

Minutes of the Learning & Quality Committee Meeting held at 4.30pm 03 December 2024

Present: Prue Amner (chair), Huw Chapman Tim Jackson, Lyndsey Mason (staff governor), Shirley Nellthorpe & Mike Stoneman

Apologies: Liz Byrne & Mark Cooper

In attendance: Eve Johnson	Interim VP Information Services
Tess Cole	VP Curriculum and Quality
Matt Phelps	Deputy CEO and Deputy Principal
Emily Pountney	VP Curriculum and Quality
Paola Schweitzer	Director of Governance
Jo Shankland	VP Student Experience
Sarah Warren	VP Curriculum and Quality
Katy Quinn	CEO and Principal

Minutes

143 Attendance and Participation

Liz Byrne and Mark Cooper sent their apologies. Eve stated that the permanent VP Information Services, Steve McDermott, would attend the next meeting.

Prue congratulated the College on the successful Ofsted inspection and noted the importance of the meeting in reviewing the quality of learning in 2023/24 and understanding quality intentions for 2024/25.

144 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

145 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 19 June 2024 were **Agreed** as a correct record.

146 Matters Arising

Minute 133: L&Q Dashboard: It was not yet possible to provide governors with more granular data as it required contextualisation. However a more detailed dashboard would develop over time with further developments brought to the next meeting.

Governors **Noted** the matters arising.

147 Ofsted Inspection Report (paper 701/24/L&Q)

The paper summarised the provisional grade following the full Ofsted inspection in October 2024 and provisional grades for key judgements and provision types. It also summarised verbal feedback concerning strengths and areas for development. All provisional grades had subsequently been confirmed by Ofsted. The Overall Effectiveness was GOOD with other grades as follows:

Key judgements:

- Quality of Education GOOD
- Behaviour and Attitudes GOOD
- Personal Development GOOD
- Leadership and Management GOOD
- Enhanced Skills Contribution REASONABLE

Provision Types

- Education for Young People GOOD
- Adult Learning GOOD
- High Needs GOOD
- Apprenticeships REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT

Tess, Emily, Jo and Sarah were invited to give their views on the inspection. They noted it was a tough process and whilst pleased with the outcome, they were disappointed that some areas were not graded Outstanding (eg adults and high needs). They had not been surprised by the areas for development identified. Katy had been impressed by the way staff pulled together to showcase the College's good work, demonstrating the strength of the curriculum management team. Prue invited governors to refer to the areas for improvement during their link visits. Governors **Noted** the Ofsted inspection outcome and feedback.

148 Self-Assessment Report & Quality Improvement Plan (paper 702/24/L&Q)

This report comprised three parts: Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) term 3 2023/24 update and close down, Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2023/24 and whole College QIP 2023/24. The 2023/24 SAR grades had been finalised and alongside some 2023/24 QIP actions, had informed the 2023/24 whole College QIP. The QIP included the areas for development identified by Ofsted. Matt was confident the QIP identified the right actions.

Governors recognised that there were still pockets of poor attendance and punctuality however it was an improving picture. There was a brief discussion about initiatives to improve maths and English attendance and governors noted that tutorials were showing significant improvement. Ofsted identified that extremism and radicalisation was not embedded in tutorials and this was an issue of timing (content was being delivered for the first time during the inspection week). Staffing remained a challenge and was having an impact in some areas such as overdue reviews and slower than anticipated improvements. The College was developing its links with employers through Employer Advisory Boards (EABs) to fill specialist gaps and was developing better feedback. Tim noted that it was good to see apprenticeship quality improvements having a positive impact. Prue thanked Matt and his team for their work on these documents and invited governors to attend EABs and ask about staffing during their link visits. Having scrutinised the 2023/24 and 2024/25 QIPs and 2023/24 SAR, governors **Agreed** to recommend them to Corporation for approval.

149 Quality of Education Report (paper 703/24/L&Q)

This report provided an in-year update on the quality of students and apprentices' learning experience and outlined the Ofsted inspection, apprenticeships, external quality activities, surveys and feedback and teaching and learning.

Key points were the improving position with apprenticeships, evidenced through work and behaviours, application of skills in the workplace and personal development. The highest areas of concern remained construction, automotive and most wet trades. Progress reviews were now in place with employers. Eve confirmed that the College had met the 01 December external quality deadline and would meet the 05 July 2025 award claims submission for BTEC learners. Prue welcomed sight of the impact of CPD and asked that data be presented concerning the number of staff (in addition to the number of benefits). Lyndsey believed that teaching staff would welcome the opportunity for a more collaborative approach to lesson observations. Having scrutinised the report, governors **Noted** the quality of education.

150 L&Q Dashboard (paper 704/24/L&Q)

The L&Q dashboard set out final performance for 2023/24 for education and training, apprenticeships and attendance data (achievement data would not be finalised until later this month) as well as initial 2024/25 performance.

Shirley asked about apprenticeship end dates and interventions in place to ensure achievement within the timeframe, noting that there were still a lot of out of funding apprentices (OOFs). Matt outlined the range of interventions and Shirley suggested Apprenticeship Liaison Officers use employers as a lever for achievement. Sarah was producing a monthly report to SMT outlining apprenticeship progress. Tim asked if the College had sufficient in-house expertise and whether there were opportunities to learn from other colleges. Matt responded that the issue fundamentally concerned curriculum effectiveness so whilst there were opportunities to learn from others, these issues needed to be resolved first. Katy stated it would take time, particularly because it required staff training and underlined the importance of focusing on progression (as well as new starts). With regards to 2024/25 data, attendance was better than at this point last year. In response to a question Emily confirmed that the Attendance Project Group had had a positive impact and was now focusing on other issues.

Governors **Noted** the 2023/24 and 2024/25 L&Q Dashboards.

151 Student Voice Update (paper 705/24/L&Q)

This report provided a detailed overview of student voice based on surveys, student voice meetings and learning and assessment feedback. Governors were invited to triangulate the judgments and RAG ratings in the QIP and Quality of Education paper. Governors noted the College's recent work with Unloc to support Student Union representatives. There was a brief discussion about the areas for improvement in particular clarity of timetable (75%) which was due to staffing issues and fresher fair attendance (44%). Jo reported that the fairs were busy and Prue suggested that the question was amended so those who were not in College that day wouldn't be counted in the statistics. Jo clarified that student voice meetings had recently been separated into student voice (ie support services tutorial and corporate services) and curriculum voice meetings (ie teaching, learning and assessment). Governors **Noted** the Student Voice update.

152 Safeguarding & Prevent Annual Report (paper 570/24/L&Q)

This report provided an overview of safeguarding disclosures/referrals in 2023/24 as well as updates on Ofsted, systems, e-safety (including the new safeguarding referral and monitoring system), compliance with statutory training, SCR and Prevent.

Ofsted found the College's safeguarding arrangements to be effective, with students and apprentices feeling safe and valuing the support from the staff team. The new tutorial framework would ensure that students extended their awareness of safety and local risks including radicalisation and extremism. A review of the staffing model was underway to take into account safeguarding referrals (there had been a small increase in the number of referrals compared to 2022/23) and the increased number of unaccompanied minors and pre-16 students at Highbury Campus. 85% of staff had completed their training. Two governors had yet to complete their training. Governors **Agreed** to recommend the Safeguarding & Prevent Annual Report to Corporation.

153 Careers Report including Gatsby Benchmarks & Destination Data (paper 707/24/L&Q)

To report updated governors on careers activities during 2023/24 across the College, Ofsted feedback and assessment against the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Ofsted had found that students and apprentices, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, benefitted from a consistent and effective focus on careers information, advice, and guidance to plan their next steps and that students planning to go to university benefitted from effective support and advice on UCAS applications. Gatsby Benchmarks were a non-statutory framework used to develop an effective careers programme and in 2023/24 the College had achieved 100% in all eight benchmarks. Governors welcomed the comprehensive report and the positive progress made in the last year, in particular the distance travelled with the careers team and students and the positive progression and destination data. In response to a question, Jo confirmed that the College was above the sector average with positive destinations and in line with the sector for UCAS. Updated UCAS figures would be circulated to governors. Governors **Noted** the Careers Report including Gatsby Benchmarks and Destination Data.

154 Comments, Complaints & Compliments Annual Report (paper 708/24/L&Q)

This report provided an overview of complaints received in 2023/24 and their outcome.

There was an increase in stage 2 complaints (ie formal complaints) in 2023/24 with the majority concerning staffing absences (21), followed by students who raised concerns after being chased for non payment of fees (10) and staff behaviour (10). Katy believed the increased number of complaints was due to more rigorous reporting and tracking with all complaints (even those raised informally) now logged. These complaints were relatively routine, with the exception of staff behaviour which was discussed at SMT and linked through to staff conduct and HR procedures. Governors **Noted** the Comments, Complaints & Compliments Annual Report.

155 Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2024/25 (paper 709/24/L&Q)

Prue advised governors of the Audit Committee discussion asking that policies were separated from procedures (governors were required to agree some policies but procedures were a matter for management) and that this would be done as policies followed their review cycle. References to the ESFA would need to be replaced.

The Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2024/25 had been reviewed and updated to better align to regional safeguarding standards, further

clarification on COPC safeguarding team & procedures and senior staff roles & responsibilities and on how to raise concerns in the evening (an Ofsted recommendation). With the additional amendment to reference the whistleblowing policy (not just its procedure), governors **Agreed** to recommend the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2024/25 to Corporation for approval.

156 EED&I Policy (paper 710/24/L&Q)

The EED&I Policy had been reviewed and updated, a process that had involved a governor, Liz Byrne. Changes included amending the nine protected characteristics, reference to equity, the Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure (formerly the Learner Behaviour Policy and Procedure), governors and an additional section on related policies. Governors asked that equity be defined in the policy. With this amendment, governors **Agreed** to recommend the EED&I policy to Corporation for approval.

157 Comments, Complaints & Compliments Policy (paper 711/24/L&Q)

The Comments, Complaints & Compliments Policy had been reviewed and updated. There were no substantive changes except for reference to the Financial Regulations where an investigation resulted in a recommendation for a fee waiver/refund.

Huw noted that this was a complaints policy and asked if governors could see compliments received. Matt clarified that staff received numerous informal compliments but there was no central mechanism to record and share them. Governors suggested the policy was renamed Feedback Policy, with separate sections on complaints and compliments and that a mechanism to capture compliments be established. With this change, governors **Agreed** in principle to recommend the Comments, Complaints & Compliments Policy to Corporation for approval.

158 Freedom of Speech & External Speaker/Visitor Policy (paper 712/24/L&Q)

The Freedom of Speech and External Speaker/Visitor Policy had been reviewed and updated to include written and verbal speech, an additional section on policies and roles and clearer expectations for external speakers/visitors. The policy also collated all relevant legislation. There was a brief discussion clarifying who made decisions and how, with Jo assuring governors that the policy did not discourage debate. Governors **Agreed** to recommend the Freedom of Speech and External Speaker/Visitor Policy to Corporation for approval.

The meeting ended at 6.15pm