

CORPORATION OF HULL COLLEGE

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held at 4.00 pm
On 19th October 2022 via Teams**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Joey Greenwood Rob Lawson Rachel Storr Debra Gray	External Governor (Chair) Externa Governor External Governor Principal
IN ATTENDANCE:	Lynette Leith Ranjit Singh Nicola Dimond Lesley Venables	VP Curriculum VP Quality VP Human Resources Interim Director of Governance
Min. No.		
1	Meeting with Curriculum Heads in Absence of Management Governors received assurance from curriculum heads that solid progress was being made in a timely manner and that, although this could mean making some difficult decisions, they felt that the College was being steered in the right direction.	
2	A governor asked whether functional skills (FS) was sufficiently embedded into the curriculum and was advised that most students were studying GCSEs rather than FS, but it was noted that language was a barrier to success for some ESOL learners.	
3	Managers outlined the challenge of changing the culture amongst College staff and governors were assured that managers had the appropriate tools and level of support to achieve this.	
4	Apprenticeships had been graded as 'Good' by Ofsted in February 2022. However, there were ongoing issues with compliance against the ESFA funding rules. It was noted that achievement levels had also decreased year on year due to both internal and external factors, and it was proving difficult to keep apprentices on track for upto 4 years. The Support to Improve process provided a structured approach to making the necessary changes to teaching and learning.	
5	Initial Advice and Guidance needed to improve to ensure that students were on the most appropriate programme and College staff were working hard to deliver an overall 'experience' for learners, rather than merely a formal qualification.	
6	A governor queried whether there was any additional support that could be provided by the Board. Curriculum managers suggested that having strong links between governors and employers would be helpful and using any high level connections that could be made for the benefit of the College and its students. Some areas of the curriculum needed to be invigorated and it was recognised that input from employers in its design was vital to ensure that it met the aspirations of all parties.	
7	Managers felt that the 'back to the floor' initiative had been highly successful and had brought about changes to the planning process, which would have a significant impact on learners.	

8	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Tom Dannatt (External Governor).
9	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELEVANT TO THE AGENDA There were no declarations made against any agenda items.
10	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting on 20 th June 2022 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.
11	MATTERS ARISING The Interim Director of Governance presented a progress report on actions arising from the previous meeting.
12	In relation to AP1 on the replacement of YELLIS software for 14-16 reporting the VP Curriculum advised that this was part of the College's curriculum planning process which was currently taking place and the action should be brought forward to the next meeting. The Committee was reminded that details of the AEB adult curriculum had been shared with governors at the previous meeting and that it was important that the priority was for the College to meet its AEB allocation (minute 2.5 refers). Comparison data between 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 would be brought to future meetings to enable governors to understand the links between each element of the Deep Dive report (minute 3.3 refers). All other actions were either completed or featured on the agenda.
13	QUALITY OF EDUCATION Indicative Achievement 2021/2022 The Principal presented a report on the indicative outcomes for 2021/2022. Governors noted that for 16-18s achievement was 81.4% (which was 5% less than the national average) and for adults 86.6%. Study programme achievement levels were too low and had been for a number of years. Apprenticeship achievement levels had also decreased, which was reflective of the national picture for this group of learners,
14	The College's Self-Assessment Report was being prepared and would include the indicative achievement levels. The Principal reported that apprenticeships were likely to be graded as 'requires improvement' and would be lower than at the previous Ofsted inspection.
15	A governor asked whether any of these results had been surprising and was advised that the previous SAR ratings had been accurate. Study Programmes had been predicted as 3-4% higher but the overall gradings for each aspect of provision were as projected.
16	<u>Nursery Report</u> The Committee received a report on the College's nursery provision, which included an overview of children, staffing, pupil premium, safeguarding (with a small number of cases identified) and the financial contribution. The report outlined that this area of provision had been expected to make a loss even before overheads were taken into account and was treated as a 'service' rather than a commercial activity. The Vice-Principal F&R was currently reviewing options to ensure that the nursery was financially viable and met all health and safety requirements. It was envisaged that this process would be completed by the end of the Autumn Term.

17	In response to questions from governors the Principal reported that the service was subsidised for both staff and students, with the latter offsetting some of their bursary funding against the costs. The facility was only available during term time (unlike a commercial operation, which would not be subsidised).
18	Governors commented that it was difficult to accept that the nursery was loss-making (£35K) given the high demand for such services in the locality. The Principal advised that approximately 50% of places would be allocated to bursary students.
19	A specialist inspector in Early Years education had been asked to review the nursery provision and how well it aligned with the DfE framework.
20	Management was asked whether it would be feasible for a third party to operate the nursery on behalf of the College, which would reduce the level of risk involved (in terms of finance, reputation and safeguarding). The Principal agreed that this was a further option and was being reviewed as part of the cost-benefit analysis.
21	14-16 Update Governors received a report on 14-16 provision, focusing on key outcomes, risks and mitigations. The VP Curriculum explained that attendance levels required rapid improvement, partly due to the high number of students being home-schooled during the pandemic.
22	Recruitment levels were strong, with 70 pupils on the wait list to enrol, who would not have been accommodated in previous years. Enrolments were on a "first come, first served" basis, following a robust recruitment process aligned to that of the rest of the College. Pass rates were good (95.5%) but attainment requires further improvement. Students needed to be more ambitious about progressing to high level qualifications and part of the solution was to offer more full Level 2 courses to provide students with GCSE equivalents, which would be addressed as part of the curriculum planning process currently underway.
23	The Committee expressed concern that the College had failed to accurately predict the outcome of the mid-year examinations for this group of learners and their mock assessments and asked how this was being resolved. The VP Curriculum reported that schools used a different prediction tool (YELLSS), which had now been aligned to the rest of the College's provision and enabled staff to scrutinise data quickly. All curriculum teams had allocated an hour each week to determine teaching and learning needs based on the collected data.
24	A governor asked whether there were links to teaching talks and deep dives for this area. The VP Curriculum responded that the self-assessment report for 14-16 provision was a grade '2', but highlighting the need for setting more stretching targets. The deep dive activity would provide feedback on any weaknesses and it was noted that staff were already aware of and addressing any identified improvements.
25	In response to a question about 14-16 being a growth area for the College the Principal commented that this was a possibility, with a total of 168 students this year. However, the staff were accustomed to managing a defined number of pupils, which may require review if larger numbers of students were enrolled. This area provided an alternative to mainstream schooling and clear pathways to post-16 vocational learning. Pupils also received a full 'wraparound' curriculum, including PHSE, the themes of which were covered well by staff.

26	The Committee queried the reasons for attendance being graded as 'requires improvement' and was advised that attendance monitoring for this cohort had been more lenient traditionally, compared to 16-19s. It was felt important that a robust approach to attendance was required to address this issue, which had to start at the outset of the academic year.
27	Apprenticeships The VPC presented a report on apprenticeships, including an update on those apprentices who were past their end date (PED), recruitment and risks around assessment. Predicted outcomes had been reported as 55% at the last Committee meeting, however, it was noted that one sub-contractor was facing significant delays with the DVLA due to a backlog of driving licence applications and this had reduced predicted the overall achievement level to 41%. The College was working closely with the sub-contractor and would be looking at classifying these students as on a break in learning but this did represent a risk.
28	Retention levels had fallen significantly compared to 2021/2022 but outcomes for those who remain on programme and completed their End Point Assessment were largely positive with 97.4% of those successfully achieving their qualification.
29	A major overhaul of the curriculum and staff roles/responsibilities was taking place. Governors were concerned about the achievement data but noted that this would not have any financial implications, as there had been a significant reduction in the number of apprentices whose end dates had now expired. However, achieving the targets for corporate and commercial provision remained a challenge.
30	The VP Curriculum reported that the College had successfully negotiated its exit from the costly contract with JTL as a sub-contractor and converted the learners to direct College delivery, which was more financially viable for the College.
31	In terms of retention, governors noted that the College still had some learners who should have left in 2019 but had remained on programme until 2021/2022 due to the impact of the pandemic. The current overall retention rate of 79% was considered by management to be a good level of performance considering all mitigating factors. A detailed withdrawal analysis had been undertaken for this group of students and for the 2021/2022 cohort, a summary of which would be included in the next report to the Committee.
32	The Chair commented that the curriculum managers had emphasised the need for employers to be involved in the design of the curriculum and to have a greater level of involvement in College activities. Communication and the lack of reporting on progress had also been highlighted in the discussion. The VP Curriculum reported that all these elements were addressed in the Employer Engagement Strategy. It was noted that it was difficult for the College to have any influence over young people withdrawing from their studies, particularly on long programmes.
33	Strategies to support employer engagement included staff assisting employers in the on-boarding process for new employees recruited from the College, managers visiting workplaces more often and an active social media presence highlighting the work undertaken in partnership with local businesses.
34	The Chair reported that feedback from curriculum managers on the Support to Improve programme had been positive and that it was hoped that this would apply to apprenticeships during the academic year. The Vice-Principal Curriculum added that the College was now becoming more outward-facing and engaging with external stakeholders.

35	At the next meeting the outcome of the analysis of withdrawals and retention would be presented for discussion, together with a summary of the curriculum planning day on 11 th November. Governors were invited to attend the latter event and the Chair's suggestion for a link activity with curriculum managers would be followed up.
36	Programmes For Young People Report Enrolments on study programmes were currently at 105%, which was a slight reduction from the start of term (109%). Attendance was being tracked robustly.
37	It was noted that an updated English & Maths Strategy would be submitted to the Committee's next meeting for recommendation by the Corporation.
38	A governor asked whether initial advice and guidance was accurate, to which the Vice-Principal Quality reported that staff had checked for any anomalies and that focused learning walks were taking place. The College was able to transfer students quickly to more appropriate programmes if they had not been enrolled on the more suitable course. There was still some work to be done in this area and this was partly due to aspirations of learners and reflected the opportunities based on GSCE outturns.
39	Management was confident that English and Maths performance levels would improve, particularly since this year standards for behaviour and attendance had been set early. However, it was likely to take a full two years post-COVID19 before this work impacted on student outcomes. This also applied to apprenticeships.
40	Attendance for young people had been poor, but had improved slightly to 77.5%, which was similar to pre-pandemic levels. Achievement on L1 and L2 courses had improved due to carry overs of functional skills students. Maths and English courses were focusing on progression and it was anticipated that GCSE outcomes would be much improved.
41	Adult Learning Update The VPC presented a report that showed the current and end of year projection for achievement, noting that adult provision had differing completion dates. A new experienced Executive Director had recently been appointed and had been working on proposals to offset the reduction in income for adult provision. Skilled staff were in place for subject areas for SWAPs and the areas of English & Maths, Digital and ESOL were performing particularly well.
42	It was noted that one particular area was weaker than the rest and was currently being performance managed by two successful heads of institution.
43	A governor queried the scale of potential financial impacts and whether SSW was still loss-making. The Vice-Principal Curriculum reported that a new manager had been appointed last academic year, whose leadership had led to the offsetting of some employability losses and there had been some successful outcomes. The staff in this area needed to be retained to support the College's employability agenda.
44	Higher Education Report The VPQ presented a report on the College's higher education provision, for which a new Head of HE had recently been appointed.
45	Governors were advised of the outcomes of the National Student Survey, which highlighted a number of areas for improvement, including course organisation and learning resources.

46	A new quality calendar had been developed and the Committee was advised that the emphasis for HE was now on improving quality, rather than merely compliance. Processes were being streamlined to enable staff to focus on teaching and learning. Although the perception within the College was that HE provision was strong, this was not supported by the evidence. Student experience, teaching, learning and reporting all needed to be tightened up as part of the improvement process.
47	The Principal reported that the College's leadership and governance arrangements for HE required some strengthening and a higher level of scrutiny, including the establishment of an HE oversight committee with governor participation. A revised HE Strategy would be submitted for recommendation by the Corporation at the next Committee meeting.
48	A number of best practice visits had been scheduled for the current academic year, some of which had already taken place and proved highly valuable for staff.
49	The Vice-Principal Quality commented that high-level skills in the workforce locally was traditionally low and that the College's HE provision had not received sufficient attention in the past to stretch the aspirations of its students and the community. This was a long-term strategy and governors were advised that it took at least 18 months to devise new provision and to complete the HE validation process.
50	A governor asked whether any internal progression data was available and was advised that data collection from the College's MIS was problematic and was the subject of a detailed review by senior management.
51	JOURNEY TO OUTSTANDING Draft Equality & Diversity Strategy Governors received the first draft of the College's Equality & Diversity Strategy. The final version would include demographic information on the College's EDI profile compared to the local community.
52	Deep Dive Update The Committee received for information a report on recent Deep Dive activities. Induction had been one area covered by the process in the first part of the new term and an action plan for any improvements was currently being compiled. Performance levels were better than in 20-2021/2022, but this was from a low starting point.
53	In Health & Life Sciences there were signs that management oversight was improving, however, this institute was still graded as 'requires improvement' (formerly 'inadequate'). A change in leadership in Digital and Advanced Manufacturing appeared to be having a positive impact. Maths and English would be reported on at the next Committee meeting.
54	A governor asked whether there was a need for managers to be better trained for their roles and more empowered, rather than there being too many touch points during the year with which they needed to comply. The Vice-Principal Curriculum responded that streamlining processes would be helpful in reducing the administrative burden for managers.
55	When asked how employers were being engaged in co-designing the curriculum the Vice-Principal reported that employer engagement was a 2-way activity and had not been achieved well in all cases in the past. A consistent approach and improved communication were vital in providing employers with confidence in their dealings with the College.

56	Employer Engagement Strategy The VPC presented the draft Employer Engagement Strategy, which aligned to other strategies developed by the College.
57	A governor asked about the College's previous provision in Ports & Logistics which had decreased in volume over several years. The Principal reported that the College needed to choose between engaging in existing or emerging areas of economic activity on which to focus curriculum developments, as it was unable to compete with organisations already in this market.
58	In response to questions on the background of the employer engagement team the VPC advised that the majority were student-facing staff and experienced managers in this area.
59	The Committee commented that the aim and aspiration of the Strategy was commendable. Communication, servicing employer needs and understanding their challenges would be critical to its success.
60	Resolved – That the Corporation be recommended to approve the draft Employer Engagement Strategy
61	LEARNER SUPPORT AND WELFARE The VPQ provided an update on Safeguarding in Term 1 to date. The number of mental health cases had increased compared to 2021/2022. There was a relatively high number of students with an Education Care & Health Plan.
62	A governor asked whether staff had received sufficient training on safeguarding issues and was advised that the quality of training had improved this year, which should provide staff with appropriate confidence in undertaking their roles. The Principal was asked whether safeguarding arrangements had improved since she joined the College in April 2022 and responded that safeguarding was a habit, not an add-on to the operation of the institution. Improvements were evident and the Principal was seeing more tangible evidence of this on the ground, however, not all issues had yet been resolved.
63	Governors received a summary of the first student survey of the academic year, which focused on the enrolment and induction processes. Students felt that the College provided a safe environment, positive experience, good levels of support and were on the appropriate course for them. These outcomes had improved when compared to 2021/2022.
64	Gatsby benchmarks were used as the standard for careers advice and the College had appointed a member of staff with responsibility for engagement with careers and entrepreneurship.
65	RECRUITMENT 2022/2023 The Principal presented a report on recruitment levels for 2022/2023, the main points of which were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-18 – on target. There were potentially 150 to 200 withdrawals, but this would not negatively impact on the budget position • HE - £400K loss was predicted and management was meeting next week to discuss the mitigation of any budget risks. The decrease in HE enrolments was reflected in the national picture • Adults – 80% of target achieved, with further enrolments during the rest of the year • 14-16 – no concerns

66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeships no concerns <p>Governors noted that a new MIS Director had recently been appointed and their initial focus was devising proposals to ensure the transparency and availability of accurate student data. The Committee felt that the Corporation should be informed of the extensive work that was being undertaken by the senior leadership team in addressing this and all other significant issues for the College.</p>
67	<p>CURRICULUM AND QUALITY RISK REGISTER REPORT</p> <p>The VPC presented a report on the risk register, which was unchanged from the previous meeting, with a total of 32 curriculum-related risks. Two of the sub-risks were graded as ‘amber’ and would be reviewed as part of the deep dive process.</p>
68	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>The Principal suggested that the newly-appointed Director of Governance should undertake a further review of reporting formats, in conjunction with the SLT to streamline the documentation that was submitted to governors and focus on key issues.</p>
69	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>6th December 2022, 5.30 p.m.</p>

Approved by the Standards Committee at the meeting held on 6th December 2022.