

**MINUTES OF QUALITY AND LEARNERS' COMMITTEE OF THE CORPORATION  
TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 16.30  
Committee Room, Moulsham Street Campus, Chelmsford and via MS Teams**

**Members:** Sarah Noble (Chair), Lola Cole (student governor), Amanda Montague, Christian Norman, Paddy Reilly, Jon Selvage, Kaiffe Turner (student governor) David Warnes (CEO), Barbara Vohmann.

**College Officers:** Debbie Garroway, Alison Davies, Mark Emerson, Penny Petch, Jo Styles.

**Director of Governance:** Ra Hamilton-Burns

	<b>Item</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1.	<b>Apologies for absence</b> There were none.	
2.	<b>Declarations of interest and to notify any confidential items</b> There were no new declarations of interest or confidential items.	
3.	<b>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2023</b> The minutes were presented to the Board in July 2023 and were coming to this meeting for approval.  <b>RESOLVED: THE BOARD AGREED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2023 WERE AN ACCURATE RECORD.</b>	
4.	<b>Matters arising / actions</b> Matters had either been completed or were on the agenda to discuss.  The staff survey will go to the PSR Committee on 16 November  Jon Selvage joined the meeting 16.35.	
<b>TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE</b>		
5.	<b>Self-Assessment and Improvement</b> a. Self-Assessment Report 2022-23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendices</li> <li>• Heat map</li> </ul> It was noted that the heat map for 2022/23 related to the structure last year not the current year's departments. All areas were graded as good with the exception of apprenticeships which is judged as requiring improvement.  Governors welcomed the summary of main issues, not intended to truncate discussion but to draw key issues to the attention of the Committee  Debbie Garroway explained that the SAR looks at performance for last year and from that report, the improvement plan is drafted and is mapped against Ofsted criteria and other requirements. The result is a 40-page document which should be read in conjunction with the heat map which offers context and direction of travel.  The Chair was pleased to note that the College remains 'good' in all areas	

with the exception of apprenticeships. She welcomed the evidence offered in support of the judgements. She thanked the team for the work that had gone into producing the document.

The student governor asked how the College could be made 'outstanding' – Debbie Garroway explained that the Self-Assessment report on page 8 explains why the College is not yet outstanding but the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) outlines actions required to support the ambition to reach this. The key areas are:

- Lack of consistency
- Variability of teaching and learning delivery in small minority of areas
- Retention, including looked after children
- Quality of some apprenticeships
- Attendance

Student governors asked how the College can improve the learning of students. DG said that attendance is critical to positive outcomes. Teachers need to stress how the course can support their progression and the importance of attendance. Work will continue to ensure that this happens. The College will continue to develop the classroom practice and engage with stakeholders. The work of the quality and learners' committee focuses on supporting this improvement.

Governors thanked the team for the improved format and information in the report.

David Warnes reminded the Committee that the SAR will undergo a further stage of validation. A VP from another College will externally moderate the report and it will be presented to the December Board meeting.

Governors said that the heatmap has both '=' and 'down arrows' and whilst it is appreciated that this is a report for the prior year, this is of concern as it indicates that progress has not been made in these areas. They asked how the College will measure improvement in-year in the areas concerned and report to the Committee. It was explained that this version of the heat map relates to old College structure so direct comparison to the new curriculum will be difficult, however the QIP will ensure that these areas are monitored and that there are rapid interventions.

**ACTION: An updated QIP report will come to the Q&L Committee outlining progress and any interventions required.**

Governors commented that they were reassured that in-year progress will be carefully and appropriately monitored.

**ACTION: The colouring on the heatmap will be corrected to ensure that it is consistent going forward.**

Governors commented that the heatmap was extremely helpful in giving a visual view

Governors asked how progress on improvements to apprenticeships will be presented to the Q&L Committee and the Board. They will be reported under intervention priorities and in the QIP updates.

Governors asked how any underlying reasons for the underperformance of apprenticeships would be dealt with. The curriculum area review board every six weeks will focus on this and any other areas of intervention. There are also cross college quality meetings to share any issues and best practice. Additionally, there is a strategic meeting for apprenticeships.

**AGREED: THE QUALITY AND LEARNERS' COMMITTEE AGREED TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD THAT THE SAR OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS 2022/23 IS GRADED AS 'GOOD'**

**b. Quality Improvement Plan 2023-24**

- Executive Summary
- Operational Plan

These provided an executive summary of the priorities from the SAR and the operational plan outlined actions for the SMT. Post covid there is still a detrimental impact on learners in areas such as attendance and punctuality.

**Chelmsford College 2023-24 priorities**

The 2023-24 priorities for improvement have evolved as a result of the self-assessment process and are linked to quality of education they are:

- **Priority 1** - Leaders and managers need to ensure **attendance and punctuality is consistently high** across the College through regular **monitoring** and **communication** with their teams. (L & M, B & A)
- **Priority 2** – Teachers and WBT's need to ensure that the **implementation of the quality of education** enables all learners and apprentices to make **good progress** to support their **career aspirations** (L & M, Q of E).
- **Priority 3** – Leaders and managers need to **review** and **evaluate** the **workforce planning strategy** to ensure the workforce is recruited, retained, is highly skilled and demonstrates resilience when faced with adversity (L & M).
- **Priority 4** – Leaders and managers need to ensure **strategies to retain all learners and apprentices, including vulnerable learners** are **successfully implemented** to assist in successful progression. (L&M, QoE)
- **Priority 5** – Leaders and managers need to continue to monitor the **work-related experience, including industry placements**, of Study Programme learners, to support the development of essential skills, knowledge and behaviours (L&M, PD)

- **Priority 6** - All Governors, leaders and managers focus on the strategic development of the College to **achieve the milestones set out in Project Future** for financial resilience and growth in the curriculum. (L&M)

Student governors asked what good ideas would be to improve teaching and learning and offered the example of worksheets as one of the areas that might be improved. Student governors commented that from their experience there can be too high a volume of worksheets which can be overwhelming. Debbie Garroway responded that more creative, learner driven, collaborative activities are being encouraged. Additionally, each Wednesday there is professional development for teachers to improve teaching techniques.

Student class representatives are encouraged to feedback through Learner Voice and student meetings with governors are set up to allow time for these discussions. The College recognises that the economic environment is putting pressure on learners and is alert to this. In addition, the College continues to provide support for the student's mental health issues still resulting from Covid.

Student governors confirmed that the Skills Builder initiative to support learners with soft skills for industry is well communicated throughout the College.

Governors asked how the balance is achieved between setting realistic but ambitious targets for GCSE maths. Debbie Garroway explained that the achievement of high grades was in line with the national picture for FE, although recognised that this was lower than the previous year. DG said that there has been an increase in learners arriving at College impacted by Covid and their baseline assessments are demonstrating that their starting points are much lower, therefore this was taken into consideration.

Priority 4 – is the word 'all' – might be better worded as strategies seeking to retain all learners would be better. Debbie Garroway said the College is keen to serve all learners but appreciates that this is ambitious.

Governors commented that there was nothing specific about apprentices in the list and that it might be helpful to make clear that the College has strategies to improve the outcomes for them particularly. There is an operational plan which outlines these discretely and this can be referenced in the priorities.

**ACTION:** The priorities list should make specific reference to the operational plan which outlines strategies to support improvement in apprentices.

**AGREED: THE QUALITY AND LEARNERS' COMMITTEE AGREED TO RECOMMEND THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2023/24 TO THE BOARD AND ITS SUBSEQUENT UPLOAD TO THE OFSTED PORTAL**

## Annual Safeguarding Report & update

The College is meeting all of its requirements.

The summary outlined:

- All safeguarding training is up-to-date.
- All relevant policies have been reviewed and updated within the identified time frame.
- The Single Central Safeguarding Record has been maintained throughout the period of this report.
- The total number of safeguarding issues raised for the main College cohort was 465, this is broadly in line with the previous academic year when 457 issues were raised.
- Referral to external agencies and partnership working increased from 30 interventions in 2021/22 to 188 in 2022/23. Whilst there is a significant increase, some of this will be down to recording a wider range of services and an improved recording system.
- Two PREVENT/CHANNEL referrals were made, one of which was escalated to the counter terrorism team and followed up by several external agencies.
- The college counsellor received 126 requests for support, 49 of which also had safeguarding issues identifying a risk of harm. In the previous academic year 154 learners were supported.
- Transfer of records remains an issue both with the timeliness and format we receive the records.
- [SECURUS](#) captures for potentially unsafe activity online continues to be effective with a small increase on the previous year. This is because of moving to an improved version of SECURUS which provides a better analysis of online activity.
- All actions identified in the safeguarding report last year have been fully met.

Governors asked if the number of referrals made to the senior DSL had increased significantly on last year and if staff needed further training to be on what is appropriate to refer. It is thought to be the complexities of the referrals this year which have increased in line with national mental health issues post-covid in learners.

The report implies that mental health support from external agencies last year had reduced and governors asked if this is expected to deteriorate further. It is hoped that this won't be the case but the increase in external referrals and the complexity is significant. The College is launching [‘togetherall’](#) platform this week, an online platform available all day, every day of the year for staff and learners on an anonymous basis. It is monitored by clinical practitioners who intervene if appropriate. Governors asked if there is an overlap with learners reporting in several categories who may need extra support. The most serious aspect is categorised but not all concerns. If the learner then presents at a later date they may be categorised with a new concern. The Safeguarding team meets on a Friday to discuss high-risk learners and refer where appropriate. Working with partners, communication and referrals are much improved.

	<p>Governors asked if the significant increase reflected the national picture. The Safeguarding Team explained that this reflects the picture in Essex and Debbie Garroway added that a recent, national conference supported the view that this is a national issue. To support learners, the College also has a campus officer who has undertaken level 3 safeguarding training who is vigilant concerning all learners and is a great asset to the safeguarding teams.</p> <p>Governors asked how many of the incidents had emanated from the influencer, <u>Andrew Tate</u> and his campaigns. There had been sessions for learners on harmful, sexual behaviour and staff are alert to learners' concerns. Last year there had been a group of learners who were supportive of Andrew Tate and staff worked with them to discuss this. The Committee asked if this work had a positive outcome or if views were entrenched. Work continued to educate learners. However, individuals are entitled to their views, but intervention takes place where required.</p> <p>A project on bystander intervention to train twenty learners to act as ambassadors to work in the College to support their peers will begin in January. Governors asked if learners challenge their peers before this programme. This varies across the College and PRISE week offered sessions with Caroline Whybrow and Gavin McKenna. There has been a shift in mindset.</p> <p><b>AGREED: THE QUALITY AND LEARNERS' COMMITTEE AGREED TO RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT FOR 2022/23 TO THE BOARD.</b></p>	
7	<p><b>Student experience</b></p> <p>The report covered the following areas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Attendance update</li> <li>b. Induction Survey of Students 2023-24</li> <li>c. Student Experience/Engagement Report</li> <li>d. Learner Voice/Student survey report 2022-23 &amp; 2023-24 meetings</li> </ol> <p>Student governors said that they are aware of the Attendance Affects Achievement 'AAA' campaign but more communication would be welcome</p> <p><b>Action: Communication of the AAA initiative should be strengthened.</b></p> <p>Governors asked if something had been done differently in induction to result in the reduction in positive responses. Nothing had changed but feedback from learners was that there was too much information given to learners in a short time and induction delivery was sometimes inconsistent between Departments.</p> <p>Governors expressed concern that learners should know how they would be assessed on their course. This was possibly skewed by the responses on what is known as 'extended learning' as learners would not always know about this.</p> <p>Governors asked if attendance has improved on this time last year. It is not where the College would like it to and is at 81% including English and maths. Changes to timetables and data cleansing are thought to be the main causes.</p>	

	<p>Some learners are attending college but not going to lessons. This has now resulted in an additional process to monitor and action this issue. Student governors said that learners are confused about where their lessons are taking place and signage could be improved. Whilst attendance is recognised as a national issue, the College is focussing on this including the 3As 'Attendance Affects Achievement.' The DfE has circulated resources to support colleges. Publicity of the bursaries has been improved to let learners know what is available to support their attendance. Governors expressed concern that the interventions put in place have not resulted in improvements at this stage in the term.</p> <p>There is no national average but other colleges are sharing low to mid-80s anecdotally. Governors asked if there is data from similar institutions against which the College can benchmark. They also asked if the average is skewed by a few learners who don't attend consistently or if it is across the cohort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41% of learners are above 90%,</li> <li>• 62% are above 80</li> <li>• 7% are below 50% attendance.</li> </ul> <p>The College needs to monitor carefully if the measures put in place are having an effect and advise Governors accordingly.</p> <p>Governors discussed the possibility that managers might be invited to give update reports on a regular basis on monitoring and impact of measures since this is a priority for the QIP. Managers do attend the meetings and this information will come through reports.</p>	
8	<p><b>Teaching, Learning, and Assessment</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Annual Report on TL&amp;A (2022-23)</li> <li>b. Observation process 2023-24</li> </ol> <p>Construction, Business, Travel &amp; Tourism, Electrical and ICT Science are all below target in all key five expectations.</p> <p>Whilst observation is a supportive process over time the five key expectations were being misinterpreted by staff, so they were being refreshed to support the drive for improvement.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the new process.</p> <p>The Committee asked what it can expect in terms of reporting to allow it to gauge what the improvements in TLA are and the impact on learners' achievement.</p> <p>There is not always a clear correlation between observation outcomes and achievement. Every teacher will be seen three times a year and one of these learning walks will be accompanied to embed standardisation. It is thought that line managers had been reluctant to suggest improvements for fear of causing stress to the teacher. Reporting to the Committee will be in a similar format and include similar data and information as before. A reflective approach from teachers is being encouraged through this process.</p> <p>Governors asked if there is a standardised report template to ensure consistency. This is the case.</p>	

	<p>The Committee asked how good practice is shared? Staff recognised as demonstrating good practice are asked to deliver a CPD session to colleagues The Committee asked what happens to those teachers who don't or can't improve. The Committee were advised that this becomes a performance management issue.</p> <p>Governors suggested if it was possible to survey learners before and after interventions and improvements are put in place to see what the impact is.</p> <p><b><i>Lola Cole and Kaiffe Turnner left the meeting at 18.10</i></b></p> <p>Governors had scrutinised these reports and thanked Penny Petch for her reports.</p>	
9	<p><b>Curriculum Intervention Plan 2023/24</b></p> <p>It was noted that insufficient impact in Sport was made on exam preparation for students. There will be a specific intervention for this. Other areas of focus will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner behaviour.</li> <li>• English and maths will have a focus of high grades.</li> <li>• Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Engineering and Electrical</li> <li>• Within the priorities for 2023-24 there will be oversight of particular aspects e.g. retention in some cases.</li> </ul> <p>Governors said that in the past the heads of department (HoDs) had presented their action plans to the Committee. It was felt that the presentations had not contributed anything to the information presented by the senior team. David Warnes suggested that HoDs might be invited to discuss barriers to success. Governance cautioned that, whilst there is value in focussing on specific areas, it is important that the Governors retain strategic oversight and not cross into operational matters.</p>	
10	<p><b>English and Mathematics update</b></p> <p>The report focused on challenges and the solutions put in place which will lead to impact. The outcomes were good with Maths GCSE high grades and Functional Skills finishing at national average and English in line with the national rate.</p> <p>For 2023/24 English and Maths the College is experiencing the same issues that are being seen nationally. An increase of learners arriving having not achieved level 4 in English in Maths has led to larger class sizes and a shortage of Maths teachers.</p> <p>The recommendation was that the English and Maths curriculum remains in intervention.</p> <p>Governors asked if, in addition to the English and Maths issues, are there particular departments in which attendance is poor? Are there some departments where attendance is better than others from whom lessons can be shared?</p> <p>Learner numbers have increased, learners have issues and in one case had been signed off by their doctor from English and Maths due to anxiety and</p>	



	<p>some learners simply refuse to attend in some cases with the support of their parents. This is a complex area with many challenges. The College has offered sessions with parents to discuss the importance of English and Maths but sadly engagement was poor.</p> <p>Governors asked if lessons might be learned from these improved outcomes with poorer attendance. The College moved the timings of Maths and English to within the core curriculum timings and should celebrate last year's improved pass rates. Aside from the extreme examples, the Chair urged the meeting to focus on positive action that had underpinned that result.</p> <p>Governors would like to see in future reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data on attendance reported, down to granular data on departmental attendance</li> <li>• How the increase in learner numbers is being managed</li> <li>• How learner behaviour is being addressed.</li> <li>• The outcomes of the November exams</li> <li>• Direction of travel</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Penny Petch left the meeting at 18.40.</i></b></p>	
6.	<p><b>Analysis of Complaints and Compliments 2022/23</b></p> <p>Governors commented that it was pleasing to note that there had been no increase in complaints.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Risk Register and Academic KPIs for 2023/24</b></p> <p>This had been covered in the Quality Improvement Plan. Page 3 of the KPI report should read 2023/4. Every area of curriculum is now represented in light of the new structure.</p> <p><b>Risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Staffing</li> <li>• New managers in post</li> <li>• Increased numbers of English and Maths learners</li> </ul> <p>It was confirmed that the risk report goes to PSR.</p> <p>Governors asked if the KPI on page 2 could have an overarching figure for attendance. It was suggested that there might be an extra page on attendances.</p> <p><b>ACTION: An additional page on attendance to be included in KPIS.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION: A report on attrition of students in numbers should be made at each meeting.</b></p> <p>Governors confirmed that whilst percentages are of interest, actual numbers are important to give the context to the Committee.</p> <p>Governors asked why the College is proposing a lower target than last year when the College is seeking continuous improvement.</p> <p><b>Page 3 – level 3</b> – Governors asked how the decision was made that the national rate is 83% and the College is targeting 84% and if this was</p>	

	<p>sufficiently ambitious. The College had taken into account the continuing learners' issues into account. This year is expected to be more challenging than last year and it was considered that it is important to be realistic.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Governance matters</b></p> <p>a) <b>Committee Self-Assessment 2022/23</b> – Sarah Noble had reviewed the responses to the self-assessment questionnaire for the Quality and Learners' Committee for 202/23 with the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The summary sheets are useful and focus the governors' attention on the purpose of the report.</li> <li>• The other key outcome was that the action and impact with evidence would be a focus and that these are summarised particularly in-year.</li> <li>• Challenge is intended to be supportive.</li> <li>• The time of the meetings has been changed to improve the Committee's attendance</li> </ul> <p>Sarah Noble asked if the 16.30 start was welcomed, there was concern that the later start meant a late finish time for those who work. She asked that people should try to attend the meetings in person. Christian Norman explained that the timing of the meeting would make public transport difficult for him to attend in person and this was understood.</p> <p>c. <b>Link Governor reports matters arising</b> – Barbara Vohmann reported that she had made Governor champion visit to Construction in the past week. The department is using Padlet in an innovative way which was very impressive and this might be shared across the College. She has completed a form but it was not clear how to submit it.  <b>ACTION: AS to contact BV to offer support in submitting link visit reports</b></p>	
9.	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p><b>Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Prevent action plan.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED: THE QUALITY AND LEARNERS' COMMITTEE AGREED TO RECOMMEND THE SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT POLICY TO THE BOARD and noted that the safeguarding policy meets legislative requirements.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Paddy Reilly needs to be added as the Safeguarding Link Governor</b></p>	
10.	<p><b>Any Other Business notified to the Governance Professional in advance of the meeting</b></p> <p>There was none.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 19.10</p>	
11.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>13 February 2023 at 16.30.</p>	