

Present: Sean Devlin (Chair), Rubia Amin, Joe Durnall, Sheena Payne-Lunn, Wendy Pickess, Cathy Scott-Burt and Ed Senior.

In Attendance: Ruth Scotson (Deputy Principal), Jo Payne (PA to the Principal/Clerk to the Local Governing Body)

1. Apologies: None.

The Chair welcomed Joe Durnall to his first meeting of the Committee.

2. Standing Items

- (i) No interests were declared.
- (ii) No items were identified as confidential.
- (iii) No urgent business was identified.

3. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the Quality Committee: 4th November 2020

The minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record. An update was received on the action points arising from the minutes. In relation to the action points the Deputy Principal advised that:

- The previous retention figure considered by the Committee was not comparing like for like. Retention on long level 3 courses was 93.5% compared to a benchmark of 92.2%. This has been corrected in the relevant appendix of the SAR;
- Attendance alerts had been turned off for the period of remote learning and would be reinstated when students return.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

4. Management and Strategic

(i) Principal's Update

The Principal presented his update report and noted the following points:

- Lateral flow testing had gone well. Two temporary hourly paid staff were appointed to process tests and oversee quality aspects. A number of existing staff were also supporting the testing efforts;
- Twice weekly testing of staff was taking place and this supplemented other safety measures. Serial testing, however, had been suspended as, given that the tests were only 50% accurate, it was determined that this should not replace the need to isolate for proximity contacts;
- The indicative funding to support testing efforts would sufficiently cover the staffing costs for testing;
- The Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing was sharing a weekly newsletter with students with advice and guidance aimed at promoting positive mental health. These would be shared with governors for their information;
- 140 laptops had been issued by the government to be distributed to students. Seven laptops had also been donated by the Worcester Lions to be reconditioned. The parent of a student was involved in this initiative;
- Although there was no certainty that students would not be disadvantaged, the decision to cancel January applied exams was taken to ensure the safety of staff and students. Ofqual subsequently confirmed that students will not be disadvantaged although the details of how grades would be awarded and any possibility to resit have not been confirmed;

- The consultation on how grades would be determined closed on 29th January, however, the outcome of this would not be known until the week commencing 22nd February. It seemed, however, that there would be external exams/assessments with teachers determining grades. The message to students continued to be that they should focus and prepare as if they were sitting the usual exams;
- The College held rigorous mock exams in November, however, students would complete an assessment in the spring term to provide opportunity to demonstrate what they can achieve. The timing of this assessment was to be confirmed and would be adapted depending on when students were to return;
- Parental feedback was overwhelmingly positive and was an important factor in maintaining staff morale. Given the time take to provide feedback, careful consideration was given to responding to parents where areas for improvement were identified.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- In cases where a lateral flow test was positive, a confirmatory PCR test was not required as positive results were highly accurate. A negative result, however, provided false reassurance as the subject might have a low viral load;
- Different ways of identifying students in need of support with IT equipment had been used including a survey at the start of the autumn term, and subsequent emails to students identified as disadvantaged and their parents. It was occasionally the case that students and/or their parents did not want to admit to needing support;
- The forthcoming assessment was not another mock exam and would be a piece of A Level standard work with additional internal moderation and extra time arrangements etc should these marks subsequently be eligible for consideration when grading;
- The College had remote invigilation in place for November mocks which enabled students isolating to complete exam papers at the same time as their peers. This was on a relatively small scale, but it would be difficult to replicate these arrangements for a large number of students.

The Chair of Committee advised that, in his role as the designated Safeguarding Governor, he had recently met with the Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing and was very impressed with the support provided by the safeguarding team and tutors, in particular, the weekly welfare checks that were taking place.

The Committee **noted** the report and thanked the Principal for his update.

(ii) COVID Recovery – Monitoring teaching, learning and assessment

The Deputy Principal outlined the key updates in relation to teaching, learning and assessment to enable effective monitoring. She advised that the College was better prepared for remote teaching with staff training focused on the use of Teams. Feedback from staff and parents was positive and expectations about what teachers would provide and the levels of engagement from students were outlined in the Policy on Remote Learning. The Digital Learning Co-ordinator was continuing to offer support to staff and members of the Quality Team were meeting with Heads of Department and Subject Leaders to discuss subject specific plans for remote teaching and how the impact of this would be monitored and evaluated. The recent Teaching and Learning meeting was very well attended with a focus on checking on student engagement.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- No more than 12 students on any one day were attending College at present. These students were not receiving live lessons and were in College to enable access to IT and remote lessons;
- There was some debate about whether students should keep cameras on during live sessions and a proposal would be put forward with guidelines for students on how to blur their screens;

- Whilst Teams insights was one means of checking engagement, this was by no means perfect given the many different means that staff were using to set assignments and involve students.

The Committee acknowledged the burden that was being placed on teachers, were appreciative of the efforts of all staff and impressed with the organisation of this. It was noted that governors felt they were kept well informed. It was suggested that governors would be able to join remote lessons to get a better view of what was happening as a link visit should they wish and this could be organised via the Clerk.

(iii) Policy on Remote Learning

The Committee **approved** the policy on remote learning.

5. **Quality Assurance**

(i) Self-Assessment Report

The Deputy Principal presented the summary of the self-assessment report and advised that the full version was available for governors to review. The SAR reflected the Ofsted inspection framework heading with sections, and proposed grades, for quality of education, behaviour, personal development and leadership and management with an overall effectiveness grade. It was proposed that the College was good in all areas.

The Chair of the Committee asked what was preventing the College's leadership and management as being deemed outstanding. The Deputy Principal said that outcomes were the determining factor in this and 2019 outcomes for A levels, in value added terms, were not as good as they should be. Good progress had been made with the half a block of time for support and enrichment for full-time teachers, although it was important to focus on the embedding the principles of the Worcester Working Week and evaluating its effectiveness and also in raising student aspirations so that all are aiming for the highest grades.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and **agreed to recommend** to the Local Governing Body that the Self-Assessment Report for 2019-20 be approved.

(ii) Quality Assurance

The Deputy Principal presented the key aspects of her report and highlighted the following:

- The Quality Improvement Plans for the five subjects involved in Subject Improvement Reviews were included for scrutiny to enable governors to consider if suitable actions had been identified to bring about improvement;
- Real progress had been made in three of these subject areas although there were staffing issues in the remaining two with one newly appointed member of staff resigning and one in another having their probationary period extended;
- The Quality Team were meeting weekly with fortnightly updates on progress with improvement reviews. All departments were being spoken to check on arrangements for remote learning and support for catch up;
- SLT were reviewing the progress of particular groups of students including those with an EHCP, looked after children, young carers and disadvantaged students;
- The destinations of students had been collated. The Principal added that 460 applications were submitted to UCAS this year which was an increase on the total number last year even before taking into account late applicants.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- In addition to the loan of laptops to students, the College was trying to address digital poverty through investing in devices to increase bandwidth and also data SIMs;
- The Sociology QIP identified a need for textbooks to be purchased. The cost of these often meant that this was not feasible and resources were instead made available online, however, given the improved financial picture brought about by increased recruitment, there might be opportunity to consider the purchase of resources once again and department capitation was being reviewed;
- Senior Leaders had worked hard to offer support and challenge to subjects requiring improvement, however, if improvements were not seen there would be a consequence to this. It was intended to invest more time to support new teachers;
- The Deputy Principal would feedback in relation to areas identified by students for improvement and ensuring that all of these were responded to in the subject QIPs.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and thanked the Deputy Principal for her report.

(iii)

a) Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal outlined updates to the College Quality Improvement Plan and advised that these reflected the areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report. The Committee **noted** updates to the Quality Improvement Plan.

b) Marketing Update

The Clerk, in her role as Marketing Co-ordinator, reported that applications were positive with 189 more started than at the equivalent point last year. This was particularly positive in light of the strength of recruitment in the current academic year and in that applications currently exceed the increase in the size of the year 11 cohort. There were still many uncertainties and challenges in that the applicants had not been able to attend an Open Event or a year 10 day last year and might never have visited College. It was also possible that applications were being made earlier than in previous years.

Whilst the autumn term Open Events were held remotely with relative success, it was not felt that there would be benefit from repeating the same event in the spring term, however, plans to offer individual/small group tours was not currently possible. Consideration was being given to subject spotlights to be promoted via social media over the spring and summer terms. The recent success of increasing the College's bank of alumni through the use of LinkedIn was noted. The Deputy Principal advised that the College was holding a virtual Ambition Event on 18th March for year 10 and 11 students and their parents.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

6. Governance

The Clerk outlined the following in respect of governor vacancies and appointments:

- Alex Gwinn's first term of office as staff governor was nearing an end. Alex was willing to extend his tenure and the Committee were asked to consider recommending his re-appointment;
- Attempts to contact the Independent Vice-Chair of the Student Exclusion Appeal Panel in order to ascertain whether they wished to be considered for reappointment had failed. The Committee was asked to consider whether a replacement should be sought;
- The vacancy for an external governor with legal experience/background remained unfilled although continued to be promoted on governor recruitment websites.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and **reviewed** confidential minute register. The Committee **agreed** to:

- **Recommend** the re-appointment of Alex Gwinn as Staff Governor and member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee for a period of four years;
- Seek a suitable replacement for the Vice-Chair of the Student Exclusion Appeal Panel

7. Policy Reviews

- (i) Whistleblowing Policy
The Principal advised that no changes were currently proposed to the Whistleblowing policy. The policy was **approved** without change.
- (ii) Governor Appointment Policy
The policy was approved with the minor changes proposed.
- (iii) Access to Meetings Policy
The policy was approved with the minor changes proposed.
- (iv) Tabling of Papers Policy
The policy was approved with the minor changes proposed.

8. Closing Standing Items

- (i) Risk Management
The Principal outlined the updates to the register noted that those presented to the Committee were those that remained high even after controls and mitigations. IT accounted for a number of these and an audit of the network suggested that significant improvements were needed to make it robust. The estimated cost of these measures was £200,000. The disaster recovery plan in relation to the IT systems was being reviewed although progress was being made with the College and Hereford SFC storing each other's data to provide greater resilience.

The Committee **noted** the revisions to the Risk Register.

- (ii) Impact: The Committee reflected on their discussions and noted their scrutiny of ensuring that arrangements for remote learning and actions identified in subject QIPs were adequate.
- (iii) Any Urgent Business: No items were raised.
- (iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 12th May 2021

The meeting finished at 6.52pm.

Signed:.....
Sean Devlin (Chair)

Date:.....

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 3rd FEBRUARY 2021

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/03.02.21/5(ii)	Request that QIPs include a response to all areas identified by students as requiring improvement.	RJS	12.05.21	

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/04.11.20/6(i)	Report back of reason for lower retention on long level 3 courses.	RJS	03.02.21	✓
C&Q/05.02.20/4(ii)	Review arrangements and thresholds for attendance alerts to parents to ensure these are satisfactory.	EYS/RJS	13.05.20	✓