

**PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE
CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE
25 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Present:

Mr M Burgess (Principal)
Ms L Dance (External Governor)
Ms M James (External Governor) (C&Q Chair)
Ms A Nutbrown (Staff Governor)

In Attendance:

Mr D Kettlety - Director of Student Employment and Experience/DSL
Dr K Morris - Vice-Principal, Curriculum and Quality
Ms J Cosson - Governance Professional/Clerk to the Governors

Apologies:

Dr H Moyes (External Governor)
Ms J Stackman (Staff Governor)

Attendance: 66.7%

37/24 Opportunity for Private Business

None.

38/24 Apologies

Noted as above. HM provided comments on the papers.

39/24 Declarations of Interest

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

40/24 Confidentiality of Items (C)

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

41/24 Minutes of the meeting of 25 June 2024

Approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

42/24 Matters Arising from the Minutes and Actions Matrix

Members reviewed the Action Matrix and noted the status update.

43/24 Update on Start of Year

MB and KM gave a brief update on the start of the year at the College.



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MB reported that student recruitment has been even more positive than anticipated with significant demand in certain areas such as Construction and First Steps. Staff morale is good.

KM added that learners have settled in well overall, showing more understanding of the school/college environment since Covid.

She reported that there has been a significant increase in the number of learners requiring GCSE English and maths resits this September as a result of fewer learners achieving grade 9-4 in GCSE English and maths, nationally, this year. Whilst this benefits the College, the start of lessons had to be postponed by a week in order for the College to reorganise the timetables to accommodate the increase in learners, particularly in maths, where there is a national shortage of teachers.

Morale in the discrete High Needs area is good at the outset of the year. There has been an organised start to the year with learning walks planned early in the term to assess the quality of delivery. Initial baseline assessments were redesigned and are underway ready for auditing and quality assurance by the Head of School. A schedule of checks is built into the year to review whether evidence of learner progress is being appropriately documented.

The College has seen an increase in the number of students with low or no GCSEs at enrolment. The First Steps provision, which is designed to support learners to improve/gain English and maths qualifications alongside supporting them back into an educational setting, had already been expanded. The team have demonstrated exceptional flexibility in enrolment and added in a further group. The College will need to review what this may mean for progression requirements in 2025/26. Many of the learners enrolled were hoping for Construction and Motor Vehicle courses but did not have the grades. They will aspire to move to these courses next year, adding to the demand for these courses. A Member asked if the College is able to obtain profiles for these students but was informed that many of them have not been attending school, so this is difficult.

Construction and Technology courses filled quickly, especially Plumbing, Electrical and Multi-Skills. The College met its promise to those who had applied up to 31 March, but many have had to be offered alternative courses, and some remain on waiting lists. Whilst some successful staff appointments have been made in this area, there are still vacancies, and it is difficult to retain staff in certain areas due to industry salaries. This has limited the College's ability to grow and meet demand.

The College is, therefore, actively recruiting for staff in maths and English, Construction and Technology and First Steps.

Safeguarding

DK provided Members with a verbal update on safeguarding at this point in the term.

KCSIE was updated in September. All staff and governors have been briefed and will be asked to confirm they have read it.



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The position is similar to the start of previous years. The College is reviewing files received from schools and dealing with new cases. File transfer has improved greatly this year meaning the College can get up to speed quickly. The College has declined to enrol some learners as a result. The number of open cases is about the same as last year. There is no change in the severity of cases but the themes remain similar – poor mental health; peer on peer sexual abuse; domestic abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation. The number of learners with EHCPs has increased and there are lots of learners with unusual additional needs.

Securus alerts are lower and less severe this term than this time last year. MJ asked what has led to this improvement. DK replied that the College is blocking a lot more sites but it is also possible that learners are becoming more adept at getting around it. Some good work went on in Computing last year regarding the impact of computer misuse on careers. Key risks remain self-harm, domestic abuse, extreme right-wing involvement and urban street crime.

DK went on to say that the College's Security Emergency Response Plan has been published and all staff, learners and governors have been briefed on it. Staff teams have been thinking through how they would respond.

In terms of staff development, DK has been working with the Director of People and Culture on the theme of Professional Boundaries for the next College Development Day.

The College will undergo an external review of safeguarding in November. MJ will be involved as Designated Lead Safeguarding Governor.

The Annual Safeguarding Update will be presented to the next Board meeting.

RESOLVED: The Update to the Start of Term was noted.

44/24 Approval of SAR and QIP

KM reported on the draft SAR and QIP.

KM reminded Members that the SAR reviews the College's performance last year but only makes judgements on the areas of the College's provision that are in scope and only on the courses that are run, not the courses that the College has decided not to run.

KM has read all the individual School SARs before drafting the College SAR. All areas self-assessed as Good except High Needs. There has been a good start to the year here but there are still some staffing gaps which will require some thought in terms of structure. There has been significant progress in Quayside and LD1. It is the Harbour House provision that is receiving the most focus. The Chair asked if there will be review points during the year. KM advised that there will but progress will be externally reviewed again in November.



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The Chair asked why discrete High Needs is not identified as such in the SAR. KM answered that it is not separate in the EIF. There is one judgement for the whole High Needs provision within the College so it cannot be separated out in the SAR.

Personal Development has moved to Good but there is more work to be done to secure this judgement.

KM reported that some Schools are already judged to be Outstanding but the College will be aiming to move more areas which are currently assessed as Good to Outstanding. This will not necessarily result in an overall judgement of Outstanding as all areas of provision would need to be Outstanding for this to be the case.

The final version of the SAR is not expected to change. The College level achievement data/confirmed results will be reported to C&Q and headline evaluations added to the SAR once the ILR return is finalised in October. There were no surprises in the SAR validations carried out this week. The final SAR will be presented to C&Q and shared to the Ofsted portal in January 2025.

The QIP set out eight areas for improvement. This is a working document which will be updated for each C&Q to demonstrate progress against actions and impact of progress. Any gaps identified after results have been confirmed will be added to the QIP but there are not expected to be any that have not already been included.

AN remarked that she knows the QIP inside out as a staff member. However, she wanted to check her understanding that work placements have improved for learners. DK replied that more learners have indeed secured placements, particularly in LD1 and discrete High Needs, but still not enough and that is why it has been left in the QIP. AN wondered whether what is taking place is good quality. MB answered that the quality of placements is sometimes not adequate either.

The Chair asked what action would make the most impact in the QIP. KM replied improving first time pass rates and consistency in High Needs provision. In terms of pass rates, 75% of staff in the key areas (Electrical, Plumbing, Motor Vehicle) are new to teaching. Students are spending too much time revisiting and resitting. Staff need support to achieve first time passes. In High Needs, there is a need to develop staff internally because there are not enough trained teachers. The College needs to think differently about how to support staff to develop independence and employability in the learners. The SEND Link Governor commented that the College had done well to get learning walks and mini dives underway so early in the term.

MB added that the College will be doing some analysis on maths and English, asking questions that Ofsted will not necessarily ask but which will be helpful for the College to know in order to test the reliability of its judgement, as it is difficult to benchmark this provision against other colleges.

HM had submitted a written comment that the SAR seemed a fair reflection of her understanding of where things are in the College in that she recognised what she had seen throughout the year at C&Q meetings in the document i.e., there were no surprises. The question she would like to ask is would successful delivery of the



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action for improvement move any/all of the sub-judgements up to "Outstanding"? In other words, are these the actions needed to consolidate "Good" or are they stretch targets? She would like to understand where KM feels the College is getting closer to "Outstanding" and where it is not.

KM advised that the action in High Needs is to move from Requires Improvement to Good. Other QIP actions are to consolidate Good, although the College's ambition is to achieve Outstanding in at least one judgement this year. Adults, Behaviour and Attitudes and Apprenticeships could achieve this.

MJ commented that she had attended several of the individual school SARs, and the question of where exactly the grade sat was asked each time. Some areas were only just Grade 2 (e.g., Student Support), and others were getting close to Grade 1 (e.g., Beauty). C&Q will track progress during the year, backed with evidence of what actions have the greatest impact and triangulated against internal and external reviews.

Members found the SAR and QIP comprehensive documents providing helpful context and focus for improvement.

RESOLVED: The draft SAR and QIP were approved under delegated authority and will be notified to the Board in the next Board papers. To be monitored through C&Q.

ACTION: Members to send any further comments or corrections on the SAR and QIP to KM.

45/24 Access and Participation Plan (C)

KM presented the College's second APP. The APP sets out detailed intervention strategies for improving access to HE at the College for disadvantaged learners. The first APP will finish at the end of this academic year. This plan needs to be submitted by 1 October to OfS for 2025-26 to 2029.

KM advised that it is a very academic paper. The content is heavily prescribed by guidance and there is therefore very little room to depart from what has been drafted. No significant risks in our access arrangements have been identified. The College has a diverse population of HE learners with a lower proportion of those eligible for Free College Meals, but there are some gaps that need to be closed.

MJ thanked HM, in her absence, for her helpful comments on the papers. She particularly appreciated her expert eye looking over the APP document.

KM noted that, although the deadline for submitting the document has already passed, she expects to receive queries from OfS anyway, as they tend to make quite a few suggestions on the document, and to have to resubmit it, so she will consider HM's points at that point.



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C&Q will monitor the APP in the Headline Data report, where progress against the seven risks identified in the APP for the small number of learners to which it applies will be tracked.

RESOLVED: Members noted and approved the APP for submission to OfS. The APP will be presented to the next Board meeting for notification.

46/24 Approval of New HE Partnership (C)

Members considered the proposal for a new HE partnership under the framework delegated to C&Q for approving such proposals.

MB reported that the HE partnership with CLC is working well. It was clear from meeting the learners that the partnership has huge social value, and achievement rates are very good (93%). The College has learned valuable lessons that will help when looking for other partners, and it is an important business model to support the College's core activities.

Members agreed that the proposal looked exciting and that it aligned with the College's strategy. The experience with CLC has been a good starting point.

RESOLVED: The new HE partnership was approved under delegated authority and will be notified to the Board through the C&Q report to the next Board meeting.

47/24 Key Items for Board (C)

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

- Progress in High Needs. Further external review to be carried out in November.
- Growth in learner recruitment in certain areas and the number of GCSE resits has led to staffing challenges.

48/24 Any Other Business

None.

49/24 Date and time of next meeting

28 November 2024, 5pm, Room C126e, Gloucester Campus

Signed

MP James

Date

28th November 2024