

## Meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Committee

<b>Date:</b>	1 November 2023	<b>Room number</b>	Via Teams
<b>Present</b>	Alex Key (Chair), Steve Dowbiggin (Interim Principal/CEO), Andy Forbes (AF), Charles Tennant (Vice Chair), Katharina De Vita (KDV), (GH), Forhad Altafi (Staff Governor) (FA)		
<b>In attendance</b>	Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer) Jason Turton (Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Quality) (JT) Michael Smith (Executive Director – Excellence in Learning and the Learner Experience) (MS)		
<b>Apologies</b>	Geoff Hall (Staff Governor)		
<b>Circulation</b>	Curriculum & Quality Committee, Corporation		

The Chair confirmed that this meeting was to focus on strategic discussion, however, the intention was to ensure that staff who usually attended the Committee were kept informed of discussions to keep momentum building.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b> The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting of the Committee and introductions were made. Apologies for absence were received from Geoff Hall.			
<b>2.</b>	<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. The Committee Chair and Vice-Chair declared an interest in agenda item 3.			
<b>3.</b>	<b>Appointment of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair</b> The Chief Governance Officer (CGO) reported that prior to the meeting, the current Chair and Vice-Chair had agreed to continue in their respective roles for 2023/24 if approved by the Committee. No objections or nominations were received and the Committee unanimously approved the re-appointments.  <b>Approved: That Alex Key be re-appointed as Chair of the Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee for 2023/24. That Charles Tennant be re-appointed as Vice-Chair of the Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee for 2023/24.</b>			
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 19 June 2023</b> The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 June 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.  <b>Approved: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 June 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</b>			
<b>5.</b>	<b>Matters arising</b>			
	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
	6.	All Committee members to undertake at least one learning walk per year.	All	October 2023
				Ongoing

6.	Quality calendar to be made available to the full Board as soon as possible.	MS	ASAP	Complete
7.	A drill down into trowel trades, carpentry and engineering be provided prior to the next meeting.	JT/AMcL	September 2023	Discussed
7.	Governors attending open events and parents evenings to champion English & Maths to be discussed at the July Corporation meeting.	Chair/CGO	10 July 2023	Deferred to November Strategy Event
9.	Further detail on the elements of income to be provided for the next meeting.	NK	October 23	Income to be discussed at P&R
11.	CGO to meet with the Vice-Chair to discuss implementation of the 'confidence in process' matrix.	CGO/Vice-Chair	ASAP	Brief discussion taken place – follow up conversation to be scheduled.
11.	Curriculum Links Policy to be put in place.	CGO	September 23	To be discussed alongside learning walks etc.
13.	HE to feature on C&Q agenda for next two meetings.	CGO/JT	October 23	HE will be discussed at the November Strategy Event
<b>6.</b>	<b>Check-In Discussion</b> The Chair introduced the check-in process, and all present provided a positive from the week. The Chair recorded his thanks to staff for the work undertaken during the Ofsted inspection.			
<b>7.</b>	<b>Ofsted Monitoring Visit Feedback</b> MS provided the following key points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ofsted visit monitored progress from October 2022</li> <li>• Four themes were focussed on: high needs, apprenticeships (particularly around progress reviews), Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Teaching, Learning &amp; Assessment (TLA) across the College</li> <li>• Key points from each theme were provided and the subsequent judgements</li> <li>• Report expected in c2.5 weeks</li> </ul> <p>AF stated that the outcome was better than expected and that the feedback concerning apprenticeships was not a surprise. He asked whether the numbers for high needs learners were still significantly growing. MS replied that the numbers this year were the same as last academic year with 200 learners in discrete high needs and c20 learners in supported internships.</p> <p>FA questioned whether the inspection looked at apprentices who had not completed but were still on the records and not being funded. JT replied that Ofsted did look at this area but the data on Smart Assessor was not accurate enough to provide the answers. The inadequate use of Smart Assessor had been noted at the first inspection and even though assurances had been given this had not improved significantly and would form part of the action plan moving forward.</p>			

The Vice-Chair stated that the feedback was good news and, for apprenticeships, this outcome had been anticipated. The good practice evident in high needs was a positive and it was questioned whether the College could progress sharing good practice in other areas. The Chair added that the Head of High Needs was a transformational, strong leader and questioned whether the College was identifying performance issues where leaders were making the step change. There was a need for accountability to ensure the right leadership was in place.

The Interim Principal/CEO stated that the College's HR function was more dysfunctional than had been expected. Compliance with target setting was poor and needed improving alongside the introduction of a robust performance management system that set clear targets for all staff and monitored their achievement. This was being addressed by the Executive Director – HR & Safeguarding and a new CPD offer was being considered and a HR restructure would take place prior to the end of term. The Chair advised that the Committee needed to ensure regular access to key leaders and it was agreed that the Executive Director – HR & Safeguarding would be invited to attend future meetings.

The Chair recorded that improving three of the themes/areas to the highest level possible was an outstanding achievement.

**Action: Executive Director – HR & Safeguarding to be invited to attend future meetings.  
Agreed: That the current position be noted.**

#### 8. **Quality Achievement Rate (QAR) Consolidation – end of Term 1**

JT advised that a lot of work had taken place on the QAR. The following key points were discussed:

- Predicted achievement rate 76.2% and achieved 76.9% - predictions were accurate but this was not where the College needed to be and it was acknowledged this needed to improve.
- 85% overall attendance increased from last year at 79%.
- 16-19 all qualifications: predicted 65.3%; achieved 67% – fractional increase on last year.
- 16-19 attendance at 84.1% and retention 91.44%.
- Adults – predicted 83.3% QAR achieved 83%
- Adults retention against pass rate – retention higher at 96% with pass rate at 86.4%.
- Vocational – actual QAR 81.6% against predicted 82.1%; pass rate 86.4% – national rate is 86%.
- Maths and English – 70.3% QAR against a prediction of 68.2%; retention 94% - attendance and pass rate not where they needed to be.
- English QAR predicted 72.1% and actual 73.8%
- Maths QAR predicted 64.3% – actual 66.7%

The Chair referred to the national rates for QAR at 63% and questioned why the College was rated red against this. JT replied that this was the average and would need to be broken down by level or by age to provide a more accurate picture. It was agreed that all areas would be reported against National Averages and hotspots would be discussed at the next meeting.

AF expressed his confidence that the predictions were so near the actuals. He questioned whether this year's cohort was larger than the previous year for Maths and English and whether the current staffing issues were affecting the Maths Department as good Maths teachers were difficult to find. JT responded that there had been slight growth for 22/23 but larger growth within the current academic year. MS added that the Maths Department had an established staff team who had worked in the College for many years, however, the quality was variable and this was being worked on.

The Vice-Chair questioned how quickly after the start of term the College predicted outcomes and whether interventions could be made early enough to have maximum impact. JT advised that progress reviews had been established a year ago and the deadline for these was 3 November 2023. The reviews would populate the predicted Self-Assessment Report (SAR) which would be able to advise on

the current position. The Vice-Chair stated that this was innovative practice by the College and a case study demonstrating good practice should be considered.

The Vice-Chair referred to 19+ English and Maths which showed an increase in retention but a dip in achievement and noted there was clearly an issue between retention and achievement which merited further investigation. It was agreed that the Head of English and Maths would provide the data to clarify and a deep dive into English and Maths by area would take place at the next meeting.

The Interim Principal/CEO advised that the new Learning Support Zone to provide interventions, placed close to the Admissions area within the College, would help address retention issues and improve the monitoring of participation in English and Maths provision (where needed). This was an example of building and access design being used intelligently to support the College's ambition and target support for the students that needed it the most. Staff were applauded for providing this support to learners. The Chair added that the Ofsted meeting with Governors took place in this area and this allowed the Lead Inspector to see the work taking place and she commented on this.

**Action: Head of English and Maths to provide 19+ English and Maths retention and achievement gap data.**

**Deep dive into English and Maths by area to take place at the next meeting.**

**Areas against National Averages and hotspots to be discussed at the next meeting.**

**Agreed: That the current position be noted.**

#### 9. Apprenticeships – Immediate Next Steps

JT highlighted the need for the College to act quickly on the feedback from the monitoring visit, specifically:

- Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and additional action plan to be revised
- The PIAP focussed on the areas identified by Ofsted – most of these sat in Smart Assessor which had not been updated and this had impacted on the level of improvement. This was the first action and work was taking place with key members of the College to ensure that records were updated as a matter of urgency.
- Content of the reviews for learners to be input into the system.
- Quality – monitoring MAP meetings had taken place but not into the granular level that was needed.
- The integration of apprenticeships into the College's curriculum offer had not taken place but this was now moving forward.
- Review curriculum offer - curriculum design to be realigned and ensure the apprenticeship offer was appropriate/revised. The College needed to be mindful of employers and consider local needs and the Borough. The restructuring would seek to provide single points of contact for employers.

The Interim Principal/CEO reported that the management had taken steps to identify the problems with the apprenticeship process and to support and guide staff in what they needed to do. Poor performance by the managers and unfocussed activity by the staff in this area had led to the problem.

The Interim Principal/CEO advised that it was important for Governors to be assured that the issue was with performance. The complexity was that the unit was designed to deliver between £2.6 - £3m of apprenticeships but this year the outturn was £1.6million. The College needed to get the quality right and identify key employers and establish links with them. The current £2.37m income target in the 23/24 budget would actually reduce to £1.4m and it was therefore timely to be looking at refocussing and resizing the apprenticeship team to ensure a one stop shop for employers.

The Chair questioned who was accountable for the fact the College did not make sufficient progress. The Interim Principal/CEO replied that this was due to the management of the apprenticeship team (no evidence of clear setting of priorities and staff not being held accountable). The Chair stated that Governors had been aware of this position for some time and questioned where the accountability sat

to hold the manager accountable. The Interim Principal/CEO replied that the consultant for apprenticeships had been provided with assurance that work was taking place and the situation was in hand but this was not the case.

The Interim Principal/CEO reported that a new structure was being proposed but this had been delayed due to Ofsted and half-term etc. In response to a query from the Chair, the Interim Principal/CEO confirmed that the restructure was being used to address the performance issue with the management. He advised that the fastest way to resolve the issue was to restructure to provide clear roles and accountability including a validation and compliance officer who would be responsible to a post outside of apprenticeships (Quality or CIS) for ensuring that systems (such as Smart Assessor) were fully used and progress of learners was regularly monitored.

AF stated that this was not just a performance issue and the way the apprenticeship delivery service was integrated with other aspects of the College was key. The apprenticeship team needed to take overall responsibility for employer relationships but also ensure effective relationships with the teaching team across the College – the restructure would need to address all of these points.

The Chair expressed his concern of being given assurance that issues were being addressed when they clearly had not been to date and this must be avoided in the future. Governors could not perform their duties if the assurances they were given were not correct and that transparency must be increased going forward.

AF advised that it was key to ensure that governance reporting of apprenticeships and progress was improved in terms of quality this year. The Chair stated that the College needed to consider the role apprenticeships played in the offering and how the College was positioned to be an effective high-quality apprenticeship provider which had a huge impact on the brand reputation. This would be a standing agenda item going forward and reporting in the format requested

The Vice-Chair advised that the College needed to follow the same strategy for all employers instead of focussing on key ones. The Interim Principal/CEO replied that it was important to give staff guidance on priorities and for staff to prioritise employers in the first instance whilst protecting the core.

The CGO advised that timelines would be beneficial for the Committee to be able to track progress. JT replied that a full action plan would be available in the next four weeks which would be time bound. This would be reviewed and agreed by the Chair.

The Chair requested that the apprenticeship leader/the person to take apprenticeships forward and the data needed to have an informed discussion be available at the next meeting of the Committee. The Chair advised that it was key to drive the accountability for the specific parts of the action plan.

**Action: Timebound action plan for apprenticeships to be reviewed and agreed by the Chair.  
The person to take apprenticeships forward and the data needed to ensure an informal discussion to be presented at the next meeting.**

**Agreed: That the current position be noted.**

**10. Two Priority Areas for Discussion**

The Committee discussed priority areas going forward:

MS advised that attendance was below College average and there were attendance issues within English and Maths. Close attention to Engineering and Motor Vehicle was needed due to inconsistent staffing and achievement last year was well below College average. Changes had been made in moving staff but the College needed to ensure staff were supported. There were also management

	<p>issues within Smart construction. It was agreed that attendance and achievement in these areas would be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>JT advised that skills was a large part of the Ofsted framework and needed to be incorporated into Curriculum &amp; Quality meetings – Higher Education (HE) also needed to be incorporated as a growth area. AF added that HE was important and advised that it would also be useful to get a sense of online/blended delivery and strategy moving forward. JT added that a strategy around incorporating blended learning would be out forward in the New Year. It was agreed that HE would be included on the agenda for the next meeting. The Vice-Chair stated that the current HE position should be monitored until the new Principal/CEO was in place to consider the HE Strategy and how big and bold the College needed to be in this area.</p> <p>The Chair advised that apprenticeships and English and Maths were urgent and important and required an operational view in the short term. Engineering, Motor Vehicle and Smart Construction required input on a more strategic level alongside HE/blended learning/AI. Some of these areas would be covered by the dashboard/visualisation but work was needed to establish the framework for each item.</p> <p>FA referred to student engagement and asked if there was any feedback from the new cohort on their current experiences and Student Voice. MS replied that there was a cycle of surveys for learners across multiple themes and a condensed profile would be provided. The Vice-Chair added that in terms of HE student voice would need to align with Governance structure.</p> <p>KDV stated that deep dives to look at issues, potential interventions and links between curriculum design and assessment strategy would be useful. In terms of apprenticeships she questioned to what degree had there been a review of untapped potential of existing relationships to look at future demands. The Chair advised that the Committee would be encouraged to look at the strategic deep dives alongside more operational areas.</p> <p><b>Action: Attendance and achievement in Engineering, Motor Vehicle and Smart Construction to be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee. HE and Student Voice to be included on the agenda for the next meeting. Student Voice to be a standing agenda item going forward.</b></p> <p><b>Agreed: That the current update be noted.</b></p>
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Check out Discussion/Bias for action/Governor Involvement</b></p> <p>The Chair asked all present to reflect on the meeting discussions and provide one point that they had learnt from the meeting and one commitment to bring to the next meeting.</p> <p>Commitments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learner voice</li> <li>Preparation work to ensure the estates strategy can assist the curriculum strategy</li> <li>Apprenticeships to align with progress and data to be reliance and robust</li> <li>Increased governor involvement e.g. learning walks</li> <li>Build on morale, culture and atmosphere</li> <li>Support the new Principal/CEO and build a strategy to se through for the next 5-10 years</li> <li>Ensuring transparency and accountability – keep the pace</li> <li>Commitment to be of service to Exec/SLT in the role of a Governor and ensure the balance</li> </ul>
<p><b>12.</b></p>	<p><b>AoB &amp; Actions</b></p> <p>There was no further business. The CGO provided a summary of the actions from the meeting included in the action log.</p> <p>It was agreed that an additional meeting of the Committee would be convened in January 2024.</p>

**13. Date and time of next meeting – 11 March 2024**

The Chair thanked all those in attendance for their contributions. The meeting closed at 7.00pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

**Alex Key (Chair)**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Update</b>
7.	Executive Director – HR & Safeguarding to be invited to attend future meetings.	CGO	ASAP	Complete
8.	Head of English and Maths to provide 19+ English and Maths retention and achievement gap data.	DPCQ	ASAP	
8.	Deep dive into English and Maths by area to take place at the next meeting.	DPCQ	January 2024	
8.	Areas against National Averages and hotspots to be discussed at the next meeting.	DPCQ	January 2024	
9.	Timebound action plan for apprenticeships to be reviewed and agreed by the Chair.	DPCQ	ASAP	
9.	The person to take apprenticeships forward and the data needed to ensure an informal discussion to be presented at the next meeting.	DPCQ	January 2024	
10.	Attendance and achievement in Engineering, Motor Vehicle and Smart Construction to be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee.	EDLL	January 2024	
10.	HE and Student Voice to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.	CGO	January 2024	
10.	Student Voice to be a standing agenda item going forward.	CGO	January 2024	