


Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Thursday 28th March 2024

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Ben Owen, Chair
Andrew Cropley, Principal and Chief Executive Officer
Andrew Spencer, Staff Governor (business support)
Spencer Moore
Jane Peacock

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement and Student Experience
Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Nikki Slack, Assistant Principal: Health, Education and Service Industries (from 17:30)
Sarah Morley, Assistant Principal: Quality and Standards
Kirsty Walsh, Assistant Principal: Engineering
Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies
Amaya Waddingham, Student Governor
Morgan Williams, Student Governor
Eloise Hopkinson, Clerk to the Corporation

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> 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.		
2	<u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies for absence were received from David Gillies and Scott Smith.		
3	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH JANUARY 2024</u> The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions. One governor requested that a sentence at item 13 be reworded to be clearer, and this was changed and agreed as follows: “Governors were in agreement that the proposal that colleges must have discussions with the parents of gender-questioning young people (rather		

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than this condition only being in place for schools) is of concern and feedback should certainly be given that this is how the sector feels.”

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2024.

There were no matters arising.

4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The committee was happy to note the content of the update provided. The chair gave a lot of positive feedback in terms of the employer boards, stating that this activity is progressing very well.

5 **BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND COMMUNITY PLEDGE ACTIONS**

Balanced scorecard

During last year’s Ofsted inspection, four areas for improvement were identified:

1. Leaders should ensure that plans for apprentices’ on- and off-the job learning are used consistently to inform practice and consolidate activity.
2. Leaders should continue their work to stabilise the electrical curriculum and provide tailored support for the teaching team.
3. Leaders should ensure that all teachers set learners demanding work which helps them to achieve high work standards over time.
4. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use assessment effectively, so that learners retain their learning over time and know what they need to do to improve their work and skills further.

Some departments do still have more work to do, but senior leaders are content that the position has improved. The vice principal provided updates against the areas for improvement as follows:

- On- and off- the job learning
This was mainly in relation to engineering and is thoroughly monitored through audits and deep dives. This area has shown the biggest improvement, and coordination of staff during OneFile sessions shows that planning is now consistent.
- Stabilising of the electrical curriculum
The department has now secured a stable staffing medley and is only short by one technician. Projected end-of-year retention is currently better than it was at the end of the previous academic year. Learners have taken their technical exams and completed their synoptics and will have the opportunity for another attempt if they do not pass.

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There are a number of experienced teachers within this team but also some individuals from industry who are honing their craft and engaging in continuous professional development to do so. The teaching and learning coach is delivering some practical examples and focusing on the foundations of a good lesson. At this point, the vice principal is happy with the progress made.

- Achieving high work standards over time
The findings have been based on the 24 deep dives which have taken place so far. Improvement can be seen in many areas, but there is still work to be done in others. The vice principal will provide a further update to governors at the next committee meeting.
- Using assessment effectively
The vice principal has again used deep dives to evidence where this has been a key focus and has outlined where there is still more work to do. Governors will be provided with a further update in June. This has also been a focus within PMRs, with scrutiny by the vice principal, assistant principals and heads of department.

Governors were pleased to see the progress, particularly in relation to deep dives, and a question was raised as to whether there is specific work taking place, whether with individuals or across the board, to drive further improvements in assessments. The vice principal explained that 'How2s' are being used to enable staff to individualise pedagogy, in addition to coaching for members of staff who need more support, plus sharing practice meetings. This will be an area of focus for all areas, and a more in-depth update will be given closer to the end of the academic year.

VP: C&Q

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Furthermore, the vice principal reminded governors that the college has moved to individualised CPD post-inspection, which is better for the more experienced teachers.

The chair extended thanks to human resources for striving to close the recruitment gaps, and the committee acknowledged the impact which this invaluable support has had in terms of stabilising teams and improving staff retention.

Community Pledge

The vice principal provided an update against each action from the Community Pledge, then invited questions. Governors were happy to note the content of these updates and indicated that they did not have any questions at this time.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2023/24 – PROGRESS UPDATE

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The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed report, focusing particularly on apprenticeships and attendance. Key matters highlighted were:

Attendance

- Attendance has declined slightly in both maths and English, and this is being explored in the ongoing progress management reviews. Incentives such as Amazon vouchers and the West Nottinghamshire College coins are in place to try to further encourage attendance.
- Evening homework clubs have been extended and are now also taking place at other sites, not just Derby Road. Attendance to these has been improving and communications have been sent to students and parents to explain and inform them of these sessions.
- Students have been given the opportunity to attend revision sessions every day over the Easter break.
- The college has purchased Century Tech, and curriculum areas have been asked to find time to use this platform in independent learning or tutorial sessions in order to increase students' learning and thereby bolster lessons and accelerate learning.
- Progress checks show that English is just over a grade behind the minimum target grade and maths is just under a grade behind. The summer exams are now quite close, so progress is a very high priority, and it was hoped that more students would be closer to the mark by now. Harsh grade boundaries were used in the marking of mock exams to encourage students to push a little harder in this final term.
- The scheme of learning has been sequenced in accordance with knowledge gaps and will now focus on revision and exam preparation. Skills gaps were also a focus before February half term.
- The deep dive of maths has shown that more focus is required on sequencing, and a critical friend has provided some advice in relation to this. He has also invited less experienced maths teachers to visit his school and join lessons for lower ability groups. It is hoped that this will aid the teachers in forming and adapting learning.
- The college will aim to stream lessons by ability next year, as it is apparent that there is a vast difference between learners who achieved a grade 3 (for example) in their GCSEs and those who did not achieve a grade at all.
- The standards coach has been working on behaviour management and the gaps between vocational and English and maths staff. More intensive coaching will take place in targeted areas where attendance is particularly low. A lot of this will take place at Kirkby Road and Station Park.

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- Overall, there is still more work to do and there will be a final drive to improve further over this final term.

Apprenticeships

- The R06 update has been shared in relation to accountability measures. The vice principal and principal have communicated their frustrations to the Department for Education in respect of the fact that achievement and retention are still based on last year's R14 data and so can never change. In real-time data, the college would be 'on track' for retention. It is hard to give a definite position for achievement as the college still has continuing learners. However, if it were assumed that all starts will be retained and all will achieve, the vice principal indicated that the college should be 'on track' and not 'needs improvement'.
- The vice principal also explained that a new employer feedback sub-measure has been added to the dashboard. 331 reviews of the college have been submitted since this opened, the cumulative feedback from which would show the college to be 'good'. However, the rating is only based on the feedback from reviews submitted since 31st August 2023, which puts the college at 'needs improvement'. Colleagues have tried to drill down to target specific areas so that improvements can be driven, but the dashboard does not enable this. However, the college has aligned the questions asked to its own quality assurance activity, and these areas and topics are covered via the deep dive process and by contacting and surveying employers.
- Following an update received on the day of the meeting, the vice principal verbally informed governors that the college has surpassed 250 learners past their expected end date within the ILR, so this measure has fallen back to 'needs improvement'. However, if the college had a smaller number of apprentices, this would not have flagged. This is another frustration for senior managers as a large amount of work has been, and continues to be, carried out college-wide. Some students' assessments had been delayed, which exacerbated the issue, but colleagues are striving to rectify this.
- During the senior team's termly conversation with the ESFA, the actions being taken to improve were explained in detail to the college's link.

One governor challenged whether the ESFA is comfortable with the accountability measures data, and the vice principal and principal indicated that the ESFA is monitoring the college but is content that progress is being made. Governors were informed that, through the extra monitoring being carried out internally, leaders and managers know the learners by name and are working extremely hard to ensure they all get over the line and, where this is not possible, that there is a

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narrative. The vice principal indicated that she would be happy to share details of this monitoring with governors, if desired.

The staff governor questioned whether it would be possible to see the raw data around the mock GCSE results for English and maths. He also indicated that it would be interesting to see the impact which Century Tech will have. He was invited to contact the manager of the MIS team to obtain the data.

The chair questioned what impact the standards coach is having. The vice principal indicated that this staff member is working with some teachers who are struggling with behaviour management, and this work involves both 1:1 coaching and in-class support. Meetings have taken place with curriculum areas, and more joined-up thinking between English and maths and vocational staff is being facilitated. Some real progress has been made, but cumulative attendance data will not show an improvement quickly. Rather, it is felt that the impact will be seen more clearly next academic year. There is also an intention to set up a steering group to further improve synergy between vocational and English and maths. The standards coach will also attend the curriculum and quality management meeting so that colleagues can continue to look at how teams can work together to drive this further. Focus is being placed on changing the approach to teaching, e.g. by covering topics at application stage rather than scaffolding down.

The chair raised a question around progress checks, asking what the vice principal feels what the final outcomes are likely to be. The vice principal feels that it will be a challenge, and that this will be the case in maths more so than English. Nevertheless, it is hoped that an improvement will be seen, albeit slight. A critical friend from Loughborough College was very impressed by some of WNC's teachers and indicated that he had seen some outstanding features.

The chair questioned the impact of the recent announcement in relation to the teaching hours for maths and English, and the vice principal explained that Century Tech will be used to provide the extra hour of teaching required from 2024/25. This will enable a more individualised approach, as well as the introduction of a competitive element with prizes or rewards. Early feedback from staff and students is that they like this platform. It is also helping with apprentices' learning outside the classroom and will hopefully accelerate the speed at which they take their exams. The use of Century Tech will be badged as 'Progression for...', and a facilitator (rather than a teacher) will be used to support this delivery.

One governor raised a point in relation to the National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). The Department for Education has recently released the criteria for 2024/25, and it was suggested that the college

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might still be eligible. It was agreed that now would be a good time to look into this to see whether the college is eligible and, if so, which staff members might enrol to these courses.

VP: C&Q

May 2024

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

7

SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT – EXCEPTIONS REPORT 2023/24

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her detailed report. Key matters highlighted were:

- The team has continued to receive a high number of safeguarding reports through CPOMS.
- At the time of the report, 10 students remained open to social care on a Child in Need (CiN) plan. A further 26 have been closed to social care as the risks have been mitigated or, in most cases, the young person has reached their 18th birthday and so is no longer eligible. The vice principal indicated that this was the highest number open on a CiN plan during her time at the college.
- Four students remained open to a Child Protection (CP) plan.
- Two students remained open to a harmful sexualised behaviours panel – one will close in late March 2024 as they will turn 18.
- Two students are open to a child sexual exploitation panel, with risk assessments in place.
- 42 concerns related to sexual harassment and violence. Two relate to sexual assault and the others relate to comments and low-level concerns.
- 31 incidents occurred externally to the college. A number of these relate to behaviour on public transport, ranging from inappropriate comments being made (largely to female students) and unsolicited physical contact. The bus companies have worked closely with the college to resolve these issues, and five of these concerns have been referred to the police.
- The college has received eight concerns relating to of county lines and gang-related activity, an increase since the previous report to this committee. None of these criminal exploitation concerns are currently open to social care.
- One Prevent concern received related to extreme right-wing ideologies. This was referred to the police Prevent team but did not meet threshold for further intervention.
- A second Prevent concern also resulted in a referral but is still undergoing formal assessment. The vice principal feels that this one will result in some intervention due to the level and nature of the concern.
- The largest number of referrals related to wellbeing, self-harm, mental health and suicidal thoughts. 11 placement counsellors are working with the college but there is still a list for these services.

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- One student remained under section in hospital and is unlikely to be released this academic year, so the length of her course has been extended over two academic years. The college continues to support this young person.
- The college has seen a rising number of concerns related to bullying – 82 year-to-date. In some cases, these relate to issues from school continuing into college.
- 19 students are currently deemed to be at significant risk and are subject to monthly reviews with welfare managers to ensure that these risks are being mitigated.
- The safeguarding risk register was included at appendix 1. Gang-related concerns have slightly decreased, and attendance has also been marked as a decreased risk as it is an improving picture. However, risks related to right-wing ideologies have increased given the recent Prevent concerns.
- The vice principal and the safeguarding manager have undertaken some training and development related to trauma informed practice, and they are now looking at how they might build some of these principles into the college’s behaviour management practices and how a more relational policy might be implemented.

Progress against key performance indicators

- Good progress has been made in respect of the retention of care experienced young people, with the gap reduced by 8.8%. However, this masks some concerns around young people in supported housing, in that their attendance tends to reduce when they enter this accommodation. The vice principal has commenced a piece of work with the local authority’s virtual school and accommodation providers (particularly the YMCA) to explore what can be done collectively to keep these young people on track. Suggestions include someone from social care or the welfare team accompanying learners on the bus to college, and authorising an absence when they first move in. Social care colleagues are putting together a support pack, but the vice principal feels that the key is to work with staff within the settings to ensure they understand the importance of college attendance and take on a more parental stance in terms of getting the young people into college. Another possibility is for there to be a dedicated wing at the YMCA where young people in education or apprenticeships are all together, rather than living alongside young people who don’t have to be up early, so that they are not being disturbed late at night or early in the mornings.
- Attendance for young people closed to CiN plans is of concern at 77.3%, which is nearly 10% behind peers. Ways to resolve this are being considered, but wraparound support disappears once a young person has been closed to a CiN plan. One change to

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mitigate this is that the safeguarding team will now continue to hold these students within their caseload until it has been ascertained that they are stable and able to continue without this level of support.

- An internal audit of safeguarding practice is taking place, and the committee chair will be part of this team. Other committee members were invited to get involved if they wish, and information about the audit will be sent by the vice principal upon request.

One governor raised a question in relation to the new wellbeing manager and the focus on helping young people to become more resilient. It was explained that this is a replacement post, and the role previously tended to focus on a number of young people in crisis. These numbers have not diminished so, instead, the focus will now be on delivering sessions to the wider student body to coach them in maintaining resilience and how to deal with knockbacks, etc. Some young people do not recognise that the anxiety they feel is actually perfectly normal and is something many people feel – for example, prior to delivering a presentation. The intention is to normalise lower-level anxiety and deliver some sessions on how students can help themselves to build their own resilience. Governors agreed that it is positive to see this work in relation to building resilience, rather than being reactive to the need only when it arises.

It was acknowledged that the trauma informed work is also very positive. However, a question from the chair was whether the team is appropriately structured to deal with the increased workload due to resilience and post-COVID challenges. The vice principal explained that the safeguarding team is slightly underpowered, and members are unable to visit the other campuses as much as they would like, so some additional resource might be needed. She confirmed that the balance of the support coaches is right, but it is necessary to look at where they are based and how they are split. Governors agreed that it is important to look at what the committee can do to support but also to note the challenges in terms of funding and accommodating staffing demands. However, the chair acknowledged the great work that is taking place.

In general discussion, governors expressed concern around how this demand is growing, and it was noted that schools are equally overwhelmed. External services close young people down far more readily than they might have done in the past. Furthermore, cases are often closed due to parents not engaging, which is a concern as the affected young people are then no less at risk. At the strategy day, one governor asked what she can do as the chief executive officer of a local council, and it was agreed that all governors need to be spokespeople and do what they can to discuss this situation and support the college in their day jobs and via their networks.

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The vice principal was able to provide a positive update in that some headway was potentially being made in terms of having designated social workers linked into the college so that the college's care experienced young people have the same social work team.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 **RISK REPORT (RED RAG ITEMS)**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented the report, highlighting the following points:

- Hard-to-fill vacancies
Some progress has been made, and the HR team were thanked for the work carried out with curriculum and their creativity in filling vacancies. At the end of last year, engineering and construction had 20 vacancies; this has now decreased to only 12 across the college. Three of these vacancies have been advertised for five months or more. The hardest areas for recruitment are air conditioning, fabrication and welding, and business. The vice principal informed governors that a female staff member has commenced in post in engineering, but the biggest struggle is with the air conditioning vacancy as applicants have chosen to go elsewhere due to travel.

- Failure to improve target grades in comparison to 2022
At progress check 4, vocational grades looked much better than at the same point last year, at -0.5. However, some areas were more than one grade behind:
 - Art and design (-1.3). The end projects are very heavily weighted, so it is hoped there will be significant late improvement.
 - Business (-1.01) has had some staffing issues and is still a team member down, but the area has a strong head of department who has introduced great energy and employer links. The new formative assessment process is working well, but there is still more work to do in terms of teaching to the top. However, the head of department has been pulled away from this focus due to having to teach. Recent exam results showed better performance.
 - E-sports (-1.32) got off to a strong start last academic year, but this year's Level 2 cohort has more barriers to learning. Interventions are in place, as is 1:1 coaching, but this group of learners is of concern.

At progress check 4, the residual score shows that most learners studying T-Levels are half a grade in front. Construction is well over a grade in front, which is positive. Attendance is better in T

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Levels than the college's average vocational attendance, and students are performing very well. However, it is necessary to bear in mind the difficulty of the upcoming external exams.

The update in relation to T Levels was positively received. Overall, this was felt to be a very strong position, and governors were pleased to see the regular updates through progress management reviews and these committee papers. It was observed that maths and English will always be a challenge, but good progress has been made so far.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

9 **PERFORMANCE REPORT – DATA ON A PAGE 2023/24**

The assistant principal: quality and standards introduced this item and particularly drew the committee's attention to the following data:

Education programmes for young people

- Attendance has declined by 0.5% since the last meeting but is the same as at this point last year (84.5%).
- Retention (91.2%) has declined by 2.2% but is 3% above last year and 2.5% above the national average.
- Progress overall (-0.75) shows that learners are a quarter of a grade ahead compared to this time last year.
- English attendance is 77.9%, which is 1.7% above this point last year.
- Maths has seen a decline in attendance since this point last year, at 78.9% compared to 80%.
- Maths and English have both seen a significant increase in learner numbers.

Adult learning programmes

- Direct delivery retention (94.3%) has seen a slight decline since the last meeting and a more significant decline since the same point last year. This is not a concern taking into consideration the volume of learners in the college.
- Subcontracted and community delivery retention (94.4% and 90% respectively) and achievement rates (73.7% and 66.7% respectively) have seen a decline in comparison to last year but have increased since the previous meeting.

Apprenticeships – direct delivery

- Retention shows a decline of 1.5% and is only 0.8% above this point last year. This is under heavy scrutiny and is monitored closely by leaders, managers and exec.
- 20% off-the-job training shows a slight increase since the last meeting but remains in decline compared to this point last year.

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- Reviews in the last three months shows a slight decline compared to last meeting and, at 83.4%, remains a decline in comparison to this point last year (which was 89%).

Deep dives meeting expectations (percentage grade 2 or better)

- Deep dives of classroom-based learning show an increase, with 57.1% achieving grade 2 or better.
- Apprenticeships deep dives show that 50% have achieved grade 2 or better.
- Subcontracting deep dives show that 100% have achieved grade 2 or better.

One governor raised an issue in relation to the format of this data report and reminded staff of the suggestion that this be made more user-friendly for governors. She indicated that some of the columns are not headed, making it unclear what the data actually means. It is also not clear where the largest concerns are, so it is not known how useful the data is and what governors should be looking at. The principal indicated that this is almost a gross error check document, and the data is mostly presented through other reports and covered elsewhere within the meeting papers. It is presented to provide the full picture and to show when data is unusual so that this can be questioned and resolved or so that governors can challenge where they feel that there is something which leaders and managers haven't explored. However, headers will be added to the columns to make this clear. It was acknowledged that it might be possible to change this format for the next academic year, and this will be looked into before the first meeting of 2024/25.

AP: Q&S June 2024

Principal /
VP: C&Q /
AP: C&S September
2024

One governor asked whether it could be shown where the data cross-references to the other papers so that governors have an at-a-glance view of what really needs to be discussed and where there are/are not concerns, and it was agreed that this will also be explored for the next meeting.

AP: Q&S June 2024

AGREED:

- to note the content of the update provided
- to add headers to the columns within the 'data on a page' report
- that the format of the report will be looked at to see whether it can be changed for next academic year.

10

A LEVELS

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

- Year 13 attendance has dropped by 4.2%, but this is because some students have chosen not to attend the extra intervention sessions which have been timetabled. Students who have not attended these sessions have been chased.

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- Year 12 attendance shows a slight decline but is above college average and RAG-rated green.
- The progress check 4 residual for Year 13 is -1.11 against a target of 0, so this is a concern. Nonetheless, this has improved by nearly half a grade since the last progress check (a six-week period). All subjects are RAG-rated red with the exception of film studies, and the residual shows that not enough learners are working at their target grades.
- The Year 12 residual score is -0.65 and is not of concern at this point as there is still over a year of teaching to go. The residual scores in some areas, such as art and design, maths and sociology, are slightly lower. Mock exams will take place in summer and will give a better idea of performance. These results will be used to inform conversations with students.
- ALPS scores for Year 13 (the ninth progress check over a two-year period) show improvements from progress check 3 but there is still some concern as 11 subjects are in blue.
- To target concerns around Year 13 and drive improvements, the area has planned the following: extra one-hour revision lessons; targeted intervention sessions; coaching and 1:1s for students; academic study lessons focusing on revision strategies such as the use of software and on testing strategies; teachers and achievement coaches are communicating with parents and carers; STAR sessions are being provided to enable learners to sit revision papers in controlled conditions; and external motivational speakers have come in to speak about positive mindset. The vice principal has observed lessons and obtained feedback, and students confirmed that they left the sessions feeling more motivated. A campaign is taking place in relation to the countdown to exams. All learners who did not perform to their minimum target grades have been given extra teaching and resat the mock exams, where they have revisited core content. Intervention is now much more targeted and meaningful, and attendance is now an expectation.
- The Year 12 ALPS scores present no significant concerns at this point.
- Retention for Year 13 is low at 70.7% and has declined since the last meeting. Some students have moved courses or can still achieve their intended destination just with an AS. Targeted conversations have taken place involving students and parents.
- Year 12 retention is 96% – this is a slight decline.
- The residual for Year 13 overall at progress check 4 is 6, but the head of sixth form feels this is still on track to achieve the prediction of 5.5.

The student governor informed governors that a number of students are experiencing problems with the ongoing construction work, which is causing disruption in lessons. There is a concern that this will affect

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exams as well as learning. The principal asked the vice principal: curriculum and quality and assistant principal: academic, creative, community, digital and professional studies to invite the director: IT, estates and learning resources to speak to students about what is happening and when. Student governors were assured that the exams will all be taken at the front of the building, as far away from the works as possible. Where there are larger candidate numbers which can't be placed in the front classrooms, the construction will stop for the duration of the exams. Some sound barriers are also being constructed, hopefully in time for the exams, and all students will be provided with earplugs. The student indicated that the front rooms are next to the main road, and these can also be noisy – this is less of a problem in lessons but not ideal in exams. The vice principal and assistant principal will speak to the director, as suggested, and will then feed back to the students. It was acknowledged that there needs to be a balance between improving campuses and ensuring that the quality of learning is not impacted.

VP: C&Q /
AP:
ACCDPS

April 2024

The chair questioned whether some of the students who did not stay on programme moved to other programmes within the college, and it was confirmed that the majority did decide that A Levels were not for them and moved to other departments. Some also went into apprenticeships, which does sometimes show as negative, although this reporting is being tidied. It was discussed that the current Year 13 cohort of learners has been the most impacted as their GCSEs fell during COVID, so taking their A Levels and actually sitting exams was a large step. Year 12 is much less of a concern, and it is hoped that their retention will be better. It was also confirmed that fewer Year 13 students have left the college this year than from last year's cohort. The assistant principal: academic, creative, community, digital and professional studies also indicated that many students did not perform well in their mock exams but were still allowed to progress to Year 13 even though this might not have been the best thing for them.

One governor questioned what the intended destinations are for those Year 13 students who are still giving cause for concern. It was asked whether these are tied to performance in exams and, if so, whether there is a safety net to ensure that they will still have options. Staff explained that, where students do not want to go to university, the team is ensuring they obtain careers advice to inform their choices. This is why some students have dropped to an AS rather than failing an A Level, to ensure that they can still progress to something. There will also be clearing, during which students can be supported into a HE destination. Furthermore, students do not always take mock exams as seriously as they should and, when they find they have to resit them, their performance has sometimes improved by up to two grades.

AGREED: to note the contents of the report.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair


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11 **PRIORITY LEARNERS DATA REPORT**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her report, and key matters highlighted were:

- The vice principal is pleased with the data pertaining to young people in foster care – attendance and retention are better than college averages, and progress is in line with peers.
- The vice principal has carried out an investigation of learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), as their attendance is slightly behind peers. She has discovered that a number of young people with an EHCP refuse support, and it is there where attendance concerns emerge and where destinations are not achieved. She indicated that, once support has been declined, the college is no longer meeting the provisions laid down in the guidance. A resulting question is why the EHCP is still in place and how the college should approach this next year. This is being explored with the local authority.
- High needs data is higher than college averages in all respects.
- Table 3 within the report shows how well the college has done in closing the gap in terms of destinations for priority learners. The was described as largely positive. The gap for learners with an EHCP closed by 8.7%, but it remains stubbornly wider for 19+ care experienced young people and young people closed to a Child in Need plan. However, these are small numbers of students, and data is impacted more heavily where numbers are small.
- Proportionately more learners from priority groups studied at a lower level within the college, particularly those closed to a Child in Need plan, 16-18 high needs learners, and those with EHCPs. The majority moved into the DFN Project Search or supported internships, programmes which will support them into employment and so could be categorised as a positive destination. However, three learners closed to Child in Need plans dropped to Level 1 from Level 2 programmes.
- Table 4 within the report outlines the destinations of priority learners by group. The college has made good progress in closing the gap for high needs and ECHP learners, but there is still some work to do around care experienced young people and those closed to Child in Need plans. The vice principal has started to analyse this data line by line to work out where the issues are.

The chair observed that it is not good that young people are declining the support which has been made available to them, and he indicated that this has been an issue for a while. It was discussed that, even if a young person declines the support, it is often the case that their parents want to keep the plan in place and there is then a difficult conversation to be had. The parent may then take the local authority to a tribunal if the plan is taken away, which means the local authority has to decide whether it is willing to risk this.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 18/06/2024

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

12 **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (STUDENTS) EXCEPTIONS REPORT**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience referred to her detailed report, and key matters highlighted included:

- Incidents to date have included some homophobic and transphobic bullying, and there has been an increase in incidents of racial bullying. All except one incident have been lower level, but one of the racial abuse concerns did result in a student being excluded.
- The college has also excluded a student who subjected a Muslim staff member to some serious Islamist abuse.
- All other concerns have resulted in low level disciplinary warnings.
- Appendix 1 includes an update on current progress against the equality, diversity and inclusion action plan, including actions within the community engagement strategy.
- The college currently has a resource issue in the careers team. The specialist careers advisor post became vacant before Christmas, and it has not been possible to recruit to fill this vacancy. The team is incredibly stretched so, not only is this impacting on the service for priority students, but the team as a whole is also not able to offer appointments before May.
- Some students have been engaging in community projects – e.g. sport students taking part in activities in local primary schools – and feedback received has indicated that the students have been positive role models.
- The assistant principal: academic, creative, community, digital and professional studies and the head of human resources are working with employers to look at an inclusive recruitment strategy. This will involve identifying economically inactive people and asking what they want from a job, then tailoring a job to meet those needs.
- There has been some slippage in terms of the family learning programme and the publication of an inclusive employment pledge, which have not yet progressed.

One governor raised a question as to whether pressures caused by the current vacancy in careers might encourage more staff members to leave. The vice principal does not think this will be the case as the current team is stable and consists of long-serving members of staff. However, the role has been advertised three times with no success. The head of human resources has been asked to do a piece of work around salaries – for example, in universities, salaries for similar roles are significantly higher. Most desirable candidates are Level 6 as a minimum, and this is what the college is struggling to attract. It might be necessary to take

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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someone without a Level 6 and then train them, but there is a risk that such a person would then leave for higher pay.

AGREED: to note the contents of the report

13 **DESTINATIONS – 2022/23 ACTUAL**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her report, particularly highlighting the following points:

- Activity concluded at the end of January.
- 93.9% of learners stayed in learning or progressed to positive destinations. Of these, 81.1% went into employment, an apprenticeship, Higher Education, or a higher level of study, which is almost same as in the previous year.
- 1.1% of destinations are unknown, a decrease on the previous year.
- 4% left to become NEET, a decline since last academic year.
- The number of learners who repeated a level of study has increased from last academic year.
- Those who stayed in learning but on a lower level has increased by 1.5% from last academic year; however, the number repeating a level has decreased.


In response to a query from the chair, governors were informed that 78% of learners have submitted a UCAS application, and it is felt that the low number progressing to Higher Education last year was due to the A-Level grades. It is hoped that there will be an improvement this year and also that more will go to higher level apprenticeships. It was acknowledged that it was positive to see the upward trend in terms of this year's Year 12 and 13 A-Level cohorts and that this might indicate the tail-end of the impact of COVID.

In progress management reviews this week, the vice principal has had a conversation with the assistant principal and head of sixth form about informing A-Level students in relation to higher-level apprenticeships. It might be possible to get the employer engagement team involved to speak to teachers about what an apprenticeship looks like so that teachers then have more confidence in promoting this option to students. Higher-level apprenticeships would also be a better option for some students in terms of finances.

AGREED: to note the contents of the report

14 **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT**

The vice principal: communications engagement and student experience presented a verbal report, indicating that it was very positive to hear the chair's update in relation to the employer advisory boards.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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The engineering employer advisory board is being relaunched and a meeting has been organised for May. The assistant principal intends to catch up with employers beforehand to discuss what they want to cover.

The construction board is also being relaunched and there has been good uptake from employers so far.

The college has also been doing a lot of work in terms of taking on a leadership role over Mansfield and Ashfield 2020, and this is seen positively as a vehicle to support engagement with local employers.

The vice principal has also scheduled a meeting with the assistant principals to devise the college's business development model and what this might look like, as well as how to react timely and flexibly to the employer need.

Employer engagement was a focus of the recent strategy day. This was a positive event and the chair acknowledged that it is good to see this work being taken forward.

AGREED: to note the content of the update.

15 **COMPLAINTS (IN-YEAR UPDATE)**


The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her report, particularly highlighting the following points:

- The college does receive more complaints than are reported here, but the vast majority are resolved at team level and are not recorded at an executive/governance level.
- The majority of the complaints received related to teaching and learning. However, of the 20 received year to date, none were about quality. Rather, they related to communication between teaching teams and students. A number of complaints were also raised in relation to learners being unable to access their preferred courses due to their grades, so this is more about the customer service element.
- The change to the bus service has also reduced the number of formal complaints received around transport, with only one having been received in-year by the college. However, it was observed that many of these complaints are now likely to be going directly to the bus companies rather than to the college.

AGREED: to note the contents of the update.

16 **LEARNER VOICE REPORT (MONITORING)**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented this report. Key matters to note were as follows:

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 18/06/2024

- The Rate Your Course survey was completed towards the end of January 2024.
- Nearly 1,400 responses were received for Rate Your Course, which is one of highest response rates seen.
- Just over 90% of learners said they learned a lot or some new things, which is a reduction of 2% on the previous survey.
- Only 1.3% said they learned nothing.
- Just over 90% would recommend the college to a friend.
- Responses from construction and building services learners were the least positive, with only 89% saying they 'learned loads' but 91% saying they would recommend the college to a friend.

The second part of the paper presented an update on the Your Voice meetings. The second meeting took place on 4th March and the minutes were attached for governors to read. No issues were raised around the quality of teaching and learning; comments mostly pertained to canteens and student behaviour.

The chair indicated that the results of the Rate Your Course survey are positive, and governors were pleased to see the high response rate.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.


17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of additional business.

18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

This was confirmed as Tuesday 18th June 2024 at 17:00.

Meeting closed at 19:10.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 18/06/2024