



**Minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting
held on
Monday 7th November 2022 at 4.30pm**

Present:

Shirley Price (SP) –Chair - online	Rachel Gray (RG)
Peg Hulse (PH)	Justin Knight (JK)
Jeremy Pattison (JP)	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 Nour El-Serry, the SU President.	
3.	Declarations of Interest	
	There were no declarations of interest for any items on the agenda.	
3.	Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 6th June 2022	
	The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday, 6 th June 2022 as an accurate record.	
5.	Matters Arising	
	The matters arising either had been completed or were covered elsewhere on the agenda.	
6.	Curriculum and Quality Developments	

ODS updated the Committee on Curriculum and Quality Developments.

Examinations Update The College had outperformed national trends, securing a higher proportion of examinations at grades A* to B than in previous years, when nationally the proportion had fallen. This was a significant achievement. He advised, however, that the Government policy meant that, next year, there could be a significant drop in the proportion of students getting higher grades as the policy was to move towards 2019 grade boundaries.

Quality Achievement Rate - ODS explained that the QAR (Quality Achievement Rate) was an OFSTED monitored indicator; if the College's QAR fell below the benchmark, which was the national average for 6th Form Colleges, this might be one of several risk factors to prompt an OFSTED Inspection. The College's QAR was largely driven by our retention rates (with our pass rate having only a minor influence as it is so high). Of the 2020 cohort, some 12% had left before the end of their course. The SLT and the Pastoral and Curriculum meetings regularly review retention and reasons for students leaving. The College only offers a 3 A-level course option for the vast majority of students, as students dropping from 4 A-levels to 3 A-levels adversely affects the QAR (loss of retention for one subject). Trustees asked:

Why were there differences in retention between single, double and triple BTECS?

ODS noted that the triple BTEC students tended to form a real community, as the students were together so much, and this aided retention. The retention rates for single and double BTECs needed further investigation, but ODS noted that BTEC students tended to have lower GCSE results and there was a relationship between GCSE results and retention. He also noted that lower retention rates for BTEC courses were common across the s7 Colleges.

Were there particular A-Level subjects with lower outcomes? ODS highlighted English Language and Linguistics, Geography and Sociology. An issue for English and Sociology was the difference between student expectations and reality. For English, the course was markedly more difficult than the GCSE; while for Sociology, there was often a mistaken belief that the course was relatively easy, and it therefore attracted students with lower GCSE results. The College sought to correct these mistaken beliefs. There had been an improvement in sociology outcomes since 2019 but it was not yet at the level that the College would wish. For geography, work was in hand to improve the coursework systems.

Did differences in staff/student ratios affect course retention? ODS advised that class sizes were in line and therefore not a factor.

2023 examinations - ODS briefed that these examinations would be marked in line with 2019 grade boundaries. It would be a hard year for the affected cohort. The College would continue to focus on mock examination preparation and would put greater emphasis on barriers to learning e.g., SEND. The College would be holding a Teaching and Learning Workshop, a January INSET Day and undertaking an External Quality Review (EQR) in March

BTEC and T Level Update – ODS briefed that the no courses offered by the College had been affected by the Government's list of BTEC courses that would be defunded in 2024/25. The College had not been affected by the programme of T-levels that had been announced thus far. Trustees noted the College needed to be aware that Industry wanted to move towards Degree apprenticeships and that T-Levels may be seen as a pathway to

degree apprenticeships. ODS briefed that performing arts and sports were protected until 2025/26 and were not affected by T-levels.

Admission and Courses – ODS briefed that there had been 2226 applications and 1168 were enrolled. The conversion rate has, therefore, increased since last year. There has also been a decline in the numbers lost between enrollment and enumeration, reflecting the College’s efforts over recent years to better aid the transition from GCSE to A-level/BTEC. Trustees asked if there was a particular pattern to the students withdrawing; ODS advised that there was no obvious pattern. ODS highlighted that the numbers retaking GCSE English had increased after the period of Centre Assessed Grades and Teacher Assessed Grades. Regarding course choices, ODS noted that geography, music, drama and modern foreign languages had declined, but subjects such as graphics were more popular.

The Committee congratulated the Staff and Students on the examination results.

7.	Student Support Update	
	<p>CXH briefed the Committee on the Safeguarding data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeder institutions send through paper records which must be scanned on to the Colleges system and then triaged. • Some of the incidents recorded are historic in that the incident happened before the student joined the College but it has been reported to the College. For example, bereavement may have happened earlier in a students' life, but it is still recorded because students continue to be affected. Bullying data is disaggregated between those accused of bullying and those that have been subject to bullying. • There were a significant number of family issues; these were important as they could leave a student feeling vulnerable. • The College had added a "Low Mood" category to avoid the need to use the label of "Depression". <p>Trustees asked if the data was useful, given how labour-intensive the process was. CXH advised that it was important as it showed that our experience was following national trends and it allowed the College to target resources more effectively, for example, by providing suicide training for all tutors.</p> <p>Trustees also asked:</p> <p><u>Given the negative slopes on the graphs of monthly reports, whether there was a seasonal pattern and why there was no spike in cases in the summer examination period?</u> CXH advised that the pattern of reported incidents may differ across the year between the cohorts.</p> <p><u>Had 25 students become pregnant?</u> CXH said that she would check but the category may include those cases where the student had simply asked for advice.</p> <p>Action: CXH to confirm whether the data on pregnancies reflected the number of actual student pregnancies.</p> <p>Trustees also asked whether it was possible to integrate CPOMS and CIS data to analyse how safeguarding affected retention rates. They also asked that Table 4 of the Data Report be brought back to the February meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>Action: CXH and ODS to investigate the scope for using the CPOMS and CIS data to analyse the effects of safeguarding on retention.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to add Safeguarding to the agenda of February meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked CXH for the excellent data and said that it showed what the Committee needed to be aware of and helped the College move forward.</p>	
8.	Governance Self-Assessment Review: 2022/23	
	<p>The Chair asked that Committee members submit proposals for the Committee's 2022/23 objectives to her and JP by 2 December.</p> <p>Action: Trustees to submit proposals for 2022/23 Committee Objectives by 2 December.</p>	
9.	Policy	
	<p><u>Examinations Policy</u> – ODS briefed on the changes to the draft policy. Trustees made the following points:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the terminology used from external sources? ODS advised that the College used the JCQ terminology. • The draft policy should be amended to set out what the IT Director is responsible for, in the same way as other postholders. The summary sheet and policy should also refer to the Acceptable Use of IT Policy. • The reference to MATS/Consortium in para 4.1 should be amended to refer to the College. • Why would the College refuse a Review of Marking (para 4.1.8)? ODS advised that, in practice, it would not but that the text was drawn from the JCQ guidance. • What did the staff that had access to results before publication do with the information? ODS said that he would sense check the results to prepare him for talking with Heads of Department the following day regarding anomalies; CXH said that she would review the data in case the results would pose problems for vulnerable students e.g., those that might be prone to suicide. • Did the College have a standard operating policy or procedure regarding the training of invigilators? ODS would confirm the arrangements with the Examinations Officer and brief the Chair. <p>ODS amended the draft Policy, as directed by the Committee. The Committee agreed to recommend the amended policy to the Board for ratification.</p> <p>Action: ODS to brief the Chair on the SOP/Policy regarding the training of invigilators.</p> <p><u>Examination Access Policy</u> CXH introduced the draft policy, noting that the policy accompanied the Examinations Policy and that there had been no substantive changes. Trustees asked that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attendance register should not be capitalized. • The qualification “directly” should be deleted from the reference to the employment of educational psychologist. • The terminology on the use of separate invigilation for mental health reasons should be drawn from the JCQ guidance. <p>CXH made the changes to the draft Policy; the Committee approved the policy for ratification by the Board.</p>	
10.	AOB	
	Trustees asked for an EDI update at their next meeting.	
	Action: Clerk to add EDI update to agenda for next meeting.	
11.	Date of the next meeting	
	The Committee noted that the date of the next meeting was 20 th February 2023.	

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.

Signed Date.....