

Present: Sheena Payne-Lunn (Chair), Duncan Clark, Sean Devlin, Alex Gwinn, Beth Hallam, Kelvin Hard, Wendy Pickess, Caroline Shaw, 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)

Further to Sean Devlin's appointment as Chair of the Local Governing Body, a new Committee Chair should be elected. Sheena Payne-Lunn was unanimously appointed as Committee Chair for the remainder of the academic year.

1. Apologies: None.

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: 2nd November 2022

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.

4. Management and Strategic

(i) Principal's Update

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

- Whilst a 2.2% increase in the base funding rate for next year was welcomed and would see funding levels almost back to 2009 levels, it would not cover pay rises or increased energy costs. Funding mechanisms will be changed so that some high premium courses will have their weightings reduced and reduced funding for advanced Maths premium courses would be an active disincentive for institutions to offer these courses. Given the success of the Core Maths course at College, it would be disappointing if delivery was no longer financially viable;
- 113 additional students this year compared to last year would mean an additional £500,000 in funding for next year which would mean that the College could respond to the challenges faced;
- Strike action would cause disruption to students in the run up to external exams which was disappointing. There are three further days of strike action planned for March, although it is possible there will be further action if negotiations continue to be unsuccessful;
- The SFCA and other stakeholders are campaigning to mitigate changes to the curriculum landscape through the removal of applied general qualifications which are crucial to the social mobility of many young people. Despite some indications of a softened approach, the Government intend to proceed with plans which will see only a small number of applied qualifications survive;
- The ESFA funding audit conducted by PWC found non-material errors amounting to approximately £7,000 which is around 0.09% of the College's funding income;
- The Science Centre build remains on track with the steels installed. Monies must be spent by the end of March with the build completed by 1st September;

- The outcome of a CIF bid for fire safety measures is not yet known. Disappointingly, the College was unable to submit a T Level capacity bid as the project is not sufficiently costly that it would be eligible. The Council application for levelling up funding was also unsuccessful;
- Feedback from the parental survey was overwhelmingly positive. Where more than 10% of parents disagreed with a statement, a response has been shared with parents. Namely this was in relation to subject advice, accessing the Portal, who to contact about their son or daughter's progress and what support was available in relation to progression, in particular, apprenticeships.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- The NEU had stated that their industrial action would not disrupt the exams series itself so there is currently no need for contingency planning. The impact of any transport strikes taking place during the exam series was not yet known;
- The percentage of parents who would recommend the College to their friends or family was typically always similar to the 97% this year.

The Committee challenged whether the College could do more to enable parents to access the Portal to get the information they need, for example, whether there was an automated message that could be sent to parents if they have not logged onto the Portal or haven't done so for a length of time.

The Committee **noted** the report.

5. Quality Assurance

(i) Quality Assurance

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

- In response to the request of the Committee to review a range of QIPs, several were shared for scrutiny;
- The cross-College focus was for subject areas to develop strategies to promote improved value added and aspirations. Guidance was shared with HoDs and Subject Leaders suggesting possible strategies without being too prescriptive. Subjects are being asked to ensure that sufficient homework and independent study tasks are set, with follow up action to ensure this was being completed and was suitably stretching for students;
- There is also a focus on the importance of feedback so that students are clear on what they need to do to improve their work and feel able to apply this;
- The process for monitoring progress against actions identified in QIPs has been formalised with a mid-year review. A prepopulated template has been produced to assist HoDs with the data to be reviewed. The intention is to give a sense of progress in year in terms of attendance, retention etc. Departments were given time on the January training day to reflect on students off track, whether there were particular patterns and what strategies would be implemented to address underperformance of students;
- The feedback from the Quality visit was included, but the College had since been inspected by Ofsted with the outcome currently embargoed;
- A new HoD for Biology is in post along with the introduction of a new subject leader for Criminology;
- The Senior Leader for Subject Improvement continued to support subjects identified either as a result of underperformance or due to other factors such as staffing;
- The feedback from the SPOC questionnaire was shared although the response rate was disappointing and the questionnaire will be issued again in March and consideration given to these being completed in class. The survey identified that 26% were unsure about event and what to do if they suspected signs of radicalisation. The College will consider its response to this.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- Whilst there was no set timescale to evidence improvements, clearly there needs to be points throughout the year to review implementation and student performance in mock exams etc. The final review point ultimately is when exam results are published in the summer;
- Criminology was one of the applied courses that would be defunded from 2025. The detail on the courses affected will be shared with governors;
- The Worcestershire Prevent team identified trends nationally in terms, but would not share details of the local risk. The College has had to make referrals in relation to potentially radicalised behaviours.

Governors challenged and sought reassurances that quality processes are effective in terms of subjects addressing areas for improvement. Whilst it was noted that of the subjects supported over recent years, 6 had improved against all measures, 6 against some and only one had failed to improve. Consideration will be given to ensuring that evidence of the effectiveness of quality processes is shared with governors. The Committee asked how they could monitor attendance by group routinely and provide challenge. It was requested that consideration be given to sharing KPI data with governors through an effective means.

The Student Governor commented that the surveys were lengthy and required for each subject and enrichment opportunity. Given the relatively low response rate, the Committee challenged the College's leadership to respond to the need to improve and raise the profile of student voice.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) Quality Improvement Plan

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

(iii) Progression

The Vice Principal (Progression) presented his report and highlighted the following:

- The focus has been on reviewing the cross-College progression agenda and the importance of aspirational progression aims to social mobility;
- Of last year's leavers, HE numbers remained stable. The focus has been to increase the numbers registering with UCAS even where ultimately students do not intend to submit an application. Registration rates increased to 95% this year compared to 75% of eligible students last year;
- There was an increase the numbers entering employment although it was not felt that for many of these students the employment offered long term training and development;
- The College needs to focus on being more aspirational in the number of students taking part in work experience and getting this back to pre-COVID levels is not sufficient;
- Efforts to engage with students considering an apprenticeship and their parents were outlined and, to mark National Apprenticeship Week, an apprenticeship webinar was taking place later this evening.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- In terms of what is considered an aspirational apprenticeship for students on level 2 programmes or intending to progress into truly vocational professions such as being an electrician, a level 3 apprenticeship would be considered suitable, although for students completing level 3 qualifications at College, aspirational meant level 4 and above (degree apprenticeships);
- Whilst measures were taken to capture high levels of destinations of last year's students (95%), it is 'soft' data as there is often some confusion between HE and FE and the nature of employment etc.

The Committee **noted** the information provided. The recordings of the progression webinars will be shared with governors and their challenge invited on further things the College could do to support students considering an apprenticeship.

6. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and noted the following:

- The Committee should review the confidential minutes register and consider if any items could be removed;
- The link governor role for SEND remained vacant and the College continued to seek a replacement Safeguarding Governor;
- Imminently legislation will be introduced requiring educational establishments to have a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead was working to develop this strategy and is completing Designated Mental Health Lead training. It is recommended as part of this that a governor role be introduced with a focus on mental health and the draft role description had been shared. Expressions of interest were invited;
- The Trust had commissioned an external review of governance and, as part of this, auditors would join the LGB meeting on 1st March and feedback to the Chair afterwards.

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

7. Policy Reviews

(i) Governor Appointment Policy

The policy was approved without change.

(ii) Access to Meetings Policy

The policy was approved without change.

(iii) 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:

- In a meeting with Councillor Tracey Onslow, her view was that the likelihood of building a new sixth form college as outlined in the South Worcestershire Development Plan was low given the current onus on developers to invest in associated infrastructure;
- The College's ability to manage further growth next year is dependent on timely completion of the Science build. Consideration was being given to measures to manage should there be a delay;
- Whilst the College had developed its resilience in terms of IT systems, cyber crime continued to be a viable threat. IT are undertake phishing simulations in order to develop staff awareness of the risks;
- It had been identified that record keeping in relation to work placements checks were not good enough. The action taken in relation to this will be reported in due course and governor challenge in this area was welcomed;

- The impact of the end of the fixed energy costs in April was as yet unknown and remains a risk.

The Committee questioned whether due consideration had been given to energy efficiency savings in the new build. The Principal noted that the College had been allocated £80,000 to spend on improving energy efficiencies. The Committee **noted** the revisions to the Risk Register.

- (ii) Impact: The Committee reflected on their discussions and noted that their challenge of the College's need to further promote the Prevent agenda and of quality processes was to ensure the best provision for students. The Committee also challenged the College to raise the profile of student voice and to reflect on what KPIs can routinely be shared with governors.
- (iii) Any Urgent Business: No items were raised.
- (iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 17th May 2023

The meeting finished at 7.05pm.

Signed:.....
Sheena Payne-Lunn (Chair)

Date:.....

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 8TH FEBRUARY 2023

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/08.02.23/4(i)	Consider whether an automated message can be sent when parents fail to logon to the Portal.	EYS	May 2023	
C&Q/08.02.23/5(i)	Consider means of effectively identifying and sharing KPIs with governors.	JLJ	May 2023	
C&Q/08.02.23/5(i)	Identify actions to better promote student voice.	SLT	May 2023	
C&Q/08.02.23/5(iii)	Share progression webinars with governors.	JJP	ASAP	

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/02.11.22/6(i)	Retention data to be disaggregated by course and level.	JLJ	February 2023	
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	

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
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