

# Curriculum and Student Matters Committee

Tue 15 November 2022, 17:00 - 19:00

GW B, Parsons Walk Campus, Wigan



## Attendees

**Present:** Andrea Ferguson (Independent Governor - Chair), Jenny Bullen (Independent Governor), Harinder Dhaliwal (Independent Governor), Steven Tomlinson (Independent Governor), Anna Dawe (Principal), Rebecca Turley (Staff Governor), Jennifer Connor (Independent Governor), Jomana Aref (Student Governor)

**In attendance:** Joanne Platt (Director of Governance), Anne-Marie Francis (Vice Principal Curriculum), Alison Rushton (Vice Principal Employment and Skills), Dave Harrison (Vice Principal - Data and Funding), Jim Harrison (Head of English and Maths and ESOL) for Item 4, Ursula Hoyles (Head of HE) for Items 7, 13 and 15.

The Director of Governance confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

## Meeting minutes

### 1. Apologies for absence

CSM-22-11-01

Apologies for absence had been received from Ann Harrison, Louise Brown and Millie Gallagher.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

CSM-22-11-02

There were no declarations of interests.

### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

CSM-22-11-03

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 were an accurate record of the meeting. All actions are complete.

**Resolved:** The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022.



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The Committee considered a presentation on Maths and English for 16-18 and 19+ learners, noting that these subjects are the cornerstone qualifications to any future prospect in employment or further education for students. The College's approach is to contextualise the subject towards real life examples of the uses of Maths and English in specific vocations with a focus on employability skills such as problem solving, mastery of skills, resilience, determination, reflection, creativity and communication skills. Programmes focus on building confidence from starting points, building exam skills and showcasing progression and assess regularly to allow the learners to know more and remember more.

It was noted that outcomes in Maths and English for adults are improving, although outcomes aren't as good for 16-18 year olds, in line with the national picture. Progress for 16-18 learners is nevertheless strong.

Enrolments and attendance is high with some areas such as Sport, Public Services, Hair and Beauty, Land based and Foundation Studies excelling.

Focused intervention at Pagefield is aimed at improving attendance and motivation and includes classroom enhancement (taking students out of the traditional school type learning environment), additional Teaching, Learning and Assessment support, particularly for learners not in receipt of Additional Learning Support, adaptive teaching and adaptive behaviour management.

In terms of November re-sit exams, interventions are aimed at faster achievement for Grade 3 learners, implementation of an attendance strategy, adaptation to delivery models, including the streamlining of the curriculum, the contextualisation of topics, for maths, colour coding topics to enable learners to more easily focus on their specific areas of development and working with vocational subjects to merge skills into learning.

It was noted that there are a high number of learners taking November re-sits and that the College closed to other students to facilitate this.

Targets for 2022-23 have been set high, with interventions planned to include a focus on student attendance (particularly at Pagefield), timely intervention with next of kin, walking students to class, adaptive teaching and 'workspace', reward systems, student motivation including contextualising topics to work, focusing on skills and merging the gap between vocational subjects and Maths and English to show students the value of Maths and English in their chosen career. In terms of progression, the College has a new EHCP lead in the department and a new EHCP specialist to track progress and the implementation of TLA strategies for EHCP and High Need learners.

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that students who don't achieve a Level 4 in English and Maths can still pass their vocational qualification, but this may hinder their ability to go to University or get employment.

Governors found the presentation a really helpful overview, providing a summary of a comprehensive programme of actions, which provides context to the data seen by Governors in the Curriculum KPI dashboards.

It was noted that the November re-sit results will be available in January 2023.

The Committee noted the presentation.

**Jim Harrison left the meeting at 5.30pm.**



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The Committee considered a report on how the College is meeting local skills needs, with a particular focus on T-Levels, which offer practical and knowledge-based learning and on the job experience through an industry placement of at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days).

As a Wave 2 Provider, the College has been providing T-Levels for 12-months and is now in the second year of delivery. Currently, the College offers T-Levels in Health, Education and Childcare, Civil Engineering and Digital and plans a further rollout in September 2023 and 2024 for T-Levels in Leadership and Management, Legal and Accounting and Animal Management. It was noted that recruitment is strong and student and employer satisfaction is high.

However, it was also noted that as T-Levels are an academic qualification, albeit with a high level of practical application, there are some concerns about their suitability as pathways for construction trades and other skilled trades such as catering and hair and beauty and at present, the College is not therefore planning on expanding its T-Level provision in these areas. There also remains work to do in relation to the breadth of progression pathways from some T-Levels and there was significant concern raised as to the suitability of assessments in Health and Science this summer. Students at College were, in the main not affected by this. The College intends to take a steady, staged and selective roll-out of T-levels. It was also noted that the DfE plans to stop funding some BTEC qualifications where they see an overlap with T-Levels.

The Committee was satisfied that the College's approach to T-Level provision was sound and appropriate in the current climate.

The Committee noted the report.

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## 6. College SAR 2021-22 and Quality Improvement Plan 2022-23

The Committee reviewed the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR), which had been developed from the bottom up with all departments actively engaged in identifying strengths and areas for improvement or development.

A new approach has been developed this year, which splits the SAR into the four provision types of Education Programmes for Young People (EYP), High Needs Learners, Apprenticeships and Adults.

It was noted that the self-assessed grade for each overall judgement was a two, although with the exception of apprenticeships, each sub-judgement for personal development has been graded as a one. The Apprenticeships sub-judgement for personal development had been graded as a two, as there are currently fewer opportunities for personal development activities for apprentices who only attend college for a minimum of one-day a week.

For each area, strengths and areas for improvement or development have been identified. The Committee noted the need to improve achievement gaps in a small number of areas, that the Teaching and Learning Academy has an agenda to reinvigorate classroom and workshop learning (which is underway), retention requires improvement for adult learners and internal progression of returning students also needs to be an area of focus.

Priority actions identified through the self-assessment process have been captured in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), progress against which will be reported to governors through the Committee. It was noted that each department has its own detailed QIP, which feeds up to the priority actions in the overall QIP.

It was noted that the SAR had been discussed with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Governing Board (one of whom is also the Chair of this Committee) and issues identified through discussion had been captured in the version considered by the Committee. The next step is to present the SAR and QIP to the Governing Board (via a presentation) at its meeting to be held on 6 December.

The Committee noted that the judgements given are fair and well reasoned with some really good case studies. Whilst the evidence shows that grades were at the top end of a two, it was agreed that keeping the grades at twos was the right approach. It was also noted that the self-assessed grade for skills was 'strong' which will permeate through all areas.

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that although there is a wide range of support available to support all learners with their mental health, there is a need to provide more targeted support for adults, which is why this features in the Adults QIP.

**Resolved:** The Committee agreed to recommend the College SAR 2021-22 and Quality Improvement Plan 2022-23 to



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## 7. HE Annual Monitoring Report and HE SAR 2021-22

CSM-22-11-07

The Committee considered the HE annual monitoring report, noting that HE provision is meeting required standards with evidence of student involvement and external review. This includes improved outcomes for students, retention, pass rates, high grades and student satisfaction compared to the previous year.

The Committee also reviewed the HE Self-Assessment Report (SAR), noting that the experience of students on HE courses at the College is assessed critically via External Examiner reports, survey results (e.g. National Student Survey (NSS)), feedback from Student Committees and course retention rates.

When reviewed as a whole, the quality and standards of the College's higher education provision can be considered to be of good quality and reliable. Taking the broad range of stakeholder feedback into account the College can be confident that its higher education provision meets awarding body academic standards and the Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration .

The implementation of the College's Higher Education Quality assurance and Enhancement Framework and professional development events such as weekly continuous professional development meetings and the Research and Scholarship Symposium, provide the College with a HE-bespoke and reliable quality assurance mechanism. Student outcomes are evaluated via Continuation rates, Attainment / High Grade performance, Assessment Board outcomes, retention rates and pass rates, led by a dedicated higher education management team. The Committee noted that, whilst there were pockets of under-performance in 2021-2022 relating to retention and pass rates, the overall performance of the College's HE provision is good.

The Committee commended the HE Team on the NSS results and a comprehensive report. It was noted that the Access and Participation Plan, currently rated as amber will be reviewed in line with national consultation, with a new plan to be in place for 2024-25.

Plans for the reported HE underspend include actions to support students with the cost of living crisis by accessing the HE Fund.

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that KPIs in relation to Condition B3, currently rated as amber are to be added to the HE KPI dashboard to provide visibility to the Committee on student outcomes valued by employers. However, the difficulty in getting students who have completed their studies to complete surveys to provide this data was acknowledged by the Committee.

It was also confirmed that some residual issues arising from the Pandemic, remain, particularly in relation to the mental health of some students.

**Resolved:** The Committee agreed to recommend the HE Annual Monitoring Report and HE SAR 2021-22 to the Governing Board for approval.

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## 8. Curriculum Reports and KPI Dashboards



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## 8.1. Study Programmes and Dashboard

CSM-22-11-08

The Committee reviewed a report and KPI Dashboard for 16-18 Study Programmes, noting that early indications are that the majority of learners are making progress and the picture is particularly positive at Level 2. Attendance is marginally below target and action is ongoing to motivate learners to attend. Key to this is that learners enjoy their lessons in college and want to be here. The Teaching and Learning Academy work around outstanding TLA is following this aspiration and has launched a 'Be Brilliant' campaign to support high expectations of staff and students.

It was noted that learning walks and observations of TLA are underway and findings will be reported to the Committee in subsequent reports.

The early findings (induction) survey is positive and the majority of learners are very satisfied with their choice of college and course.

The Committee noted that the data for all KPI dashboards considered under Item 8 has also been included within the College SAR considered under Item 6 above.

The Committee asked for future Curriculum KPI dashboards to be RAG rated for ease of reading.

The Committee noted the report.

## 8.2. Adult Provision and Dashboard

CSM-22-11-09

The Committee reviewed a report and KPI Dashboard for Adult provision, noting that adult attendance is good and still in line with the target of 90%, SPOC 1, learner voice interim results are very positive with an average score of 97.3% and Right Start activities have supported a smooth start to the year and good learner experience.

The Committee noted that small pockets of lower level attendance are emerging at Levels 2 and 3 on infill and discrete adult programmes and that strategies are underway to identify learners at risk and to work with teams to improve performance. It was also noted that on SPOC 1, responses to first day experience is below expectations on some adult courses. Interrogation of issues at team level will feed into plans for the start of next year.

The Committee noted the report.

## 8.3. Apprenticeship Provision and Dashboard

CSM-22-11-10

The Committee reviewed a Report and KPI Dashboard for Apprenticeships, noting that attendance is excellent and in line with KPI targets. Work continues with Trainer Assessors to improve compliance and support new staff to understand and deliver on the College's expectations and interim data from SPOC 1 highlights Apprentice satisfaction is very high. The first Employer Forum has taken place where employers were able to engage with and influence curriculum.

However, it was noted that attendance on English and Maths classroom sessions is lower than vocational skills classes, and work is underway to improve attendance in line with the Apprenticeship QIP.

The Committee noted the report.



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The Committee reviewed a Report and KPI dashboard for HE, noting that there are lower number of learners on HE this year and learners are attending well and enjoying their chosen course of study. HE Reviews have taken place and UC Advantage Funding has been allocated.

Close monitoring of applications for HE is required to ensure the College progresses internal students for whom the College's university centre is the right choice, as well as attracting external applicants.

The Committee noted the report.

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## 9. Complaints Policy

CSM-22-11-12

The Committee considered a revised Complaints Policy, which has been updated to add a section in relation to complaints made about Governors, the Governing Board and the Director of Governance, following discussion on this at the Strategic Workshop in March.

It was noted that Eversheds had been consulted on the proposed changes and as a result, some other minor changes to the Policy had also been made.

**Resolved:** The Committee agreed to recommend the revised Complaints Policy 2022-25 to the Governing Board for approval.

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## 10. Admissions Policy

CSM-22-11-13

The Committee considered the Admissions Policy which had been reviewed. It was noted that there are no substantial changes but that guidance relating to vaccinations and work placements has been removed.

**Resolved:** The Committee approved the Admissions Policy for 2022-23.

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## 11. Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

CSM-22-11-14

The Committee reviewed the Annual Complaints report for 2021-22, noting that the volume of complaints was largely in line with previous years with a slight decline in numbers since 2017-18

Although there has been an increase in complaints from learners with a disability, it was noted that the vast majority of these have not been upheld with the exception of complaints relating to progression to the next level of study. It was also noted that complaints from students undergoing gender re-assignment have increased. LGBT Training for staff and managers has been completed to ensure we can meet the needs of all learners and stakeholders.

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that there are no discernible themes to the complaints from students with a disability and that actions have been taken to address any issues that have emerged requiring management action.

The Committee noted the report.



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## 12. Annual Safeguarding Report 2021-22

CSM-22-11-15

The Committee considered the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2021-22, which included an update on all aspects of Safeguarding across the College and an outline of the various areas of focus undertaken by the Safeguarding Team. The report focused on the current safeguarding position and 5-year trends, recent changes to Keeping Children Safe In Education, the Prevent Duty and upcoming projects for the current academic year.

It was noted that online grooming, safety and sexualised behaviour low mood and suicidal thoughts are prominent nationally, some impacted by the cost of living crisis and the support needs of families. During 2021-22, a small number of complex safeguarding cases led to Education Safety Plans being put in place for students.

The Committee recognises the current trends in national issues and that they will be present in College and were assured that the College has developed a robust approach to tackling these issues.

The Lead Governor for Safeguarding confirmed that she is in regular contact with the Safeguarding Team and is assured that safeguarding is strong at the College, staff are well trained and have good relationships with students, which is borne out by conversations she has had with students.

The Committee took assurance from this and the Annual Safeguarding Report and agreed to recommend it to the Governing Board for approval.

**Resolved:** The Committee agreed to recommend the Annual Safeguarding Report 2021-22 to the Governing Board for approval

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## 13. University Centre Course Fees

CSM - 22-11-16

The Committee considered the proposed University Centre Course Fees for 2023-24, noting that these had been considered at the HE Strategic Board, which had made a decision to recommend that HE Fees for courses operating in 2023-24 should not be increased.

**Resolved:** The Committee approved the Course Fees submission for 2022-23 to the Office for Students.

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## 14. Student Feedback Report (including NSS Survey)

CSM-22-11-17

The Committee considered a report on student feedback, including the National Student Survey (NSS), noting that to date in 2022-23, feedback was positive, with learners feeling they are on the right course, are enjoying College and the six-week induction has helped learners to settle. Apprentices are enjoying their apprenticeships, feel they are on the right course, and would recommend the College.

In terms of the 2021-22 review of the year, feedback was positive for both classroom and apprenticeship provision, the vast majority of areas received positive Curriculum Review feedback with overall headline results showing improved satisfaction for vocational provision (but not English and Maths). It was noted that improvements have been made in most of the areas for improvement identified last year such as awareness of target grades and radicalisation and extremism, with some areas for concern identified, now being addressed.

The Committee noted that the NSS results are significantly above national rates and are continuing to improve.

It was also noted that the Parent / Carer survey established as a pilot provided overall positive feedback from parents and carers and is now ready to be fully launched later in the current academic year.

The Committee noted that the targets shown in the report are the College's own high targets, with areas shown as red indicating satisfaction rates below 90%.

The Committee noted the very positive feedback provided by students.

The Committee noted the report.



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## 15. Access and Participation Plan Update

CSM-22-11-18

The Committee considered a report on the Access and Participation Plan, noting that there was no update available yet from the Office for Students (OfS).

In response to a question from a Governor, it was confirmed that the Committee will receive a further report when the variation to the Plan has been approved by the OfS.

It was noted that the variation will apply in 2023-24 with a new Plan to be developed for delivery in 2024-25.

The Committee noted the report.

**Ursula Hoyles left the meeting after this item.**

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## 16. Link Visits Report

CSM-22-11-19

The Committee considered the reports of the three Governors who had attended the Link Visits on 1 November, noting that overall, each had been a very positive experience.

It was agreed that the report would be amended to include a management response for issues identified by Governors and that the report template would be amended for future Link Visits to enable Governors to identify areas where further investigation and / or a management response is required.

It was noted that only three Governors had attended the visits and the Committee agreed to review the frequency of Link Visits later in the year in the event that more Governors were unable to attend.

The Committee noted the report.

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## 17. Committee Effectiveness Review and Annual Report 2021-22

CSM-22-11-20

The Committee reviewed a draft report outlining its activities during 2021-22. The report is to provide assurance that the Committee's expected functions have been discharged and that the Committee has operated in accordance with its Terms of Reference. It was concluded that the Instrument & Articles of Government and the Committee's Terms of Reference have been appropriately discharged during 2021-22.

**Resolved:** The Committee approved the Committee Annual Report 2021-22.

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## 18. Items for inclusion in Committee Chair's report to the Governing Board

CSM-22-11-21

The Committee agreed the items to be included in the Committee Chair's report to the Governing Board.

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## 19. Any other business

CSM-22-11-22

There were no items of other business.

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## 20. Date and time of next meeting: 28 February 2022 at 5pm

CSM-22-11-23

**The meeting ended at 7.09pm.**

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## 21. Actions

**CSM-22-11-08**

**Action:** RAG rate all Curriculum KPI dashboards in future reports

**Action by:** VP Curriculum and VP Employment and Skills

**CSM-22-11-19**

**Action:** Include a management response to issues identified by Governors on Link Visits in the covering report to Governing Body on 6 December and in all future reports to the Committee.

**Action by:** VP Curriculum

**Action:** Review Governor report template for future Link Visits to include a section on issues requiring further investigation and / or a management response.

**Action by:** Director of Governance



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