



**Minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting
held on
Monday 20th February 2023 at 4.30pm**

Present:

Peg Hulse (PH) - Chair	Rachel Gray (RG)
	Ed Sylvester (ES)

In attendance:

Carol Horlock (CXH Asst. Principal)	Ken Kehoe (KK Clerk to the Trustees)
Oliver Stevens (ODS Deputy Principal)	

		Action
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	There were apologies from Shirley Price and Jeremy Pattison.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	There were no declarations of interest for any items on the agenda.	
3.	Appointment of Chair	
	The Trustees agreed to appoint Peg Hulse as Chair of the meeting.	
3.	Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 7th November 2022	
	The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday, 7 th November 2022 as an accurate record.	
5.	Matters Arising	
	<p>The Committee discussed the following matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What involvement would Trustees have in the External Quality Review? ODS explained that the EQR would focus on the barriers to learning, in particular, SEN, medical and student disadvantage. The external experts would carry out a 2-day review and write a report with recommendations. ODS would report back to the next Committee meeting. <p>Action: ODS to report back to the Committee on the outcome of the EQR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CXH briefed that 13 students had raised pregnancy concerns, of which 4 were male students. Most of those had been seeking information, while others were looking at options. In response to Trustee questions, CXH assessed that this number was not unusual. CXH briefed the Committee on the difficulties of integrating data from the CPOMS and CIS databases. 	
6.	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Update	
	CXH briefed the Committee on the ethnic and gender make-up of the student body, using the ethnicity categories recommended by the Government. The distribution was in line with the local area, but the new EDI Officer was looking at other catchment areas. By gender, the	

	<p>College student body was predominantly female. Retention had been lower for males, except for the last two years. In 2019, there had been a 10-percentage point difference between male and female retention rates, but in 2021/22 the rates were nearly the same.</p> <p>In response to Trustee questions, CXH advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it was unclear why there had been a reduction in the difference between retention rates but suggested the introduction of mock exams, improved ASD support and enhanced induction/orientation may have played a role; and • the College’s gender make-up was similar to other s7 Colleges; it was a common feature of post-compulsory education. <p>Action: CXH to provide information for discussion at the Trustees conference</p>	
7.	Curriculum and Quality Developments	

ODS updated the Committee on Curriculum and Quality developments.

Retention

OFSTED monitored retention. The biggest driver of the QAR measure was if a student left the College because that reduced retention in 3 subjects. Ideally the 97.3% retention rate for Year 1 students would be higher but it was in line with recent years. The two-year retention rate was not as high as in the COVID years but still good. The figure was reviewed by the SLT and the pastoral committee. The College would get national benchmark data in March, and it was looking at benchmarking against other S7 Colleges. The College is above the 2019 benchmark and hoping to be even further above the 2022 benchmark when it is published.

Trustees asked why students leave. ODS explained that there were a variety of reasons including the College not being the right place for them, starting full-time employment, moving to an FE College, changing aspirations and medical reasons. There was a link to those with lower prior GCSEs and next year the SLT intended to provide more scrutiny and support for lower GCSE students.

Trustees asked whether the College reviewed course requirements. ODS assured the Committee that it did, and he reviewed the data to look for patterns by department/subject. The College's course requirements tended to be more generous, but they were broadly in line with other S7 Colleges. When students left, they left the College rather than Departments or subjects.

As requested at the last meeting, CXH had looked at the impact of safeguarding issues on retention. Retention rates for students with Safeguarding Level 1 and 2 concerns were lower than for the whole student body. This was not unexpected. The retention rate for Level 3 Safeguarding was erratic as it involved a small number of students and was very case specific. In response to a Trustee question about managing the Safeguarding workload, CXH and ODS advised that the SLT were looking at how the safeguarding workload was managed and the level of resources.

BTEC Update

ODS briefed the Committee on the Government's recent announcement regarding the Applied General courses, including BTECS, that could apply for funding from 2025/26. 75 out of the 134 Applied General courses had been axed only 59 courses are left. Most double and triple BTECS have been excluded from the list of those courses that are eligible for funding. Moreover, students would be only able to take one Alternative Academic Qualification, except in exceptional circumstances. The DfE had indicated that they would announce which courses would receive funding by July 2024. This was 6 months too late for College planning purposes.

The Committee thanked ODS for his briefing.

7.	Student Support Update	
	<p>CXH briefed the Committee:</p> <p><u>Attendance Data</u> There was a strong correlation between attendance and academic performance. Attendance was good for the core programme but less so for tutorial, enrichment and learning support. The College pushed on attendance constantly and they were looking, in particular, at how Learning Support attendance could be improved, particularly as the value added had been good. Trustees noted that the College had no high needs students (i.e. receiving funding of more than £6k per annum) but a small number with EHCPs.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding, Fitness to Study and Disadvantaged Students</u> CXH briefed the Committee on the data. Trustees asked whether there was increased demand for external counselling services; CXH advised that there was and that the contractor currently provided 3 days per week.</p> <p>The Committee thanked CXH for her briefing.</p>	
8.	Governance Self-Assessment Review: 2022/23 Objectives	
	Discussion of the Governance SAR Objectives as deferred.	
9.	Committee Operations	
	Discussion of the appointment of a Vice-Chair and the Committee Skills Review was deferred.	
10.	AOB	
	Trustees deferred discussion of Digital Skills Training for students to their next meeting.	
	Action: Clerk to add Student Digital Skills Training to the agenda for next meeting.	
11.	Date of the next meeting	
	The Committee noted that the date of the next meeting was 5 th June 2023.	

The meeting closed at 6.10pm.

Signed Date.....