

**Present:** Sean Devlin (Chair), Matthew Bennett, Joe Durnall, Sheena Payne-Lunn (*arrived 5.37pm*), Wendy Pickess, Paul Tamas 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:** Emma Bridges, Alex Gwinn

## **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: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

The minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record.

## **4. Management and Strategic**

(i) Principal's Update

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

- The current prediction was that student numbers next year would be in line with this year as the result of a modest decrease in recruitment and comparative increase in rollover into the second year;
- Whilst applications were running slightly ahead of the equivalent time last year, there would be more choices available to young people with more apprenticeships being offered and, with the return of external exams, it was likely that fewer would be qualified for the courses they want to study;
- There were no significant changes to staffing proposed. Appointments had been made in Maths and English in preparation for the likelihood that more students would need to resit GCSEs in these subjects. A full-time Biology teacher had also been appointed;
- There would be an increase in funding next year of approximately £1 million as a result of increased student numbers and a welcome increase in the funding rate;
- The government were introducing a requirement for an additional 40 hours for an average student programme for them to meet the requirement to be funded as full-time. The College timetable would change to facilitate this whilst not increasing teacher workload. Each teaching block would have one longer lesson with 25 minutes being allocated in a way that could be used flexibly by teachers. This could be used for additional teaching, one-to-one reviews or small group support. Teachers would not need to provide additional workshops which required significant organising and chasing of attendance. The longer lesson would also provide practical subjects, such as Art and the sciences, opportunity for activities;
- It was likely that Level 2 students would not have the longer lesson, but 16-19 tuition sessions would be timetabled for them from the start of the year.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- The primary concern in relation to the adaptations to the timetable were whether it was affordable as any enrichment delivery would come off the 5 blocks of academic teaching and, therefore, had an associated cost. In terms of initial feedback from staff as part of the consultation, there were a small number of concerns that the additional 25 minutes created more work. Reducing the number of students a teacher was responsible for and removing the administration associated with workload was intended to mitigate teacher workload;
- Consideration would be given to the College's key values and whether these could be better communicated in College publicity and with governors.

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:

- A detailed summary of the deep dives in subject areas was shared and this process was almost complete. Deep dives were light-touch with a view to supporting staff in preparing for inspection. Attempts were made to involve Heads of Department in deep dives in other department areas although this had proved logistically difficult. Work scrutiny involved checking folders but going forward this would be more rigorous with reviews of marked work and feedback;
- Clear themes from the deep dives were that teaching, learning and assessment were good, teachers were passionate about their subject and supporting their students to achieve. Feedback from departments was positive with comments that it made teachers more confident about responding to questions inspectors might ask. Some suggested the process was too brief and more difficult questions could be answered;
- It was felt that to tie up the work of academic departments, learning support, pastoral care and careers, cross-College communication needed to make clear what happens when and to embed careers across the curriculum;
- SLT undertook paired practice questioning with one speaking to students and the other with the teacher. Fifteen classes were visited and feedback would be collated;
- In planning the quality cycle for next year, even if the College has been inspected, it was felt there was real value in the deep dive process and visits to classrooms and this process would continue;
- Peer observations were undertaken and the findings summarised. This process was not intended to be judgmental and observers recorded what value they gained from visiting the lesson;
- An external consultant visited College recently looking at the work of Student Services and the tutors. Most recently their visit focused on Foundation/Level 2 provision. It was noted that the Chair of the Committee accompanied the consultant on one of the visits which was an additional source of assurance for governors;
- Most recent data on student progress was shared focused on demonstrating the impact of the system of interventions. In 41% of cases where concern was raised in the previous Summary Assessment, there was improvement by the time of the next assessment;
- 16-19 Tuition Fund workshops were introduced from February with tutors employed to deliver these sessions. Whilst attendance at sessions was disappointing at 40%, feedback suggested that for those who attended they felt it had made a positive impact. As funding for next academic year had been confirmed, the sessions would be timetable from the very start of the year and it was expected that this would result in improved attendance.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- Feedback on the deep dives became more detailed as the process evolved;
- In response to CLA students not making as good progress as students typically, it was noted that there was confidence that bespoke support was in place for each of these students. Other vulnerable groups were making good progress. It was suggested it would be useful to compare the progress and achievement of CLA students with this group nationally;
- It was intended to extend access to tuition fund sessions to students on A levels such as Sociology who achieved grade 4/5 in English, but might still need support with writing skills. The Committee were in favour of this support and continued support for English as well as Maths was identified at the governors' conference.

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

(ii) Quality Improvement Plan

The Vice Principal (Curriculum) advised that the College Quality Improvement Plan had been updated and a summary of progress to date shared with governors. The key priorities continued to be teaching and learning, progression and monitoring interventions.

In response to questions, it was noted that the requirements of the Criminology specification were extremely challenging with students required to sit an 8 hour controlled assessment. With the number of students enrolled on the course along with assessments needing to be internally marked before sending off to the moderator, there were clearly workload implications for the staff delivering the course. Options were being considered in terms of getting external support for marking or moving to a new specification once there was an accredited alternative.

The Committee **noted** the updates to the Quality Improvement Plan.

(iii) Student Progression Update

The Vice Principal (Progression) presented his report noting the following points:

- Whilst university was not the right route for everyone, the College would promote it as a viable option for all students. Students would have to go through the steps of writing a personal statement and engaging with UCAS as ultimately this would prepare them for applying for apprenticeships or employment;
- The difficulty with students being able to access appropriate level apprenticeships was noted and often these were promoted too late in the year;
- The University and Careers fair was a great success with 21 universities attending alongside apprenticeship providers, the armed forces and Police etc. 83% of year 1 students attended and feedback was positive. To ensure students could access this it was timetabled during the College day in their free lessons. Teachers and tutors promoted the event and had discussions with students about which stands they would visit and the questions they would be asked;
- A mentoring scheme was being piloted with three undergraduate students from the University of Worcester mentoring three of our students. It was hoped to increase this to six for next year with disadvantaged students and those who would be the first in their family to go to university being targeted. The University of Worcester were also hosting a weekly careers booth in College;
- Work had continued to identify year 2 students who had not applied to university to ensure they had discussions with College about their progression plans;
- Progress continued to be made with the Gatsby benchmarks and this was being recorded. There were still areas for further progress including ensuring that all students have experience of the workplace.

In response to questions, it was advised that:

- There was not a one-stop shop for apprenticeships in the same way that UCAS oversee university applications. Although it might be right in some circumstances, apprenticeships were often at level 2 with degree level apprenticeships being mis-sold. Consideration would be given to a Professional Programme in guiding students towards the best apprenticeships where this was the student's clear progression aim;
- There was some work to be done to establish the role of teachers in preparing their students with their progression;
- Unifrog was a database signposting to different progression opportunities and would cost approximately £2,500 per year.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and thanked the Vice Principal for his report.

## 6. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and noted the following:

- Abigail Stephenson was nearing the end of her term of office, creating a vacancy for an external governor. The current skills and knowledge of governors was being collated and will be shared so governors can consider if the advert for a governor should be focused towards those with particular backgrounds;
- A training needs survey would be shared and the responses of this would inform the training programme for next year;
- The Committee was invited to review its terms of reference and cycle of business;
- A draft schedule of meetings for 2022-23 was presented for recommendation.

The Committee **recommended** for approval the terms of reference, cycle of business and proposed meeting dates.

## 7. Student Union

The Vice Principal (Progression) presented the Student Union annual report and commented on the challenges faced. The Union was led by two ECTs with a core of around 8 students committed to running charity events etc. Attendance was impacted by the need for students to attend workshops and it proved difficult to increase numbers. The election for next year's President would take place this year with a view to pushing recruitment at Course Confirmation. The intent to forge increased links with New College Worcester was also a positive step forward.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

## 8. Policy Reviews

### (i) Complaints Policy

The Committee **approved** the policy with the minor change proposed.

The record of concerns and complaints was considered. The Principal advised that there appeared to be more than in previous years, but this was linked to the College's response to government guidance on reporting low level concerns where the harms threshold had not been met. The Principal said that when parents or students raised a concern, it was an opportunity for the College to demonstrate its core values in the way it responded which was clearly a part of reputation management and continually trying to improve the service provided.

Given that Biology was an area where senior leaders felt there was significant improvement, the fact that there were numerous concerns raised over the course of the year was an area where governors would be right to provide challenge and support. The Vice Principal (Curriculum) outlined the nature of the concerns and the findings when these were investigated. The positive response of the department to

provide consistency and specialist teaching to students was noted. A governor recently completed a link visit in this area and was reassured by the visit and the enthusiasm of the Head of Department to bring about improvement.

The Committee **noted** the content of the concerns register and report on Biology.

(ii) Admissions & Fitness to Study Policy

The Committee **approved** the policy with the minor change proposed.

**8. Closing Standing Items**

(i) Risk Management

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

- The College had been awarded £2.1 million in grant funding to complete the Science Centre extension. The applications was not initially successful given it was not 'shovel ready', however, the case was strong enough on the grounds of growth that this was subsequently awarded. The delay, however, means that timescales are extremely tight with work onsite scheduled to start in August with completion required by the end of March. Whilst, ultimately, it was the Trust's decision, the risk is that additional costs would require repayment by the College;
- The City Council were applying for a grant from the levelling up funding which, if successful, would mean improvement of the existing Sports Centre facilities and a new facility. Whilst the new and refurbished facilities could be used by the College, in accordance with the joint use arrangements, and mean that Freedom Leisure would no longer require use of the Gym and Dance Studio, the project would require College land.

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

(ii) Impact: The Committee noted that scrutiny of quality assurance arrangements including progress of CLA students, support for progression and monitoring of concerns and complaints was aimed at ensuring the highest levels of support and achievement for students.

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

(iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 (TBC)

The meeting finished at 7.20pm.

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

Date:.....

**CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
C&Q/18.05.22/4(i)	Consider whether the College's values and visions could be promoted more clearly to stakeholders.	EYS	November 2022	
C&Q/18.05.22/5(i)	Identify national benchmarks in relation to the performance of CLA students.	JLJ	November 2022	

**ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>

**ACTION POINTS COMPLETED**

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