

Quality & Learners' Committee Minutes

TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 16.30

Committee Room, Moulsham Street Campus, and via MS Teams by exception

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

Also present: Alison Davies, Mark Emerson, Debbie Garroway, Sarah Hamilton, Penny Petch, Jo Styles, Ra Hamilton-Burns

Quorum: 40%

MATTERS	ACTION
<p>1. Apologies for Absence and welcomes to new members Apologies were received from Doug Zeeman and Jon Selvage. Lola Cole did not attend.</p> <p>Sarah Noble thanked Christian Norman for agreeing to become Chair of the Quality and Learners' Committee from May 2024.</p> <p>Amanda Montague reminded Committee members that this was the last meeting of Quality and Learners' Committee that Sarah Noble would chair as she is leaving the Board in March 2024. She had served the Board for ten years as a Board member and six of those as Chair of the Committee. She was warmly thanked for her generosity in sharing her time and expertise with both College and Board colleagues and will be greatly missed.</p>	<p>Note</p>
<p>2. Declarations of Interest and to notify any Confidential Items There were none. David Warnes declared that he is on the Board of Leaders of Citizens UK.</p>	
<p>3. The minutes of the Meeting held on 7 November 2023</p> <p>AGREED: THE QUALITY AND LEARNERS' COMMITTEE AGREED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2023 WERE A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD.</p>	
<p>4. Matters/actions arising</p> <p>5. Self-Assessment and Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An updated QIP report will come to the Q&L Committee outlining progress and any interventions required. Two papers are on this agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the first QIP update and the RAG rating for the operational ○ QIP/Support and challenge paper • The colouring on the heatmap will be corrected to ensure that it is consistent going forward. This is complete. <p>Chelmsford College 2023-24 priorities</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The priorities list should make specific reference to the operational plan which outlines strategies to support improvement in apprentices. This is not specified but the operational QIP includes this and there is an operational plan for apprenticeships. <p>7. Student experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication of the AAA initiative should be strengthened. This is now on all college TV screens, prizes for attendance are given as well as other initiatives being taken. <p>Risk Register and Academic KPIs for 2023/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An additional page on attendance to be included in KPIS. This is complete. A report on attrition of students numbers should be made at each meeting. This is complete. <p>8. Governance matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS to contact BV to offer support in submitting link visit reports. This was done and link visit reports have been discussed and completion encouraged for all Board members. <p>9. Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paddy Reilly needs to be added as the Safeguarding Link Governor. This was done. 	
5.	<p>Election of a Committee Chair and Vice Chair This item has been superseded by the Board’s decision that Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs will be reviewed and recommended by the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee and approved by the Board in order that members’ skills are used in the most appropriate and balanced way.</p>	
TO DISCUSS AND/OR APPROVE		
6.	<p>Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (TLA) update</p> <p>I. Teaching, Learning Skills Academy Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 new staff members in term one (and more have been appointed since then) 9 new graduate trainees Base rooms on both campuses Weekly CPD is taking place on Wednesday afternoon though, to date, take up has not been good. There are eight apprentices on the first cohort of Level 5 learning and skills teacher apprenticeship and growth is predicted 	

- 28% of the College's current teaching staff are not teacher trained and many will have to achieve Math and English at Level 2 to enroll on this apprenticeship
- Concern focuses on staff using Wednesday afternoons as administrative time rather than for CPD.
- Coaches have had a high workload as many come from the same department and the large number of new staff they are having to mentor.

David Warnes asked how much time is allowed for Level 5 apprenticeship as it was flagged in the recent staff survey. They have three hours of delivery on Wednesday afternoon and an additional three hours are part of non-contact time noting that they have 24-hours of teaching time.

Governors noted that there was less availability of TLSCs at the base room at Princes' Road than the one at Moulsham Street as TLSCs teach at the latter for a larger proportion of their time. Governors asked how this is being addressed.

A rota of availability on both campuses had been drafted which included locating staff that are usually on Moulsham Campus to be at Princes' Road when not timetabled. However, there is not the opportunity for staff to see a learning coach informally in the same unplanned way. Efforts to recruit learning coaches continue but it is important to find colleagues based at Princes' Road to appoint. Governors suggested that the appointment of a coach who is usually based at Princes' Road and would be more familiar with the staff there and be more approachable.

Governors asked if managers have a target CPD for their team. There are targets set for teachers e.g to demonstrate sufficient planning. The January CPD days focused on training on lesson structure to address some of the issues. The Teaching Learning and Improvement strategy has been updated and has guidance for colleagues. The College will audit schemes of work going forward to check that they are available and of sufficient quality.

Committee members suggested that the College might hold sessions encouraging teachers to share their lesson structures and discuss them. The Committee recognized that changing culture and practices can take time.

2. Learning walk data (Term 1 -23-24)

- 79 learning walks – 19 (25% were 'developing', 44 (56%) were 'secure and 16 (20%) were 'mastery'
- 76% are 'secure' or 'mastery' against an end-of-year target of 90%
- Theme of demonstrating the context and planning of lessons are the major concern - highlighted in the learning walk data.

	<p>Governors asked for more detail on the problems surrounding planning. It is the evidence of planning which is the issue. There is no set template or platform for this, but the College requires the plans to be put on the standard scheme of work system to enable smooth cover if necessary. A separate lesson plan is not required. Governors commented that the poor planning is an area of concern.</p> <p>Development days in January on planning structure had been used to address this. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent updates to the Teaching, Learning and Improvement strategy The TLIS included a typical lesson structure template • A pedagogy newsletter will be shared to remind staff. • An audit of schemes of work will ensure that plans exist and are of appropriate quality. <p>The Committee asked for more information on issues surrounding assessment identified in the data. This is based on the lack of variety on assessment in many learning walks. Assessment is often focused on questioning, and this does not allow the teacher to assess all students.</p> <p>Committee members asked if there had been a change of approach on provision of CPD. The College still has ten days of professional development across the year. Additionally, Wednesday afternoons had been freed up for CPD and meetings, but CPD attendance has not been as good as hoped as staff see this as taking up admin time. Governors asked if CPD was seen as optional. New and unqualified staff are engaging quite well with the coaching staff but established staff are not. David Warnes reminded governors that the change was made based on the workload staff survey last year which gave a clear steer that they wanted more dedicated time for CPD and cross-College meetings and Wednesday afternoons had never been for admin time. The College is moving to develop a culture of active engagement which will find staff keen to attend CPD sessions.</p> <p>Governors suggested that if managers had a target for their teams with clear objectives, these may be used to plan activities on Wednesdays that help them to achieve these targets.</p> <p>3. Subcontracting quality update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition is to recruit a cohort of students, but it is expected that this will take place in the next month. • Learning Curve has received an external quality assurance visit • Learning Curve and The Skills Network have had a quality check from TLSA Team leader which was largely positive. 	
7.	<p>Quality KPIs Predictive Outcomes 2023/24, attendance, and retention, 2022-23 destination data</p> <p>The Committee was asked to note the positive progress made against five out of the six College priorities. Attendance remains a priority for the College as it does not meet the 90% target set.</p>	

- Retention at 97% is high and 5.1% higher than last year
- There is no significant difference between genders
- 100% retention of LACs and 16% above last year
- this is to be celebrated but at 13 students is a small cohort.
- Predicted achievement at 16-18 classroom provision 86% across all levels
- 19+ provision achievement is predicted slightly lower than last year's outturn
- English and maths remains a challenge
- Predicted achievement for apprentices is 59.6% - 7% higher than at year-end last year and close to 60% target.
- Student destination data shows 92.4% up 2.1% on last year.

Governors asked for more detail on the performance of subcontractors and in particular their retention data which has not been good. There is a support and challenge programme underway with a detailed action plan. David Warnes reminded the Committee that it is the nature of distance learning provision that many people are in work so the destinations are not the same as for 16-18 cohorts. These mature students often study for career progression or personal interest.

Improving attendance is very challenging with the College putting in place many mitigations. It is recognized as a national issue, but the College is not complacent. Work continues with learners to ascertain the reasons for non-attendance and this has provided some information, but the causes are different. Issues such as funding for travel or gaps in timetables have been addressed or changed. Similarly concerns around teaching and learning have also been addressed. However, there are societal issues – needing to work for economic reasons, poor mental health or caring responsibilities which are more problematic to fix but the teams are working on approaches. Debbie Garroway invited any suggestions from Board members.

Governors asked if some provision could be online to save on travel costs and make attendance easier for those working or caring. There were suggestions of blended and online learning for some aspects. Another strategy was that, as in one London College, curriculum staff might be responsible for walking learners into their English and maths class after vocational lessons. Staff would be held to account for any attrition between the lessons.

Maths, English, Life skills and Level one provision are the key areas with attendance issues. Debbie Garroway had met with staff and tasked them to discover what progress tutors are doing to address attendance and personal targets and progress for individual learners. A report is expected after half-term holidays.

Governors commented that it is helpful to identify any learners or cohorts that need particular focus so efforts can be concentrated on these areas.

The Committee suggested that the Learner Voice Survey responses can be used and asked the student governor if he could share any

insights. Kaiffe Turner said that there is no particular student feedback on English and Maths, but learners do tend to regard LifeSkills as 'an extra' with little relevance to their courses.

Governors asked if the LifeSkills is tailored appropriately for each cohort or level to make the learning relevant. Some content is adapted but some is not. Some learners do not appreciate the value of the skills such as fundraising or British Values. The rationale and benefits and communication of these to students will be improved going forward. David Warnes commented that employers rate the LifeSkills as the number one requirement for new employees and this should be communicated to learners.

Governors asked if tutors should visit employers to refresh their understanding of what their requirements are and, in turn, pass this onto learners. Another strategy would be for teachers to sit on employer recruitment panels to witness what skills are valued. There will be a 'back to the floor' day for staff on 28 March 2024 to do this. Additionally, experienced tutors with work experience do mentor other teachers.

The high percentage of new or unqualified teachers who have considerable demands on their time represents a challenge for the College but work to communicate the need for LifeSkills will continue.

The Committee noted that there is often a notable differential between the genders in their ratings of themselves. There is also a difference in understanding by students in what is being asked for by employers in terms of expectations. The exact meaning of confidence, engagement and skills might be spelled out which would, in turn, show the value of the content of lessons in terms of securing employment. David Warnes reminded the Committee that [Skills Builder](#) has an assessment tool which offers this context. He had trialled this himself and found the outcome very accurate. Governors emphasised the importance of support when learners use this.

There was a discussion about the apparent misalignment between achievement rates of students making progress against their TAG and the projected performance. It was explained that it is possible that they may achieve one outcome but not hit their target grade. A governor cautioned that students need to have their progress to final attainment managed carefully to ensure that they understand what they need to do and achieve to improve and reach their goals.

Mark Emerson offered governors an update since the papers with data had been published. The College QAR Qualification achievement rates (QAR) by ESFA to be published in March 2024. There will be a slight difference in recent data from those in the SAR in October. The discrepancy is technical due to business rules for the QAR and there is an ongoing query with the ESFA. A number of 19+ L2 learners and on 20 learners Princes' Trust – there a number of learners for whom certification was delayed although they had completed by end of July 2024. The College had been instructed by the ESFA funding audit to mark them as completed with result not known, but the rules of the QAR treat them differently. The result is a 14% drop in the 19+ Level 2. All these learners did achieve. The ESFA is looking at changing the rules

	going forward.	
8.	<p>English and Mathematics progress and areas of concern</p> <p>Sarah Noble thanked Jo Styles for the comprehensive, if daunting, report outlining the plethora of integrated issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenges are the staffing gaps exacerbated by the increase in volume of learners requiring a resit. • Staff recruitment continues to cause concerns. • There has not been a consistent manager for the department since April 2023. <p>An extensive learner voice survey resulted in feedback with many actions put in place in response which included bringing in external bodies to provide catch-up as identified.</p> <p>Governors commented that the catch-up had not had an effect, but 83 learners have taken this up since the 23 January 2024. Mocks will be this week and exams in June 2024.</p> <p>The original plan had been to have discrete Maths and English managers, but recruitment was not successful, so the roles have been conflated. In the interim Jo Syles is doing this role.</p> <p>The Committee asked if there is focus on the cohorts who have particularly poor attendance. The College has double staffed on some courses that required backfill to minimize any detrimental impact on learners due to absence or depleted teams. This has put strain on staff but the College has also made timetable changes to ensure that there are some permanent staff to support learners. However staff sickness is now also resulting in problems.</p> <p>There has been a reset on the expectation on teaching and learning to respond to the learner voice outcomes. Some teachers are not qualified teachers and there is a high volume of agency staff. There has been a successful round of Maths teacher interviews, but these candidates have to serve their notice before joining the College. Once the College has a new manager in place and a full team the mitigations put in place will drive improvement.</p> <p>The Board noted the report and the ongoing challenges that continue to mean the department remains in intervention.</p>	
9.	<p>Learner Experience update</p> <p>i. Learner Experience</p> <p>The report summarized that which is new or different:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student support and safeguarding – work continues but reports have continued to rise. • Transfer of records is 953 at this point against a total last year of 1,117 • Togetherall platform has been invested in, but uptake is slow • SkillsBuilder works with all employability skills, but engagement needs to be encouraged. College on track to achieve ‘bronze’ 	

- Learner engagement is good but needs further development. Unloc will do an audit in March
- Citizens UK started on Monday with
- **Work related experience** remains an issue and sufficient placements for completion is a problem e.g Forensic placements are one example of limited availability.
- There is a lot of work-related experience through CIAG such as visits or meeting with employers. However often learners don't relate this to WREX.
- There is work being done to ensure students understand that this forms part of work experience.

Governors asked if there is a correlation between safeguarding referrals and attendance. This is thought to be the case, and this is discussed in context with learners and appropriate response is offered. There is particular focus on barriers to English and Maths attendance with support being put in place. The Committee acknowledged that the situation might be worse if the mitigations were not being put in place.

Governors commented that during a recent learning visit to Year 2 Electrical, the biggest issue was that they knew that they need to undertake work experience but did not know what the process was. Governors asked if there is a central record that monitors and ensures that all cohorts have received information and guidance on this.

Debbie Garroway reminded the Committee that this department has had no manager for a while, but recent interviews had not been successful. A senior manager will be going into these groups to discuss work experience and offer guidance. The Careers Team has also visited this cohort.

The Committee suggested that there be a twilight session to brief governors on WREX, careers, and other issues.

ACTION: Debbie Garroway to arrange a twilight briefing session for Board members to address a range of topics such as WREX after discussing with Paddy Reilly.

Governors suggested that social media and College screens be used to familiarize learners with language around CIAG, WREX etc. It was noted that during OFSTED inspectors will be careful with the language they use, and the College would remind them of its specific terminology. A consistent language is being used as it resonates with employers.

ii. **Safeguarding report**

Governors asked if the College has identified what the local risks are for learners.

There are in posters in the College and toilets highlighting this. A refresher on Prevent and Safeguarding which included a reminder of the terminology for staff and learners had taken place in the last week.

10.

Meeting Skills update

Sarah Hamilton provides an overview of how the College is addressing the LSIP and meeting skills needs for the local community.

Pleasant to note:

- Since the LSIP and the addition of a skills element in the Ofsted inspection decided there has been a great deal of work around skills development within the College.
- Original curriculum stakeholder audits for each area
- The only concern, apart from changing culture of the College and identifying what skills are needed, is that there are not enough community stakeholders identified and this being addressed.
- There have been eight stakeholder knowledge exchange events which were sector specific
- Soft skills were the highest priority and skills builder will help to address this.

Concerns –

- Skills needs and gaps
- Curriculum forums will address those still needing focus.
- Pinpoint areas of focus to address in granular detail

LSIP document – the College works in all the priority sectors except two. These are due to geography or agrotech or FoodTec which is being provided by other areas.

Governors said that it was interesting to note that this now links back to Heads of Department on curriculum planning for 2024/25. There is now a momentum to making this progress. They noted that the links to the green agenda can feed into many areas of the curriculum. The Committee suggested that several areas could be stranded and use many of the strands.

David Warnes noted that the next stage is to take the accountability statement to Board in March. The 24/25 document will be updated to include the curriculum intent document which has already been presented and the work that is ongoing with stakeholder engagement. It will be an update on the last plan and needs to be uploaded to the ESFA by 30 June 2024. It will contain an action plan. The Stakeholder Scrutiny Committee will monitor this.

Governors noted that Richard Davidson had emphasized the importance of Maths once again at the Development Day and suggested that it might be beneficial for governors who are employers to meet with learners to explain the importance of this. The College works with SHARP and is considering the use of videos to explain the importance of Maths and English. There are members on the Essex FEDEC board who may be willing to support such an initiative with both staff and students.

	Sarah Hamilton left the meeting at 18.05	
11.	<p>Self-Assessment and Improvement Monitoring of QIP 2023-24 Debbie Garroway provided a RAG profile in the back of the document. Six priorities are outlined with two being areas of concern: Priority one and five - The attendance and WREX issues had been discussed earlier in the meeting mitigations are in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority five has improved since this report. There were seven red areas in December but only two now. • Attendance had four actions for improvement in December but is still three as improvements from the mitigations have yet to be seen. <p>Priority 2 – quality of education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The change of philosophy on teaching and learning • The new document to support and coach teachers is resulting in huge positive progress • Teachers are now more comfortable with observations despite an increase in classroom visits • one action was around the Heads of Department taking ETF training. Two have done this to date. <p>Priority 3 - Workforce planning – pleasing progress has been made attracting new staff and some succession planning documents are still being drafted.</p> <p>Priority 4 - Learner and apprentice retention is good. Support for vulnerable learners has been effective.</p> <p>Priority 6 - Project future – there are challenges to meet financial targets. There are strategic meetings in place to re-profile these targets.</p> <p>Each department has a detailed plan and will have a meeting with DG after half term to monitor progress.</p> <p>Governors asked if there are other approaches to improve attendance. The College says that it is aware that learners attend the College but do not go to lessons that do not appeal to them. Campus managers now have ipads with access to learners’ timetables so that they can direct them to where they should be. It was noted that a swipe card system would allow precise monitoring of this but would require investment.</p> <p>The Committee noted that it was pleasing that there were 35 new members of staff (and more have since joined). The metrics are broadly positive and in terms of staff turnover and sickness the College is at, or below, benchmark but there are spikes in this in pockets of the curriculum. The success in attracting graduates and use of ‘inspire to teach’ has been considerable. There are still issues on the entire workforce which need to be addressed.</p>	Note

	<p>II. Curriculum Intervention plan 2023/24 progress and areas of concern</p> <p>There are curriculum interventions in specific areas rather than whole departments in ‘support and challenge’. Progress was outlined for each of the areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Industries – L1 Hair and beauty programmes (significant progress) • Built Environment and sustainable Technologies – Technical Construction and Carpentry and Joinery apprenticeships (reasonable progress) • Inspire – Gateway Provision (reasonable progress) • Business and Professional studies – L2 Business (reasonable progress) • Health, Care and Science – Sport (insufficient progress) • Engineering and Electrical – department focus (insufficient progress) • English and Maths – GCSE high grades (insufficient progress) <p>The Chair had observed an English and Maths and EE CARB board and commented that progress has been made in EE but sustaining this will be an issue as the Head of Department is in an ‘acting’ capacity.</p> <p>The Committee noted that Sport has been in intervention for over a year and a new head was brought in. Staffing changes and problems with recruiting have added a risk element to a department already facing challenges. Agency staff are still used with only one permanent appointment this year. The Senior Team is focusing on offering further support to the Head of Sport to address these issues.</p> <p>Governors asked if more capacity would enable the issues to be addressed or if there were capability challenges. There was a discussion that the culture is critical and has changed significantly over the last couple of years. It was recognized that it is important that this cannot be fixed overnight but there is a strategy to address this.</p> <p>3. Curriculum Plan 2024-25 (update)</p> <p>The Committee has received this in draft and noted the update. The curriculum intent has been strengthened The Committee was pleased to note that it was more aligned and relevant to current student and local needs than plans from previous years.</p>	
12.	<p>Risk Register for 2023/24</p> <p>The risks had been discussed in detail throughout earlier items on the agenda.</p>	
13.	<p>Governor visit reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been 12 governor visit reports logged on the governors’ portal since September 2023. • The report format includes a column for SLT to reply for questions 	

	<p>posted to ensure that issues raised are noted and feedback given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide range of areas have been visited. • Additionally, a further seven learning walks took place on 2 February 2024 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lv 1 Diploma in Carpentry & Joinery ○ JTL L3 Yr 1 Electrical Diploma ○ P&D L1 ○ Construction L1 ○ Electrical installation L2 ○ Early Years' apprentices Yr 1 ○ GCSE English 	
14.	<p>Any other business reported to the Governance Professional in advance of the meeting</p> <p>It was noted that the agenda and meeting had allowed governors time to discuss key themes and questions in detail.</p> <p>The Committee thanked Alison Davies who was leaving the College for her contributions and congratulated her on her new role.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18.30.</p>	
15.	<p>Date of Next Meeting 21 May 2023</p>	