:

High quality teaching and learning

- Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP) – learning walks taken place in term 1 but paused for term 2 due to the imminent Ofsted inspection to alleviate immediate pressure on teaching staff (localised set of learning walks have taken place and enabled issues in terms of capability to be escalated).
- MAP meetings – thanks to AA and ET for their attendance – action plan developed for each curriculum area
- Culture for reflection and inclusion – all staff briefings; sharing of good practice

AF stated that staffing issues had caused a lot of problems and asked whether some of the issues had now eased. MS replied that at the last inspection in 2022 there were c70 vacancies and the current position was 6% which was lower.

Student and stakeholder experience

- Lot of concerted work taking place with stakeholders
- Meaningful work experience
- ‘Competition’ strategy has been developed and continues to grow
- Implementation of a CRM ongoing

The Chair stated that, although there were some areas that still required attention, the trend was in the right direction.

**Agreed: that the current update be received.**

- 7. KPI Dashboard**  
The Principal/CEO presented the following headlines:  
Priority 2 – also relevant to Policy & Resources Committee but for this Committee the focus is ensuring planning the curriculum in a way that meets the skills needs.
- Key strategic question is HE/ELIOT – modest level of growth within the strategic plan
  - General theme is the College is meeting recruitment targets and larger income lines
- Priority 3 – Attendance continued to be a concern – a third cycle of discussions with students, parents/carers taking place. There were a number of vocational areas where attendance was good but Maths and English remained problematic.
- Culture change taking place towards attendance
- Priority 4 – achievements rates at 79%16-18; 84% adults – targeted interventions in place with the aim to reach 80% 16-18.
- Apprenticeship achievement rate was an area of concern, particularly given the DfE expectation of 60% overall achievement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Destinations data for High Needs – 16% of learners undertaking supported internships</li> </ul> <p>AF asked where discussions regarding curriculum development/new areas took place. The Principal/CEO replied that these discussions were covered in the business planning process led by the Deputy Principal – Curriculum &amp; Quality. Discussion took place on Performing Arts provision which it was noted that the College had previously Performed well in, particularly given some of the famous alumni.</p> <p>AF stated that the College needed to be mindful of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement 2026/27 which would be a new opportunity that would require attention.</p> <p>The Chair stated that he appreciated the clarity of the KPI's and the colour coding and thanked the Principal/CEO for the update.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</b></p>
8.	<p><b>Overview of C&amp;Q Performance (Data Pack)</b></p> <p>MS highlighted the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retention up on the previous year</li> <li>- Predicted QAR showing improvements – English and Maths lot of work taken place to ensure accurate predictions</li> <li>- Apprenticeship QAR</li> <li>- Attendance remained a concern – work taken place with the Borough to consider Year 11 leavers data for learners attending the College this year to comparing current attendance against attendance at school. It was established that attendance at the College was a 6% increase on school attendance. than they did at School</li> </ul> <p>The Chair asked if the data was showing anything different to previous trends. MS replied that there was a robust set of predictions/data now in place. The Chair noted that establishing accurate data had previously been a challenge and had made governance discussions difficult.</p> <p><b>Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP) – Progress Update and Review</b></p> <p>MS provided the following key headlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- QIAP was a lot leaner than the previous year</li> <li>- Areas of improvement by theme</li> <li>- Intent and implementation stronger than the impact</li> <li>- Personal development</li> <li>- Careers/work experience – concerted effort</li> <li>- QIAP progressing well – seeing impact in year</li> <li>- Actions with no change – not seen desired progress as yet in year – work taking place to ensure improvement but the impact was not yet sufficient</li> </ul> <p>The Vice-Chair referred to the items with no change and queried why one item with actions had not yet commenced and five were in progress but only four actions were on the table. MS replied that enrichment had been subsumed within one of the actions and progression was the area where action had not yet started but this was a timing issue and would be moving forward just after the Easter period.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</b></p>
9.	<p><b>English and Maths – Update</b></p> <p>LO updated the Committee on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Report included a lot of facts but it was noted that there were lots of positives taking place</li> <li>- Lots of changes taking place in year to keep up t date as there would not be sufficient time during the summer</li> </ul>

to make the changes required.

- Positive impact – learner streaming, starting points, right qualifications, grade 3 learners in different classrooms
- Management of the department had faced challenges – this was still ongoing and under review
- Staffing risks – remained a significant concern, lot of staff absences – increased accountability had resulted in increased staff sickness
- English department particularly impacted through inconsistent staffing
- Assessment and exam preparation – not previously done – whole College closure for a mock day to help learners adapt to exam settings, allow planning for summer exams
- Digital team invested in marking the mock exams through AI – provided invaluable feedback, actions, strengths, areas of improvement to the learners – learners received individualised feedback to their phone and feedback shared with parents
- Paired with Waltham Forest – sharing of good practice
- Attendance still a concern – interventions in place
- Individual curriculum area attendance
- Progress reviews – huge step forward as they had previously not been completed within Maths and English
- Duty manager rota for Maths and English now in place
- Revision workshops – masterclasses
- Positive parents evening – students and parents leaving with action plans
- Accountability - previous staff not achieving core in learning walks – has been improvement, interventions taken place for the staff performing below the expected standard

The Vice-Chair referred to the challenges with staffing and pressure from increased scrutiny and asked if it was possible to advise on the lead time of that disruption slowing down and becoming more stable. LO replied that it was difficult to put a timeframe on this as was a moving part. The academic year had started without a full team and finding strong agency staff was challenging. Previously, a lot of staffing had been managed by middle management LO had taken this over to ensure the right people were in the right positions for next year. The processes had therefore needed to slow down to ensure they were correct.

In response to a query from AF, LO advised that attendance at the mock exams was c82% and all learners who had not attended had been identified. Exam anxiety was a huge issue but where learners did not attend 1:1 work was taking place and parents were involved.

AF questioned whether when looking at overall attendance it was a small group driving the attendance down or whether it could be particularly sessions. LO responded that there were key themes eg plumbing had one of the worst attendance rates, however, work was taking place to try to emphasise the messages around progression and highlight the importance of Maths and English. Analysis was taking place including the date, time, room, and teacher.

The Chair stated that there was a need for a whole College approach to English and Maths and asked how the College could ensure accountability for the faculty leads within relevant areas and asked if the College was reporting the combined target. LO advised that a huge piece of work had taken place in this area and the narrative was beginning to change eg a focus on data for overall attendance instead of English and Maths being separated. MS added that Monitoring and Performance (MAP) meetings made it clear that at risk learners included English and Maths. There was now a dedicated space for English and Maths and a duty manager rota bringing vocational heads into that area. The momentum needed to be maintained and ensure the clear message that everyone was involved in English and Maths.

AF advised that staff not being confident in their own ability with English and Maths could also be behind some of the staff not being engaged – staff development would be needed to improve confidence.

The Chair thanked LO for the comprehensive report, noting appreciation for the challenging task she had

	<p>inherited and offering any support required from the Committee.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</b></p> <p><i>FA and AA left the meeting.</i></p>
10.	<p><b>Apprenticeships – Update</b></p> <p>MS reported the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Best case position 63% - target this year is 60%</li> <li>- Last year disappointing final QAR (51.7%) against national rate of 57.7%</li> <li>- 182 apprentices with a planned leaving date within this academic year – 40 have withdrawn and 37 have already achieved. Out of the remaining 104 apprentices, 55 are predicted to pass by the planned end date, 21 are highly likely to achieve but will need additional time in order to do so and there is a risk that these learners become past end date (PED) learners. If these learners do not achieve then the 182 apprentices will reduce to 161 –finance and modelling on these figures is being considered.</li> <li>- Learners at risk – work taking place to ensure these learners achieve but there are challenges eg some have moved employer or attempted End Point Assessment (EPA) previously and not been successful</li> <li>- If 55 learners achieve then the achievement rate will be 50.55%</li> <li>- Mid level prediction that the learners who require additional time are carried over – 57%</li> <li>- At risk 13 learners also achieve which is 63% best case</li> </ul> <p>AF stated that it was reassuring to hear the level of detail and asked to what extent legacy issues were having an impact and if the College was confident going forward that there would not be the gaps where apprentices were not completing on time. MS replied that as time progressed the position would improve - apprenticeship numbers had been reduced to focus on quality and measures were in place to prevent future PED learners. AF stated that it would be interesting to look at learners in first/second year of their programme – this would be considered.</p> <p>In response to a query from AF, MS advised that out of the total achievers to date, 10 of 37 were rail engineering apprentices and another 10 were predicted to achieve by the end of July all with the same employer.</p> <p>ET asked for clarification on Health &amp; Social Care apprentices. MS informed the Committee that Health was one of the big skills sectors but the College currently only had 8 apprentices on pharmacy standards L2 and L3 but this area was being considered in terms of future direction.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</b></p>
11.	<p><b>Careers and CEIAG Update</b></p> <p>AB updated the Committee on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Process of recruitment</li> <li>- Gatsby benchmark being followed</li> <li>- Working through to provide careers guidance for each 16-18 learner</li> <li>- Working in tandem with the enrichment programme – employability and enhancing student work ready skills</li> <li>- Lot of review around ensuring quality of provision was delivered to a high standard</li> <li>- Cultural change needed across the organisation</li> <li>- Improving relationship with Enterprise Advisers</li> <li>- Recruitment for staff with Level 5/6 careers qualifications was difficult – investing in staff to study this qualification</li> </ul> <p>AF asked if there was an element of careers education in the tutorial programme or whether the College was reliant on individual careers talks. AB replied that the tutorial programme covered skills, progression and employment but there was no explicit reference to careers. AF stated that this could be an area for development</p>

	<p>in the future. AB advised that one of the Gatsby benchmarks was to embed careers within the curriculum but curriculum staff needed work on this. The Principal/CEO added that excellent work was taking place for careers in the curriculum on employer interaction eg industry speakers, skills show etc. Core careers delivery was about capacity and availability and there were currently only two careers advisors and more were needed. Work was taking place to consider what could be devolved into the curriculum to ensure meaningful careers guidance for each learner.</p> <p>ET advised that, from her experience, a lot of people had left the careers profession and the pay was poor for careers advisors. In response to a query regarding the College's liaison with Enterprise Advisers, AB confirmed that regular meetings to discuss the College's position and help align to Gatsby benchmarks took place.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the update be received.</b></p>
12.	<p><b>Ofsted Ready – C&amp;Q call to action</b></p> <p>MS provided the following key highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Position statements for all curriculum areas including provision types and a whole college statement were in place but now needed updating</li> <li>- Detailed plan in place for when the Ofsted call was received</li> <li>- Data was ready to be shared</li> <li>- DPCQ and MS attended recent AoC nominee training</li> <li>- Work taken place with HoDS collectively to achieve an answer bank</li> <li>- Teacher preparation would need to be revisited</li> <li>- Work taken place on careers/work experience with SLT was with Ofsted in mind</li> </ul> <p>The Chair asked when the position statements would be available. The Principal/CEO replied that a second Q&amp;A session for Governors was being scheduled which would include position papers. The CGO added that it was likely that this session would now take place after the Easter period (unless the call was received the following week).</p> <p>The Chair requested that a summary reminding Governors what could be asked from a process point of view be provided – this was agreed.</p> <p><b>Action: a summary reminding Governors what could be asked from a process point of view from Ofsted to be provided asap.</b></p>
13.	<p><b>Check out Discussion/Bias for action/Governor Involvement</b></p> <p>The Chair asked the Committee to provide one reflection in terms of what needed to be considered for Ofsted readiness working as a team.</p>
14.	<p><b>AoB &amp; Actions</b></p> <p>There was no further business. A self-assessment form would be issued after the meeting.</p>
15.	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting – 30 June 2025, 5pm</b></p>

The Chair thanked all those in attendance for their contributions. The meeting closed at 19.02pm.

Signed.....

Alex Keay (Chair)

Date.....

Actions				
12.	A summary reminding Governors what could be asked from a process point of view from Ofsted to be provided asap.	MS/CGO	ASAP	Complete