

**College of West Anglia  
Minutes of the  
Performance Review and Quality Committee  
20 September 2023  
8.30am  
Meeting Room, Principal's Suite**

<b>Present</b>	Sam Fletcher Chris Ashman Scott Leadley David Pomfret	Governor (Chair) Governor Governor Governor (Principal)
<b>Attending</b>	Kerry Heathcote Rob Petto Sarah Anstiss Laura Holland Sue Moore Ria Steventon Rachel Boast Clare Pelling Hilary Sowden Lisa Pepper Jules Bridges	Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Assistant Principal Funding and Performance Head of Apprenticeships and WBL Head of Faculty – Maths, English, ESOL Head of Faculty – Technology Head of Learning Improvement Head of Faculty – Public Sector Services Head of Learner Experience Head of Faculty, Creative Arts, Foundation & Engagement Programme Manager, Hair and Beauty Head of Governance

No.	Action
<p><b>1 Apologies</b> There were no apologies for absence, but non-attendance will be recorded for Fliss Miller.</p>	
<p><b>2 Declarations of Interests</b> There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p><b>3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 June 2023</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2023 were reviewed and <b>agreed</b> as being an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>4 Matters Arising</b> The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report. The completed items are to be removed from the table.</p>	HoG
<p><b>5 Election of Vice Chair</b> The Chair nominated Chris Ashman recognising this would be a temporary arrangement as the Board searches to appoint other members to the committee. <b>Approved</b> by a show of hands</p>	
<p>S Anstiss and S Moore joined the meeting at 8.35am</p>	
<p><b>6 Priority Item 1 – Apprenticeships/Technology</b> The report was received and noted. A governor asked in terms of outcomes, what would the quality of the curriculum look like if the legacy issues affecting outcomes were stripped away? It was acknowledged that this would be a very different report as the aim is to clear down the number of individuals who have been on programme for far too long. Significant progress has been made but this work continues. In terms of quality going forward there are still challenges, training plans is one area of weakness</p>	

and there are teething issues with the CRM. Resolving these will help to drive quality and completion rates in a more positive way. Monitoring of learners on programme has been heightened enabling closer focus on those who may be struggling and a different delivery model for maths and English should impact positively, with learners completing in the first year rather than being left to tail off in later years. The committee asked to see the report with the legacy numbers separated so that they could understand how effective processes are to clear these down.

HoAppWBL  
HoTech

Governors queried how the team knows in year that learners are progressing at the rate that they are supposed to and need to? It was acknowledged that there are sticking points in the process and the team are pushing back with employers, or forcing breaks in learning until there is re-engagement. The Principal/CEO highlighted the audit risks caused by poor practice in the past particularly around lack of evidence or consistent approach to training plan development at the beginning. The consequence of this is a lack of clarity for employers and a plan for off the job training. There are some significant gaps but there is confidence that teams now understand their responsibilities. The committee will continue its oversight and scrutiny.

R Petto joined the meeting at 8.50am

The Chair commented that the audit committee will be focused on the external scrutiny of the ESFA but for this committee the focus will be the external scrutiny of Ofsted so it was questioned what confidence the team has that they can evidence that current practice is quality enough to enable them to park the legacy issues that we have. For assurance the DCEO/VPC&Q explained that comparisons of the apprentices past their end date in 2019/20 was 845; at the end of the 2022/23 academic year this had reduced to 325 and is currently now at 66 so this is evidence that would support significant progress and understanding of the issues. Work with the team continues to ensure that messages to inspectors' lines of enquiries are consistent and understood.

A governor asked if the right risk had been identified in the risk register acknowledging that actions to improve the provision have been taken but reports are not showing the positive impact. It was recognised that deliverables will take time to emerge. There is a lot of work to do with the team, systems need to be embedded and positive impact will then follow. There is confidence that this will emerge in the next few weeks with the implementation of the CRM and a better position evident and reportable in December 2023.

S Anstiss and S Moore left the meeting and L Holland joined at 9.15am

## **7 Priority Item 2 - Maths**

The Head of Faculty for Maths, English and ESOL reported that GCSE maths outcomes were positive for the college. Nationally outcomes are at 12.4% with the college 11% above. 16-18s were 7% above national average and 19+ were nearly 20% above. CWA was 5% up on 2019 for 16-18s and 1% up on 19+. There was a 36-mark grade boundary change which was significant and had it not changed CWA outcomes would have been 58%. None-the-less, good progress can be evidenced.

The achievement rate data for functional skills outcomes are yet to be finalised as some resits are still taking place. The pass rate data shows that level 1 students are 13% above national and level 2 are 25% above. Entry level students (276) are 20% up on the year before.

Student numbers are incredibly high this year. There are an additional 404 students for maths (37% increase) and there are 118 adults enrolled. Programmes for maths have been timetabled 3 times and staff capacity of course is a challenge. Adverts are out for teaching staff and a trainee lecturer has been recruited. There are two members of staff absent but they are due to return shortly. Staff are stretched but this continues to be monitored.

It was noted that 20% of 16-18 students did not get a grade 4 or better and a governor questioned if it can be evidenced that these learners progressed. The Head of Faculty confirmed that most have made progress on their year-end goal but it is difficult to evidence that they have made progress from their grade at school as they may have achieved a low grade 3 at school and achieved a high grade 3 at college.

Having received the report and assurance of good outcomes for learners the committee resolved that it would no longer keep this agenda item as an area of specific focus. Scrutiny will continue through other reports to the committee such as the operational oversight report presented by the DCEO/VPC&Q.

## **8 Priority Item 3 - ESOL**

The report confirmed positive results for ESOL, particularly for 19+ learners. These learners in terms of achievement rate were 30% below national average last year and are now 4% above. The move to split the qualification into three parts was the right decision to enable students to flex their learning and achieve. 16-18 learners on ESOL do a full-time course which is not split into modules. There are behavioural issues, and some learners were moved on. Achievement is 14% below national rates, but the decision has been made to split the programme to improve achievement.

There are 207 ESOL students enrolled compared to 322 last year but enrolment continues throughout the year. 16-18 learner numbers are down at Wisbech enrolment continues. Students are embracing their medium-term plans and schemes of work and lesson plans. There are two members of staff (out of five) in the team on long term absence, but an advert is out to recruit on an hourly paid basis to infill.

A governor asked if the destination of these learners is known and if their learning is bringing positive changes to their lives. The Head of Faculty commented that Christmas is a pinch point for these learners, with many returning to home countries and not returning to learning. There are plans to improve student tracking systems to capture destination data via WhatsApp, and other social media platforms, and swifter processes determined for those who may withdraw from learning at any point.

The committee recognised the staffing challenges but acknowledged the success of the team and it was agreed that ESOL is no longer a focus area for this committee.

L Holland left the meeting at 9.35am

## **9 Meeting Skills Needs Deep Dive Report**

The report was received by the committee which detailed that the findings of the process has informed the position statement for meeting skills needs. There is confidence that the college could evidence a 'strong' contribution to inspectors and teams are being coached to express this with consistency across the college, providing examples of responding to the skills needs of employers, community, civic, and other educational providers.

A governor queried to what extent study programme destinations could be evidence of meeting employer needs. The destination data doesn't capture the employer where the learner has gone just that their destination is into employment. Inspectors may ask this at course level so coaching staff teams to articulate their work and give examples will be important. It was noted that the college has applied for an AoC Beacon Award, the City and Guilds Award for college engagement with Employers which will be a great accolade for the college to share with inspectors, if successful.

Hilary Sowden and Lisa Pepper joined the meeting at 9.50am

## **10 Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy Deep Dive Impact Report**

The Programme Manager commented that the deep dive didn't feel particularly positive at the start but turned out to be one of the best things that could have happened to the department. The process enabled changes to the curriculum from level 1 to level 3 and

the feedback from staff and students has been good and the progression from level 3 and progression onto higher education and employment has really increased. The quick feedback from the deep dive, clear direction of what needed to be done was pragmatic, provided good ideas and discussion that has been embraced by the team.

The Principal/CEO commented that he had observed at a team meeting that the focus was very much on the qualification as the driving force, and the team was insistent to teach the qualification to ensure learners were work ready with the skills and experience for industry.

The committee was interested to know what the team will change in the next year or two. The Programme Manager said that they would welcome another deep dive at any time. Change is good and prevents complacency. The changes made after the deep dive are now having an impact. Attendance has been 95% for the year which is really stretching but demonstrates learners' engagement and commitment to the programme. The team are enjoying the freedom to reach out to employers to ask what else they need from level 3 learners to ensure they are more employable when the leave. They are taking ownership and accountability for the success of their learners.

Hilary Sowden and Lisa Pepper left the meeting at 10.05am

The Chair asked for reports/agenda items to specify what governors are to scrutinise or challenge and it was noted that there was a two-page profile missing from the pack of papers that would have detailed this which the Head of Governance will circulate to the committee.

HoG

#### **11 Operational Oversight Report**

It was reported that the retention target of 90% was not achieved in the year and it has been set at 92% this academic year. Good progress was made but between May and August 2023 retention dropped by 1.8% which although this is lower than the drop the year before, there is still work to do.

Under item 1.5a of the report it was noted that there was some script missing and some items on 1.5b are to be amended for presenting to the committee at the next meeting to be held in November 2023. The Open University policy and compliance visit takes place tomorrow and will involve a deep dive process which will be useful for the application to register with the Office for Students as part of the HE Strategy work.

DCEO/VPC&Q

Governors asked for clarity as to why there is a 10% difference in retention between faculties F02 and F04. It was confirmed that this was attributable to the year 1 A level students who were not retained onto the second year of study. This year will be different and additional oversight of withdrawals has been implemented.

#### **12 Learning and Curriculum Report**

Governors commented that the report looks as though no observations of Public Services have been completed but it was confirmed that the data just hasn't pulled through. An updated report will come back to the committee at the next meeting to be held in November 2023.

DCEO/VPC&Q

The committee asked for assurance that the long-term issues are understood and the areas for improvement are being made. The report doesn't reflect a changed picture from previous reports. The Head of Learning Improvement commented that there are supportive processes in place to drive improvement and build confidence but autonomy of development with teachers needs revision. Personal development plans are now linked to appraisals and line managers have oversight of PDPs which historically had been removed. Support for teaching staff is more effective and efficient with fewer 1-2-1 mentoring and more groups being brought together to share best practice and make better use of the TLP team as a resource. PDPs only play a small part of the improvement needed. Growth mindset training, accountability questioning, skills matrix

and staff development pieces covering wider curriculum areas all contribute to bringing about the change.

The Chair commented that the report doesn't reflect the impact that the Head of Learning Improvement shared verbally at the meeting. The explanation given would have had an impact, would have brought about change but the report doesn't reflect this. The Chair asked that future reports on the number of observations that have taken place and highlights where the issues are, and the planned resolution for improvement. The Chair asked if there were elements that are of concern and if there is inequality between faculty observations and learning practice. The Head of Learning Improvement suggested that a risk-based approach to reporting and scrutiny will be taken so that improvement can be targeted and is visible. It was agreed that the table in the report will be updated and refreshed with more context of strengths and weaknesses of delivery and details the areas for improvement.

HoLI

### 13 TLA Strategy Annual Review

The changes have been updated against the Ofsted EIF and enhanced messaging to staff around the changes. The additions and changes proposed were **agreed** by the committee.

### 14 Curriculum Planning Strategy

It was confirmed that the updates from previous meeting have been included and the curriculum planning expectations and approach revisited to include meeting skills needs. The committee **approved** the strategy presented, particularly noting that the strategy has been clearly embedded as this was evident through the agenda items of this meeting.

### 15 Quality Improvement Plan 2022/23 – Year End Review

It was reported that all previous redundant and completed targets have been archived and there were two updates that have moved forward. The leader for apprenticeships has been amended, and on the leadership and management recruitment and retention updates, there are some HR initiatives to streamline recruitment stages and intakes are now fortnightly instead of monthly. The collective agreement with Unions has been updated to match the teacher induction process launched as of September 2023.

Regarding the adult curriculum, the intention is to increase participation and improve outcomes for adult learners. The AEB budget is a perennial difficult target to hit but the committee commented that the actions look as though progress is being made but it was questioned if we are doing the right actions to get close to hitting the target. It was agreed that a root cause analysis was needed to establish the right actions. The key barrier to growth is staff capacity to develop a wider offer. It was suggested that the QIP includes creating greater flexibility in staff teams through recruitment and employer engagement as there is a sense that curriculum focus on study programmes, apprentices, and HE, and are less focused on adult provision. The DCEO/VPC&Q is working with Heads of Faculty to explore opportunities and different ways of working and will report back to the committee with the outcome of these discussions.

DCEO/VPC&Q

Rachel Boast joined the meeting at 10.45am

### 16 Applewood Nursery Annual Report 2022/23

The Head of Faculty, Public Sector Services reported that the number of children versus the number of staff and capacity are stretched. As a registered Ofsted the nursery has a maximum number of 52 children in the building at any one time. This gives 12 children in the baby room, 15 in the middle age range and 25 in the top room. Currently there are 72 children on roll but obviously not all attend every day. The resource is growing, as is the reputation. Since the college community learning conference in March 2023 an additional 8 members of staff have signed their children up to the nursery and one of the new room leaders is a real whizz on social media which is increasing awareness and the profile of the nursery. Cold calls are being

received all the time from parents wishing to register their children. The challenge is to turn the fortunes of the provision around as the staffing ratios currently prevent growth. An advert is out to find another full-time member of staff. There is a waiting list for the baby room that cannot be satisfied due to the constraints of the building. The aspiration of the team is to come back to ask for a new building to fulfil the demand and see the nursery become a central of excellence for the education of early years practitioners for the region. The team is also looking to offer adult courses to parents and offer progression onto other CWA courses and/or higher learning.

Governors were interested to learn that there are former students on the payroll bank and the nursery offers placement opportunities to not just early years practitioners but also the Health and Social Care learners. This is particularly useful for young people who are thinking about getting into paediatric nursing for example to give them the exposure and planned educational visits for the health and social care cohorts for when they are studying their child development units and really need to understand what the differences are of what a 9-month-old baby can do and a 3 and a half year old child.

The committee congratulated the changed fortunes of the Applewood Nursery and asked what the key changes have been in the last two years, pre-pandemic. The team has matured, and complacency diminished. Financial viability is now recognised as well as the need to forge links with employers and business. The nursery will extend its hours to 6pm in response to parents need. Many nurseries will not take children under the age of 9 months so there is opportunity for growth.

Rachel Boast left the meeting and at Clare Pelling joined the meeting at 10.55am

#### **17 Hearing the Student Voice 2022/23**

Governors asked what key improvements for study programme learners have been made in the year. The enrichment offer is an area that has received a lot of positive feedback from students but on the flip side there is a question around resource and a big push with investing in surveys. Enrichment activities have grown through the involvement and drive of the student council. There has been lots of activities which have been relatively small, but these have had big impact on student satisfaction. It was noted that the take-up of surveys has been insignificant, and it was acknowledged that survey participation does need to improve. You Said, We Did responses and communication will help drive participation as it is recognised that the college needs to be able to demonstrate how students input and ideas have made a difference, otherwise learners are unlikely to want to participate.

Clare Pelling left the meeting at 11.00am

#### **18 2022/23 Strategic Targets Progress Review**

The year end progress of strategic targets was shared with the committee. There are a number behind target, and it was noted that progress had been made but the percentage target for example was not hit. After discussion, it was agreed that target 2.1 would be split out as two targets for the 2023/2024 academic year, one for HE and one for Adult Education. This will be reflected in the new strategic plan.

DCEO/VPC&Q

#### **19 Any other business**

The staff governor will complete his term of office in October 2023. The Chair, on behalf of the committee, thanked him for his valued contribution to their work. His ability to differentiate his role from being a member of staff has been exemplary and he has been an asset to the membership of the committee and will be missed.

#### **20 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation**

- Legacy issues still exist with apprenticeship practice but the number of out of funding learners has significantly reduced from 845 in 2019, down to only 66 currently.
- The committee will continue to keep close scrutiny of apprenticeship/technology areas

- Some great results on GCSE maths and functional skills. The committee will no longer keep maths, or English under close scrutiny.
- Meeting skills needs is part of Ofsted's enhanced inspections. There is confidence that the college could evidence **a strong contribution to meeting skills needs** at inspection.
- The committee carried out the annual review of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy for the corporation to approve at the meeting.
- The year end quality improvement plan (QIP) was received and considered by the committee. Additions of new targets are being added for the 2023/24 QIP
- Student surveys show that students enjoy their experience at the college, are positive about the support they receive, feel that teachers are knowledgeable, and they feel safe.

## **21 Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday, 8 November 2023 at 8.30am

Meeting ended at 11.05am