WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Monday 9th October 2023

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Ben Owen (chair)
Andrew Cropley
Andrew Spencer
Spencer Moore

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement and Student Experience
Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Gavin Peake, Director: IT, Estates and Learning Resources (until 17:25)
Phil Clark, Assistant Principal: Construction
Nikki Slack, Assistant Principal: Health, Education and Service Industries
Sarah Morley, Assistant Principal: Quality and Standards
Kirsty Walsh, Assistant Principal: Engineering
Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies
Jonathan Mills, external observer
Ian Ashman, external consultant
Eloise Hopkinson, Executive PA (notes)

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	**APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIR FOR 2023/24** Ben Owen, vice-chair, is acting chair for this meeting. However, the committee agreed to appoint Angela Newton-Soanes as the committee chair for the academic year going forward.		
2	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on agenda items to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.		
3	**WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Apologies for absence were received from David Gillies, Angela Newton-Soanes, Jane Peacock and Kate Truscott.		
4	**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH JUNE 2023** The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.		

Signed : _____Chair   Date: 16/11/2023

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th June 2023.

There were no matters arising.

5   ACTION PROGRESS REPORT
The committee were happy to note the content of the update provided.

6   SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT
The vice principal presented her detailed report, and key matters highlighted were:

- The annual report 2022/23 shows progress against the safeguarding action plan for 2022/23. Paragraph 2 highlights the fact that the college continues on its journey to become a trauma informed institution, and several team members have now completed training to become trauma informed practitioners.
- Included in paragraph 3 is progress against KPIs, as follows:
  - Improve learner survey outcomes so that 99% of students feel safe at the college – 96% said they felt safe, which is an improvement of 1% but 3% below the KPI.
  - Improve learner survey outcomes so that 96% of students recognise they have received training on radicalisation and extremism – achieved.
  - Improve learner survey outcomes so that 100% of students state they know how to keep themselves safe online – 99% of students said they knew how to keep themselves safe; this shows no change from the previous survey and is 1% below the KPI target.
  - Ensure that destination data for care-experienced young people and those on a child in need plan is in line with peers – the gap has been closed for care experienced young people who repeated a level but is still not in line; the gap has widened for learners on a CiN plan. Gaps closed for both groups in terms of dropping down levels. The proportion of young people in care or who were on a CiN plan is proportionately more than peers; however, if taking out those who withdrew in-year, the data is largely in line.
  - Ensure that attendance and progress data for young people either open or closed to child in need plans is in line with peers – attendance data is still 10% behind peers; however, the gap has halved.
- The target for learners feeling safe online is acknowledged to be high, but LK argues that this needs to remain at 100%.
- The focus on radicalisation and extremism in tutorial has yielded benefits.
- Gaps have narrowed but have not closed completely, so the college is on a journey to ensure that destinations of care experienced and young people on plan are in line with peers.

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- Attendance data for students on a CiN plan is still behind peers.
- Just under 2.5k safeguarding concerns were received via CPOMS.
- Prevent incidents more than doubled in-year with a peak in November, which is when the views and opinions of Andrew Tate were rife and were being articulated by students in classrooms.
- There were eight young people on child in need plans by the end of the year, with two students and their unborn child also on a CiN plan. Throughout the year, the college worked with a further 19 who underwent child in need assessment or whose plan was closed.
- There were three students on protection plans at the yearend, plus 10 others who were closed to social care as the year progressed.
- Three students over the age of 18 were open to social care at the end of the year; two others were closed midway through the year.
- 57 safeguarding referrals related to child-on-child sexual harassment and violent. This is a concern, but it is suspected that the increase in referrals shows that young people are comfortable in coming forward, which is positive.
- There were 15 partner provider referrals compared to 41 in the previous year. The college has stopped delivering 16-18 provision through Inspire and Achieve, which has caused a drop-off of referrals from the organisation.
- The revised Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) guidance for 2023/24 has been published and circulated, and governors are reminded to read and confirm to the principal's PA that they have read and understood this document.
- The draft action plan for 2023/24 was presented to the committee, and KPIs have been suggested within the report:
  - Improve learner survey outcomes so that 99% of students feel safe at the college.
  - Narrow the gap in retention for care-experienced young people by 7%.
  - Reduce the proportion of care-experienced young people and young people on a child in need plan who are NEET at the end of their programme of study by 10%.
  - Ensure that attendance data for young people either open or closed to child in need plans is in line with peers.
- There were no changes to the Prevent risk register at its most recent review in September 2023.
- One slight concern this year is that a small minority the parents seem to be 'stepping into the fray' to resolve issues between students rather than asking the college to resolve. This is not across the board, but there have been some incidents this year that have involved parents making threats against students.

AGREED:

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1. to note the content of the update provided and its appendices
2. to approve the key KPIs for the safeguarding action plan 2023/24.

As an appendix to the vice principal's report, the director: IT, estates and learning resources presented information in relation to online safety. This is a new part of KCSiE, and there is a requirement for governors to have confidence that the college is taking online safeguarding seriously. The report lists some of the systems that are used in the college, and these include:

- Endpoint filtering and server filtering (e.g. emails, malware prevention, etc.) – the college always takes a layered approach to this as no single system is ever thorough enough. Cybersecurity is always a red risk as there is no situation in which the college can ever be safe enough in this regard.
- Smoothwall is a keylogging system which has been installed onto every machine within the college. It looks at every word a user types (in all European languages) and decides whether there is a risk. It Also looks at images and puts them through an algorithm to determine risk. It was described as very intrusive but excellent. If it is triggered, the system will recall the last few minutes of a user's activity and will take this record to be fed through to CPOMS. There are three levels of risk with five categories – levels 1 and 2 are very low risk; levels 3, 4 and 5 are of interest. The system generates around 90 triggers at levels 3 and 4 each month, and this is manageable for the safeguarding team. At level 5, a person from the Smoothwall company calls the college and alerts the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience or the HR director. This happens very rarely – there was one instance recently, but this was the first in six months. Levels 3 and 4 are most common and are generally low-level – the safeguarding team sometimes follows up but sometimes does not feel the need to. The term 'one win a week' is used – this refers to an intervention that has helped someone and made their life better as a result of what the person was searching for (positive action taken to help). A lot of colleges still refuse to have this programme in place, but it has been found to be very beneficial at the college.
- Some of the systems monitor what the students are doing to ensure they are not causing a nuisance to people outside and inside the institution, so it is about protection on both sides.
- The content filters are updated twice a day, and there is an international group of content providers that shares information between companies and provides frequent updates.
- Other triggers come from security services, including the police and GCHQ. These updates come through every two or three days.
- However, the director indicated that there is no guarantee that the college can catch everything. Furthermore, the college cannot control personal devices that are not using the college's

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Wi-Fi. Nonetheless, there is confidence that very serious efforts are being taken to keep students safe. If something inappropriate or concerning is searched for on a personal device that is using the college's Wi-Fi, the director clarified that this will still trigger and feed back into the system.

Agreed: to note the content of the update.

GP left the meeting at 17:25.

7   **BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND ANNUAL KPIS 2022/23**
The vice principal: curriculum and quality introduced this item, and key matters highlighted were:

- Attendance at GCSE maths and English was in line with the previous year but, at the end of 2022/23, was too low. This was despite incentives and the best efforts of staff. Incentives did have some impact on individual attendance but not enough to change the overall cumulative attendance.
- Attendance at both mock and summer exams was significantly higher than attendance to lessons. Efforts are being made to continue to chase via staff follow-up, support coaches, and HoD meetings. It is really not clear what more staff can do to resolve this. The college has employed an additional team of staff for six weeks with an email address for parents and students to use to report absences. Attendance continues to feature as key area for development.
- 20.7% of learners achieved grade 4 in GCSE English. The vice principal indicated that the best year for comparison is 2018/19 as this was the last time GCSE exams were sat with no adaptations. Last academic year's exams permitted adaptive information and lower grade boundaries to transition out of the pandemic-affected period. The comparison to 2018/19 for English is a 1.8% increase.
- For maths, 2022/23 results show a 3.3% decline since 2018/19. However, this does need to be put into an FE context in that the majority of learners are resitting, and grades are down for resits nationally.
- Last year, the majority of learners took GCSEs; now, anyone coming in with grade 1 is put onto Functional Skills unless they go through an exemption panel or there is a reason to put them on a GCSE (for example, a number of foundation studies students have asked to take GCSEs for the purposes of progression – colleagues have looked at this robustly through diagnostics to ensure it is the right choice).
- The college has introduced an award in maths which focuses on number. Successful students will attain a Level 1 award. The college is really trying to ensure learners get the best chance they can to eventually attain a grade 4.

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- Progress against target grade (excluding maths and English) – not enough students achieved their minimum target grade, and the residual score is currently at -1.20. However, there is a caveat is that there are still some unknown outcomes, and the full vocational analysis will be completed once these are resolved.
- 387 students were flagged for mental health and wellbeing, and a number of students struggled with exam anxiety. This was particularly seen on GCSE exam days, where several students had panic attacks.
- 31 deep dives took place last year. 10 at the beginning of the year were not graded in order to allow teams to work on improving their areas for development and assess this. Furthermore, after Ofsted, the decision was made not to reinspect areas that were inspected by Ofsted.
- The college has totally revised how it delivers CPD, moving to a more individualised approach. The assistant principal: quality and standards has met with heads of department to devise a CPD plan tailored to the needs of each curriculum area and staff within, rather than the 'sheep-dip' approach where all teams have the same CPD.
- There is a slight decline in high grades to 42%; however, some curriculum areas are still getting used to requirements of the EPAs. In some, students can achieve pass, merit or distinction; in others, the grades are either pass or distinction. This has an impact. Furthermore, EPA feedback and the speed in which this is received varies considerably, so it can take a while to become familiar with requirements and to allow improvements to be put in place. The hair and beauty area has shown particular improvement this year with 75% high grades so far. The business, EPA organisation was changed, which has led to a decline in high grades while staff become used to the new model and receive the feedback in order to prepare apprentices.
- Overall attendance last year was 83.8%. Overall attendance on study programmes was 83.7% and for adults was 86.5%. This is not where the college wants to be and is below target. However, attendance is a national problem, and many colleges are in a similar position. Extra strategies are being put in place to combat this.
- The college has successfully welcomed T-Level learners in engineering, construction and early years.
- Foundation courses in construction have been changed, and Entry Level and Level 1 are now designed to have a more trade-focused pathway with a smaller qualification. This enables more focus on the development of transferable skills to allow transition to Level 2 and apprenticeships.
- The assistant principal: health, education and service industries has led on making Level 2 health and social care assessment

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methods more innovative with less writing and a wider range of methods.

- The college has introduced three programmes designed to focus on getting learners through maths and English and with a focus on wraparound transferable employability skills: these programmes are Boost, Engage, and the Mansfield Education Hub, which is for young people who are not yet ready to attend a main college campus. The college has overrecruited in all these areas and could still take more learners if there were the space.
- The college has introduced specific Level 1 courses in engineering, motor vehicle and fabrication and welding with a smaller certificate qualifications, reducing the exam and assessment burden and making the courses more about skills development and employability.
- Level 2 fabrication and welding has been reintroduced.
- A-Level Philosophy and an online Access to HE offer are now available, as is Level 3 CIMPSA.
- The college achieved MS Showcase status. Congratulations were given to Jane Fishwick and members of the TELD Strategy group in relation to this piece of work.

One governor questioned whether there is an example of what is causing the drop in attendance, and it was confirmed by the vice principal that mental health is some of the reason, but the cost of living also caused issues as some young people were having to take work to support family or needed to look after younger siblings in the absence of working parents. Also, some students are now young carers. There have been some instances of students choosing to socialise rather than attend classes, but these have been dealt with quickly.

A questioned from one governor was whether the English and maths non-attenders are a specific group or whether this is random. The vice principal advised that some are repeat offenders but others tend to be more sporadic non-attenders. It was reiterated, however, that exam attendance was higher.

In relation to GCSEs for 2023/24, the vice principal informed the committee that 1,004 students took GCSE Maths last year; this year, the number is 1,609. English has gone from 889 to 1,550. A note of caution was given in relation to 2023/24's GCSE exams due to these high numbers, and the vice principal reminded all attendees of the importance of focusing on ensuring students get a good exam experience. Invigilation will need 'all hands on deck' to ensure all rooms and exams are suitably covered.

The principal indicated that all exam results in all educational settings have deteriorated this year. It is necessary to front up to the challenge, and it is felt that the college is in a good place to do so this year with

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heads of department more up to the challenge than has ever been seen and a keenness to resolve attendance issues.

One governor challenged that, even in industry, many people now want to work from home and better manage their work/life balance. He questioned whether the college has considered a hybrid attendance approach, suggesting that it might be a case of having to adapt to modern expectations in order to secure higher attendance. The principal indicated that the college owes it to students to get them into the habit of being present, creating an environment where this is required of them – he feels that extracurricular activities and inspirational teaching will make the college feel like an even better place to be. Evidence shows that online learning can never be as good as being present in a classroom, particularly for practical quals, and colleagues are nervous about enabling students to disengage further from face-to-face teaching. The challenge back was that this is understandable, but it is surely better to have online attendance than learners not attending at all. The principal talked about the online Access to HE offer – in specific instances, having an online offer is a good thing, but is felt not to be best for 16-18-year-olds. Members of the committee indicated that there is very much an online culture in education now, even in Higher Education, so there is a note of caution that this might be the future.

Referring to the increased English and maths numbers due to grade boundary increases, one governor questioned whether the college has the resources to enable it to accommodate all normal ways of working needs. The vice principal explained that the college closes teaching except for apprentices and foundation studies learners. She explained that, if it were not for putting more students onto Functional Skills, the number for GCSE exams would have been even higher. The Quality team will be attending the curriculum and quality management meeting next week to discuss invigilation and access arrangements, and all colleagues will be expected to invigilate (including Executive). It will be necessary to look at the NWOW requirements to ensure the college can fully facilitate them. This is a national problem – the Association of Colleges has asked for colleges to submit their GCSE numbers. It was explained that there were 38,000 fewer GCSE English passes this year than last, and over 20,000 fewer GCSE Maths passes. The grade boundary increase is significant, and many learners in GCSE classes this year would have achieved a grade 4 in past years. Colleagues are hoping that the number will reduce as there are over 100 entries each for maths and English resits in November to try to get students over the line to a grade 4.

One member of the committee challenged in terms of subjective measures, indicating that the employer survey results need to be borne in mind. Another challenge was in relation to accountability boards – it is felt that some of these measures do not feel strong enough. It is necessary to ensure that the college is still willing to be held accountable by the employer boards, and it is important that measures do not feel

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'loose'. The principal countered that, nationally, accountability has come to a somewhat of an end with the current government. However, devolution does allow for local accountability to be possible. He and the Corporation Board chair are meeting with two of the mayoral candidates soon, having already met with one. It was suggested that engaging employers on the advisory boards and ensuring there is a set of actions that the college is accountable for might help – each advisory board should have a set of tracked key actions that the college takes away ('you said, we did').

The assistant principal: health, education and service industries informed the committee that the sport employer advisory board was really successful, and she feels the 'you said, we did' suggestion is a good one. The conversation was around understanding things more – what employers want from the college and vice versa – and she feels that having an action plan in place would be really useful. The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience agreed with this and indicated that the paper at item 16 gives a summary of the current position in relation to employer advisory boards. This was described as a mixed picture: the sport and childcare boards show very good practice where employers are actively engaged, but some of the other panels might need a refresh. There is an objective in 2023/24 to establish another five employer advisory boards, and the vice principal feels that this needs to be a vehicle through which to drive accountability and show how the college has responded to feedback. There is a subjective measure around the effectiveness of employer panels, and she will be reporting on this as well as how the panels are holding the college accountable and how the college is responding. It was acknowledged that the college is a leader in respect of the employer advisory boards and, for this reason, the boards all behave slightly differently rather than having a completely consistent approach. The principal indicated that the college is trying to reduce its subjective measures – it is acceptable that the boards are different as they are at different stages of maturity, but it is key that they are successful. The assistant principal: engineering indicated that she is trying to recruit more employers onto the engineering board as this is a varied area and it is really important to get a wide range of feedback and ensure that various different elements taken into consideration. The governors indicated that it might be better to have an objective measure for accountability (e.g. the percentage of an action plan completed) rather than a subjective measure, and colleagues were happy to take this on board.

VP: C&Q /
Principal

Oct
2023

AGREED:
1. to note the content of the update provided.
2. to recommend that the board approve the proposed for the balanced scorecard measures, with the caveat that accountability will be an objective measure rather than subjective.

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8 **2022/23 POSITION STATEMENTS AND SAR TIMELINE**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed report, and key matters highlighted were:

- Meetings took place with 263 specialists, managers and leaders in 36 curriculum areas. Good discussions were held around key strengths and areas for development, looking at teaching and learning. It was noted that self-assessment grades are provisional as colleagues have to wait for the closure of the ILR when the final data is confirmed.
- Individual meetings will take place in early November. Governors will join, along with senior managers from the City of Wolverhampton College.
- 24 curriculum areas have provisionally self-assessed as 'good' or better and 11 as 'requires improvement'. The mix and balance of these has changed, with some areas having moved from one grade to another.
- 72.1% of learners studied in 'good' or better provision at the end of 2022/23.
- Hospitality and catering was judged to be 'outstanding'.
- E-sports was new last year and has self-assessed as 'outstanding', with very high achievement rates, 43% high grades and a pass rate of 98%. This area has small numbers, but credit was given to the team for the solid outcomes delivered.
- Early years is proposed to move from 'good' to 'outstanding' as high grades has improved to 58%.
- The quality of teaching in media classroom-based; computer science classroom-based and apprenticeships; performing arts; hair and beauty apprenticeships and classroom-based; and sport and public services was found to be 'good', and teaching and learning continues to improve.
- Disappointingly, A Levels self-assessed as 'requires improvement' with significant weaknesses, and there is a lot of work for managers to do to ensure swift and sustained improvement. Some of last year's report showed that Year 13 students were struggling to meet target grades.
- Engineering has assessed as 'requires improvement', and this continues to be impacted by churn of staff.
- It has been reported widely that entries for GCSE resits have increased, and JCQ has said that results for 17-year-olds are more variable than students who sat their exams within in compulsory education. Therefore, teaching and learning in English is found to be 'good' despite a decline in grades. Maths, however, still is still 'requires improvement' despite improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Function Skills continues to have good first-time pass rates in English and maths. However, this area might drop to 'requires improvement' due to data which needs checking and might come in lower than anticipated with some end-of-year fails.

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- Adult learning continues to prosper and thrive with some key weaknesses. A small minority of subcontractor provision is 'requires improvement' – this is one subcontractor with which the college is working to improve. Other subcontracted provision is 'good'.
- The college SAR will be submitted to the Corporation Board after the validation meetings and scrutiny by a critical friend and Executive. Governors were assured that this is a critical and supportive document completed in cohesion with teachers and critically assessed by externals.

Governors agreed that it is positive to see the good retention and pass rate for e-sports and the amount of 'good' provision within the curriculum.

Agreed: to note the content of the report.

9   **PERFORMANCE REPORT – DATA ON A PAGE (2022/23 YEAREND)**

The assistant principal: quality and standards presented the data. Key matters highlighted were:
- This is not the final data set as, at the time of production, there were 1,685 unknown outcomes.
- Attendance on 16-18 education programmes has improved slightly since the previous meeting but is slightly lower than the same point in the previous year. Retention has decreased since the previous meeting but is still slightly better than at the same point in the previous year.
- Adult has improved slightly since the previous meeting but is slightly lower than the same point in the previous year.
- Subcontractor retention has decreased. Achievement has improved slightly since the previous meeting but is slightly lower than the same point in the previous year.
- Comm achievement has declined but there are a large number of unknown outcomes.
- Apprenticeship retention has decreased. Achievement has improved slightly since the previous meeting but is slightly lower than the same point in the previous year. Too many apprentices have not had a review in the last six weeks.
- High needs attendance has improved since the last meeting but is a decrease on last year's figure. Retention has decreased but is an improvement on last year's figure.
- Free school meals attendance has improved since the last meeting but is a decrease on last year's figure. Retention has decreased but is an improvement.
- The update on deep dives shows that 82.4% were judged to be good or better. 10 were not graded and not all areas had a deep dive – those that were to be inspected as part of the Ofsted visit had their scheduled internal deep dives cancelled.

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- Subcontractor deep dives were 75% good; one subcontractor did not receive a deep dive as they had an Ofsted inspection at the same time, but they have now received a deep dive in 2023/24 and this was judged to be good.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

10   **2023 EXAM RESULTS**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality introduced this item, and key matters highlighted were:

- The report includes a comparison to the previous year, but the focus will be on comparison to 2018/19.
- 17.3% of students secured A*-B.
- 40% of students secured A*-C.
- A*-C achievements declined in 13 subjects compared to 2018/19.
- A*-B achievements saw an increase in six subjects and a decline in 10.
- The residual for A Levels is -2.21, showing that not enough learners achieved their target grade.
- Again, many learners struggled again with mental health and exam anxiety. Due to inflated grades, the average prior attainment score was 6.39, which is almost a grade higher than in the previous year. Furthermore, many of these students had not previously sat formal exams due to the measures in place throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- A teacher-by-teacher review of performance has been carried out to look at route causes for the poor exam results. There are a lot of new and young teachers in the department, many of whom are on the teaching apprenticeship. Colleagues have explored ways to improve and have booked a consultant who specialises in A Levels to deliver training on 26th October. He will deliver a full day of training to staff and managers and will come in at a later date to carry out a deep dive to assess impact. Colleagues are also visiting Loughborough College to share practice, and the area will be closely monitored over the year to ensure students are being better prepared for exam techniques.
- GCSEs have been discussed quite robustly already within the meeting, but the vice principal indicated that English is being moved to the new Pearson Lift qual – a pilot has been run and this was found to be more practical. For maths, AQA is currently used by all public schools, so a pilot is being done with Eduqas to trial this too. The college is also extending homework clubs to other sites – after half term, they will take place at Oddicroft Lane and Station Park. These proved popular at Derby Road last year.
- In relation to vocational results, high grades for quals with external examinations were at 54.7%. However, the college is

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still closing down some unknown outcomes. Some areas performed better than others, but it is important to realise that grade boundaries and high grades percentages do differ considerably from qual to qual.

The chair questioned whether the A-Level data aligns with what other colleges have seen for this cohort and whether this is a common problem. The vice principal indicated that other colleges have experienced some decline but not to the same extent as West Nottinghamshire College.

The committee agreed that the data is very clear and it is good to see improvement plans and actions in place where needed. The vice principal indicated that the training plan is very robust, and this was positively acknowledged by the committee.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11   **QIAP**
The vice principal: curriculum and quality drew governors' attention to the full document and indicated that updates are highlighted in pink. Areas for improvement have been adapted rather than changed significantly.

'Teaching to the top' has been revised to provide an approach to learners' study skills to enable a higher proportion of learners to achieve. As has already mentioned, all staff CPD will be bespoke in 2023/24.

The apprenticeships section has been expanded to further ensure apprentices excel within set time frames. Accountability measures are now in force – in R12, the college had slipped into 'needs improvement' for apprentices past their expected end date and 'at risk' for achievement and retention. The portal reflects the data from a few months previously, so this data has been recalculated and it is believed that the college has improved slightly in terms of apprentices past their expected end date and would now be RAG-rated amber for retention. Colleagues have put a lot of work into this, and the vice principal and assistant principals will meet with heads of department to look at learners who are past their expected end date. There are also plans in place to meet with specialists in each directorate to look at why learners are not staying in learning, why reviews are not taking place timely, and what barriers and blocks there are in relation to learners studying to their expected end date. The vice principal will report back to the committee once more answers are in place.

Since 24th February 2023, scrutiny has increased as the college has become more vigilant to learners beyond their end date. The teaching and learning coach audits OneFile every week and sends the report to heads of department who then respond with explanations. As at last

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Friday, the number of learners past end date had decreased from June's figure of 130 to 87.

The committee acknowledged the improvement in the number of leaners past their expected end date and the checking of OneFile that is taking place.

AGREED:
1. to note the content of the update provided.
2. to approve the amendments to the QIAP.

12 **RISK REGISTER**

The vice principal introduced this item and specifically drew the committee's attention to the risk in relation to hard-to-fill vacancies.

- Overall, HR colleagues have worked hard to put in place a number of initiatives. This is proving to be successful across the college. For example, it was expected that there would be difficulty in filling an A-Level Maths teacher post, but this was filled quickly.
- The college is still facing challenges in construction and engineering, but this is improving.
- At the beginning of August, the college had 20 vacancies to fill in construction and engineering but, by the end of last week, this was down to only nine. The assistant principals have worked tirelessly with HR to get people in place.
- The main reason for the recruitment issue continues to be high industry salaries, but market uplifts have been put in place and the HR team are trying all options to improve and help recruit.

The committee acknowledged the efforts of all colleagues to mitigate the recruitment challenges, and governors agreed this is a very good set of updates, overall. It was communicated to governors that four people who had left the college fairly recently have returned, and this is a really good indicator of the 'grass not being greener' elsewhere. It was also mentioned that a tax-free benefit has been announced for teachers in certain subjects, but details of this are still to be confirmed. In short, it is felt that the situation is improving gradually, but the challenge is still there. A meeting is being held at Oddicroft Lane to look at topics such as how different colleges are approaching the recruitment shortage and challenges from industry in terms of pay. Guest speakers will attend from employers and colleges to discuss how this can be steered in the future.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided and to note the mitigation of the risks.

13 **CURRICULUM**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed report. Key points of note were:

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- Overall, still too few curriculum areas and subcontractors met all Aspire curriculum expectations – colleagues will continue to monitor this through PMRs, deep dives and learning walks. It is felt that the move to individualised CPD will help.
- Developments in terms of T Levels are very exciting – the hard work put in by last year's leads really paid off: they shared practice with Chichester, Weston and Barnsley Colleges, there is robust planning in place and the curriculum is very impressive. There are 16 T-Level learners in engineering; 19 in construction; and 30 in early years. Early feedback from is that teaching and learning is going well, and learners are enjoying learning and starting to grasp and apply complex theories. Engineering learners had their first employer interaction in September, and feedback from this was overwhelmingly positive.
- The leads are in place to plan for the additional engineering T Level and two streams in construction for 2024/25. The college will hopefully successfully recruit to the digital T Level next year and is also offering a software stream, which is showing early signs of strong interest. Other T Levels in 2024/25 are animal care; healthcare (supporting adult nursing); and media broadcast and production, although placements in the latter are challenging for the college to obtain, so it is felt that to be necessary to keep options open and see how interest develops. Due to this activity, the college has met its Community Pledge in terms of T Levels.
- Key priorities in the LSIP are digital, net zero, transferable skills, the local skills system, and the local economic position. The college has expanded the digital and green skills offers and has more plans to deliver moving forward. Colleagues are looking at how to embed these into curriculum to ensure learners are employment ready.
- A total of 23.7% of learners who studied classroom-based courses at Level 3 (including Access to HE) have stated university to be their intended destination. The college will start capturing actual destinations between October and December. One governor questioned the percentage of A Level students who progressed to university, and the assistant principal: academic, creative, community, digital and professional studies confirmed this to be 60%, although the final figure is not yet confirmed.

Agreed: to note the contents of the report.

14   PRIORITY GROUPS DATA REPORT
The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her detailed written report, and key matters highlighted were:
- Table 1 includes the yearend position for priority learners.
- Achievement data is not yet complete, so there may yet be some movement in terms of pass and achievement rates.

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- The data for learners with SEND is in line with, better than or, in some cases, significantly better than that of their peers.		
- Data for learners in receipt of free school meals has improved.		
- Data for young people in foster care is largely in line with peers. However, the retention rate for young people in residential care and supported housing is significantly behind peers (almost 30% behind for residential care and 20% for supported housing). The vice principal intends to carry out an investigation into how the college can improve this.	VP: CESE	Nov 2023
- The retention rate for young people on or closed to CiN plans is significantly lower than peers.		
- The pass rate data for BAME students is proving to be stubborn and is not improving – this has been a KPI for two years. The vice principal indicated that attendance, retention and progress are all above peers, but pass rates are not. She feels that this needs to be investigated and must be given more forensic focus to see whether the issue is in any specific area and what the cause might be, if this can be identified.	VP: CESE	Nov 2023

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

15 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY (STUDENTS)**

The vice principal referred to her detailed report, and key matters highlighted included:

- The college achieved the lived experience charter and carer-friendly status, and Ofsted praised the college's activities such as visits to the Holocaust Centre.
- Progression rate gaps narrowed.
- The learner exit survey responses placed the college in the top quartile for equality and diversity.
- The college has organised a very successful LGBT+ focus group which has organised a range of events, including Pride Week celebrations.
- Students have been involved in giving back to the community.
- It was agreed last year that the EDI and community action plans would be merged as many of the actions overlap.
- There were 18 incidents in relation to homophobic bullying; 28 in relation to racial abuse – this is largely captured via Smoothwall and is mainly found to be language used on gaming forums; eight incidents of bullying relating to disability; there were 100 incidents of child-on-child sexual violence, including incidents which happened external to college; 64 incidents in relation to more general bullying; and 75 incidents of online abuse. The balance has tipped this year and the college has seen fewer online safety issues and more online abuse wherein young people are willing to say things online that they probably would not say in person.

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- The achievement of KPIs is not good but gaps have been closed in most areas.
- The action plan for 2023/24 is at appendix 2 and shows a real focus on some of the above issues. For example, the EDI steering group found that mental health referrals for construction and engineering are significantly behind other centres, and it is known that young men are more reluctant to come forward in relation to mental issues; therefore, colleagues are working with external agencies to show the students that it is alright to come forward if they are struggling.
- Some data is awaited to enable a full set of KPIs to be proposed, but suggestions are:
  - Reduce the percentage of EHCP learners who are NEET by 10% to 5.6%.
  - Improve the percentage of students who believe tutorial widens their understanding by 3% to 92%.
  - Close the gap in achievement for BAME students (data to be confirmed once final outcomes are known).
  - Narrow the gap in retention for care-experienced young people by 7%.
  - Reduce the proportion of care-experienced young people and young people on a child in need plan who are NEET at the end of their programme of study by 10%.

Governors were made aware that, because the college has signed up to treating care experience as a protected characteristic, related data appears in both the safeguarding and the EDI reports. Governors were asked to confirm whether they were happy with this duplication or whether they would prefer to have it only in one place or the other. The committee members present agreed that they are happy to see the data twice as it is very important.

In relation to the high number of sexual violence incidents, a challenge from one governor was in terms of the action that corresponds to this, as this really stands out as something that needs to be improved. The vice principal agreed that it is a concern that students are subject to this sexual violence, but she feels that some of the increase is about the awareness raising that has been carried out with students over the past eighteen months via tutorials (for example, in relation to informed consent). These tutorials often prompt a flurry of concerns when students realise that they have been victims of certain unacceptable behaviour. This is not acceptable, but it is a good thing that students feel comfortable to come forward and that they are aware to report this behaviour. The vice principal explained that she would expect to see the levels even out this year. She explained, in addition, that incidents are on a spectrum ranging from, for example, comments shouted by a van driver to some quite significant incidents of abuse. Although all incidents of abuse are serious, there is a clear difference between certain types. Governors asked whether cause and effect can be traced to give assurance that it is being monitored, and they indicated that they would

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also like the 100 incidents to be broken down on a scale. It was agreed that this breakdown will be presented in future – the assistant principal: quality and standards will provide a schedule of the tutorials to the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience so that referrals resulting from topic coverage can be traced.

AGREED:
1. to note the content of the update provided
2. with the caveat of there being more of a breakdown in relation to sexual abuse incidents data, to approve the KPIs as proposed.

16   **<u>EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT</u>**
The outcomes of the employer perceptions survey have been received, and the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented the highlights:
- Positively, the engagement rate shows an improvement (143 responses, a 25% return rate).
- The results are disappointing: the perception rate is at 76% which is a decline of 10% since the last and is below the KPI target of 95%.
- Only half of employers say they are well informed about the progress of their apprentices.
- The results cannot be broken down by curriculum area but can be broken down by the size of employer, and issues are mainly seen in micro and SMEs. Individual specialists are the point of contact for the smaller employers, so it is felt that there is a piece of work to be done between the two vice principals to see how to improve contact and, consequently, this data.
- The number of employers who see the training received as relevant to the business is concerning, as is the percentage of employers who would recommend the college. The latter is a 15% decline to 70% and, again, is SMEs who have an issue.
- The responses from public sector and larger employers, in comparison, are very positive indeed. It is clear that work must be done around how the college is responding to smaller employers and how it is flexing to meet their needs. Results have been shared with colleagues across the college.

One member of the committee questioned how the college can best capture what SMEs want, and whether they have different expectations. The assistant principal: engineering communicated that what employers need in their business does not always fit with what the apprenticeship can offer – not all skills are provided for within an apprenticeship standard. Colleagues are working with employers to ask what they need, compare this to what the college can offer, and identify the mismatch to then explore bespoke courses that might fill the gap. Some employers want a standard 'plus', with certain other elements in addition to the curriculum. Engineering colleagues have already taken steps to support with this: for example, some apprentices came in over the summer to

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attend skills sessions. However, the vice principal: curriculum and quality offered a note of caution that care must be taken in this respect as it needs to be evidenced that the apprenticeship offers new learning. The vice principal feels there is some work to do around employers' understanding of what a standard apprenticeship is and the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed as part of this. Furthermore, EPAs vary significantly, and expectations around employer involvement are very different in comparison to frameworks. Apprenticeship standards are more about pedagogy and teaching, and everything hinges on the EPA. However, as frameworks are no longer available, it is hoped that this situation will naturally improve over time.

One member of the committee advised that his organisation surveyed SMEs and the outcome was that they require multiskilled people, whereas apprenticeships tend to pigeonhole learners into one skill. Their understanding of the training and skills sector is low – it is perhaps necessary to think differently about SMEs in comparison to larger employers, and a more flexible offer might need to be considered.

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience indicated that feedback from SMEs has been that they do not understand what the college can offer, and they seem to think that apprenticeships are the only option. There is certainly work to do to communicate more effectively with employers and look at alternative offers where appropriate.

In respect of the survey results, the principal indicated that the college cannot and will not shy away from bad data. There are now apprenticeship coordinators in engineering to keep these employers in the loop, and it is hoped that an improvement will be seen in the next survey. The apprenticeship/employer dashboard is in the final stages of production, and this will be available to employers. The college is also doing better in relation to recruiting staff, which will hopefully have a positive impact on the employer experience.

In relation to the employer advisory panels, the vice principal indicated that there is a bit of a 'mixed picture':

- The sports board was reported to be working very effectively; however one member of the committee is also on that board, and he advised that it had to be re-energised as it wasn't delivering quickly enough. The last meeting had more energy but there was not much output previously, and some employers drifted off. He indicated that the boards need to get moving from the start so as not to lose traction. It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged between this committee member and the assistant principals, particularly Nikki Slack and Jane Fishwick, to see how to ensure this. `Exec PA` `Oct 2023`
- The childcare employer advisory panel is doing well and every single T-Level student is now out on placement.

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- The construction advisory board hasn't met since June as the September meeting had to be rearranged, but work has been going on behind the scenes and colleagues have secured placements for almost all construction students.
- Engineering is in a similar position to construction.
- The digital panel was shelved when the T Level was postponed to 2024/25, but the employers are still engaged and interested in being part of this. The board now needs to be revived.
- Panels to be established in 2023/24 are health and social care; animal care; business; creative industries; and hair and beauty.

The milestones for 2023/24 were presented. These include:
- agile project development
- the concept of a business development service, where the college might work with external partners to deliver more rapidly to the employer need
- a single CRM solution for the college – there are currently several ways of collecting data – the head of employer engagement has been tasked with looking into this
- the college will be starting a piece of work through the LSIP to develop a common employability framework for D2N2.

AGREED:
1. to note the content of the update provided
2. to approve and support the milestones for 2023/24.

17   **LEARNER VOICE**
The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented this detailed report. Key matters to note were as follows:
- The apprenticeship survey results are positive, and the response rate is 26%.
- The college is in the upper quartile for all questions but one.
- 100% of respondents agreed that their apprenticeship developed their knowledge and understanding to enable them to achieve long-term goals.
- 87% agreed that trainers improved their performance at work, which links to the employer feedback.
- 96% of apprentices would recommend an apprenticeship to a friend.
- The main exit survey had a 74% response rate (classroom-based).
- The overall satisfaction rate is 94%, with 93% agreeing that they would recommend the college, which is a 2% improvement on last year.
- Most curriculum areas show an improvement on previous survey outcomes.
- Health, education and service industries had a particularly high return rate and was the most positive.

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- Perception around A Levels has improved (albeit the A Level response rate was low and this needs unpicking).
- The lowest response rates were in engineering, electrical, and business studies.
- All responses have been shared with the heads of department to be built into their quality improvement plans.
- The learner voice calendar is largely unchanged from last year.

In general discussion, the committee agreed that the improvement in the apprenticeship satisfaction rate is very good to see.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

18   **COMMUNITY PLEDGE ACTIONS REPORT**
The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience reminded governors that, in May, the board approved the college's Community Pledge, and this report shows progress against priorities:
- LSIP – the LSIF bid was submitted by the deadline of 15th September in partnership with other D2N2 colleges. The outcome should be confirmed by mid-October, and there are three projects:
  - Net zero – Nottingham College is leading on this. WNC will use the funding, if awarded, to support some of the ADMC project outcomes and to invest in motor vehicle provision and air pump training.
  - Digital skills – Derby College is leading. WNC will use this to develop technical lead-based curriculum resources.
  - Essential skills framework across D2N2 – this is led by RNN. WNC has asked largely for revenue funding, and this will need to be spent by the end of March 2024. Given that the outcome is not yet known, the college will effectively have six months to spend the funding.
- Good progress has been made against the green skills agenda and the online offer.
- The college has now been granted planning permission on the Future Tech and Knowledge Exchange.
- Good progress is being made with Ashfield District Council in relation to the civils centre.
- Work has started on Station Park's mezzanine.
- The college has formally launched the Gene Haas centre.
- There have been positive meetings to look at pathways into public sector employment. The college is looking at holding a 'step into the public sector' employment event soon.

AGREED: to note the progress against actions within the college's Community Pledge.

20   **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

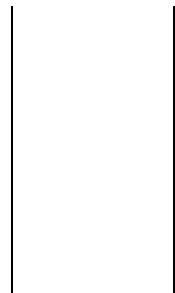Signed : ____ _____ _____Chair   Date: 16/11/2023

There were no items of additional business.

21   **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
This was confirmed as Thursday 16th November 2023 at 17:00.

Meeting closed at 19:20.

Signed : _____Chair   Date: 16/11/2023