

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

**In Attendance:** Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal), Jo Payne (PA to the Principal/Clerk to the Local Governing Body)

**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: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023

The minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record and an update provided on the action points. In relation to the Committee requesting that SLT consider how best to promote student voice, it was noted that an appointment has been to the post of Senior Leader for Progression and Enrichment and a key part of their remit would be to oversee student engagement.

**4. Management and Strategic**

(i) Principal's Update

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

- Applications are currently 117 ahead of the equivalent point last year. The best predication based on a modest increase in year 1 numbers and similar increase in year 2 rollover, the College might have up to 100 more students next year;
- Capacity remains a significant challenge. Whilst completion of the Science Centre in mid-September will mitigate this in terms of available teaching spaces, there will be continued pressure on common spaces including the Cafeteria and LRC;
- The reduction in funding for student financial support was such that the daily allowance for free meals will be reduced from £7.50 this year to £6 next academic year;
- There had not been a like for like replacement of the Vice Principal Progression role. The position of Head of Student Services was made redundant and an appointment made for a Senior Leader for Progression and Enrichment;
- Level 2 provision will change so that there is no GCSE only route with applied courses having clear progression pathways at College;
- Although the funding for Core Maths has been restored for 2023-24, delivery would be reduced from 3 to 2 lessons per week, the reasons for which are two-fold. It is difficult to make the teaching staff appointment that would be needed with no certainty as to whether Core Maths will continue to be delivered in 2024-25 and as a response to capacity issues;
- No end is in sight to the NEU teachers' strike action with 7 days of disruption this academic year;
- There had been a little more staff turnover that was typical and some appointments had been made with more interviews taking place before half-term;
- The Science Centre project is on track and on budget. The decision of the CIF bid for fire safety work has not yet been communicated and a bid is being planned for the refurbishment work needed to enable delivery of the Health T Level.

In response to governor challenge it was noted that:

- The College was aware of the risk that student numbers might not remain as buoyant with this year being the last in which there is significant growth in the size of the cohort before it levels out. The Principal advised that sixth form colleges have a history of being remarkably flexible in responding to changes in the cohort;
- The number and quality of candidates applying for teaching vacancies had diminished with a noticeable reduction in degrees from Russell Group universities. It was felt that the College continued to maintain its appeal and make good appointments and did not yet face the issues reported by schools of having non-subject specialists teaching;
- The reduced free meal allowance would still enable a student to purchase two meals a day. The Committee asked for confirmation of how this compared with other colleges in the Trust and also what constituted a meal in terms of what could be purchased;
- Whilst the College had identified action to mitigate capacity issues for next academic year, it would continue to be an issue if the student number increased further. On a weekly basis, application data is being reviewed to consider courses that might be oversubscribed. Applicants interviewed at this stage in the year are being advised that there might be not be places on the courses they wish to study. The College will ensure criteria for allocating places will be applied fairly based on order of applications where students meet the entry requirements. The Principal highlighted the risk of this in that, given the levels of competition in the county, there was a risk that it could negatively impact on student numbers;
- Consideration will be given to whether rooms with computers are being used as efficiently as they might be if group sizes are small.

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

## 5. Quality Assurance

### (i) Quality Assurance

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

- Mid-year reviews were held with every Head of Department and this was a useful exercise to focus on whether strategies identified were having an impact. Departments are concerned about attendance, which although an issue across the sector, remains a priority for the College;
- The College intends to use ALPS as a value added tool to track student progress in-year. Last summer's results were input and the outcome is that students make expected progress as indicated by Six Dimensions data. With a return to exams and accountability in terms of value added measures, it is felt this will help monitor student progress;
- The performance of students following the most recent assessment point also considers how students in vulnerable and ethnic groups compare to the College average. It indicates that Pakistani students did not perform as well, however, those in receipt of free meals or RONI were in line with College averages;
- Whilst there is an improving picture in relation to attendance reflecting the hard work of the tutors and Heads of Year, this is not at the level that the College would expect and the strategies being used to bring about improvement will be shared with the Local Governing Body. It was noted that there is a need to engage with parents to address any perception created as a result of the pandemic that learning can happen remotely;
- Retention and attendance disaggregated by course will routinely be shared with governors as a means of ensuring oversight of key performance indicators;
- The attendance at small group tuition was noted demonstrating good levels of engagement. The resit pass rate in Maths and English GCSE is strong;

- A student perception of College survey was issued recently and the response rate was 45%. Next year, the SPOC survey will only be issued on one occasion in an attempt to increase engagement. Responses were lower in relation to whether the College social spaces provided a welcoming environment and also the availability of computers in the LRC. The feedback in relation to students knowing what Prevent was had increased since the last survey demonstrated the positive impact of the action the College had taken.

In response to challenge it was noted that:

- Consideration will be given to developing links with a local Imam with a view to engaging with Pakistani students;
- The data on ethnicity will be checked as there is a discrepancy in the percentage off track when compared with the data disaggregated by gender;
- A decline in student feedback in relation to enrichment appears to be because students are unaware about subject specific enrichment or how enrichment develops skills that are relevant to subjects;
- The subjects where retention is flagged as red will be followed up.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and thanked the Vice Principal for her report. Although there are areas to focus on as a result of student feedback, the extremely positive nature of this feedback overall was noted.

*(Caroline Shaw left the meeting at 6.30pm)*

(ii) Quality Improvement Plan

The Vice Principal advised that the Quality Improvement Plan had been updated to ensure it reflected the areas identified by Inspectors in January. The Committee **noted** the updates to the Quality Improvement Plan.

## 6. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and noted the following:

- The Chair of the Local Governing Body, the Principal and the Clerk met with Rowan Boyle who applied for the External Governor vacancy and safeguarding lead role. Rowan is a Police Constable for the Safer Neighbourhood team;
- The Principal and Clerk met with Samantha Moran who applied for the External Governor vacancy and SEND lead role. Most recently Sam worked as a Paralegal for a local company and is now volunteering for Worcestershire Association of Carers;
- The annual training needs survey will be shared with governors with a view to identifying appropriate training for next academic year;
- The Committee should review its terms of reference and cycles of business;
- A meeting schedule for next academic year has been drafted to ensure meetings align with the Trust meeting schedule.

The Committee **recommended** for approval the following:

- The appointment of Rowan Boyle as External Governor, Safeguarding lead governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a four year term;
- The appointment of Samantha Moran as External Governor, SEND lead governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a four year term;
- The Committee's terms of reference and cycle of business;
- The meeting schedule for 2023-24.

## 7. Student Union

Beth Hallam, Student Governor and member of the Student Union gave an overview of the activities of the Union this year. It was noted that there was a successful Christmas Fair, Scavenger Hunt and Cultural Day. Members of the Union received external training in the autumn term which helped with team building and in focusing on what they wanted to achieve this year. Key roles are being promoted for next year and consideration being given in how to improve student participation and engagement.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and recommended that the Student Union look to develop links with the University of Worcester Student Union.

## 8. Policy Reviews

### (i) Complaints Policy

The Committee **approved** the policy without change. The Principal presented the record of complaints and concerns and identified the following:

- Concerns around travelling to College by bus were predominantly at the start of the academic year. The Principal advised that there have been some positive developments with the County Council committing to putting on additional services and altering some routes and the timing of services in response to concerns raised by the College;
- Members of the public have raised some concerns about the anti-social behaviour of students offsite and, in particular, at Wildmore park resulting in this area being deemed out of bounds to students during the College day. To provide context, the Principal advised that a number of years ago, governors asked senior leaders to consider making County Hall and Nunnery Woods out of bounds to students following an incident which resulted in exclusions from College. The Committee were invited to review whether designating areas as out of bounds to students was a proportionate response;
- There were remarkably few concerns in relation to teaching staff performance or absence, the latter of which was testament to the work of the Vice Principal and her organisation of the cover supervision team and also the commitment of staff in going above and beyond to mitigate the impact of any staff absence.

The Committee **noted** the content of the concerns register. The Committee agreed with the stance of the College in relation to Wildmore Park given the potential reputational damage from anti-social behaviour of a small number of students. There was some challenge, however, in light of the current capacity issues and student feedback on their experience at College as to whether County Hall should be out of bounds although it was agreed that any incidents of student behaviour which could bring the College into disrepute, should be dealt with following disciplinary procedures.

*(Alex Gwinn left at 7pm)*

### (ii) Admissions & Fitness to Study Policy

The Principal proposed minor changes to the Admissions and Fitness to Study Policy to remove reference to a target student number and to be explicit in relation to places on subjects being allocated based on when the application was submitted.

The Committee **approved** the policy with the changes as proposed as were reassured that the College had processes in place to ensure fairness in terms of enrolment on courses where places might be restricted.

**8. Closing Standing Items**

(i) Risk Management

In reviewing the risk register prior to presenting this to the Local Governing Body, the Committee requested that the discussion in relation to reputational issues associated with student perception of their experience at College and possible course restrictions. The Committee **noted** the revisions to the Risk Register.

(ii) Impact: The Committee noted their discussion in relation to student performance and the challenge in relation to the disparity between vulnerable and ethnic groups.

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

(iv) Date of Next Meeting: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023

The meeting finished at 7.12pm

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

Date:.....

**CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
C&Q/17.05.23/4(i)	Find out how the daily meal allowance compares with other colleges and what it can purchase.	EYS	November 2023	
C&Q/17.05.23/4(i)	Consideration will be given to whether rooms with computers are being used as efficiently as they might be if group sizes are small	SLT	September 2023	
C&Q/17.05.23/5(i)	Check data on ethnicity and students below target grade.	JLJ	June 2023	

**ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD**

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

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