

Present: Sheena Payne-Lunn (Chair), Wisal Bashar, Elle Beale, Grahame Davies, Sean Devlin, Andrew Forth, Alex Gwinn, Wendy Pickess, Paul Rushton, Caroline Shaw, Ed Senior and Larik Voitenko

In Attendance: Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal), Jo Payne (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: 6th November 2024

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. The Principal advised that the representatives from Worcester City Council visited College to speak to students about the Speak Up campaign aimed at building confidence to challenge discrimination.

4. Management and Strategic

- (i) Principal's Update

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

- The likely funded number of students this year is 1761 compared with 1750 last year;
- In light of the most recent data, it is predicted that there will be a significant increase in the county demographic, with all things being equal, will result in the College benefitting from some of that increase. Given the higher in-year retention so far this year, it seems likely that there will be improved rollover into year 2. If similar numbers are enrolled this would result in a larger student body and based on similar assumptions going forward, the revised forecast student number for 2028/29 is 1989;
- Overall, parental feedback was extremely positive. There was, however, a noticeable difference between year 1 and 2 parents with year 1 parents being less positive across the board. From free text responses, albeit only small in number, dissatisfaction appeared to relate to concerns as to whether emails were responded to in a timely manner and whether parents were suitably informed about their child's progress. Where positive responses were lower than 90%, the College has provided an update on these areas;
- Attendance alerts via the Portal have been introduced and this appears to have prompted higher levels of engagement with the Portal and there is a plan to deliver a demonstration for parents on the features of the Portal;
- The outcome of the Government's 'pause and review' of level 3 reforms was more positive than anticipated with the result that only a small number of small applied subjects will be required to change specification for September with other 'at risk' qualifications being protected until at least 2027. Applied Business will disappear at that time with no intention of introducing an alternative qualification so the choice will be Business A Level or T Level with both qualifications being equally hard.

In response to challenge it was noted that:

- The College is mapping how to partner Business A Level with one block AAQ options. Students who enrol on the three A Level equivalent Business course leave College qualified to progress to university, but this isn't always an aspiration and it is difficult to secure higher level apprenticeships in this area;
- In terms of the College's capacity to manage any increase in numbers, it was noted that the anticipated increase next year could be managed. Mobile classrooms were considered but it was felt that numbers could be managed with some small changes to create capacity.

The Committee **noted** the report.

(ii) Strategic Update

The Principal presented the Strategic Update and noted the following:

- The College's achievement in being in a strong financial position has enabled the environment to be improved, to take steps towards reducing teacher workload, and embedding robust quality assurance processes;
- The challenge and priority for the College is addressing the significant shortage of toilets for students and staff. There is a meeting with the Trust CEO, CFO and Director of Operations which will provide opportunity to outline proposals for the investment of school condition allowance funds to address priority areas. Options to create new toilet facilities involve the loss of classroom space, which with the anticipated increase in student numbers will require additional classroom space to be created. The plan also identifies the need to respond to issues with the kitchen and server areas using SCA allocations;
- There is a shortage of social space for students and the introduction of a split lunch to try to manage this, has impinged on opportunities for enrichment and support;
- Next year, funding will be tight – the growth this year did not match last year so there will not be the same increase in funding, yet the College will need to support its highest ever number of students. Their timetable was also completed so efficiently that even a small increase in students next year will create the need for additional groups. The current estimation is the need for five or six additional teachers;
- The pay negotiations have been challenging and, whilst the College had received additional funding to support the 5.5% increase for teachers, it had not received anything to fund what might be agreed with support staff. The likely award of 2.5% (if what is agreed follows what happened in schools) will create pay differentials which will need to be addressed to acknowledge staff with additional responsibility;
- Student attendance decreased before Christmas and remains a focus.

In response to challenge, the following was noted:

- There is not a specified minimum number of toilets required. The shortage of toilets, however, was impacting the quality of student experience and having a direct impact on lessons with students, particularly, female students, asking to leave the lesson as they were unable to access toilets facilities in their break;
- There was some staff absence before Christmas which may have contributed to a decrease in attendance, but this was noticeable worse for level 2 and applied courses and year 2 attendance was lower than year 1. There has been some improvement since the start of the spring term, but there is still work to be done.

The Committee **noted** the update to the Strategic Plan.

5. Quality Assurance

(i) Quality Assurance

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

- Mid-year reviews with Heads of Department had been completed with a focus on in-year attendance, retention, a focus on students off-track etc;
- Student Perception of College feedback has been reviewed and benchmarking possible due to standardisation of the questions across the colleges in the MAT. There was a good response rate to teaching questionnaires with 92% of students saying they would recommend the College. Responses in relation to opportunities to participate in sport were lower and this may have been the result of a delay in the start of sporting activities at the start of the year. Students were positive in relation to their teachers and they said they are aware of what they need to do to improve. Less positive was the number of students who said that they complete three or more hours of work outside the classroom and there is a need to re-emphasise the College's expectations and ensure that sufficient work is being set;
- Progress against the aims in the College Quality Improvement Plan has been updated;
- Students who have consistently underperformed and failed the November mock were communicated with in relation to being entered for the AS level exam as well as the A Level where appropriate. This will be revisited following the February mocks with a final decision being taken in March. The aim is to motivate students to do better and not to off-roll. In terms of numbers, approximately 20 students who double entered;
- Students are being asked to complete a self-reflection after key assessment points to consider what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. The quality of these self-reflections differed after the first attempt so teachers are being asked to spend time in lessons to help students scaffold their responses to these;
- Disadvantaged students remain a priority. The latest data suggests that more from these groups were marked as off track and attendance was lower so clearly there is more to do in this respect.

In response to challenge it was noted that:

- The questions will be reviewed again as the Committee felt that if the expectation was 4 hours or more of work per subject that the question should reflect this;
- Students are not required to log the work they complete outside of lessons. They are registered for Impact and Independent Study sessions, both of which are mandatory, but otherwise not;
- At mid-year review meetings student feedback is discussed and where students suggest that they are not receiving sufficient work or that it lacks the appropriate challenge, this is raised;
- If students are likely to be entered for the AS rather than A Level, they may be able to access year 1 lessons more relevant to the AS content wherever possible;
- In terms of what students were leaving College with and the implications for UCAS, it was noted that if there was a conversation about performance and their programme of study at the end of year 1, they are likely to have been enrolled on a one-year applied course which can be completed in the year. The AS would attract fewer UCAS points and may, therefore, have implications for progression opportunities;
- It is possible that overall achievement will be affected by an increase in retention, in particular, if those retained have poor attendance where there is a correlation to poor outcomes.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

6. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and noted the following:

- The Confidential Minutes register is annually reviewed by the Committee so as to consider if any changes are required;
- Alex Gwinn would be willing to stand as Staff Governor for another term further to there being no new expressions of interest in the role;
- The Trust is holding an event for local governors across its academies on 1st May with a focus on cybersecurity, providing challenge and stakeholder engagement.

The Committee:

- Reviewed the confidential minutes register and agreed that no changes were required;
- Agreed to **recommend the appointment** of Alex Gwinn as Staff Governor and member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee for a four-year term;
- Noted the details in relation to the Trust Conference.

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 relevant extracts from the updated risk register and the following was noted:

- The score in relation to the risk of poor staff morale was lowered to take account of the Trust's decision to implement a pay award irrespective of national agreements;
- A new risk has been added to acknowledge national teacher shortages in the subject areas where the College was likely to need to make appointments;
- The score in relation to curriculum change was reduced following the outcome of 'pause and review' of level 3 reforms;
- The College has used its surplus of financial support funds and so needed to review its provision so as not to eat too much into resources whilst providing students with the support they need. The daily amount will remain at £5 which is enough to get breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria, however, meals will not be funded outside of term time going ahead and parents above a certain household income will be asked to make a contribution towards travel costs;
- An additional risk has been added in relation to the College's mental health strategy not yet being fully articulated or embedded and this is an area the College is looking to promote.

(ii) Impact: The Committee's scrutiny of student facilities and the impact on student experience was noted as was the adverse impact on learning and enrichment opportunities as a result of the split lunch.

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

(iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 14th May 2025

The meeting finished at 7.01pm.

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

Date:.....

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 5TH FEBRUARY 2025

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/05.02.25/5(i)	Review teaching questionnaire and consider amending the question in relation to work set outside of lessons.	JLJ	Summer 2025	

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/06.11.24/6(i)	Consider means of engaging with local communities teams with a view to improving diversity among the staffing and governing bodies.	EYS	Ongoing	
C&Q/06.11.24/7	Consider whether governor performance could also be measured qualitative as well as quantitatively, for example, identifying the areas where governors identify that their challenge has been focused	JJP	February 2025	

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/06.11.24/6(i)	Review data on those who failed last summer and their progress in previous internal assessments and report on outcomes of students who failed their end of year exam and their continued progress.	JLJ	February 2025/ Ongoing	✓
C&Q/08.11.23.6(i)	Develop a strategy aimed at addressing the under-performance of disadvantaged students.	JLJ	Ongoing*	✓

*denotes change