

Students, Curriculum & Quality Committee

Wednesday 19 March 2025, 6:00pm-7:45pm
Block 1 Boardroom (1.204)



Meeting papers link: [SCQC 19Mar25 - meeting papers \(GovernorHub\)](#)

Committee members:

Aisha Benachour (Committee Vice Chair)
Sarah Dawson
Oli Preece (Items 3-6)
Tegan Powers
Gail Rothnie (Committee Chair)
Anna Sutton

Officers in attendance:

Jacquie Carman, CEO & Principal
Steph Morley, Director of Governance
Jon Priest, Chief Information Officer
Craig Tucker, Asst Principal – Standards & Quality
Jo Williams, Deputy Principal/CEO

APPROVED MINUTES

Item	Discussion	Action
1	Welcome and introductions G. Rothnie formally opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance.	
2	Procedural matters	
2.1	<u>Apologies</u> There were no apologies received as all committee members were in attendance.	
2.2	<u>Declarations of interest</u> There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.	
2.3	<u>Minutes of last meeting and actions/matters arising</u> The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 as a true record. The outstanding action regarding student (and staff) engagement was reported as in progress and all others were confirmed as completed/closed.	
3	Previous year performance	
3.1	<u>Qualified achievement rate (QAR)</u> J. Priest informed the Committee there had been little change to the college's achievement rate (-0.3%) following the publication of the QARs; therefore, performance was in-line with what had been reported previously. The Committee noted the update provided.	

4 Current year performance and progress

4.1 Performance against KPIs and targets

J. Priest presented his report and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- Attendance was slightly below the same point in the previous year. Most divisions were performing well, still with room for improvement; however, Maths & English attendance (1400 learners) significantly affected the overall average
- Retention was broadly in-line with the same point in the previous year
- Most A level subjects were on a positive trajectory for value-added and this week's mock exams would be used to update outcome projections
- Vocational value-added showed students were not achieving grades above target in Level 3 qualifications across a range of areas

The Committee referred to the subjects performing less favourably and asked if the reasons for this were known. J. Williams advised were typically the subjects who were more cautious with outcome predictions. Students were attending intervention workshops and conversations were taking place with individual students who did not pass the most recent exam to identify any support needed.

J. Priest informed the Committee a more accurate picture for vocational predictions should be available for the next meeting, as previously they were informed by a snapshot from the unit being studied at that time, rather than a more holistic picture provided for A level students.

The Committee acknowledged the attendance concerns surrounding GCSE Maths and English, and asked what was being done to address this. J. Williams spoke about the impact of the later start at the beginning of term and about the work already underway for next year – timetabling with encouraging Maths and English attendance as the main focus. J. Carman reported that regionally the AoC was reviewing employer opinions about GCSE Maths and English as a requirement for employment. She informed the Committee about a college pilot in development to provide dual staffing with a Maths/English professional and subject professional and provide contextualised lessons at the beginning of their course. She advised funding was being sought from the WMCA, as well as the potential for an academic study. The first pilots would be Health with Maths and Digital with English.

The Committee commended this new approach and asked how the pilot would be evaluated. J. Williams advised this would be using data already collated/measured – attendance, retention, achievement and progress, compared with previous years' data for that subject and the in-year data for subjects not involved in the pilot, plus also the academic research study if undertaken.

The Committee **noted** the report.

4.2 QIP progress

C. Tucker presented his report, explaining the update report at this time of year was more light-touch as most actions were currently in progress.

The Committee acknowledged the update and asked, where the need for intervention re quality of teaching had been identified, how this worked in practice with staff. C. Tucker explained he worked closely with HoDs, helping them to use their QIPs to drive improvement and meeting directly with their teams to emphasise the need for consistency of teaching and learning.

C. Tucker informed the Committee about the upcoming staff development day and its focus on supporting each other and sharing best practice across the college. The Committee noted the recent DfE publication 'Powerful Pedagogy' had been shared with teaching staff and acknowledged the link to the next LEAD session for college managers, which would be about 'Reaching to the stars'. The Committee discussed this approach with T. Powers, as a current student at the college, and it was noted there was still work to do to ensure all students received feedback about their performance and encouragement/support to achieve their potential.

The Committee **noted** the report and the progress made to date to deliver the QIP.

5 In-year updates

5.1 Teaching, learning & assessment and staff development

C. Tucker presented his report, which provided an update on quality assurance activity, staff development and courses under notice of improvement for retention. The following was highlighted/discussed:

- Good feedback has been reported during recent observations
- The rapid improvement plan introduced for Public Services was led by the manager and focused on driving staff performance
- The divisional review process had been refined and was now a more robust and reflective process known as 'curriculum summits'
- A model curriculum summit review document had been produced to help HoDs to prepare/present, which would be shared with the Committee
- The majority of courses with a notice to improve for retention had made good progress to date, closing the gap between both actual and national averages and last year's figures

JW

The Committee referred to the new format of curriculum summits and asked if there would be a review of all the collective intelligence and feedback obtained through the process - J. Williams confirmed this would take place.

The Committee asked how curriculum summits had been received by the HoDs. J. Williams explained there had been some hesitation at first; however, HoDs had now gone through the new process and acknowledged the value of the new format.

The Committee asked about the proportion of newly qualified and experienced teaching staff. J. Williams reported the balance was right in some departments but less so in others. She informed the Committee there would be management intervention regarding recruitment if the number of newly qualified teachers was higher than needed for that department. The Committee acknowledged the additional support put in place for newly qualified staff, including mentoring, extra

line management and additional opportunities to observe/be observed, and asked for the approx. proportion of newly qualified teaching staff qualified to be provided.

JW

The Committee noted the advantages/disadvantages of having newly qualified staff and asked if students could have more than one teacher for a subject. C. Tucker advised this was dependent on the subject/course being studied, with vocational students more commonly having multiple teachers for their subjects.

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.2 Apprenticeships

J. Priest presented the report, highlighting challenges involved with data collection and analysis for apprenticeships. The following was highlighted/ discussed:

- Due to time taken to be processed on the system, there was always a time lag between recruitment and starting the apprenticeship
 - The largest volume of apprenticeship learners was at Level 3, with Business Administration having the highest proportion
 - The current overall best-case retention for apprenticeships was 78.26%, with a 6-month overall retention rate of 86.11%
 - Overall timely achievement was 72%, ranging from 55% to 100% across the apprenticeship standards
- The majority of withdrawn apprentices reported employment as their intended destination
- All apprenticeship accountability framework measures were on track, with no one indicator giving cause for concern

The Committee referred to the lower rates of timely achievement, in particular for Assistant Accountant, and asked what action was being taken to address this. J. Williams advised Level 2 apprenticeship was being added to the suite of qualifications to ensure apprenticeships had the basics.

The Committee thanked J. Priest and J. Williams for the report, which provided the requested data for assurance regarding apprenticeship performance, and asked if information regarding the reasons for withdrawal were collated for all apprentices. J. Priest confirmed this data was collated/analysed internally and could be shared with committee members. It was confirmed the financial aspect of apprenticeships came under the remit of the Finance & Resources Committee.

JP

The Committee noted the importance of stakeholder voice and asked if this was collected from apprentices and employers. J. Williams confirmed a learner voice survey had recently been carried out with apprentices and would be presented at the next meeting. She referred to the development of a new employer engagement survey and suggested this also be presented to the Committee in June 2025.

JW

JW

The Committee **noted** the report and acknowledged the progress made to date.

5.3 Learner Voice

J. Williams presented her report, which summarised the responses received from the recent Term 2 Learner Voice survey. She informed the Committee approx. 1600

individual responses were received and the feedback primarily referred to issues the college was already aware of and responding to, and provided assurance that students felt supported and that their learning environment was safe and caring. She confirmed any responses causing concern were immediately followed up directly with the student involved.

The Committee acknowledged the improved student engagement in enrichment activity compared to previous years and asked what was being done to improve further. J. Williams reported this was an area of focus going forward and highlighted difficulties, such as timetabling making attendance difficult, would be reviewed.

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.4 Careers and destinations

J. Williams presented her report and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- Careers remained busy, although appointments had decreased
- UCAS applications were broadly in line with last year, with more to Russell Group universities than previous years
- Evaluation of Cohort 1 of High Achievers had not shown a significant impact and the review of Cohort 2 would help to inform the programme's future

The Committee acknowledged the limited impact of the High Achievers programme for Cohort 1 and asked if this had been a one-year programme. J. Williams confirmed it had and added Cohort 2's programme was spread across two years; therefore, greater impact was expected for this group.

The Committee asked if the reasons for lower engagement across some subject areas was known. J Williams advised the subjects showing lower engagement were those where employer engagement was strong as part of course delivery and progression to university was not typically a post-college destination. The Committee asked if careers engagement was explored during the curriculum summits. It was confirmed this did not happen presently but would be incorporated in the near future.

The Committee referred to the continued failure to challenge and support high achieving students in Geography and asked if the reasons for this were known. J Williams informed the Committee there had been staffing changes illness which had impacted this previously; however, there was now consistent staffing in place and improved outcomes were expected for this year.

The Committee **noted** the report.

5.5 Subcontracting

J. Williams advised, further to the last update, the first construction pilot programme with NIS had completed and the second pilot would soon undergo evaluation. She confirmed the outcomes for the first pilot of 16 starters – 11 moved to full-time employment; 1 moved to part-time employment (which became full-time); 2 deferred completion for personal reasons; and 2 did not achieve.

The Committee **noted** the updated and outcomes achieved through the first pilot.

6 Pastoral support update

6.1 Safeguarding report

J. Williams presented her report, highlighting the complexity and volume of the safeguarding issues and incidents addressed by the college's safeguarding team. She highlighted the following:

- Increases had been seen in online abuse, drug use, criminal exploitation and weapon-related issues, which reflected national trends
- Mental health remained the most common reason for student withdrawal
- The number of students who were (previously) looked-after children had increased; therefore, an additional designated teacher for LAC students had been appointed
- Safeguarding team members were routinely provided supervision, particularly following a serious safeguarding incident

The Committee **noted** the report and thanked J. Williams for the inclusion of the links to relevant further reading.

6.2 Leaders in Safeguarding GOLD Standard report

J. Williams presented the re-accreditation report, which highlighted the college's strong and effective culture of safeguarding and contained no recommendations following the audit carried out during the reaccreditation process.

The Committee **noted** the update and commended the college on its well-deserved reaccreditation.

7 Strategy/policy reviews

7.1 Curriculum Strategy (WORKING DRAFT)

J. Williams presented the working draft of the Curriculum Strategy and advised only minor changes had been made to date.

The Committee asked if the strategy would be approved by the Corporation. It was confirmed this would take place in June 2025 at the Corporation's strategic review session, as this allowed time for further review of the working draft and aligned well with the consideration of the updated Strategic Plan.

The Committee **noted** the work underway to review and update the strategy, and asked for a 'track-changes' version of the working draft to be circulated to committee members for their consideration.

JW

8 Ofsted's proposals for further education

C. Tucker referred the Committee to his report and delivered his presentation regarding the proposed changes to Ofsted's inspection framework:

- Evaluation based on leadership, inclusion, safeguarding and contribution to meeting skills need

- Evaluations of provision types with four further judgements – curriculum, developing teaching and training, achievement and participation and development - published as ‘Report Cards’
- Judgement using a five-point grading scale from ‘Exemplary’, ‘Strong’, ‘Secure’, ‘Attention needed’ and ‘Causing concern’
- Use of achievement data, and inclusion and staff wellbeing/workload to be key themes
- The removal of deep-dives and inspections starting by discussing and observing the provider's work against the "secure" column

C. Tucker also provided the following information about the consultation:

- Draft ‘Inspection Toolkits’ had been published with criteria against each grading scale
- Consultation about the proposed changes was open until 28 April 2025

The Committee asked if a response to the consultation would be submitted by the college and from College West Midlands and the AoC. C. Tucker confirmed the college was drafting a formal response, and advised members should submit personal feedback to Ofsted if they wished to do so. It was also confirmed the college was contributing to the responses being drafted by CWM and the AoC.

The Committee **noted** the report and the proposed changes to Ofsted’s inspection framework, and welcomed the presentation being given to the Corporation to ensure all governors were aware of Ofsted’s proposed changes to its framework.

9 Any other business

9.1 Curriculum & Assessment Review: interim report

J. Williams informed the Committee of the very recent publication of this report and highlighted the following main areas covered in relation to 16-19 provision:

- Level 3
- Academic pathways
- Technical and vocational
- Level 2 and below at 16-19

The Committee **noted** the report’s publication.

9.2 Committee membership

The Chair noted this had been A. Benachour’s last meeting of the Committee and expressed gratitude for her valuable contributions during her time as a member of the SCQC and the Corporation.

There was no further business for discussion and the Chair closed the meeting at 7:45pm.

2024/25 remaining meeting dates:

- Wednesday 11 June 2025, 6:00pm

Actions from meeting(s)

Student, Curriculum & Quality Committee – 20 November 2024			
Ref	Action	Owner	Status
5.10a	Explore potential termly meetings for governors with staff and students	CT/DofG	In progress
Student, Curriculum & Quality Committee – 19 March 2025			
Ref	Action	Owner	Date
5.1	Send model version of a divisional review to SM for sharing on GHub	JW	By next mtg
5.1	Provide information about the proportion of teaching staff who are newly qualified	JW	By next mtg
5.2	Share reasons for apprenticeship withdrawal	JP	By next mtg
5.2	Present apprenticeship (and adult) learner voice next meeting	JW	At next mtg
5.2	Present the employer engagement strategy at the next meeting	JW	At next mtg
7.1	Highlight changes made to the curriculum strategy and send to SM for sharing on GHub	JW	31/03/25