

Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 5.30pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Ben Owen, meeting chair
Andrew Cropley, Principal/CEO
Andrew Spencer
Kate Truscott
David Gillies

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance
Matt Vaughan, Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality
Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications Engagement & Student Experience
Diane Booth, Assistant Principal: Quality & Standards
Phil Clark, Assistant Principal: Construction
Nikki Slack, Assistant Principal: Health, Education and Service Industries
Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.

2 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Angela Newton-Soanes, Spencer Moore and Sheik Rayhan. Absent without apologies were John Winfield, Kia Shaw and Elizabeth Whitehead.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2023

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2023.

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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There were no matters arising.

4 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The committee were happy to note the content of the update provided.

5 BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND ANNUAL KPIS – 2022/23

The vice principal: curriculum and quality introduced this item and indicated that there were two key balanced scorecard concerns that sit within his remit. These are:

- a) Maths and English GCSE attendance, and
- b) Progress against targets for GCSEs

Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed report provided, and a number of matters were highlighted, including:

- Attendance for both maths and English has increased but only slightly. The position for maths is 80.4% and for English 76.93%.
- Attendance has been significantly impacted by a few areas of provision, including animal care and construction.
- Paragraph 2.9 gives the context for construction students with a lot of learners at a low level and potentially not having had the greatest experience at school. This means that they don't particularly see the reason for continuing with maths and English GCSEs.
- For 2023/24, the college is completely revising the foundation year for all except health and social care students, where it seems to work. Functional skills at Level 1 will be provided for those students who come in at the lower levels. This will allow the college to make the lessons much more contextual and can reduce the time required each week in lessons.
- The aim is to completely revitalise this area of provision next year, with the hope being that students will engage and help many to move on to secure an apprenticeship.
- The college also has 'Boost!' English and maths incentives, which are having some impact. However, the college acknowledges that the position is still not good enough.
- Paragraph 3.2 provides further detail on progress.
- The college has robust progress checks which take place five times a year. The results at PC4, which were a mock GCSE exam in February 2023, were a concern. However, this was a tough test for this cohort of students, who have very limited exam experience given the arrangements that had to be made because of COVID. Students are just about to do the PC5, and the college is expecting some progress. Staff expressed a view that PC4, given that it was stringent and had formal expectations, will have helped them and given them a realistic 'dry run'.
- GCSE English was a key priority focus area for Ofsted when they visited, and they analysed it in detail. They only identified one

Signed : _____



_____ Chair

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attendance issue in one session.

In general discussion, governors all agreed that it was pleasing to see that the college takes a very practical and pragmatic approach to support those lower-level learners who need something different to ensure that they thrive and succeed. The vice principal indicated that the changes made respond to the 'talking heads' feedback from students, particularly the relevance of the content of the English curriculum.

In relation to the remaining balanced scorecard items and annual KPIs, the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience indicated that EDI and LSIP updates are covered in more detail as part of substantive agenda items later in the meeting. She explained that EDI is currently RAG-rated as amber, as data analysis shows that the college still has some gaps for the most vulnerable groups. She confirmed that there is good progress being made regarding other actions but that the decision has been taken to RAG-rate as amber until the gaps are closed.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 **DESTINATIONS – 2021/22 ACTUAL**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality drew governors' attention to the report and specifically paragraph 2.4, which provides a summary of the results. He explained that the college has taken a four-pronged approach to collecting data and that this dovetails with internal progression tracking. The outcome is 92% positive destinations and just under 8% negative. Of this 8%, 1.3% are unknown and 5.1% NEET. He acknowledged that the latter is a concern as it is too many; however, the position is slightly reduced when compared to the prior year.

In relation to those students who repeated and/or 'flatlined' but remained with the college, the position is 7.1%. This has reduced by 3% when compared to the prior year. There is a slight decline (by 1%) of those students who dropped down a level, and this is 56 learners in total.

Staff provided assurance that the college is really focused on the 8% and that there are some real stories that sit within this group.

In general discussion, the committee all agreed that having 92% positive destinations was something to celebrate, given the challenges that the college and the nation have had over the last two years. Staff indicated that the college is increasing the percentage of students who progress to something relevant to their field of study and that this will continue to be a focus on the journey to outstanding.

The vice principal: curriculum and quality took the opportunity to express his thanks and appreciation to the teams led by Gavin Peake and

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Louise Knott who have worked tirelessly to capture the level of data now available.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7 QIP 2022/23 PROGRESS UPDATE

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented the updated detailed document and reminded that there are six main weakness areas identified, with 38 subsections. He drew the committee's attention to the detailed review in relation to achievement of high grades and maths and English, and a number of matters were highlighted.

1) Achievement of high grades

- This has been a real focus this year.
- The college has a Teaching to the Top campaign in place.
- There are a number of excellent teachers that the college celebrates, and they are supporting others to excel.
- The college could do better in relation to some initiatives, and one example given was student use of video cameras to support learning and improvements. The college is having a big push on this for the remainder of the year to try to maximise the use of resources.
- The college is really challenging teachers to think broadly and go above and beyond.

2) Maths and English

- There are two strong teams in place.
- There are a couple of staff leaving each department, but this does not present significant concerns.
- The college is confident in relation to the November resit position for maths.
- There are some great functional skills teachers in the college.

One member of the committee commented that she found the QIP to be very comprehensive and easy to read. In relation to the teachers who are leaving, she asked how confident the college is that they can be replaced. The vice principal indicated that the college has a great HR department and that they are really supporting all recruitment required. He explained that there were very specific reasons for the departures, and examples given were retirement, commute, travel, etc. He confirmed that it is a small percentage of the teams and, therefore, it is not a 'make or break' situation. He provided assurance that the college really does do everything it can to retain good staff. There are adverts already out for the vacancies, and the college is quietly confident of success. The CEO advised that staff are hoping that the pay strategy actions proposed will also help summer recruitment.

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A challenge from one governor was that the work/life balance and the potential commute distance is something to really dig deep into when recruiting and interviewing. It was acknowledged to be a really live issue, and all agreed that there was a need to be honest in terms of what is realistic and can be maintained.

One governor noted that, in section 2, some RAG rating colours were missing, and it was agreed that an updated version with all colours included would be provided to the board.

One governor made reference to section 3.3, described as 'a niggling percentage' of apprentices who are not getting regular reviews and some non-compliance regarding OneFile use, and observed that the situation seems to have deteriorated since March 2023. Staff advised that a lot of the learners that this relates to are on health and social care courses, and the college just can't get to the learners as they are not being released by employers. It was also explained that a number of staff took annual leave at Easter, which impacted on the number of reviews undertaken. Assurance was given that staff do monitor this closely. Staff confirmed that the number of reviews completed has improved since Easter but that the data available now shows the 'Easter hit'. Staff confirmed that the OneFile user group, which provides training and support, is still in place.

AGREED: to note the content of the updates provided.

8 A LEVELS

The assistant principal drew governors' attention to the detailed written report and explained that some analysis has been completed specifically in relation to the security of grades that students come into the college with. She indicated that, following internal reviews, it has become clear that there is an element of uplift as a result of the CAGs and TAGs, with nearly a grade's difference. If the college were to take the one-grade uplift away, learners would be on track. Staff confirmed that this is not an excuse and provided assurance that staff are doing everything that they can to support learners.

The committee was advised that Year 11s are due to undertake robust assessments shortly and that action plans will be put in place following this to support and target activities for next year.

The committee was given an overview of the ALPS position, and it was explained that there is a national note of caution regarding using this data.

The committee was advised that retention levels for Year 13s are low at 71.7%, and assurance was provided that staff are following up with learners to try to engage them wherever possible or to identify positive

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destinations if this is the reason for withdrawal (e.g. securing an apprenticeship).

In considering the ALPS scores, one member of the committee noted that there was a significant difference between Years 12 and 13 in some subjects, e.g. politics, and that this one in particular was a stark position. Staff indicated that A Levels are a big step up from GCSEs and that some learners have come to college just not ready for A Levels or capable of completing them; therefore, the ALPS scores are not a particularly helpful benchmark. Staff advised that they have done some research to assess the impact of feeder schools, particularly the 'requires improvement' schools and how this may influence where students come in at.

One member of the committee asked whether there was any connection and correlation with staffing challenges. It was explained that there are in some instances, but not always. The committee was reminded that the college also had some site challenges at Chesterfield Road in 2022 which will have negatively impacted, e.g. flooding, disrupted electricity supply, etc.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

9 **PERFORMANCE REPORT – DATA ON A PAGE FOR 2022/23**

The assistant principal introduced this item and explained that the national rates have been updated within the report as they have now been received. She then provided a prior year comparison, and key matters highlighted were:

- Young people
 - Attendance is positive
 - Progress is not quite as good as last year
 - Vocational attendance is positive
 - Vocational progress is positive
 - English attendance is positive
 - English progress is positive
 - Maths attendance is positive
 - Maths progress is better
- Adults
 - Attendance is better
 - Retention is 2% lower
 - Progress is better
 - Subcontracted retention is better
 - Achievement is lower
- Community
 - Retention is lower
 - Achievement is lower

When considering the information provided, all agreed that it would be

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really helpful to include prior year comparisons within the written report circulated in advance of the meeting, rather than giving verbal data at the meeting.

AP Q&S

Each meeting

The assistant principal advised that the national apprenticeships achievement rate has declined: it is now 53.4%, which is down from 57.7%. In relation to the college's position:

- Attendance is lower than in the prior year, but not all learners are on a traditional day release programme.
- Retention is lower but is good when compared to national rates.
- The college is on track with all of the accountability measures.
- In relation to off-the-job training, the college is exceeding 20%.
- There is a decrease in the number of learners having timely reviews.

High needs

- Attendance is better
- Retention is better
- Progress is better
- Vocational attendance is better
- Vocational progress is the same as last year
- English attendance is better
- English progress is a lot better
- Maths attendance is better
- Maths progress is better

Disadvantaged

- Attendance is better
- Retention is better
- Progress is not quite as good

In relation to BAME learners, the retention, attendance and progress information is all now provided; however, there is no prior year data yet with which to be able to compare.

- Deep dive outcomes are really positive for both college delivery and subcontractors. The catering and hospitality department has just secured 'outstanding' at a deep dive. This is a retained position as they also secured 'outstanding' in 2022.

In general discussion, the committee expressed their concern regarding the national apprenticeship rates and the fact that almost 50% of apprentices do not achieve.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

10

PRIORITY LEARNERS – DATA REPORT

The vice principal introduced her detailed report, and key matters

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highlighted were:

- The report includes detailed analysis in relation to destinations and the in-year position.
- Yellow highlighted areas show where there needs to be focus.
- For BAME and disadvantaged learners, the college looks to be closing the gaps; however, attendance is down on the prior year. Often, the decision whether to attend or withdraw is based upon financial influences; therefore, the college is looking at how it may be able to offer flexibility in terms of how studying takes place.
- For those learners in foster care, attendance is no longer at 100% but is in line with peers.
- In relation to those learners in residential care, there is still work to be done with the local authorities as these learners have the most significant gaps. The college is targeting 10 students for a summer school to try to mitigate the risks.
- Table 2 provides actual destinations. For care leavers, progression in to HE is higher than their peers, which is a positive.
- The vast majority of priority learners progress to other areas of study.
- Taking a gap year or volunteering is a positive destination for high needs students and those with EHCPs.
- In terms of learners who 'flatline', the college has not managed to eradicate the gap, but it has closed to a degree.
- NEET levels have increased, and there are significant gaps in some areas. Staff have drilled down and there is a narrative in relation to each of the learners.
- There is more to be done in relation to young people with EHCPs. Last year, this was 18 students and 13 of those remained NEET. Some were not supported by parents to remain in education. To try to address this, the college now has much more visibility on learners 'intending to go into work', and the plan is to offer intense employability support to get them the jobs they want/need. Support is needed in terms of preparing them for the workplace.
- Table 4 shows the position in terms of positive destinations. There are still some gaps to address.

The committee acknowledged that, whilst this report was focused on data, there were some real-life stories sitting alongside this. All agreed that there was some excellent work taking place in the college.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11 SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT – EXCEPTIONS REPORT

The vice principal presented her report, and key matters highlighted

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included:

- Slightly fewer CPOMS referrals this year but more referrals made externally.
- Double the number of Prevent concerns. A lot of this was to do with Andrew Tate earlier in the year.
- 48 incidents of student-on-student sexual harassment and/or violence. This is double the prior year's position. This shows that students are prepared to come forward and trust that the college will take disclosures seriously.
- Appendix 1 shows the trends, including:
 - increase in wellbeing concerns
 - increase in the number of students simply not being nice or kind
 - a doubling of the number of bullying and online behaviour issues.
- An independent review of Prevent was published in 2023, with 34 recommendations made. Most relate to specialist interventions. It is likely that, generally, there will be a tightening in terms of intervention thresholds.
- Nationally, the single biggest threat is Islamist extremism, whereas locally it is far-right activity.
- Care experienced programmes are being developed to provide support, and examples given were a summer school and evening sessions where students are fed and given a quiet place to study. The college is also looking to create a specific care experienced team within the Welfare department.

In general discussion, one member of the committee raised a concern regarding some of the significant increases in certain figures, e.g. the level of bullying, and she urged the college to do whatever is possible to support resilience and respect. She also asked whether there are some 'repeat offenders' within the statistics. Staff advised that, in the recent learner voice activities, kindness and respect were also highlighted as an issue; therefore, this needs to be a focus at induction, particularly regarding college community expectations. Staff indicated that there is also more that can be done with employers in terms of their expectations and acceptable behaviours.

Staff advised that there is also a piece of work to do in relation to digital etiquette and safety. It appears to be that the current generation in college have not had this 'hammered home' to them and, therefore, are on the cusp of acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours. Staff confirmed that there were some repeat offenders, and all agreed that, if appropriate, examples needed to be made. Governors expressed concern regarding the increasing figures but agreed that they were thankful at the same time that the college has created a space where students can report issues. A challenge from one governor was to progress the 'charter initiative', and he expressed the view that having someone sign an agreement is powerful and that it will help to lay out

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the respect piece very clearly.

A challenge from one governor was whether or not it is possible to segment out the concerns raised so that the college can really home in on the areas of focus. Staff advised that there have been more issues this year in terms of school issues spilling over into college, e.g. bullying. Staff are also seeing a continuing level of immaturity, which seems to have been caused as a result of COVID restrictions.

The committee took the opportunity to thank the team for all the support that they give students.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

12 **EDI – EXCEPTIONS REPORT**

The vice principal presented her detailed report and then provided an update on the concerns raised, with key matters highlighted including:

- 13 homophobic complaints.
- 28 concerns regarding race. This is a significant increase, with 12 new concerns since the last report. The vast majority relate to inappropriate language, particularly the use of the 'N' word. There is a whole culture issue here, with racial slurs becoming more common. Staff advised that one student has been removed from their class and that a piece of work has been started in relation to language. One student is also going through disciplinary process.
- Five incidents relating to disability discrimination.
- One exclusion.

The committee's attention was then drawn to the EDI targets, with a proposal at paragraph 7 that a new target be added in relation to actual destinations for EHCP students. This is directly related to the need to reduce the number of NEETs. The committee were happy to support this recommendation.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

13 **RISK REPORT (RED RAG-RATED ITEMS)**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality drew the committee's attention to the report provided, and matters highlighted were:

- Teaching is the college's fundamental purpose; therefore, if it cannot recruit teachers, it cannot deliver the service.
- Sufficiency of A-Level teachers is a risk.
- The college has the potential challenge of increasing student numbers, particularly in science.
- Construction and engineering staff recruitment continues to be a risk.

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- Paragraph 3.2 emphasises the challenges.
- 82 agency staff were used in the last three years at a cost of circa £750k.
- Having stable staffing in place remains a concern.
- The committee were given assurance that there are a range of actions that continue and that recruitment is supported by a very visible participative culture and strong staff survey data.
- In relation to English and maths teacher recruitment, the college is not overly concerned at this point in time.
- The college is still struggling to recruit in construction but is trying a number of innovative approaches.
- Positive impact is being seen in relation to the 'grow your own' approach. There are currently 24 members of staff working to secure teacher qualifications, with another cohort ready for the autumn term.
- The college is reducing the attrition rates, but there is still more to do in a few pockets.

In general discussion one governor commented on the reference to 'golden hellos' within the mitigating actions and asked whether any have been offered/provided. The CEO confirmed that no recruitment premiums have been paid but that the college does offer market supplement enhancements.

One governor asked whether the college is targeting industry enough to try to create partnerships. Staff confirmed that it is in some specific areas, and examples given were digital science and fabrication and welding; however, these individuals will only ever reach a threshold as they are not trained teachers. Staff acknowledged that there was more that can be done, particularly in relation to partnerships with HE and some employers.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

14 CURRICULUM

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented the detailed report and explained that it is broken down into two parts. These are:

- a) 2023/24 emerging plans
- b) College response to qualification reforms.

Key matters highlighted were:

- The focus is on teaching and learning and the curriculum strategy.
- The college has seven planning steps linked to 4Cast data.
- Curriculum planning is a very participative process including endless promotion of industry-specific knowledge and skills – to support this, the college is looking at small changes to sequencing in a number of areas.

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- Paragraph 1.2 sets out the huge change being made to Level 1 provision. This is all about lightening the theory load.
- In relation to T Levels, the college needs to watch the political environment very carefully.
- There is a strong curriculum in place that can flex.
- It meets the skills agenda.
- There is ever-growing employer involvement.
- The college continues to develop learning companies.
- The college wants to continue to grow apprenticeship and AEB numbers.

In relation to qualification reforms, he confirmed that they are wide-ranging, and the sector will have to consider the concerns and challenges regarding defunding carefully. He described this as a turbulent period which presents a threat to life chances for a number of individuals. Streamlining qualifications also adds to the complexity

Governors' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.6, and it was explained that certain Level 3 technical qualifications will have significant change as they don't neatly fit into T Levels, and this needs to be mapped. As an observation, staff indicated that there were some really baffling government policies that really don't seem to make sense.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

15 EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT – PROGRESS UPDATE

The detailed written report was noted, and key matters highlighted were:

- An update on where the area is in terms of the LSIP, with it nearing the deadline date of 31st May for completion. The Federation of Small Businesses has issued the first final draft, which is attached as an appendix.
- The college is picking out opportunities for collaboration across the D2N2 area.
- There is a mismatch between what employers know about and what is available from the skills sector, i.e. a lot of what they say they want is already available.
- The final LSIP steering group meeting is on 16th May.

The committee was then provided with an update in relation to the employer advisory panels, including:

- There are now five in place, which was the target for the year.
- All panels have now met at least once.
- Each (where relevant) is starting to focus on what a T Level might look like.
- They are starting to talk about developing academies and sponsoring T Levels.

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- The college is now looking at other areas where employer advisory panels can be established.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

(David Gillies left the meeting at 7.30pm.)

14 **ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT**

The principal tabled a copy of the draft agreement and explained that a detailed paper will be submitted to board on Thursday, and this is an early opportunity for governors to provide initial critical feedback regarding flow, content and format. Key matters highlighted included:

- This document is part of the college's legal contract with the ESFA.
- The college intends to call it a 'community pledge' rather than an accountability agreement.
- Page 1 sets out the purpose and includes the fact that the organisation believes this document ensures the organisation meets its statutory responsibility to review.
- It is in a format provided by the ESFA.
- It says what we will do and how we will have worked out what we will do.
- It sets out our contribution to local, regional and national priorities – quite a lot of detail is provided.
- There is good alignment between local and national priorities.
- Key points from the LSIP have been picked out, and there is articulation regarding how the college will respond.
- Targets are proposed for the period from 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024 – these are the big things that the college thinks will happen in the next 12 months.
- The agreement ends with a statement from the Corporation Board.

Whilst only having a brief opportunity to review the document, governors felt that it aligned well with the mission, vision and values and that it clearly articulated purpose and intent.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

15 **COMPLAINTS – MID-YEAR REPORT**

The vice principal introduced this report, and key matters highlighted were:

- The current position when compared to the prior year.
- There has been an increase in the number of complaints regarding teaching and learning. This is highly influenced by the percentage of complaints made in relation to fabrication and

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welding when course options were changed at the beginning of the year.

- There have been a number of complaints regarding transport, and it is hoped that this position will diminish with the change in bus service in September.
- Safeguarding complaints have all been investigated thoroughly and resolved.
- Complaints are spread across a number of directorates, and there is nothing specific to highlight in terms of patterns.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

16 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

17 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

This was confirmed as 28th June 2023.

18 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis.

(Staff left the meeting at 7.40pm.)

Meeting closed at 8pm.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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