

**PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE
CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE
13 MARCH 2024**

Present:

Mr M Burgess (Principal)
Ms S Dalby (Staff Governor)
Ms M James (External Governor) (C&Q Chair)
Dr H Moyes (External Governor)
Ms A Nutbrown (Staff Governor)
Ms S Robertson (External Governor)
Mr M Williams (External Governor)

In Attendance:

Mr D Kettlety - Director of Student Employment and Experience/DSL
Dr K Morris - Vice-Principal, Curriculum and Quality
Ms J Cosson – Head of Governance

Apologies:

Ms L Dance (Co-opted Member – SEND Link Governor)
Mr N Greenway (Student Governor)

Attendance: 77.8%

1/25 Opportunity for Private Business

None.

2/25 Apologies

Noted as above.

3/25 Declarations of Interest

None other than those currently recorded on the Register of Interests.

4/25 Confidentiality of Items (C)

As marked, for reasons of commercial sensitivity, for a period of two years.

5/25 Minutes of the meeting of 28 November 2024

Approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

6/25 Matters Arising from the Minutes and Actions Matrix

Members reviewed the Actions Matrix and noted the status update.

7/25 Principal's Overview

MB presented a report highlighting the key themes arising from the papers.

The main item for consideration from the last meeting was the Maths and English Strategy.

Members had also been provided with papers in two areas where MB had requested further assurance: Prevent and Work Experience.

MB reported that Apprenticeships published outcomes differ from reported results. This is due to an error in recording a group of learners on the ILR. Actual success rates of 65% for 2023/24 will be published as 59%. The national rate published for 2022/23 was 55%.

Members noted that the published results are still marginally above national rates but asked what has been done to address the issue. MB answered that the College had had discussions with the DfE to address the discrepancy and to ensure that future data submissions are accurate and reliable. An audit trail has been established to explain the situation if necessary at inspection and to demonstrate the steps taken to rectify the issues, but it means that the official published results will be lower than the actual results as previously reported to C&Q.

RESOLVED: The Committee noted the Principal's Update.

8/25 Maths and English Strategy

Members had been provided with a detailed paper on proposals for the teaching of maths and English.

The paper was the result of analysis, carried out with the assistance of SD, of detailed performance data in order to better understand the effectiveness of the College's current strategies and to make informed decisions for future improvements.

The paper analysed outcomes in maths and English to understand how the College is performing and to what extent that results from the College's approach or the national context. It proposed changes to the strategy for 2025/26, based on the premise that the existing resit policy continues. The Executive Team wanted members to be comfortable with the College's proposals.

KM reminded Members that maths and English have vexed the sector for some time. At the last C&Q meeting, the College agreed to bring back a comprehensive summary of its position. She summarised the key points as follows.

The focus of the current Ofsted framework is an assessment of how well learners develop maths and English skills, without reference to published data as this has not been meaningful for some time following Covid. At the last inspection, the only



Gloucestershire College

concerns raised were around attendance. The last internal review of this area in 2023 assessed English as 'Good' and maths as 'Requires Improvement', with work required in maths on greater personalisation of learning.

Data is now available again to benchmark performance. The consultation on the new Ofsted framework suggests achievement data will play a key role, although it is not yet clear how. The data used by the College may not be the same as Ofsted looks at or be interpreted in the same way as Ofsted and includes data they cannot access.

The findings from the data analysis indicate that:

- Achievement rates (the number of learners achieving a grade 1-9 irrespective of their prior attainment) are slightly below national rates.
- Based on MIDES data, fewer learners improve their grade than nationally.
- There is little correlation between a learner's attendance and whether they improve a grade.

The College employs a blanket policy that all learners are entered for GCSE irrespective of their prior attainment. Whilst there are sound educational reasons for this policy (which is adopted by many colleges in the sector) it is right to review this given that the chances nationally of a learner with prior attainment at Level 2 or below achieving a grade 4 are small, with a greater likelihood of recording progress following a Functional Skills programme. However, achievement rates on Functional Skills programmes nationally are low in English and incredibly low in maths. Consequently, changing qualification across the cohort poses a significant risk to the College's overall reported 16-18 achievement rates and to an overall inspection outcome.

It was suggested that, until it is clear how the new Ofsted framework will be operated, the College maintains its current approach but runs several pilots alongside this where some learners are entered for Functional Skills in order to provide learnings should the College wish to make changes from 2026/27.

Whilst the College believes that the current workshop model and block delivery should be retained, the paper included several proposals to develop delivery to close the current achievement gaps.

The paper set out an overview of the current performance and challenges with re-sits. KM stressed the importance of understanding the impact of resits on student performance and outcomes. She highlighted how resits affect costs, staffing, and overall achievement rates. The College has made changes to the criteria for entering learners for exams which it wishes to retain, and will be reintroducing a November resit opportunity for learners meeting agreed criteria.

KM emphasised the challenges in measuring progress due to changes in assessment methods during the pandemic. Despite these challenges, classroom assessments indicate positive outcomes, but the data suggests room for improvement.

The paper highlighted that achievement rates for maths and English are slightly below the national average. It was noted that fewer learners improve their grades compared to the national average, indicating a need for targeted interventions.

The Committee discussed the national context for maths and English, noting that changes in national policies and standards could impact local strategies and outcomes. They stressed the need to stay informed about national trends and to adapt local practices accordingly. Members debated the effectiveness of maths and English teaching, achievement rates, progress, and the impact of attendance on grades.

The paper examined the correlation between attendance and grade improvement. Surprisingly, there appears to be no strong correlation between attendance and grade improvement, suggesting that other factors may be influencing student performance. A more detailed examination of student data is needed to understand the underlying issues.

Members questioned the role of student motivation in achievement. They heard that even motivated students, such as those in Early Years or Construction and Technology, did not necessarily achieve better results, indicating that motivation is not necessarily a factor for success either.

A Member asked how the College compares to Gloucestershire schools. MB answered that Gloucestershire schools are slightly above the national average but there are a lot of private schools in the county so achievement is polarised and most of the College's learners come from schools that are doing less well.

Another Member asked if the College has analysed the performance of girls compared to boys in view of the recent national figures showing that boys are beginning to outperform girls. They were informed that it has and has found no significant gap other than that of disadvantaged learners compared to non-disadvantaged learners.

Questions were asked about the potential to use more able students to mentor those who are struggling and whether more funding would help. KM answered that the availability of English and maths mentors during Covid did not impact achievement and there are not enough staff to teach let alone to mentor even with increased salary and incentives. Students mentoring other students is not seen as 'cool'. MB confirmed that the College is not lacking funding and has considered whether financial incentives would make a difference. This year, the College has issued a warning to students that it will not pay for entry to exams if they do not engage, hoping that this will encourage them to attend.

A Member wondered if the announcement regarding English and maths in Apprenticeships would lead to further disengagement of students. KM replied that English and maths is still compulsory for 16–18-year-olds for the moment. It could affect progression but Adults are largely employed.



Gloucestershire College

Extensive conversations took place on the merits of Functional Skills versus the GCSE qualifications, considering national research, risks, and potential impacts on success rates. Members asked KM to explain the differences in success rates between Functional Skills and GCSE qualifications in more detail. They queried why the College did not recommend switching from GCSE to Functional Skills. They were informed that, whilst national research indicates that Functional Skills may be more appropriate for some learners, it is not conclusive and there are risks associated with changing qualifications before understanding the outcome of the current Curriculum Assessment Review and the implications of Ofsted's new inspection framework. The College would need to carefully weigh these risks before making any changes. MB explained that changing from GCSEs to Functional Skills could also impact overall success rates. It was noted that Functional Skills have higher achievement rates, but the change could also lead to a decrease in the College's overall success rates due to differences in how success is measured.

KM outlined various proposed strategies to improve maths and English outcomes, including use of AI tools, contextualised learning, and guided online learning.

AI tools can provide immediate feedback to learners, helping them identify and correct mistakes in real-time. The use of AI tools is part of a broader strategy to enhance personalised learning.

The implementation of contextualised learning for specific groups, such as Construction students, involves teaching maths in the context of Construction-related tasks, making the learning more relevant and engaging for students.

Guided online learning will be used as a strategy to support students who prefer self-paced learning. This approach provides structured online resources and support, allowing students to learn at their own pace while still receiving guidance from instructors.

A Member wondered if the above strategies are weighted towards maths. KM responded that they are but this is because the English specification is more subjective so it is more difficult to use e.g., AI. In English, the College has changed the awarding body to a specification that interests the learners more and more of the staff team are examiners. The Member noted that the College has created a maths bot and wondered if data will be available from this. KM confirmed that it will. The College also received data from BKSB.

The paper proposed reintroducing November re-sits for students who achieve a Grade 3 in the summer series and have above 90% attendance. This strategy aims to give students an early opportunity to improve their grades and to reduce class sizes for the main exam period.

Members concluded that it was a well-thought-out paper, which appeared to have considered every option to try to improve learner outcomes in this difficult area. It was noted that the proposals will result in an increase in the number of exams being taken that the College will need to accommodate.

RESOLVED: The Committee noted the position and challenges in English and maths and endorsed the proposals for 2025/26 set out in section 9 of the paper. An update will be provided in the autumn following the November resits and a similar report will be brought to the Committee this time next year.

9/25 Work Experience Update

DK provided an update on work experience.

The paper proposed strategies to increase uptake and relevance. These include establishing clear roles and responsibilities for work experience co-ordination and introducing a catch-up week for missed placements.

DK reported that there will be a focus on securing sector relevant placements and the College intends to develop a scorecard to track the percentage of learners who have completed sector-relevant work experience.

DK reminded Members that work placements are an absolute entitlement for 16-18 learners as part of their course. It should be meaningful and relevant to the course they are doing.

The College has previously identified that Level 1 learners are not getting the planned work experiences they should. Also, uptake across Level 2 and Level 3 was not significant - less than 50%. Over the last couple of years strategies have been put in place to increase the opportunities and the numbers are greater than they were before, but there is still work to be done.

One of the issues highlighted by the external review is a lack of clarity in learners knowing who they should approach to organise the work experience. The Chair asked who learners should approach. DK replied that there are several people involved - teachers, student employment coaches etc. The College is reviewing roles and responsibilities and establishing clear KPIs for the employment team.

One strategy being used to improve the number of placements is to introduce a catch-up week at the end of the year to capture those that have missed out earlier in the year.

DK reported that there are some industries where finding work placements is more challenging so the College is focusing on employers in those hard-to-reach areas and exploring different ways of adapting placements where a block week does not suit employers and they would rather provide individual days across the year.

The College's aspiration is to achieve somewhere between 80 and 85% uptake of work experience by the end of this year. March and April are busy times in terms of the volume of learners going out on placement so it is too early to say confidently that this target will be met.

MB emphasised that this is an area which needs to improve before the next inspection so it is being raised as an area of concern for the Board and the data will be reported when it is available.



Gloucestershire College

One of the Staff Governors asked if the target figure is for the number of learners overall or for the number of learners with sector relevant placements. They wondered if the figure should be aimed at any work experience that benefits the learner and where skills can be demonstrated. KM replied that any work experience is good experience with transferable skills but the College is keen on externality so, ideally, this figure would be work experience that is relevant to the vocational area.

DK agreed to break down the figures for overall work placements and those what are sector relevant when the data is available.

The Chair wondered if the lack of work experience opportunities shows up in student satisfaction scores. DK replied that it does and most are satisfied.

Another Staff Governor asked if the College knows how other providers are doing as they were not aware of any sector benchmarks. DK believes colleges are guarded about their figures although the data is provided on inspection.

The Staff Governor also asked whether the College can secure work placements in advance with employers who have provided them in the past. One of the Members whose organisation offers work experience to the College indicated that the College already does this in Construction. The Member offered some insights into possible employer preferences which may include smaller chunks of work experience that can be made more engaging since bigger chunks are harder to manage in terms of keeping learners busy. Also, having a group of learners together tends to work well (3/4 being the ideal number). KM understood but explained that it is important to maintain a balance between those learners that need a dedicated period of time and those who need to break down the time. The key thing is to give a clear message to learners and focus and to be flexible.

Members were grateful for the feedback.

RESOLVED: The Committee noted the Work Experience Update.

10/25 Headline Progress Data including HE Partnerships Update (C)

KM provided an overview of the in-year progress data to February 2025. This gives an indication of the position towards the end of the year by comparing to year to date.

She has no concerns with regard to retention data. Currently, 16-18-year-old retention is a percentage higher than it was this time last year. Most, if not all, Schools have retention above 90%.

16-18 attendance is on par with YTD but below target. Nevertheless, education for 16-18-year-olds would remain 'Good' in its current assessment.

English and maths attendance remains low at 76% and below target. This may negatively impact pass rates. The College will review, update and implement attendance and achievement strategies at March Performance Reviews. These



Gloucestershire College

have begun and are generally showing good progress and no new areas of concern.

Members noted that there has been a significant increase in the number of learners enrolled on to GCSE maths. The need to improve engagement and attendance to improve outcomes for learners had been discussed above.

KM has no significant concerns with Adult programmes and the provision is judged as being 'Good' and close to 'Outstanding'.

The paper touched on the issue with Apprenticeship data previously mentioned, highlighting the differential between actual achievement and published data, unless some of the data can be redacted.

KM drew attention to the progress of HE partnerships. There has been positive progress with both partners: CLC - 120 new learners enrolled and improvement in work quality; LDT - initial 30 learners approved.

Members noted that the HE partnership numbers were growing quickly and asked if this posed a risk to the College. The Chair asked if there is sufficient staffing to support the increasing number of HE learners and maintain quality assurance.

KM replied that numbers are capped. The College has carried out sample checks for quality assurance purposes. The annual monitoring review meeting with CLC is due in March. The role of the Improvement Support Coordinator (seconded to support the quality assurance in this area) is critical but there is team supporting the provision including the Business department who can also deliver HND business. The College's capacity to continue to deliver the programmes if anything should happen to the partner was one of the factors taken into account when developing the partnerships.

KM explained that, in the early assessments, the College carries out 100% sample check for its own quality assurance purposes and there has been an improvement in the work being produced. Last year, the pass rate was flat and, despite good theoretical knowledge in the HNC, the application of knowledge was lacking. This year, the College is noticing learners applying their knowledge more to a business scenario. The College will carry out fewer sample checks when it is satisfied that it can do so.

KM reported that Teaching and Learning remains 'Good'.

A Member noted that there had been problems with getting Apprentices to complete their EPA or getting them into Gateway and asked what the College is doing to improve the position. KM answered that there are national issues with this. Electrical is probably one of the worst areas. Changes to endpoint assessment are planned due to the shortage of assessors and it is likely that providers will be able to carry out their own EPA and this will be externally validated.

RESOLVED: The Committee noted the in-year update and the actions in place.

11/25 Quality Improvement Plan Update and School RAG

KM highlighted significant progress in the Quality Improvement Plan, with most actions making good progress and only two remaining at Amber.

There has been significant progress in Discrete High Needs and Personal Development, as evidenced by the external reviews to be considered next on the agenda. Two areas remain Amber: English and Maths, and first-time pass rates in Construction and Technology. There has been progress in the latter area but no comparable data is available as yet. SD is working on this.

Employer engagement in the design and implementation of the curriculum is rated yellow. There have been some good initiatives involving guest speakers and master classes but the College still needs to utilise its contacts more effectively to find out what employers want.

RESOLVED: The Quality Improvement Plan Update and School RAG was noted.

12/25 Internal/External Reviews

- **External Reviews**
 - **Discrete High Needs**
 - **Personal Development**

KM shared the outcomes of two external reviews, noting that the latest external reviews of Discrete High Needs and Personal Development suggest that, based on the snapshot seen during the reviews, these have moved to a secure 'Good' position.

KM took Members through each report written by a different external reviewer or the internal reviewing team. Each report has its own improvement plan of actions. Some of those actions are already built into the School QIP but a separate record of the recommendations is kept so the College can track them.

The external reviews have been completed by serving inspectors acting as critical friends and provide an overview of the strengths and areas of development at a snapshot in time, just as they would in an inspection. The report also contains recommendations, which the College would not necessarily receive in an inspection.

In terms of the review of Personal Development, it is quite unusual to look at this in isolation as this is not how it is inspected. The College had self-assessed as 'Good', but wanted external assurance to confirm that this judgement is secure. The report recognised that there is some excellent practise and many strengths. There are still some inconsistencies and recommendations, but the review confirmed a judgement of a secure 'Good'.

In terms of Discrete High Needs, the College had identified that progress had been made although this was not as timely as the College would have liked. So, the College wanted the external review to confirm where exactly this stood.



Gloucestershire College

The report identified significant progress at that snapshot in time with some key strengths. More importantly, these were in areas where the College knew it needed to improve such as baseline assessment and work placements.

KM reported that the learners in this area are the hardest to place on work experience so staff across the College are using the knowledge gained from this area with their learners to plan their learning so they know where the learners have gone on work experience, they know what they have been doing on work experience and they can adapt their English and maths classes to be relevant to the work experience.

Members were pleased to read the reports. They commented on the effort that has gone into moving the two areas for development to 'Good', which they felt was producing results and agreed was very encouraging. They congratulated the Discrete High Needs Team on the improvement in that area.

MB cautioned that the College needs to continue to maintain this position through successive reviews and must not lose sight of Cross-College High Needs. It is hoped that this will be externally reviewed during the academic year.

SEND Link Governor Report

The SEND Link Governor Report was received and reviewed. The report confirmed LD's observations from her recent meeting with DK.

- **Internal Review:**
 - **Level 2 and 3 Media**

The College has identified, from an internal review, that this area requires improvement, and a support plan is in place for the Teaching and Learning Team to support the Head of School with specific actions. The area will then be revisited later in the year.

RESOLVED: Members noted the Internal and External Review Reports and the SEND Link Governor Report.

13/25 Safeguarding Update including Recommendations from External Safeguarding Review (C)

DK introduced the Safeguarding Update, which highlighted the impact of increased case volume and severity on the Safeguarding Team, learner understanding of Sexual Harassment and Prevent, and the need for further work on Fundamental British Values (see Prevent Update below).

The paper included an update on progress in tackling issues around Sexual Harassment. DK reported that learner surveys suggest that a high number of learners do not recognise that the College takes a zero-tolerance approach to this, so the College needs to understand the reasons why and consider what actions are required. DK is exploring this with learners and challenging their understanding around what zero tolerance means. In some cases, learners expect



Gloucestershire College

that, if they have made an allegation against another learner, the other learner will be immediately removed from the College, whereas there needs to be a fair process and investigation. DK will be presenting his findings to the Executive Team shortly and a report will come back to the Committee.

This piece of work aligns with the need to consider the new OfS Condition E6 requirement, including the College's work with HE partners. An action plan assessing compliance against the condition was included in the papers.

The Safeguarding external review report was included in the papers and the recommendations for further development were reviewed. Following a meeting with MJ as Designated Safeguarding Lead Governor, the Safeguarding Action Plan had been revised.

Members were pleased to note that the Safeguarding external review report had concluded that the College's arrangements for Safeguarding continue to be effective. However, they noted that it did suggest some areas for improvement and highlighted the need for assurance around how the College risk assesses and assures itself regarding the various tenants who use the building, especially at Cheltenham, and how the College is able to demonstrate this. This had been discussed with the Chair of C&Q and an item was included on the agenda below.

DK provided an update on the legislative changes that governors should be aware of.

He went on to speak about the volume and severity of Safeguarding cases, which are as high as they have been since Covid and higher than usual for the time of year (year to date - double the number of open cases that meet the threshold). The workload is having an impact on the Safeguarding Team and the College is reviewing this.

RESOLVED: Members noted the update on Safeguarding including Recommendations from External Safeguarding Review.

14/25 Safeguarding and Irregular College Users (C)

MB presented a paper reporting on the Safeguarding arrangements for irregular College users.

RESOLVED: Members noted the update on Safeguarding and Irregular College Users.

15/25 Prevent Update

DK presented the Prevent Update.

It was identified during the November 2022 Ofsted inspection that, in too many cases, learners (from all provision types) were not able to demonstrate secure understanding of Prevent and further work was required to achieve this. Initial



Gloucestershire College

strategies included updated resources, increased staff training, and structured assessment checkpoints.

DK drew attention to the issues caused by the terminology used in the Prevent programme contributing to a lack of understanding of "Prevent" among learners, and the College's plans to address this. It is important that the learners know the local threats and who to report to.

DK explained that learners often struggle to understand what "Prevent" means and that more straightforward language is now being used to explain the concept and provide a clearer explanation of the programme's objectives and requirements, including linking Fundamental British Values to the College's core values. DK believes there has been an improved understanding among learners as a result. Certain groups of learners can now demonstrate a well-embedded, contextualised knowledge of Prevent e.g., Travel and Tourism and Computing.

The Prevent Risk Assessment has been updated.

The internal audit programme for the year includes an audit of the Framework for Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Requirements: Prevent and Protect Duty. This will be presented to the Audit Committee in due course.

Members were pleased to learn of the improvements made in understanding and noted the further actions needed to embed the position across all areas.

RESOLVED: Members noted the update on Prevent.

16/25 Student and Employer Update Experience (C)

DL reported on the latest feedback from students, highlighting positive experiences, areas for improvement, and the need for consistent support and resources.

It was noted that learner feedback remains consistently positive with good feedback on staff support and enrichment activities (the College is in the middle of its 'What Next' activities). There have been requests for more consistent work experience co-ordination and extra support in English and maths. The quality of student development sessions has been highlighted as varying across curriculum areas so the College will be looking to standardise this.

Adult learners report that there is a supportive atmosphere across the College. Improvements have been made in online resources. Adults know where they are and how useful they can be, but uptake is low. The College will be considering how to make those resources as helpful and user friendly as possible e.g., providing Safeguarding guidance for those adults who are parents. Adult learners have requested greater access to activities and support services so the College will review Student Services opening times.

The Chair asked if all Student Mentors receive the same training and was informed by DK that they do but the College is working producing some standards



Gloucestershire College

which will provide a framework to measure quality, and going back to the basics of the purpose of Student Mentors. KM added that there more consistency is required between campuses.

In terms of Apprentices, mock endpoint assessments have been successful in improving pass rates. However, Apprentices are asking for more opportunities to revisit the skills and knowledge that they have learnt, as well as more mental health and wellbeing support. At the upcoming Professional Development Day, the College will be training all staff to give good signposting and the Apprenticeships Team are going through mental health and wellbeing training with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead.

In HE, DK reported that the introduction of a new referral process for SEND support. Access to increased assistance from SEND Intervention Mentors has been well received. However, some learners have experienced interrupted Student Mentor support due to long term sickness, meaning that they have not seen the full benefit of this provision since its introduction in September. This should improve going forward.

As mentioned above, recent feedback on sexual harassment culture indicates that a small proportion of learners feel that there is not a strong enough zero-tolerance policy in place. While this does not appear to be a widespread issue, addressing these concerns proactively is important.

Members reviewed the examples of complaints which they had requested at the last meeting.

Members had received a report on employer feedback from JT and noted that this continues to improve. They congratulated the College on being uprated from 'Good' to 'Excellent' by the National Apprenticeship Service.

RESOLVED: Members noted the Student and Employer Experience Updates.

17/25 Approval of HE SED

KM presented the HE SED, which assessed the College as continuing to meet the OfS expectations.

The HE Link Governor wondered if the language used was a little flat in that it only confirms alignment with baseline requirements. She noted that, if the College becomes subject to the TEF, it will need to elevate the language used in the SED to support the preparation of the TEF submission. Meeting the baseline quality standard will not be sufficient and will result in a 'Requires Improvement' outcome. The College will need to exceed the baseline to achieve a positive TEF outcome.

MB took the point on board but advised that the College is waiting for clarity on the rules of the TEF and will work on a plan next year to address the requirements. The College continues to monitor the numbers and recognises the regulatory



Gloucestershire College

burden. Preparation for the TEF or its successor will form part of the Operating Plan priorities for next year.

KM added that, although it may not be explicit in the current SED because it is not required at present, the College has evidence of where it exceeds the baseline.

RESOLVED: Members approved the HE SED.

18/25 Key Items for Board including Risks or C&Q (C)

The Key Items report was discussed noting the risks to be added to/highlighted on the Risk Register.

Recommendations to the Board:

- HE SED - for notification to the Board.

Risks to be highlighted/added to the College's Risk Register:

- Apprenticeships: Published outcomes differ from previously reported results.
- Internal/External Reviews: Good progress in Ofsted areas for improvement. L2 and 3 Media requires improvement.
- Maths and English Strategy: Detailed proposals and actions.
- Work Experience: Current status and future plans – still some work to do.

Other matters:

- Positive Internal/External Reviews.
- Assurances on Safeguarding (including irregular visitors) and Prevent.

19/25 Any Other Business

Following discussions at the recent AoC Curriculum Network meeting attended by MJ and SR, the Chair asked what the College's strategy is, when speaking to employers, in terms of developing 19+ maths and English and digital skills in Apprenticeships. She wondered if employers will choose to require them and if they will still be a focus for EPA.

KM replied that the College continues to require maths and English and digital even for those Apprentices who have their qualifications as they are still within the scope of the EIF and will continue to be under the new EIF framework. It is still part of the College's strategy and will be going forward. There will be an emphasis on improving skills from their starting points. The College tries to ensure employers understand this when they are recruited.

It was suggested that JT and her team may be able to answer more fully as they are closer to the matter and are having more conversations about employer requirements. However, Apprenticeships is a challenge for employers with the recent NI increases.



Gloucestershire College

ACTION: JC to ask JT if the development of maths, English and digital in Apprenticeships is an issue with employers.

MJ also asked whether the College is considering Foundation Apprenticeships. KM replied that, if there is a business case for them, it will be discussed within Employer Growth meetings. It has not been raised as a need yet or seen as popular amongst employers because students are not at the required level.

A Member wondered if they may have some mileage in Construction. MB questioned what the programme provides that a 16-18 study programme does not provide. It was noted that the programme is similar to the Traineeship model and take-up for that was low. It was suggested that the programme might be more popular if the age restriction was lifted. MB advised that the programme is not in the College's plans for September but the College will be looking closely at what is involved in the Youth Guarantee programme and will be in a better position to give a view in the autumn.

KM added that learners have found the First Steps provision with the taster element of Construction and Motor Vehicle more beneficial and a much more positive experience.

The Chair raised one final question regarding the use of AI in teaching and learning. She was aware that there is an AI Working Group but wondered where AI in the curriculum will be covered going forward. KM responded that it is embedded in the Headline Progress report under Teaching and Learning.

MB explained that there are two aspects to AI which the College is looking at: governance and data security (which SD is leading) and AI in the classroom (which RM is leading). MB suggested RM be invited to a meeting to talk about what developments are taking place in the classroom.

ACTION: JC to arrange for RM to attend C&Q in the autumn.

20/25 Date and time of next meeting

25 June 2025, Scudamore Room, Llanthony Priory, Gloucester Campus

Signed

Date