

Minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee
Meeting held on Wednesday, 5th November 2025 at 5.30 pm

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

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

1. Appointment of Chair: Sheena Payne-Lunn was unanimously appointed as Committee Chair for the academic year.

2. Apologies: Grahame Davies.

3. Standing Items

- (i) No interests were declared.
- (ii) No items were identified as confidential.
- (iii) No urgent business was identified.

4. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee: 14th May 2025

The minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record. An update was provided on the action point.

5. Management and Strategic

(i) Principal's Update

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

- Following the recent assault on Spetchley Road, the College believes it has identified the assailant who is not or never has been a student at College. It is believed that it was instigated following an earlier minor altercation in College which certainly did not warrant the level of violence that later took place. The Police have yet to interview the victims nor speak to the alleged assailant and witnesses for whom the College has shared details. Local PCSO's have visited College regularly, aimed to be more of a presence locally and apologise on behalf of their colleagues;
- The slight increase in student numbers is pleasing, and DfE data on 16-19 funding allocations indicates that the College continues to educate over one-fifth of those in post-16 education in the county. One of the local high schools with a sixth form has seen their sixth form numbers increase by a quarter and they giving negative messages about the College at their promotional events;
- The MAT have identified a consultant and architects to undertake a master-planning exercise aimed at enabling decision makers to better prioritise MAT funds to prioritise growth and site development. It is hoped to use this as the basis of a bid for Government post-16 capacity funding of £375 million nationally;
- The promise to pause the defunding of applied qualifications did not happen, however, they have announced new V Level qualifications and it is suggested these will be offered in Criminology and Travel. It does, however, mean that subjects that have just adopted AAQs and amended specifications will need to change again to V Level specifications;
- The requirements in relation to access arrangements in terms of providing evidence at the time of application are proving problematic for staff and the SFCA continue to provide challenge;
- A summary of the work of the Senior Leader for Student Progression and his team in making students more aspirational in terms of their progression outcomes and the Senior Leader for Safeguarding and Pastoral Support were shared.

In response to challenge it was noted that:

- The official capacity of the College is 2020 students and it is believed that the College could accommodate several hundred more students depending on subject choice, however, this would place significant strain on existing facilities e.g. the Cafeteria, toilets and student social space;
- The local high school with sixth form referenced in terms of their aggressive marketing do not allow the College access as they should in line with provider access legislation

The Committee **noted** the Principal's report and were particularly impressed with the increase in the number of students progressing to university, in particular, the positive progression outcomes of disadvantaged students.

6. Quality Assurance

(i) Quality Assurance

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

- Subject Improvement Support has continued and improvements were seen in the majority of subjects in scope in terms of an increase in students achieving high grades, pass rates and value added. Some subjects including Applied Business, Law and Criminology remained static in terms of student outcomes. In terms of Biology, the improvements were noted, but it was disappointing that value added measures had not improved as the College would have wished;
- The comparisons of value added measures with the other sixth form colleges in the MAT are positive with students at College making better than expected progress, including students from disadvantaged backgrounds which was particularly pleasing given the focus on narrowing the disadvantage gap. Female students did not do as well which was a trend seen nationally and Pakistani students also did not perform as well in terms of pass rates and retention. White and black Caribbean students were not performing as well as their peers, but were also not attending as well;
- There has been some success with the Afro-Caribbean Society and it is hoped to engage Pakistani students in a focus group to identify what they think would improve their engagement with enrichment opportunities;
- Responses from the first impression survey were largely positive and the responses will be benchmarked against our sister colleges once they have issued these to their students;
- Out of those students identified as needing to resit their end of year 1 exam, 20 changed subject and of these, 5 are off track in their new subject. 17 continued having improved their grade in the resit with 4 of these currently with attendance below 90% and 4 ended up withdrawing from College;
- The next wave of summary assessments would follow mock exams in November and early discussions around the possibility of being entered for AS Level would begin with failing students. For context, governors were reminded that the College only entered 12 students for the AS level qualification last year – this is not a means of getting students off courses, but a supportive measure to ensure they leave College with a qualification as opposed to failing. In comparison, one Trust college entered 80 students in one subject alone for the AS rather than allow them to sit the A Level;
- Attendance is slightly higher than at the equivalent time last year with some exceptions by subject;
- The recently issued White Paper includes a focus on improving staff retention and wellbeing and supporting the implementation and use of AI along with a commitment to more investment in the sector. It outlines a review of level 2 to level 3 pathways and references the launch of V Levels in addition to a review of Maths and English GCSE retakes and the expectation that students are suitably prepared before being entered for their resit exams;

- The new Ofsted Inspection Toolkit places greater emphasis on safeguarding, inclusion, leadership and governance etc with the expectation that providers can demonstrate that students Belong, Thrive and Achieve. Whilst there will be no single work gradings, a report card will be issued. Governors will receive further training on this, including their role and responsibility at the November Local Governing Body meeting.

In response to challenge it was noted that:

- Subjects in scope for improvement support do seek help from the other colleges in the MAT if outcomes are better, however, the profile of our students is often different e.g. lower prior attainment. The College is also looking to work collaboratively with Richard Huish College in terms of subject support;
- The College would (and has) moved to more formal processes such as capability where there is a record of support but no improvement in outcomes;
- Female Asian students at Level 2, often have no progression plans beyond their foundation year and lack aspiration. There are plans to complete a mini-project with these students, the findings of which would be fed back to governors;
- There are no national attendance benchmarks, however, Six Dimensions analysis last year indicated College attendance was 1% below where it should be based on prior attainment.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) Quality Improvement Plan

The Vice Principal reminded governors that the QIP is a working document updated during the year with progress against areas of priority. It has been reformatted, as has the self-assessment report, to reflect the headings in the new inspection toolkit.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the updated QIP.

7. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and noted that:

- Sam Wilson was approaching the end of her term of office, but had said that she would be willing to continue for another term;
- As yet there had been no expression of interest in the staff governor role and the deadline for student governor nominations had not yet passed. There are still link visit vacancies in the areas of SEND and CEIAG and it is important that these are filled at the earliest opportunity;
- Governors had met their numerical performance targets and in terms of attendance, committee attendance was above 90% with LGB attendance sitting at 80%. Governors were asked to reflect on their targets and make recommendations;
- Following governor feedback on training needs, there will be training delivered on the new Inspection Toolkit and destinations. Given the focus on SEND and inclusion in the new inspection regime, it will be requested that the Trust consider including this as a focus in any training conference for governors should this be delivered again this year, if not, additional training opportunities would be identified by the College.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- To re-appoint Sam Wilson as external governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a four-year term;
- To recommend approval of governors' performance targets for 2025-26;
- To note the proposed plan for governor training for this academic year.

8. Policy Reviews

(i) Curriculum and Programmes of Study Policy

The Committee **approved** the policy with the minor changes as outlined including the summary assessment schedule for this academic year.

(ii) Careers Strategy

The Committee **approved** the updated Careers Strategy.

9. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management:

The Clerk advised that further to governor feedback, whilst she would continue to update the risk register on the Trust's Portal, this would be duplicated in the format preferred by governors with the addition of a comments column to make clear which risks had been updated and the reason for any rescoring. Some risks had also been removed at the request of governors and these were risks at Trust level e.g. in relation to Trust operated systems.

The Principal outlined changes to the risk register in relation to entries relevant to the remit of the Committee including the inclusion of two new risks around the student experience of travelling to College, in particular, if costs were increased and deterred young people from enrolling at College and also in respect of aggressive marketing by local high school sixth forms and sixth forms within the Trust, on who continues to attend high school liaison events at a partner school and another who subsidises train travel from Worcester.

The Committee **noted** updates to the risk register as outlined.

(ii) Impact: The Committee's scrutiny of the outcomes of female and students from BME backgrounds was noted as was challenge in relation to underperforming subject areas and the role of subject improvement support.

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

(iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 4th February 2026

The meeting finished at 6.55pm.

Signed:.....

Sheena Payne-Lunn (Chair)

Date:.....

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

| Report Reference | Action Point | Person Responsible | Completion | Check |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| C&Q/05.11.25/6(i) | Feedback on mini-projects focused on the progression aspirations of Level 2 female Asian students and focus groups with Pakistani students re engagement in enrichment. | JLJ | February 2026 | |

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

| Report Reference | Action Point | Person Responsible | Completion | Check |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| C&Q/14.05.25/7(ii) | Report back on how many students had applied for access arrangements which were rejected. | EYS/JJP | November 2025 | |

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

| Report Reference | Action Point | Person Responsible | Completion | Check |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| C&Q/14.05.25/4(i) | Confirm how often sufficiency planning is reported on by the Council. | JJP | November 2025 | ✓ |
| C&Q/14.05.25/7(i) | Clarify points raised by the safeguarding governor following recent training namely whether an attendance and deputy safeguarding governor is required, whether policies need to be signed by governors and numbers reported as being on child protection plans. | EYS/JJP | ASAP | ✓ |
| C&Q/14.05.25/7(i) | Check on GDPR compliance in relation to reporting on numbers less than 10. | JJP | November 2025 | ✓ |

*denotes change