

## Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting

**Held Wednesday 6 March 2024**

*Present* Gail Rothnie (*Chair*), Joanne Rouse (*Vice Chair*), Aisha Benachour, Sarah Dawson, Chloe Naughton, Lee Smart, Anna Sutton, and Joanne Williams.

*In attendance* Jacquie Carman (*Principal*)  
 Craig Tucker (*Assistant Principal Quality and Standards*)  
 Jon Priest (*Chief Information Officer*)  
 Allison Matthews (*Assistant Principal Academic Studies*)  
 Sarah Bullus (*Assistant Principal Safeguarding and Students*)  
 Rob Lawson (*National Leader in Governance*)  
 Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	There were none.
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	There were none.
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting held 29 November 2023 and Matters Arising</b>
	<p>The minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting held 29 November were approved as a correct record.</p> <p>Under Matters Arising:</p> <p>Members noted that two governors had attended Divisional Performance Reviews to gain insight and assurance and found that this had provided further triangulation with regards to continuous development of quality.</p> <p>Two governors were engaging with the review of Apprenticeships and both the Chair and Chair of Students' Curriculum and Quality would meet with the Principal to look at findings from the reviews. Other governors would be welcome to attend this and key themes would be reported through to members of the Committee.</p>
3a	A date would be set following completion of the Spring term Divisional Performance Reviews, members of the Committee would be invited and a summary would be circulated.
	<p>The Clerk reported on actions from previous meetings.</p> <p>Under the meeting held 21 June 2023:</p> <p>Item 4a Student Performance and Progress Report; reporting on value added data for vocational courses had been provided under the current meeting agenda and was being further developed. The action was closed.</p> <p>Under the meeting held 29 November 2023:</p> <p>item 15a, Quality Improvement Plan 2023; the Quality Improvement Plan had been updated with Ofsted percentages and provided for the Chair ahead of circulation with Corporation reports. The action was closed.</p> <p>item 16a, Annual Plan Actions and Targets; the new value-added target had been incorporated into the targets. The action was closed.</p> <p>item 18b a Subcontracting Procedure</p> <p>Regarding clarification on appropriate reporting arrangements across the current cycle of business. A report on Subcontracting was provided under the agenda.</p>

		<b>Current Year 2023/2024</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>4a</b>	<b>Student Performance Report Update</b>
		<p>Jon Priest provided a detailed review for governors. The key points were that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective of the focused action student attendance was improved in comparison to the same point of the previous year.</li> <li>• Retention was also improved with better outcomes following work in relation to students with low attendance.</li> <li>• ALPS (Advanced Level Performance System) was outlined, highlighting some large movements in both A1 and A2 data sets.</li> </ul> <p>Governors asked what was being done to address areas which had dipped. Allison Matthews outlined the increase in rigour and supportive work with Heads of Department. A new lead had been appointed to tackle rigour and consistency and particularly to support learners to be exam ready.</p> <p>Governors commended Jon Priest on his work to provide a data set for value added vocational course performance. The model had been challenging to create due to very different assessment and examination points across often modular courses. T Levels were also challenging to address as comparative performance was difficult to extract. However, key themes arising from the comprehensive work undertaken were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 1 provision was very simplistic in either a pass or fail.</li> <li>• Level 3 data illustrated that students need better exam skills.</li> </ul> <p>Joanne Williams reported that focus was on what actions could be undertaken now to help learners reach their targets and meet their specific needs, with accelerator weeks being put in place.</p> <p>Governors asked if managers were confident the new data was meaningful. Jon Priest responded that the data indicated what was already known and had been helpful in illustrating to staff where action was needed; this was particularly useful in Divisional Performance Reviews.</p> <p>Governors noted that this was the first iteration of value added data for the vocational courses and that it would be a useful source indicating trends over time.</p> <p>With reference to other areas of reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members discussed that while suspensions and exclusions had gone down in comparison to the same point in the previous year, there was a notable issue with exclusions from Business courses.</li> <li>• Craig Tucker outlined the courses under notice of improvement in relation to retention data. While a significant number of courses were making progress, four courses remained below level for reasons outlined to the meeting.</li> </ul>
		<i>Lee Smart joined the meeting.</i>
	<b>4b</b>	<b>High Grades Development</b>
		<p>Allison Matthews highlighted the current performance and actions in relation to A Level studies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While retention was improved on 2022, there were identified areas of retention falling below the College target and the national benchmarks.</li> <li>• Attendance was below the College target.</li> <li>• Performance was variable and it was hoped that increased rigour and actions would see an improved picture following the next assessment point. Mock exams would support staff in reviewing predicted student outcomes and underperforming students were monitored through STAMP with targeted support provided.</li> </ul>

		<p>The Chair asked about predicted final grades and Joanne Williams responded that work had been undertaken on accuracy of predictions.</p> <p>Allison Matthews highlighted the range of positive activities and actions undertaken through the High Aspirations Programme. These included mentoring, visits and speakers, masterclasses and a dedicated Teams page.</p> <p>Governors asked questions about recording and evaluating impact of the programme. Jo Williams responded that the start point had been a questionnaire, which could be benchmarked, and that this was supported by more qualitative information from student feedback. It was noted that comparison data for students progressing to Russell Group universities, who had not participated on the programme could be useful going forward.</p> <p>Consideration of application progression trends by course and institution was further discussed, including actual take up of places offered at universities such as University of Birmingham.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
	4b	Predicted grades review following March Mock exams would be shared with members of the Committee.
		<i>Allison Matthews left the meeting</i>
	4c	<b>Annual Plan Actions and Target Monitoring Report</b>
		<p>Joanne Williams updated members on the key areas of progress against the Annual Plan. These included that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partnership work was making good progress</li> <li>• that Level 1 courses provided greatest challenge, with review of offer to make sure students were taking the right programmes (and particularly to build student resilience early in the course)</li> <li>• Level 2 programme cohorts were predicted to increase, due to qualification (T Level) reform</li> <li>• actions to improve high grades were being taken</li> <li>• delivery hours were being reconsidered with some online learning</li> <li>• a review of student services was ongoing to support access to services across all campuses</li> <li>• retention of CLA (Children Looked After) had improved</li> <li>• the College was pursuing becoming a Trauma Informed College</li> <li>• apprenticeships remained a challenge, with national recruitment trends seeing a reduction, however, high grades of the College's apprentices had increased</li> <li>• a modularised approach with regards to offer curriculum under Lifelong Learning Entitlement for HE was being considered.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair asked how the College could measure that each student had two meaningful learning experiences. It was noted that in addition to Divisional Performance Reviews feedback was gained from students through focus groups and surveys. Feedback was being collected and collated to enable themes to be drawn out.</p> <p>The update was received.</p>
5	5a	<b>Learning, Teaching &amp; Assessment Report</b>
		<p>Craig Tucker reported that under the quality assurance processes over one hundred lesson observations had been undertaken, with a high percentage of probationary staff within this.</p> <p>Teacher Development Teams were working well to focus on staff gaining most out of the process, with aspirations to keep improving, sharing of good practice and developing the core base of staff willing to have other teachers visit their classes.</p>

	<p>The latter was significant in being able to support a higher proportion of probationary staff. Additionally, toolkits were being developed for support.</p> <p>Feedback from staff illustrated where stress was reducing in relation to observations.</p> <p>Governors also noted the additional support and challenge being provided to both Health and Social Care and Apprenticeships provision.</p> <p>Following on from attendance at some lessons observations previously, the Chair asked about the next available opportunities.</p>
5a	Governor visits to lesson observations through Window 4 would be made available.
5b	<b>Staff Development Report</b>
	<p>Craig Tucker reported on both assurance of staff training against requirements for Safeguarding and Prevent and on the overarching impact of the Colleges' investment in staff development which;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supported challenging areas of recruitment through development of teachers</li> <li>supported retention of staff through increasing qualifications.</li> </ul> <p>Governors asked about the use of Artificial Intelligence and staff development and Craig Tucker reported that there were early adopters of facilities, such as Microsoft Copilot, with staff development sessions scheduled as part of April and Summer programmes. It was further noted that work was being undertaken to have both policy and protocols in place for students.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
6	<b>Quality Improvement Plan Progress Report</b>
	<p>Craig Tucker reported that following a meeting with the Chair targets had been honed and a key update was provided against areas for improvement (AFI).</p> <p>Points drawn out in addition to performance updates provided included that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attrition rates were being considered, particularly regarding NEETs (those not in Education, Employment or Training)</li> <li>that while attendance was below target, there was a positive culture to improve this</li> <li>support for students on work experience and work placements was focused on building skills and preparing for next steps</li> <li>that every learner was being looked after, supported to achieve their best</li> <li>in monitoring more information for Children Looked After, it was notable where students were meeting and exceeding expectations.</li> </ul> <p>Governors asked if employer boards were now consistently in place and were informed that this was monitored through the Divisional Performance Reviews. Some areas found it challenging to arrange a board but were subsequently going out to meet with employers individually.</p> <p>The progress report was received.</p>
7	<b>Pastoral Report</b>
	<p>Sarah Bullus provided a comprehensive report covering the wide range of areas providing pastoral support to students.</p> <p>Headlines included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of support for an increase in students experiencing bereavement</li> <li>student participation in a sleep survey undertaken by Bristol University</li> <li>developing skills for staff as part of mental health being a collective concern</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trauma informed work undertaken with Barnardo's</li> <li>• team deployment for support of SEND for 2024/2025.</li> </ul> <p>Governors asked about utilisation of Learning Support Assistants and noted that following the CEFS review, provision was being reviewed.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>Update Report on Apprenticeships</b>
	<p>Joanne Williams reported on indicative improved performance, closer monitoring of quality through curriculum areas and some success in appointments to key teaching and assessor posts.</p> <p>Craig Tucker outlined the forthcoming, externally supported review of provision which should triangulate understanding and would provide ongoing development.</p> <p>The update was received.</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>HE Update</b>
	<p>Governors noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that retention for HE students was high</li> <li>• student voice was captured separately for HE students, but would be undertaken concurrently, with that of the 16-19 student survey</li> <li>• programme development</li> </ul> <p>Governors also discussed tuition fees in relation to income and building capacity. The report provided for Finance and Resources Committee proposed a fee base of £5,995 across a two-year course.</p> <p>Members received the update and supported the tuition fees for HE, to be considered by the Finance and Resources Committee with a recommendation to be provided to the Corporation.</p>
<b>10</b>	<b>Careers Update</b>
	<p>The Chair noted that while core provision for Careers was good, governor focus was on gap analysis for areas where cohorts of students were not progressing.</p> <p>Sarah Bullus emphasised that greater collection of data from all students was needed to better identify gaps and decide on areas of focus. This included data on applications to universities, consideration of a range of motivators and guidance received.</p> <p>Attention was also needed for adult access to careers guidance when most courses were undertaken in the evening.</p> <p>Monitoring of UCAS applications was undertaken and could be shared with Committee members.</p> <p>The update was received.</p>
<b>11</b>	<b>Curriculum Update</b>
	<p>Joanne Williams outlined the areas of concern driving updates to the curriculum, including that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 3 qualification reform was having greater impact with regards to defunding of courses and there was an increase in T Level Foundation Courses</li> <li>• remodelling of 19+ ESOL courses and new provision for HE were also included</li> <li>• emphasis was upon the increased significance of alignment of course provision with key LSIP priorities regarding both funding and the Corporation's discharge of duties regarding meeting local needs.</li> </ul>
	<p>The Students,' Curriculum and Quality Committee considered the curriculum update provided and approved the Curriculum Strategy. These were recommended to the Corporation for oversight and assurance.</p>

<b>12</b>	<b>Subcontracting Reporting</b>
	<p>The first report addressing new subcontracted provision was received as assurance that quality was being monitored.</p> <p>The provision was very positive with a number of employment offers resulting from this provision.</p> <p>The Chair asked if the funding was adequate for provision and Jacquie Carman responded that it was well funded.</p> <p>It was further noted that there was a considerable gap in the market for logistics staff.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
	<b>Policy and Strategy</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Prevent Strategy Annual Review</b>
	<p>Governors considered the update of the Prevent Strategy, which addressed new duties. The strategy was clear regarding roles and responsibilities and what to do; to know how to be responsive and how to report.</p> <p>Focus was also on helping both staff and students have a greater understanding of Prevent.</p> <p>Governors asked how compliance and impact were assessed. Jacquie Carman noted that the Audit Committee considered a bespoke risk assessment annually and that additionally an organisational measure was that students were comfortable in raising concerns.</p> <p>It was noted that the Prevent Strategy remained integral to the overarching safeguarding framework.</p>
	The Students Curriculum and Quality Committee recommended the updated Prevent Strategy and Action Plan to the Corporation for approval.
<b>14</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	There was none.
<b>15</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	The next meeting of the Committee remained scheduled for 19 June 2024.

The meeting closed at 19.56