

Present: Sean Devlin (Chair), Matthew Bennett, Emma Bridges, Joe Durnall, Sheena Payne-Lunn, Wendy Pickess, and Ed Senior.
In Attendance: Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal), Luke Moseley (Vice Principal), Jo Payne (PA to the Principal/Clerk to the Local Governing Body)

1. Apologies: Alex Gwinn and Lucy Wilson.

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 Curriculum & Quality Committee: 3rd November 2021

The minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record. An update was received on the action point arising from the minutes and the Vice Principal (Curriculum) advised that blind marking was taking place as part of internal moderation and standardisation processes. 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:

- The College no longer needed to alert the Health Protection Team when a threshold was met. This appeared to be part of the government's strategy of 'living with COVID'. In recent examples where numbers of confirmed cases in a class indicated an outbreak, the College took the decision to keep the unaffected students in the class separate from other students when in exam rooms for the recent mock;
- Numbers absent due to COVID had remained between 40-50 students and 5-6 members of staff each day. Whilst manageable, clearly absence continued to cause disruption. It was noted that schools were more significantly affected with national absence rates falling by around 13% compared to a decline of around 2% for the College. Getting students and parents to see the significance of attending College and shifting a perception that students could learn remotely remained a challenge;
- Student numbers for this academic year were positive, an increase of 100 on last academic year. Applications for September 2022 remain in line with the previous year, but the conclusion is that the College will do well to recruit as many students next year. This was due to a combination of factors. Alternatives such as apprenticeships were opening up again and, with the return to external exams, it was likely that fewer students would be qualified for level 3 programmes. Whilst the year 11 demographic was slightly higher than last year, the growth was in schools with sixth forms from whom our capture rate was typically lower. Hopefully a slightly increased rollover to year two would result in similar student number for next year;
- Recent parental feedback was overwhelmingly positive with 99% reporting they felt well informed about the College's approach to COVID, 97% felt that the College's safety measures were appropriate and 96% advising that they would recommend the College to family or friends;
- Mock exam arrangements went well with overall attendance of 92%;

- Exam board advance information had been published but lacked clarity and differed between subjects.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- Support for remote learning differed by subject with some enabling access to live lessons and others directing students to work. The expectation remained that teachers would follow up with the student on their return to check their understanding of learning completed at home. This clearly created more work for teachers. With Art subjects, students isolating were directed to complete relevant research elements given the practical nature of the course;
- For those students who were unable to attend mock exams, mop-up sessions would take place on 9th and 16th February. The papers used for these sittings would be different from the original mock exam both to instil a sense of fairness and to comply with Ofqual guidance in the unlikely event that these papers need to be used for teacher assessed grades;
- Teachers had been instructed to complete the teaching of their specifications to ensure that students developed all the appropriate knowledge and skills to support their progression

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

5. Quality Assurance

(i) Quality Assurance

The Vice Principal (Curriculum) presented the key aspects of her report and highlighted the following:

- Updated QIPs for the subjects involved in Subject Improvement Reviews were included for scrutiny by governors alongside two subjects where outcomes were judged outstanding in the last set of externally verified results. All areas were focused on the same key themes and strategies identified to bring about the intended improvement;
- Mid-year reviews were ongoing and conversations were focused on what had already been implemented and where impact could already be evidenced;
- A key priority was raising aspirations for progression of our students through increasing the numbers applying to university and Russell Group universities, in particular, especially where students were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds;
- 480 students submitted university application by the UCAS deadline so work was now ongoing following up on those who did not make applications to ensure they had progression plans in place;
- National Apprenticeship week was being promoted to students via tutorial sessions and other means;
- Summary assessment data broken down by groups of students was shared. This helps identify areas for intervention. This will be further considered by the Quality Group in the coming weeks;
- Headline student questionnaire responses were positive with a 50% response rate. It was noted that typically the survey is issued before Christmas but went live in January this year. Students were particularly positive about their relationships with teachers, the support they received and they felt safe. Students were less positive in relation to workload and the feedback received from teachers about how to improve their work;
- The cross-College survey was also positive in terms of their safety and support. The less positive scores related to support for careers and progression which was already being addressed in terms of promoting what is on offer. Action was being taken to revisit Prevent in tutorials and subject lessons and a survey will be reissued focussed specifically on this area;
- The external advisor was positive about the exemplary behaviour of students and suggested some follow up points in relation to embedding skills and behaviours in addition to knowledge. A return visit is planned for 14th February to involve deep dives in Geography, Geology, Environmental Science and Learning Support;

- Tuition fund workshops were now timetabled for students with 4 tutors appointed to support this delivery. It had proved logistically difficult to introduce this at this point in the year and consideration will be given to introducing from the outset if there was benefit prior to any government funding being confirmed.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- Any value added data generated from CAGs and TAGs was not reliable and the data from this year's exams was unlikely to be as valid as the 2019 data;
- The proportion of students studying Biology was lower at College than at HSFC. It was noted that the College's entry requirements were slightly higher than those of HSFC, but the College also has more subjects on offer. Recruitment was gradually increasing in Biology after a number of years of disappointing results and possible reputational damage. The new team in Biology was led by a Head of Department driven by bringing about improvement. Following the departure of a member of staff, the remaining two Biology teachers were managing existing groups between them to ensure that students had appropriate support after failed attempts to get agency cover. The department were continuing to offer workshop opportunities. Their efforts were commended;
- Although the College was in line with national data on progression to university, Ofsted would consider the numbers progressing to Russell Group universities. The Vice Principal (Progression) advised that the SFCA provide destinations reports based on UCAS data, benchmarking based on prior attainment of students. There was some discussion about the impact of the pandemic and cost of tuition on university as an option for students and the need to shift the culture and engage staff with promoting this to students;
- It was noted that the HESA data, which reports on the degree completion rates of former students, did not include the University of Worcester who did not opt in to the data sharing and clearly this negatively impacts the College's data;
- The Vice Principal (Curriculum) was reviewing data at course level and by individual teachers and having conversations as required;
- In relation to students requesting more healthy food options, it was explained that there are plentiful options, but action has been taken to promote these more widely. Food prices have been added to the Portal so students are aware of costs beforehand. The bursary allocation for free meals was also increased to enable eligible students to receive breakfast as well as lunch and this was being promoted.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and thanked the Vice Principal for her report. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair requested that the appreciation of the committee for such detailed and reflective QIPs be passed on to relevant Heads of Department and Subject Leaders.

(ii) Quality Improvement Plan

The Vice Principal (Curriculum) advised that updates had been made to the Quality Improvement Plan since it was last considered in November and this was routinely reviewed by the Quality Group. Where possible, updates included evaluating impact and the key themes including improving outcomes and raising progression aspirations.

The SEND link governor reported that he had requested some data from the Learning Support Manager to support particular actions in the QIP and with the intention of feeding to the committee next time.

In response to a question about Impact, the Vice Principal (Progression) explained that this was a feature of the Portal which enabled students to record additional curricular activities including enrichment and their intended destination.

The Committee **noted** the updated Quality Improvement Plan.

(iii) Careers Strategy

The Vice Principal (Progression) advised that the College is required to have a Careers Strategy published on its website outlining how it will meet the eight Gatsby benchmarks. The included careers calendar was highlighted as outlining the opportunities available to students throughout the academic year. It was also noted that the CEIAG link governor met with the Vice Principal (Progression) and the Head of Student Services and a follow up meeting was planned for 7th March.

The Committee **approved** the Careers Strategy and **noted** the information provided. The Committee requested information/data on the College's current progress against the Gatsby benchmarks.

6. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and noted the following:

- The confidential minute register should be reviewed by governors and consideration given as to whether any entries should no longer remain confidential;
- The DfE would publish guidance on External Reviews of Governance in April 2022. An ERG would examine the effectiveness of the board including structures, skills and levels of accountability;
- Whilst it is for the Trust to determine the nature and scope of an external review of governance, it is important that local governors are aware of the areas this would cover and considerations to ensure best practice on an ongoing basis;
- A significant feature of the ERG is requirement for Local Governing Bodies and its Committees to have an independent 'governance professional'. It was advised that governors reflect on whether the level of support provided by the Clerk was appropriate, delivered a good understanding of legal duties and responsibilities and that there was a reasonable degree of independence, particularly, given that the Clerk was employed by the College as the PA to the Principal and Marketing Co-ordinator. Governors should reflect on how assurances are given that the Clerk is acting independently in relation to governance matters.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and **reviewed** confidential minute register. The Committee felt that the Clerk provided appropriate independent support but agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair should reflect on this on an ongoing basis as part of the Clerk's appraisal.

7. Policy Reviews

(i) Trust Whistleblowing Policy

The Clerk advised that the Committee no longer needed to annually review the College's Whistleblowing Policy as this was now a Trust level policy. It was noted that the disciplinary and grievance procedures referred to in the Trust Whistleblowing Policy were not yet in place and, in the interim, the College would continue to follow its own procedures.

(ii) Governor Appointment Policy

The policy was approved without change.

(iii) Access to Meetings Policy

The policy was approved without change.

(iv) Tabling of Papers Policy

The policy was approved without change.

8. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management

The Principal presented the risks identified as red/amber post mitigation and reported the following:

- The installation of the perimeter fence had significantly improved site security and this was further improved by the appointment of the Site Security Officer who was fantastic. The post-mitigate risk remained amber as concerns were raised by the College about Sports Centre security. The response of Freedom Leisure was positive and doors exiting onto the College's recreational area had been placed on maglocks and alarmed. They were working with the College to implement additional measures including the installation of a fence along the recreation area so that the existing fire exit for Sport Centre users could continue to be used. Once completed, the post-mitigation score would be followed;
- Julie Ferman, Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing, was commended for her proactive response to sexual harassment and violence. Partnership meetings were instigated involving the Police, local PCSOs and councillors;
- Given the significant investment in IT, governors should continue to challenge in this area. It was noted that Cyber Security Plus accreditation was awarded and was required for funding purposes and should further industry standard accreditation be required the College would respond accordingly although this would require further financial investment.

The Committee **noted** the revisions to the Risk Register. The further updated version of the document would be shared with the Committee.

(ii) Impact: The Committee reflected on their discussions and noted that its review and scrutiny of subject QIPs and quality assurance more generally was to ensure the highest standard of support for our students.

(iii) Any Urgent Business: No items were raised.

(iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 18th May 2022

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair noted the positive and impressive start the Vice Principals had made since joining the College at the start of the academic year.

The meeting finished at 7.06pm.

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

Date:.....

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 9TH FEBRUARY 2022

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/09.02.22/5(iii)	Provide information/data on progress with meeting Gatsby benchmarks.	LIM	May 2022	

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/03.11.21/6(iii)	Consider ways of improving tracking of students after they leave College and complete degrees of further qualifications.	Vice Principals	Ongoing	✓