

Meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Committee

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------------|-----------|
| Date: | 10 November 2025 | Room number | Via Teams |
| Present | Charles Tennant (Chair), Akeel Ahmed (AA), Andy Forbes (AF), Forhad Altafi (FA), Esther Thompson (ET), Natalie Davison (Principal/CEO), Sarah Noble (SNo), Mina Rehman (MR) | | |
| In attendance | Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer) (CGO) Michael Smith (Vice-Principal – Quality & Innovation) (VPQI) Tulay Rashid-Grant (Vice-Principal – Curriculum & Partnerships) (VPCP) | | |
| Apologies | Katharina De Vita | | |
| Circulation | Curriculum & Quality Committee, Corporation | | |

| 1. | <p>Welcome and apologies for absence The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting of the Committee. Apologies for absence were received from Katharina De Vita.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--|----------------|----------|----------|-------------|---------|----------------|----------|----------|----|---|----------|------|----------|
| 2. | <p>Declarations of Interest Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate. Charles Tennant and Akeel Ahmed declared an interest in agenda item 3.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. | <p>Appointment of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair The Committee agreed that Charles Tennant and Akeel Ahmed did not need to withdraw from the meeting.</p> <p>The CGO advised that both Charles and Akeel had expressed a willingness to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee respectively for the 2025/26 academic year. This was unanimously approved.</p> <p>Approved: that Charles Tennant be re-appointed as Chair of the Curriculum & Quality Committee and Akeel Ahmed be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Curriculum & Quality Committee for the 2025/26 academic year.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. | <p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 30 June 2025 and the Additional Meeting held on 22 September 2025 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 June 2025 and Minutes from the Additional Meeting held on 22 September 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>Approved: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 June 2025 and Minutes from the Additional Meeting held on 22 September 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. | <p>Matters arising</p> <p>June 2025</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Agenda Item</th> <th>Actions</th> <th>Responsibility</th> <th>Timeline</th> <th>Progress</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7.</td> <td>Recruitment across challenging areas to be included in the C&Q risk register.</td> <td>CGO/DPFR</td> <td>ASAP</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | | Agenda Item | Actions | Responsibility | Timeline | Progress | 7. | Recruitment across challenging areas to be included in the C&Q risk register. | CGO/DPFR | ASAP | Complete |
| Agenda Item | Actions | Responsibility | Timeline | Progress | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. | Recruitment across challenging areas to be included in the C&Q risk register. | CGO/DPFR | ASAP | Complete | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|------|-------------|----------|
| 8. | Colour coding for RAG ratings for the data pack to be amended to remove margins within targets. | DPCQ | ASAP | Complete |
| 11. | Draft Curriculum Plan 2025/26 to be revised based on the Committee's comments and suggestions before being presented to the Board. | DPCQ | 2 July 2025 | Complete |

September 2025

| Agenda Item | Action | Responsibility | By When | Update |
|-------------|---|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 3. | Further clarity on the recruitment figures to be provided to the Committee. | VPCP | ASAP | Provided via email |
| 4. | Future report to be mapped against strategic targets within the strategic plan to ensure a more realistic breakdown of data. | VPQI | November 2025 | Complete |
| 4. | Areas of good practice and high achievement to be highlighted in reports to stand out for the Committee's attention. | VPCP/VPQI | November 2025 | Complete |
| 4. | Profile of at risk areas to be provided through a heat map alongside well performing areas to be provided through case studies. | VPCP/VPQI | November 2025 | Complete |

6. **Approval of Committee Terms of Reference 2025-26**
The CGO presented the Terms of Reference highlighting the removal of reference to ELIOT and to specific monitoring of Ofsted progress. It was agreed that, if the remit of the Committee changed within year, the Terms of Reference would be amended to reflect this.
- Approved: the Curriculum & Quality Committee Terms of Reference 2025/26 were approved, subject to ratification by the Board.**

7. Recruitment Update – Review of Target Setting

The VPCP highlighted the following key points:

- 16-18 92 % of allocation met
- Potential lagged funding risk
- Adult on track against targets
- Early withdrawals at 9% - improvement on last year which was at 12%
- Challenge – low internal progression for 16-18 and adults; lot of strong competition from the sixth forms in the area
- Application rate – 27% this year against 30% last year
- Hair, Beauty, Carpentry, Food studies were currently under recruited
- IT, Horizons, Engineering, Digital and Production were the strongest areas for recruitment
- Business planning process commencing earlier this year
- Reintroducing 1-1 academic target setting to help with internal progression
- Redesigning open events
- Considering class sizes and closer in year monitoring

The Chair asked for clarity on the driver for the withdrawal rates. The VPCP advised that there had been an increased focus on this. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) was stronger alongside stronger entry criteria. Increased focus was now needed on internal progression.

In response to a query from the Chair regarding conversion rate challenges, the VPCP explained that the open days may not be generating all the applications that they should and responses to applications needed to be quicker - this was a key focus for the year. The Principal/CEO advised that young people were encouraged to make multiple applications by schools. Due to the high GCSE results in the Borough, an increased number of learners had remained in sixth forms which had impacted on market share.

FA questioned whether the College had a waiting list for learners. The VPCP replied that some areas were stronger at capturing these learners than others. In some areas there was confusion regarding the difference between enrolment days, open days and interviews. There was a lot of competition but some areas were addressing this better than others.

FA asked whether the College's robust withdrawal system with intervention had impacted on the recruitment drive. The VPCP responded that daily meetings had been taking place with MIS/Curriculum and Marketing to consider recruitment numbers line by line and then address actions re waiting list etc which had impacted positively.

AF asked if the College had any data on the sixth forms and whether they were providing any vocational options. The Principal/CEO advised that a number of sixth forms were providing vocational options including Health & Social Care and Business. Each secondary school in the Borough had a sixth form.

In response to a query from AF regarding NEETs, the VPCP stated that the College had doubled the number of groups running on the engagement programme and this may be further extended. A foundation level across the College needed to be considered instead of being in specific areas.

SN referred to the areas below target, noting the numbers were quite low in these areas apart from plumbing and asked if the position had worsened in these areas. The VPCP replied that these were not the areas with the highest competition and there was a need to consider whether the conversion rates were as strong as they should be. Some areas needed additional support to understand the position. SN stated that these were the traditional skills areas and more opportunities would be expected. SN questioned whether there was an issue with the way the curriculum area supported itself and if there needed to be some investigation on how to improve the figures. The VPCP advised that this would be a key area to be monitored.

ET reported that she had been made aware of some students who had waited a long time to hear from the College in the SEND area and then not been offered a space resulting in them becoming NEET. ET questioned whether this area could be expanded or additional courses provided in January. The VPCP replied that there was a re-engagement course in January 2026. The Principal/CEO added that if the learners had Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP's) this was a very complex process in terms of funding.

The Chair queried whether non progression was due to learners not meeting their outcomes for a given year or whether they were changing colleges and asked if the College captured the data as to why learners chose to progress elsewhere. The VPCP responded that some areas had been harder on progression re English and Maths (E&M) but the message had been that L1-2 could progress and continue with E&M. There was a need to reintroduce academic target setting to address progression and ensure a more nuanced approach instead of a blanket approach.

The Chair stated that it would be beneficial to see the roll out of the plan re academic target setting, timelines, and impact re KPI's for progression. This was agreed.

The Chair thanked the VPCP for the report.

Action: The plan re academic target setting, timelines, and impact re KPI's for progression to be included next meeting.

8. Overview of C&Q Performance by Curriculum Area (Data Pack) including:
The VPQI advised that this was not the totality of the areas of good practice or at risk but was the current position.

Profile of At-Risk areas

Hair & Beauty

- Adult numbers high
- Attendance was a concern which had impacted achievement
- Achievement down 2%
- Live tracking systems in place to improve monitoring

Plumbing

- L2 programme - retention and achievement not strong against national average
- Adult achievement was low
- More positive starts but needed continuous monitoring

Motor Vehicle

- Plateaued but had been some improvements
- Challenges re staff recruitment and stakeholder engagement
- New EV workshop and hoped to refresh the curriculum

Areas of Good Practice

Engineering

- Most improved and strongest area
- Larger side for 16-18
- Performance data very strong
- Previously in a very difficult place – achievement was under 50%
- Excellent stakeholder connection
- Good enrichment

Business

- Sustained good quality
- E&M outcomes high for study programme areas
- Strong quality assurance
- Strong stakeholder connections

Construction Trades

- Strong management who had helped to train and retain staff
- Achievement data was good
- Further work re stakeholder relationships and E&M

The VPQI added that the stronger areas had the better stakeholder development.

The VPQI presented the data pack highlighting the following key points:

- General trend 23-24 and 24-25 – clear improvement for retention and achievement
- 16-18 only three areas in the red for achievement compared to 9 the previous year
- Achievement rates included E&M
- New data sheet for this Committee – welcome any feedback and thoughts as to how this could be improved.

SN stated that it was useful to see the level of data and asked whether part of the data table could also focus on attendance. SN advised that she had recently attended the E&M Monitoring and Performance (MAP) meeting and considering the large amount of data used, attendance by curriculum area and national averages would be useful to help to triangulate the data. This was agreed.

AA acknowledged how clear the data table was in presenting complex data and recorded his thanks for this. AA referred to the summary table of enrolments for 19+ 2023/24 and 2024/25 asking for clarity on the strategy. The VPQI replied that the College was c3000 learners down on 19+ for 2024/25 which needed to be considered in terms of funding. The Principal/CEO added that the contract value for both years was similar and there had been no clawback last year but this would be clarified.

AF stated that the number of ESOL adults had almost halved and noted it would be useful to have more explanation on partnerships. It was also requested that the table be amended to reposition the 16-18 retention and achievement columns next to each other and 19+ to follow. This was agreed.

AF advised that Plumbing was usually an in-demand area and asked for clarity on the next steps after level two. The VPQI replied that there was a level three apprenticeship available after the completion of level 2 but this was a four-year programme which was a big commitment for a student and employer. The VPCP stated that the College did run level 3 Adult Plumbing. The Principal/CEO added that there had been some uncertainty re the level three offer due to the move over to T-levels and the threat of funding withdrawal – this would be confirmed.

In response to a query from the Chair, the VPQI stated that both Business and Construction had lower numbers in 2024-25 compared with the prior year. The curriculum offer needed to be refined to ensure high quality programmes and there was also the option to run less groups to ensure we delivered well instead of growing for the sake of growth. The VPCP advised that the main refinement to the curriculum came through the Quality process and a live tracker had been implemented to monitor learners.

The Chair referred to the three areas of good practice and three areas of risk. He advised that the College could consider common features from strong areas to make sure things were embedded across the College and also the potential future challenges of at-risk areas. E&M was doing well in the areas that were performing positively and this good practice needed to be shared. The VPQI replied that thresholds where good practice was defined could be explored going forward to ensure thematic good practice and offer a balanced profile of good and the measures to ensure good. This could be repeated for risk areas.

| | |
|----|---|
| | <p>AF added that it would be beneficial to identify common success factors eg employer connection. AA added it would also be beneficial to consider unique learner numbers.</p> <p>The Chair summarised that, at the next meeting, the data table would be enhanced with the feedback from this meeting. The tone for this Committee is to understand areas of strength and this report has begun to embed the areas of strength which will enable the picture to be clearer by the end of the academic year.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the VPQI for the work undertaken on the data table.</p> <p>Action: Data pack to include attendance and national averages going forward. Columns to be Repositioned to ensure 16-18 retention and achievement columns next to each other. Unique learner numbers to be considered.</p> <p>Clarification to be provided on 19+ enrolment figures for 2023/24 and 204/25 and level 3 offer for plumbing.</p> <p>Partnerships and common success factors to be included for discussion at the next meeting.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP) – Progress Update and Review</p> <p>Self-Assessment Report (SAR) Update</p> <p>The VPQI summarised key improvements over the last 12 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA), outcomes, underperforming areas, Looked after Children (LAC), work experience and pastoral support - seen improvement - Outcomes in E&M, internal progression, apprenticeships – remain in the QIP for 2025/26 - SAR validation for curriculum area reports in the last week in November – dates had been circulated - Profile of actions that had not seen significant improvement to be removed from the QIP for 2025/26 - Incremental improvements in attendance but not sustained improvement - Industrial upskilling needed a more consolidated and all college approach - SAR timeline <p>The Chair referred to Level 1-2 and Level 2-3 progression and asked which areas should efforts be focussed at the top line to make a difference on progression. The VPQI responded that the College had been focussed on progression for the last few months in enrolments but this focus had changed to attendance, achievement etc and progression was not scheduled to be a focus until April time. Last year more attention had been paid to retention, and it was key for progression to be revisited in February/March to provide a greater emphasis at curriculum level. The Chair stated that the size of cohort and a holistic approach needed to be considered for the impact at the top line.</p> <p>SN advised that one of the messages from the E&M MAP meeting was vocational area support and intervention when attendance was poor and asked what strategy was being used to make sure there was an impact this year on attendance for E&M. The VPQI advised that there were areas with very strong attendance in E&M but some areas where attendance was considerably lower. In terms of accountability, the curriculum areas were critical as they owned the study programmes. There was a need to ensure that accountability was being challenged and colleagues in curriculum areas were challenging and supporting the students appropriately as attendance would lead to achievement. The Committee were informed that there was an attendance procedure in place including escalation points with clearly defined activities and responsibilities including engagement with parents. Consistency was key but some areas had more challenges than others. SN stated that it would be useful to know evidence of impact at the next meeting and provide some assurance that the MAP meetings and QI plans were having an effect. This was agreed.</p> <p>AF advised that successful curriculum areas had to have a successful strategy for E&M. AF questioned whether the College was near to having one or more areas declared 'exceptional' or whether more work was required to get to this point. The VPQI replied that for the current self-assessment process, the College was using the old Ofsted grades but from 2026 the new Ofsted language in the framework would be used. The VPCP advised</p> |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| | <p>that some areas were very close to Grade 1 but each area had some issue they were still working on eg work experience but Engineering, IT and Business were all bordering on Grade 1/Exceptional. The Chair advised that these would be good areas for future deep dives.</p> <p>In response to query from ET, the VPCP confirmed that the area of Creative and Performing Arts was also close to a Grade 1.</p> <p>Action: Impact of strategies to improve attendance in English and Maths to be discussed at the next meeting. Deep dive into areas close to achieving Grade 1/Exceptional to be discussed at the next meeting.</p> |
| <p>10</p> | <p>Business Planning 2025-26</p> <p>The VPCP highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bringing business planning forward - Guide and presentation template to pull all key priorities together - Year 2 of the three-year plan - Expectation of managers will include how the year has gone against the plan, any changes, looking ahead to next year, courses to run - Focus on key areas of under performance - Course performance data sheet – each area to consider - Key focus – strengthen progression routes - Growth of areas in the strategic plan – consideration of key priorities - Deepen employer engagement - Course approval panel - CIS/Quality and Director will consider viability/resources required of the course <p>In response to a query from the Chair, the VPCP clarified that the reapproval discussion would consider the course performance data and three-year trends. The course approval form was for new courses and would ensure a rigorous approach.</p> <p>AA stated that it was apparent that the strategy was linked with the Ofsted toolkit which was encouraging.</p> <p>AF questioned whether input from the recent FEC curriculum efficiency visit had been incorporated. The VPCP responded that feedback on class sizes and utilisation had been taken into account. The Principal/CEO advised that the draft report had been received containing a lot of helpful feedback and no areas that were not expected. The report reaffirmed areas that required attention and a management response would be made to each point before the final version was shared.</p> <p>The Chair recorded thanks to the VPCP for the report.</p> <p>Action: That the current position be noted.</p> |
| <p>11</p> | <p>C&Q Strategic Risk Register</p> <p>The VPQI informed the Committee of the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focussed on two of the risks pertinent to the Committee, TLA and student and stakeholder experience - Summary to assure that proactive steps are being taken to monitor quality - Schedule of learning walks taking place – moderation to take place - Learning walks - 17% of teachers working towards compared with 22% last year- work to take place to provide 1:1 support - Second learning walks in February 2026 - MAP meetings are considering quality of TLA and discussion on learning walks, attendance and progress of students |

| | |
|----|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff with repeatedly poor learning walks – being managed through a joint up approach with HR - SAR and QIPS to be validated – actions interrogated and actions for 2025.26 to drive improvement <p>SN questioned when the analysis of TLA would be presented to the Board. The VPQI advised that this was a thematic report which would be provided for the March meeting. The Principal/CEO advised that the headline profile was included within the KPI dashboard which was reported to the Board, however, a more systematic approach with a fuller report would be available.</p> |
| 12 | <p>AoB & Actions</p> <p>There was no further business. A self-assessment form would be issued after the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all present for their attendance and contributions, noting that the Committee was moving in the right direction re the focus on areas of strength and risk.</p> |
| 13 | Date and time of next meeting – Monday 9 March 2026, 5pm |

The meeting closed at 18.35pm.

| Agenda Item | Actions | Responsibility | Timeline | Progress |
|-------------|---|----------------|------------|------------------------------|
| 7. | The plan re academic target setting, timelines, and impact re KPI's for progression to be included at the next meeting. | VPCP | March 2026 | Deferred to the June meeting |
| 8. | Data pack to include attendance and national averages going forward. Unique learner numbers to be considered. | VPQI | ASAP | Complete |
| 8. | Columns to be Repositioned to ensure 16-18 retention and achievement columns next to each other. | VPQI | ASAP | Complete |
| 8. | Clarification to be provided on 19+ enrolment figures for 2023/24 and 204/25 and level 3 offer for plumbing. | VPQI | ASAP | Complete |
| 8. | Partnerships and common success factors in relation to ESOL to be included | VPCP | March 2026 | Included on agenda |

| | | | | |
|----|--|------|------------|--------------------|
| | for discussion at the next meeting. | | | |
| 9. | Impact of strategies to improve attendance in English and Maths to be discussed at the next meeting. | VPQI | March 2026 | Included on agenda |
| 9. | Deep dive into areas close to achieving Grade 1/Exceptional to be discussed at the next meeting. | VP's | March 2026 | Included on agenda |