



CURRICULUM AND QUALITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2022

Governors	Type	Initials	Attendance	Apologies
Mike Welsh	Chair / Independent	MW	X	
David Alexander	Principal / CEO	DA	X	
Sarah Stewart	Independent	SS	X	
Michael Wood-Williams	Independent	MWW	X	
Aneela Ali	Independent	AA		X
Carol Davenport	Independent	CD	X*	
Richard Rowe	Staff Governor	RR	X	
Clerk				
Nicola Taylor	Director of Governance & Compliance	NT	X	
Presenters				
Chris Toon	Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality	CT	X	
Deni Chambers	Director of Curriculum & Skills	DC	X	
Paul Gough	Director at Sora	PG	X	
Graham Cunningham	Head of Department of Construction	GC	X	
Tom Bradley	Head of Department of Art, Design & Media	TB	X	
Tracy Foreman	Assistant Principal: Curriculum	TF	X	
Helen Hepple	Assistant Principal: Curriculum	HH	X	
Andrew Robson	Assistant Principal: Quality	AR	X	
Kevin Marston	Assistant Principal: Curriculum	KM	X	
Richard Ward	Head of Quality Improvement	RW	X	

CQ/127 1. Chair's Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. Apologies were received from AA.

There were no conflicts of interest declared. Members were reminded to declare any conflicts that arose during the meeting.

CQ/128 2. Minutes of the last meeting dated 29 September 2022

The Committee **reviewed** the minutes from the previous meeting and **agreed** that there needed to be an amendment in relation to the Wave 2 extension in relation to Bootcamps.

Action: NT to amend previous minutes.

The minutes were approved.

CQ/129 3. Matters Arising / Action Log

The action log was noted.

CQ/130 4. Self-Assessment Report (SAR) – Process Overview

CT confirmed that the meeting was focussed around the SAR, and provided assurance of the validity, robustness and assessment of the process. CT noted that a number of colleagues had been invited to attend the meeting to provide short verbal presentations of their departmental / areas.

The Committee noted their wish to add value into the SAR process, and it was confirmed that the Chair had provided some additional feedback in advance of the meeting which was being implemented.

The following presentations were provided:

Sora

PG provided the Committee with an additional hardcopy document to present the Sora self-assessment and highlighted the following:

- Sora had been working with Gateshead College for a period of 9 years and Sora felt part of the organisation.
- Sora had self-assessed as a Grade 1, an improvement on the previous year's Grade 2, evidenced by their consistency over a sustained period.
- Sora had been previously inspected in January 2020 and were graded as Outstanding by Ofsted.
- The provision was split between short course adult education (approx. 2000 learners per year) and Level 2 & Level 3 Apprenticeships (approx. 40 apprentices per year).
- Performance data was strong, and above national average.
- The intent of the provision linked directly to the skills agenda, being focussed on improving the skills base of the North East's manufacturing sector and to improve job role performance.
- Skills challenges within the sector linked to attracting new people into the sector, staff retention, and managing the development gap. Sora aim to get learners into employment, and build confidence and resilience. This includes work around tools and techniques practice, work experience, problem solving and pathways to progression.
- Key points during 21/22 included the shift in the jobs market to full employment which resulted in lower numbers to the pre-employment provision.

Action: NT to circulate Sora self-assessment electronically post-meeting.

The Committee queried the following:

- Gradings of staff based off one lesson observation - The Committee noted their caution of grading individual lessons, suggesting that this was not providing a valid assessment. It was noted that an independent former Ofsted inspector assisted with the continued focus on teacher development, providing lesson observations with feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses. It was confirmed that this was an ongoing relationship where staff were familiar with the process. It was also noted that the provision of Sora fell into the Gateshead College partnership support process, and therefore the Quality Review Team worked closely with the staff, looking at data and key quality indicators, schemes of work, feedback from learners etc, and this evidenced the good provision offered.
- 40% job outcomes within the Sora network - It was suggested that this figure would be c70% however it was difficult to obtain the evidence outside of the Sora network. The Committee **further queried** what was being done about this. It was confirmed that learners were contacted for a period of 3 months following their course however it was often difficult to obtain feedback. It was noted that this was a particular challenge, with the national rate being at 32%.
 - The Committee **requested** that the focus on ensuring the robustness of the evidence collection continued.
- The strength of the relationship with Gateshead College – it was confirmed that direct delivery was an option, however Sora had decided to remain a partner of Gateshead College as the integration had been excellent and there was continued great relationships with staff.

Construction

GC presented the following:

- The provision was focussed around Study Programmes from Entry Level to Level 3 in Electrical Installation, Bricklaying, Plumbing, Carpentry and Joinery, an apprenticeship offer across Intermediate, Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships, and adult bootcamps.
- The Construction Department had self-assessed as a Grade 2, an improvement on the previous year's Grade 3, evidenced by the improvements made over the 21/22 academic year. The Grade 2 noted the need to continue to improve Apprenticeships.
 - It was noted that 21-22 was the first year where apprentices within the department sat End Point Assessments (EPAs).
- Improvement in teaching could be evidenced by observations, and learner voice was positive with 97% of learners enjoying their course.
- There was a 97% pass rate in English and Maths.
- Functional Skills required further improvement.
- Positive improvement had been made in Apprenticeships, with 64.8% achieving at Level 2 (6.8% above national average), 76.2% achieving at Level 3 (17.8% above national average) and 57.9% at Level 4 (2.6% above national average).
- The development of PlanBEE Manchester had been successful.
- Areas of challenge included the significant disruption and impact of Covid, staffing challenges with the sector, and reducing the number of legacy apprenticeships.
- Areas for further improvement included learner attendance (including attendance at English and Maths) and the offering of high-quality work experience (which had been impacted by Covid but remained an area for improvement).

The Committee queried the following:

- The move from a Grade 3 in 20/21 to a Grade 2 in 21/22 – it was suggested that this was due to the clearing of data in relation to legacy apprenticeships and the general improvements within apprenticeships.

- The Committee **questioned** that if apprenticeships had improved within the 20/21 year, if the self-assessment grade for 20/21 would have been a Grade 2 and it was suggested that it would.
- The decrease in the 16-18 achievement rates – it was suggested that this was due to the struggle with getting learners back into College after the impact and disruption of Covid.
 - The Committee **queried** what had been done to support and increase attendance, it was noted that the timetabling model had been improved and meetings with parents had taken place more regularly. Reference was made to the externally published In-Year Retention & Pass Rates Report for 21/22, noting that there had been a decrease nationally for retention in young learners.

Action: NT to circulate externally published In-Year Retention & Pass Rates Report for 21-22.

Art, Design and Media

TD presented the following:

- The department offered Level 1 to Level 3 provision across multi-discipline areas to predominantly 16-18 learners.
- The department had a history of consistently strong outcomes.
- During the 21/22 year, there was a review of the currency of the offer, which involved meeting with external organisations to develop and validate the provision.
- 21/22 saw the first year of CoLab, a Gateshead College initiative that delivers creative outcomes, commissioned by employers and artists by working collaboratively across multiple curriculum areas including Hair and Beauty, Games, Music, Business and Performing Arts.
- There had been challenges with work placement opportunities following Covid.
- The department had a strong, competent and experienced team, with a history of outstanding achievement and high-grade attainment.
- There had been a shift in focus to ensure continuous improvement and a focus on Curriculum Review and Evaluation (CRE). Diagnostic work had also been undertaken with learners, looking at their starting points and scaffolding within lessons.
- Areas for improvement included attendance at English and Maths (72.9%), achievement within functional skills (52%), and improving English and Maths skills within lessons.
- Strengths included the final show which took place in person, noticeable improvements in output, the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) project, the introduction of commerce, the introduction of CoLab and the output of learners. 98% of learners said teaching was good.

The Committee queried the following:

- Outreach and recruitment, and aligning the curriculum intent to language used by students – it was noted that this was worked upon in 21/22 in relation to the content development and language used, using schools to gain feedback. It was confirmed that this had made a positive impact.
- Currency of provision and growth within the sector – it was confirmed that the College were good geographically placed and were continuing to work with local organisations (including SME and Independent organisations) to understand new technology to ensure currency of provision. It was also confirmed that the College had been part of the skills development panel with Northern Screen.
- Low attendance in English and Maths – it was confirmed that this was a constant challenge and the staff were working with learners to understand the barriers. The Catch-Up Tuition Fund was being used where possible.

- The Committee **queried** the impact of this, and it was confirmed that attendance had improved for 22/23 and was at 88%. The Committee **welcomed the improvement**.
- Staff links with industry – it was noted that staff specialisms had been considered and they were continuing to work with industry directly.

The Committee thanked the staff for their presentations.

4.1. Education Programmes for Young People

TF presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The area of Education Programmes for Young People had been self-assessed as Good.
- Areas of strength included the curriculum planning and intent, with robust systems being in place.
- Areas for improvement included Maths and English, and work placements. There was also concern noted around the timeliness of information provided by external agencies relating to learners with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

The Committee queried the following:

- Careers, Advice, Information & Guidance (CIAG) provision – It was noted that there was still a discrepancy between embedding CIAG within the curriculum and with the independent advice offered, however improvements were being seen. It was noted that the CIAG was award winning, and that careers education was redesigned within the last year. It was agreed that the narrative would be strengthened in relation to students progressing onto university.
- The 89.9% achievement rate for 21/22, compared with a rate of 92.3% in 19/20 and 20/21 – It was confirmed that the national rate had also decreased and this was expected due to the impact of Covid and the volatility of awarding of Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) and Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs), then to a move to formal examinations. It was noted that the retention rate had dropped to 92.3% (95.4% in 19/20 and 93.6% in 20/21) however this was still above the national rate of 90.9%. It was suggested that Ofsted would probably not look at trend analysis due to the volatility.
- Issues with receiving up to date EHCPs – it was noted that there was a lack of timeliness in terms of the local authority providing up to date EHCPs to ensure smooth transition for learners and to allow the college to implement support. Work was ongoing to further strengthen relationships however it was suggested that the quality of the EHCPs needed improvement. A new Head of Department had been appointed and were currently reviewing the transition process ready for the new academic year.
 - The Committee **noted their disappointment with the impact this was having on the College.**

The Committee **noted** that there was a number of key themes across each of the sections within the SAR, and **suggested** that these areas could be pulled out into a summary section to prevent repetition, however it was noted that points related to multiple sections and it was important to empathise where this was the case. The Committee also **suggested** for the terminology of ‘weaknesses’ to be changed to areas of development or improvement.

Action: Executive Team to consider suggestion.

The Committee agreed with the proposed grading of Good.

4.2. Apprenticeships

DC presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The area of Apprenticeships had been self-assessed as Good.
- There was a good evidence base of monitoring, timeliness and tracking of progress.
- The intent is strong and is reviewed regularly through the curriculum planning cycle.
- Improvements throughout the year can be evidenced and are ongoing.

The Committee queried the following:

- Careers advice – it was confirmed that Apprentices are offered initial advice, as well as ongoing advice and guidance.
 - It was **suggested** to provide greater clarity with the document.
Action: Executive Team to consider suggestion.
- Future improvements – It was noted that the quality of reviews were being looked into, as well as the progress over time. Work continued in Teaching, Learning and Assessment, employer engagement and preparing apprentices.

The Committee **noted** the cultural shift in the Leadership and Management of the Apprenticeship journey and **thanked** the staff for the work within this area to the improved position.

The Committee **requested** for further information to be added in relation to employers feeling that the onboarding process was complicated.

Action: Executive Team to consider suggestion.

The Committee agreed with the proposed grading of Good.

4.3. Provision for Learners with High Needs

HH presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The area of Provision for Learners with High Needs had been self-assessed as Good.
- Historically, the area had been consistently graded as Outstanding, and the department continued to provide very good support to learners with complex needs and to support them to gain skills to move into employment.
- The suggestion of a grad of outstanding was due to the decline in achievement rates, directly linked to the decline in attendance, and due to the lack of work placements due to Covid. It was confirmed that there had been a 3% reduction in learners gaining employment.

The Committee discussed the following:

- Fewer learners achieving high grades for English and Maths, **suggesting** that it was a strength that learners had achieved their GCSEs.
Action: Executive Team to consider suggestion.
- The number of elements outside of the College's control, noting that the College had done everything possible within the environment they were working in.

The Committee suggested that the grading should be Outstanding, noting the impact of external factors outside of the College's control.

Action: Executive Team to consider suggestion.

4.4. Adult Learning Programmes

CT presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The area of Adult Learning Programme had been self-assessed as Outstanding.
- This was a strong area of work and strong pedagogy.
- The College had stayed within their intent and mission throughout the impact of Covid.
- The area was ahead on all metrics by a substantial amount in relation to national rates.

The Committee queried the following:

- The link between the self-assess grade of Outstanding and issues with spending the Adult Education Budget (AEB) – it was noted that there was difficulty within the market, with the market shrinking due to the impacts of Covid. It was confirmed that the quality of provision had always been good and this did not link with the issues regarding the spending of the budget.

The Committee agreed with the proposed grading of Outstanding.

4.5. Quality of Education

AR presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The area of Quality of Education had been self-assessed as Good.
- The intent of the provision was focussed around being well designed, aligned with the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) priorities and well as being well designed for the learner profile in the lower end of the deprivation profile.
- The implementation was through a strong track record of the development of teachers and practitioners, with learner data evidencing enjoyment of their provision.
- The impact was strong sustained achievement rates and strong progression.
- Areas for improvement included functional skills, attendance and engagement.

The Committee suggested the following:

- The removal of the area of development around the reduction in external work experience and placements for High Needs Learners with this being due to external factors where the College had no control.
- Including additional narrative within the list of strengths, including contextualisation of evidence to help illustrate the impact.

Action: Executive Team to consider suggestions.

The Committee queried the following:

- The development of the action plans for learners to include short-term actions with clear, measurable outcomes – it was noted that work was underway with the Apprentice teams and half termly cyclical quality reviews were providing feedback. Significant improvement could be seen and it was confirmed that this was a continuous process.

The Committee agreed with the proposed grading of Good.

4.6. Behaviour and Attitudes

KM presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The area of Behaviour and Attitudes had been self-assessed as Good.

- Strengths included the focus on developing learners' wider core skills and the activity of the Safeguarding Council.
- Areas for development included attendance, particularly Maths and English.

The Committee queried the following:

- Key actions to improve – it was confirmed that the College were aware of the challenges with attendance and are able to breakdown the data to identify areas of concern within departments. Local initiatives could then be implemented. It was noted that some learners were struggling economically and the College were looking at bursary support where possible.
 - The Committee **suggested** for the narrative around this area for improvement to be strengthened with the work being undertaken to address this.

Action: Executive Team to consider suggestion.
- Improving behaviour – it was noted that expectations and key messages around behaviour were being reinforced. It was discussed that a number of learners hadn't been in mainstream education previously or had their education disrupted during Covid. Needs were being identified to implement appropriate strategies. The number of learners with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) had increased by c20. Work was also ongoing with staff to tackle low level behavioural issues.
- Terminology around County Lines and if students were more familiar with these terms than at the last inspection – it was confirmed that this was the case, and the Personal and Social Development session themes were revisited on a regular basis, as well as messages being reinforced. It was noted that more external speakers had been invited into the College. Some messaging was also being targeted where there was a hot topic or area for concern with work around sequencing of sessions.

The Committee suggested that the grading should be Outstanding, noting the impact of external factors outside of the College's control.

Action: Executive Team to consider suggestion.

4.7. Personal Development

DC presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The area of Personal Development had been self-assessed as Outstanding. This was based on an evidence-based approach which had been tested with colleagues.
- The narrative was to be strengthened further in relation to adult learners.

The Committee **queried** if the language within the SAR linked to the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and it was confirmed that it did.

The Committee agreed with the proposed grading of Outstanding.

4.8. Leadership and Management

CT presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The area of Leadership and Management had been self-assessed as Grade 2 Good.
- This was an area of strength, with exemplary responses to challenges during 21/22, with learners remaining at the heart of decision making.
- Areas of strength included embedding into the local business community to enrich the curriculum and the work around financial sustainability.

The Committee suggested the following:

- The reiteration of the work undertaken with the Jewish Community, suggesting that this could be included elsewhere within the report to showcase the level of the work undertaken and the impact of this. It was confirmed that data from within the In-Year Retention & Pass Rates Report for 21-22 could be used to strengthen this section.
- The inclusion of the strengthening of the Board and the Executive Team throughout the 21/22 academic year.

Action: Executive Team to consider suggestion.

The Committee agreed with the proposed grading of Good.

4.9. Grading and recommendation of the Self-Assessment Report to the Board

The Chair provided a summary of the key points discussed, and made specific reference to the following:

- The Committee had reviewed the grades of each of the areas covered, with the recommendation of all grades remaining as suggested with the exception of Behaviour & Attitudes and High Needs, with the suggestion for these grades to be increased to Outstanding.
- Some strengthening of narrative was required to further evidence the gradings suggested.
- Some statements could be strengthened with quantitative data.
- The session had been very helpful.
- There was positive triangulation from the information provided to governors over the previous academic year aligning to that provided within the SAR.
- The Committee were proud to be part of the process and the improvements made.
- It was positive to see contribution from multiple authors, evidencing a team effort and strong articulation of their areas, including their passion for the College and learners.

Action: CT/DC to consider the feedback and suggested amends provided, and update the SAR prior to seeking Board approval at the December 2022 meeting.

The Committee confirmed their recommendation of the above gradings to the Board.

CQ/131 5. LSIP Update

DA presented the report and highlighted the following:

- A meeting had taken place on the previous day led by the North East Automotive Alliance (NEAA) at Nissan.
- A project manager had been appointed.
- There had been some debate about the suggested use of baseline and historic (pre-pandemic data).
- Priorities had been taken from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP), with the emphasis on Health being diluted.
- 16 different topics had been highlighted, with each college being asked to consider their reach and extent, with a discussion needing to take place to see which college could lead on each area. Further outcomes were awaited from the meeting to understand the structure, framework, governance and data.
- Other LSIP areas were evidently working differently, and those outside of the classified area of the "North East" region, according to the LSIP, had been in attendance at the meeting, however Gateshead College had not been invited to attend the meetings of others.

Remainder of this item covered under a confidential minute.

The Committee **discussed** the potential impact on LSIPs if there was a move to a larger combined authority.

The report was noted.

CQ/132 6. Strategic Risk Register

JC presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The Strategic Risk Register had been updated since the last meeting and the new format had been reviewed in detail by the Audit Committee where they also reviewed the risk categorisation and appetite.
- There were 4 relevant risks to this Committee:
 - Inability to deliver planned curriculum provision leads to failure to meet student outcome and progression targets.
 - Inability to successfully deliver planned curriculum provision leads to failure to meet income and funding targets.
 - Loss of stakeholder confidence as a consequence of failing to secure a 'Good' or better Ofsted judgement.
 - Failure to meet statutory requirements relating to Safeguarding and Prevent and the protection of young people and vulnerable adults.

The Committee queried the following:

- Potential of a risk relating to LSIPs and the curriculum meeting needs – It was confirmed that this had been discussed, and the College had agreed that this wasn't a strategic risk at the current point in time, with the potential risk needing to crystallise prior to being added. It was agreed that this was an important consideration and remained under review by the Executive Team. It was noted that potential risks were also being discussed at the Audit Committee, with the request for the Executive Team to horizon scan and highlight any potential new areas.
- Classification/ wording of "willing" – it was noted that there were no risks which Gateshead College had an appetite of willing, and there was a discussion around the College being ambitious. It was noted that this was also discussed at the Audit Committee meeting, with a specific focus around Teaching and Learning, however the College remained risk averse around the outcomes and future prospects of students and therefore remained cautious.
 - The Committee asked for the risk definitions of open and willing to be considered further with the term "willing" being included within the definition of open and the term "eager" being included within the definition of willing.

Action: JC to revisit risk classification definitions of open and willing.

The report was noted.

CQ/133 Any other business

N/A

CQ/134 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 9 February 2023 at 10.00am