



CURRICULUM AND QUALITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2023 – Main Minutes

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	
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	
Nadine Hudspeth	Director of Brand & Learner Experience	NH	X	
Ivan Jepson	Director of Business Development & Innovation	IJ	X [*] ^	
Jeremy Cook	Deputy Principal: Finance & Resources	JC	X	
Darren Heathcote	Head of Student Services and Customer Experience	DH	X [*] ^	
Richard Ward	Head of Quality Improvement	RW	X	
Andrew Robson	Assistant Principal	AR	X	
Kevin Marston	Assistant Principal	KM	X	
Tom Bradley	Assistant Principal	TB	X	

*Attended virtually / ^Attended for part of the meeting

CQ/135 1. Chair's Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. There were no apologies. There were no conflicts of interest declared. Members were reminded to declare any conflicts that arose during the meeting.

CQ/136 2. Minutes of the last meeting dated 24 November 2022

A) Main minutes

The Committee **reviewed** the main minutes from the previous meeting and **agreed** that they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

B) Confidential minutes

The Committee **reviewed** the confidential minutes from the previous meeting and **agreed** that they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

The minutes were approved.

CQ/137 3. Matters Arising / Action Log

The action log was presented, noting that all actions were closed or complete, and that updates relating to the North East LSIP would continue.

The action log was noted.

CQ/138 4. Safeguarding Update – Term 1

DH presented the report which provided Safeguarding referrals / activity (including Prevent) across Term 1. The report noted that there had been 100 referrals across the current academic year and DH provided a verbal update, noting this had increased to 109. This was in comparison to 2021/2022, where 130 referrals were received across the full academic year.

Referrals included incidents logged in relation to Prevent, and those relating to police involvement outside of the College. The College were in the process of considering alternative reporting systems.

The Project Choice provision had the highest number of referrals and there were no referrals relating to Apprentices.

The report included a breakdown of the referrals by type, curriculum area and protected characteristics, as well as referrals made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the Health & Wellbeing Coordinator. The report also included information relating to exceptional cases, learner feedback, staff & learner awareness campaigns, the College Safeguarding Team, the Rainbow Flag Award, supervision, the Single Central Records (SCR), the student Code of Conduct / low level concerns and an update on the work of the Safeguarding Steering Group, which MWW was a member of as the Safeguarding Link Governor.

The Committee discussed and queried the following:

- Departments where a larger number of referrals had been received – it was noted that referrals were generally consistent with the size of the cohort within the provision, however noted that the Project Choice provision had a large number of learners with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), support workers and additional needs. The increase in the number of referrals from this area was noted as a significant increase, however it was also confirmed that staff were being more vigilant following continued training. Mental Health issues continued to be an area of concern.

- The Committee **noted** that the College were likely to exceed the total number of referrals received in 2021/2022. The Committee also **noted** the return to 'normal' following covid, however **discussed** the continued impact this would have on learners.
- Lack of referrals in relation to apprentices – it was noted that this was not a concern as there was training in place to make referrals where required, however the Safeguarding Steering Group had also identified this and were going to continue to monitor. It was confirmed that referrals relating to apprentices was historically low, however the College were confident that this was not a cause for concern.
- Awareness of employers in relation to apprentice referrals – it was confirmed that a lot of work had taken place with employers ahead of placing apprentices to ensure that safeguarding / Prevent was embedded. This was reiterated as part of the induction and onboarding process, and there was a good level of oversight and training in place to ensure a sound understanding of the relevant processes. This had been further improved in the past 2 years.
- The College's preparations relating to a continued influx of learners presenting with different behaviours following the impact of the pandemic. It was noted the College had been discussing this internally, and there was a tension between the duty to provide students with the employment edge, and providing students with compassion and care. The College were having initial conversations regarding the increase of the welfare support available as more time was required and this was currently taking up the resource of the curriculum staff. Curriculum design also needed to be considered, ensuring a safe space for learners and to support their needs. Work continued with the Teacher Academy in relation to pedagogy and cognitive behaviour management, and work was underway to analyse where there may be reoccurring incidents to address these. Work also continued with parents as part of the enrolment, induction and onboarding process to ensure the College expectations were clear from the outset.
- Linkage between the support and curriculum teams – it was confirmed that there was clear linkage in place with a supportive infrastructure, however further resource was required. It was noted that complex cases could be incredibly time consuming and the College were cognisant that they wanted to ensure an appropriate level of resource to support all learners.
- Student Governors / Student Voice – it was noted that Student Governors / Student Voice was missing from the meeting. The Committee **agreed** that this was important. The Chair noted that there had been conversations relating to potentially revising the meeting times for 23/24 to facilitate Student Governor / Teaching Staff Governor attendance.

Action: NT / MW to continue to discuss meeting timings for 23/24.

The Safeguarding Link Governor (MWW) noted the continued work of the Safeguarding Steering Group and the continued assurance of the Safeguarding Team, led by DH. Great work continued across the College, with an enthusiasm, commitment and passion to continue to improve.

The report was noted.

CQ/139 5. Quality Improvement of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Learner Focused Approaches

RW presented the report, noting that it provided an overview of the College approach to quality improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. The paper outlined a

proposed schedule for reporting against components of the Quality Improvement model in order to keep the Committee fully informed of development and quality improvement activity. The report also provided an overview of the learner focused approaches to quality improvement and feedback on learner surveys for the start of 2022/23.

The Committee queried the following:

- Areas for development – It was noted that 14% of apprentices had responded negatively to “I am developing my maths and English skills on my apprenticeship” and 11.2% had responded negatively to “I have discussed my career plans to help me achieve career goals”.
- Students’ confidence in securing an apprenticeship / future employment and how the College can instil confidence – it was noted this was seen as an area for improvement and the College were working with trainer assessors, ensuring apprentices were provided with careers information, encouragement to raise aspirations and signposting to resources. It was noted that some apprentices found it uncomfortable having conversations regarding their future aspirations in front of their employers and that the College had considered the sequencing of careers within the learner journey review.
- Support offered to learners who respond negatively – it was confirmed that learner data was analysed and students were followed up with to resolve any areas of concern.
- Allocation of teacher development strands and if support was well received – it was noted that staff were generally positive to receive support, however some staff were hesitant to engage with coaching and mentoring in the first instance. The College were ensuring the strands were supportive and it was confirmed that:
 - Graded lesson observations were removed which was seen as a positive change by the unions.
 - Staff move between strands and this was a continuous process, with the College being keen to develop and continue to support staff.
 - Further work was needed to obtain further feedback and to test the support and development, however initial feedback had suggested that staff were pleased with the level of support provided.
- The negative net promoter score of the Jewish Academies – it was confirmed that this was an anomaly within the data and the College were looking at ways of tailoring the survey to avoid phrases which were perhaps culturally sensitive and to ensure more qualitative ways of capturing learner voice.
- Links between careers advice and lifelong learning – it was noted that the College were looking at this internally. The College were working on a project around the website including an external consultant and stakeholder groups to ensure the full offering was evident and to further develop the careers section.

The report was noted.

CQ/140 6. Quality Improvement Plan

CT presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) had been derived from the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) relating to 21/22.
- All actions due to be completed had been achieved, and the report provided a summary of the work undertaken / planned.

- The QIP, along with a status update, would be provided to the Board in March 2023.
 - The Chair **requested** for this to be circulated to the Committee for comment ahead of Board circulation.

Action: CT to circulate QIP, including progress updates, ahead of submitting to the March 2023 Board meeting.

DH left the meeting.

The Committee queried the following:

- Low attendance in Maths and English – it was noted that the College continued to engage learners and had actions in place to support this. It was reiterated that the College continued to work with learners with complex needs and challenges, and were continuing to support where possible. Improvement could be tracked; however, the College would continue to aim for higher attendance. The Committee **appreciated and agreed** with this approach. It was noted that the College continued to capture reasons for withdrawal and were working on identifying any trends.
- Progress with external agencies relating to learners with / awaiting EHCPs – it was confirmed that relationships had improved and the College had more visibility of documentation. It was confirmed that all learners with support needs identified were being supported.
- Improvement in securing work placements following covid – it was confirmed that this had improved.
- Comparative attendance data across the sector – it was suggested that there was data available however the College were focussing on the pattern with individual learners and their attendance, rather than the overall figure. It was also noted that colleges measure attendance differently. The Committee **queried** if there was a drop in attendance in term 2, similar to the previous year, however it was confirmed that this wasn't an issue. It was suggested that the attendance system could be looked at in more detail at a future meeting to allow greater oversight of the area.

Action: CT to focus on the attendance system and attendance data at a future meeting.
- Progress within the QIP and if any additional areas would be added – it was suggested that key area of focus was around attendance and that other actions were in process. It was noted that there were some instances of low-level behaviour concerns and this was being tackled. It was suggested that further resource may be required and this was being considered as part of the business planning process. It was suggested that low level behaviour concerns would come out as part of the 22/23 SAR, and that this was a common concern across the sector.

The Committee **endorsed** the offer of continuous support and welfare to learners.

The report was noted.

CQ/141 7. Gateshead College Skills Summary

DC presented the report, noting that it was to provide the Committee with an overview of changes to the education inspection handbook to include the new skills judgement on 'how well the college meets the regional and national skills agenda', to provide confidence to the Committee by detailing the ongoing preparation for an Ofsted inspection and the steps taken in preparation to respond to the new judgement, and to share the College's strengths and key messages formed as part of a skills self-assessment activity which would form the basis of a skills summary required by Ofsted in the week leading up to an inspection.

The Committee specifically noted the following:

- The level, and continuation, of work undertaken across the College in preparation for an inspection.
- The helpfulness of the Governor Stakeholder Overview. It was confirmed that an updated version would be shared with governors.

Action: DC to share updated Governor Stakeholder Overview.

The Committee discussed and queried the following:

- Engagement with stakeholders – it was confirmed that the College were maintaining contact but were being mindful not to overwhelm stakeholders. The College were focussing on a joined-up approach and had heard from the experience of other colleges who had gone through the new inspection framework.

IJ joined the meeting. MWW left the meeting.

- The College's confidence in securing a strong judgement by Ofsted – it was confirmed that the College had an ambition to achieve a strong judgement and noted what was expected as part of the inspection, reiterating that there needed to be evidence across each department, which the College had confidence in.

It was noted that a Community Conversation would be held in March to provide an update on the College strategy in terms of progress and any changes, to ensure a continued conversation and a focus on the strategy remaining live.

The report was noted.

CQ/142 8. Duty to Review

CT presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The report included a summary paper of the overall report, however more work would be needed to cover all provision types to ensure a holistic view of provision, rather than single areas. *Covered under a confidential minute.*
- The College were in the midst of curriculum planning, and were awaiting the outcome of the North East LSIP, reiterating that time was of the essence to factor in any potential changes.

The Committee **noted** the benefit of this piece of work and supported the continuation to a fuller report.

Covered under a confidential minute.

DH joined the meeting.

The report was noted.

CQ/143 9. LSIP Report

IJ presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The North East LSIP was gathering momentum, and the College had attended meetings to receive updates on the intention and progress of the North East Automotive Alliance (NEAA) who were leading the North East LSIP. The suggested themes linked with those areas already delivered by the College.
- The College had met with the project team to share thoughts and offer support. College delivery data was shared to support this.
- The devolution proposal would make it more critical for the LSIPs within the North East to align, with funding for adult skills potentially moving to the devolved authority rather than central government.
- The College had engaged with the North East Chamber of Commerce who were leading on the other 2 North East LSIPs and had now been invited to future meetings ensuring involvement, contribution and steering.

The Committee queried the following:

- Progress and implications of the LSIP – it was noted that Ofsted were looking to take cognisance of the LSIP as part of their inspections. The College had attended all available meetings and had contributed. It was noted that a LSIP Board had been created however the College didn't have information as to how Board members were appointed. Emerging themes from the LSIP had been discussed and the College had queried the validity of the areas due to be aligning with the work of the LEP which was undertaken pre-pandemic. It was noted that the LSIP would provide priorities however the College were able to continue with other areas of provision, which placed an emphasis on the duty to review and accountability agreement.
- The financial impact if the LSIP wasn't delivered – it was acknowledged that the financial aspects of this – and the extent and nature of funding to support LSIP outcomes - were not yet known.

The report was noted.

CQ/144 10. Accountability Agreement

NT presented the report, noting that the guidance relating to the Accountability Agreement had been published, setting out the need for Colleges to submit an annual Accountability Statement to the DfE, to set out a number of outcome targets focussed on curriculum changes and adaptations to provision planned for the coming year. These targets were to reflect how the College are contributing to priorities outlined in the LSIP and to national skills priorities that DfE had articulated in the accountability framework. The Committee **noted** that the agreement would bring aspects from the LSIP and duty to review together, alongside the College's strategic aims for the year.

The report was noted.

CQ/145 11. Year to Date Performance

CT presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The report was driven by data, including a range of different tables and supporting narrative.
- Benchmarking data was available to allow the College to compare performance against others, however due to categorisation the benchmarking didn't always align to the provision groups at the College.
- Retention figures compared to the previous year were as follows:
 - 16-18 was at 91.6% retention compared to 91.8% in 2022.
 - 19+ was at 95.1% retention compared to 93.7% in 2022.
- EDI data had been included within the report and included benchmarking of data.

The Committee discussed and specifically noted the following:

- The comprehensiveness of the report and that it was pleasing to see supporting data to allow triangulation of information.
- The positive enhancement in Apprenticeships.
- The robust national average data available to allow meaningful comparisons.

The Committee queried the following:

- The confidence in the 3% increase in predicted apprenticeship provision achievement for 22/23 – it was confirmed that this was a challenging target but the College were on track to achieve this and had an improved position in relation to predictions. Monthly meetings were taking place with Heads of Curriculum (HoCs) to consider apprenticeship predictions on a learner by learner basis. The College were looking at timeframes for End Point Assessments (EPAs) and had been able to set up a local centre for some assessments. Tension remained around the lead in time and resource needed towards the end of the year to ensure learners were able to complete their EPA at a timely point. It was noted that no learning could take place between entering a learner for their EPA and the EPA taking place, meaning that knowledge could be lost where there were delays. The College were working with the EPA organisations to improve this process.
- The preparation for EPAs for Automotive apprentices – it was noted that the College had identified activities as part of the apprentice EPAs and were able to help learners prepare accordingly, with some delivery restructured to ensure alignment.
- The volatility in the apprenticeship achievement rate – it was confirmed that if apprentices weren't able to pass, they would roll into the following year's achievement rate.

The report was noted.

CQ/146 12. Complaints and Compliments Annual Report (21/22)

NH presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The College received a relatively low number of complaints (33) in 2021/2022, 16 of which related to teaching. All complaints were considered in line with procedures.
- The College was prioritising the following actions:
 - Update and relaunch the complaints procedure.
 - Review the Complaints and Compliments system and consider alternative ways of recording and reporting e.g. via Pentana, the software which is being introduced to support corporate planning.
 - Review data collection relating to protected characteristics to enhance reporting.
 - Training would be implemented around dealing with complaints at an informal level and carrying out investigations.

The Committee queried the following:

- Common themes relating to teaching complaints – it was suggested that there were no common themes and the number was small across the range of courses offered by the College and therefore difficult to detect any trend data.
- The receiving of compliments – it was noted that this was generally on an informal basis and the College were looking at ways to report this more formally going forward. The College wished to learn from both negative and positive feedback.
- Lessons learned – it was noted that the College had learned from feedback and examples of changes had included improvements within the induction and transition process, being more proactive in terms of communicating with parents, and working with Heads of Department to ensure a proactive approach to avoid gaps in communication around staff absence and the impact on learners.

The Committee **requested** some further supporting narrative to provide an understanding of the types of complaints received within the next report.

The Committee **discussed** the report, noting that it would be more beneficial to them to understand how feedback is measured across the College and as part of a more holistic view to provide value, including learner voice.

Action: NT / NH to consider broader reporting of feedback going forward.

The report was noted.

CQ/147 13. Careers Advice and Guidance Report

NH presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The College assessed itself against the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks and scored 100% in 6 of them. This would increase to 100% across 7 benchmarks subject to the Committee / Board approving the Careers Programme.
- The Gatsby Benchmarks were designed for schools and didn't always work as well with colleges. The College had fed this back to the LEP.

The Committee **sought reassurance** that the Careers plan was applicable to all learners, it was confirmed that it was part of the College's ethos to support every learner and this included prospective learners as part of College open evenings.

The Committee queried the following:

- The independence of the Careers Advisers – it was confirmed that the College employed 2 Level 7 qualified Careers Advisers who offered impartial advice, adhering to the code of ethics. It was confirmed that the LEP was comfortable with this approach, however further independent advice and guidance was offered through various sources, employer led projects, work inspiration activities, work experience, National Careers Week and employer involvement in the PSD programme.
- Relationships with local schools – it was confirmed that relationships were improving however the College were still struggling with one school in particular however the new legislation was starting to have a positive impact. The College were also working closely with Gateshead Council.
- The delay in seeking Board approval for the Careers Programme – it was noted that although Careers information had been reported to the Committee and the Board, approval hadn't been specifically sought in this way previously.

The report was noted.

CQ/148 14. Risk Register

JC presented the report and highlighted the following:

- A discussion was due to take place at the February 2023 Audit Committee regarding a treat vs tolerate approach to the Risk Register, and to consider the Risk Management Policy.
- An additional risk had been added, R14 - Gateshead Council's options appraisal of Gateshead International Stadium results in recommendations and decisions which negatively impact recruitment of learners and delivery of provision. This brought risk and opportunity, and the College were actively engaging with the council and were looking to continue the provision offered at the stadium under the long-term lease with the option to renew for a further term.
 - The Committee **noted** that this came with both risk and opportunity.

The Committee queried the following:

- No risks being categorised with an appetite as willing – it was confirmed that this was regularly discussed by the Executive Team and it had been agreed that due to the College being in Post Intervention Monitoring Support (PIMS) and being graded by Ofsted as Requires Improvement at the last inspection the Executive Team were not comfortable to categorise any risks as willing.
 - The Committee **asked** if the categorisations were being considered and it was confirmed that the wording was included within the Risk Management policy which was due to be submitted to the next Audit Committee.
- The risk relating to the Level 3 curriculum reform – it was noted that this would be followed up by the Executive Team in terms of horizon scanning.

Action: JC to discuss with the Executive Team the addition of the Level 3 curriculum reform as part of horizon scanning.

The Committee **agreed** that this should be monitored closely and for the College to prepare accordingly.

The report was noted.

CQ/149 15. Any Other Business

N/A

CQ/150 16. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 11 May 2023 at 10.00am