

Students, Curriculum & Quality Committee



Wednesday 01 October 2025, 6:00-7:50pm
Block 1 Boardroom (1.204)

Meeting papers link: [01 October 2025 \(GovernorHub\)](#)

Committee members in attendance:

Sarah Dawson
Lynn Pass (Co-opted member)
Gail Rothnie (Committee Chair)
Anna Sutton (Committee Vice Chair)
Anthony Wood

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Bullus, Assistant Principal
Jacquie Carman, Principal & CEO
Steph Morley, Director of Governance
Jon Priest, Chief Information Officer
Craig Tucker, Assistant Principal
Jo Williams, Deputy Principal/CEO (from Item 3)

APPROVED MINUTES

Item	Discussion	Action
1	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance to the first 'risk-focused' meeting of the Committee, in particular L. Pass (co-opted member, with a focus on safeguarding) and A. Wood (staff governor) as the committee's newest members. Round table introductions took place.</p> <p>Student governor membership: S.Morley advised the election process for the two student governor vacancies was currently underway and that the successful candidates would be in post ready to attend their first Corporation meeting on 15/10/25.</p>	
2	<p>Procedural matters</p>	
2.1	<p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>There were no apologies received as all committee members were in attendance.</p>	
2.2	<p><u>Declarations of interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest for this meeting or reported changes to governors' individual declarations of interest.</p>	
2.3	<p><u>Confidential item(s)</u></p> <p>There were no items for discussion under confidential session.</p>	
2.4	<p><u>Minutes of last meeting and actions/matters arising</u></p> <p>The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025 as a true record.</p> <p>All actions were confirmed as closed/completed, with the exception of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ref 11, Progression data for financially disadvantaged students: superseded by a wider piece of work to provide performance data for all student group types	

2.5 Approvals since last meeting

There had been no approvals/decisions made since the last meeting.

3 **2024/25 – a year in review**

3.1 Outcomes/achievement

J. Priest presented the report on 2024/25 student achievement outcomes, noting the figures in brackets represented the averages set out in the National Achievement Rate Tables (NART), and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- Headline classroom-based achievement was 4% above the national average; apprenticeship achievement was 7.8% above the national average
- Achievement for adult learning, Entry Level, Level 1 and mixed level courses was below national average
- Achievement at divisional level and by EOM categories provided a mixed picture
- The college value-added outcome (ALPS) for A Levels was Grade 7 (the highest score being 1 and lowest 9). Compared to the previous year, five subjects had improved their grade, six had maintained and sixteen subject had a grade lower than the previous year's. The majority of subjects were classed as 'blue' – being within the bottom 25% of the national benchmark
- Large variances between A Level predicted grades and final grades were noted
- Performance at a divisional level had been presented and discussed collectively with all Heads of Divisions. Rapid improvement plans had been introduced at a course level to drive and support the required improvement

The Committee thanked J. Priest for the report and asked if trend data could also be provided. J. Carman advised trend data would be incorporated into the reports for the upcoming Corporation meeting and J. Williams informed the Committee trend data was also being prepared for the drafting of the 2024/25 SAR.

The Committee acknowledged the ALPS score achieved and formally noted its disappointment regarding the score being lower than the previous year and two grades below prediction. C.Tucker agreed monitoring accuracy had not been good enough and informed the Committee about the substantial focus this year on 'trust and verify'.

The Committee noted the action being taken to address monitoring accuracy and asked if the senior leaders had confidence that staff understood the concern. J. Williams reported she was confident the message had been received – additional support had been engaged for the areas of most concern, she and J.Carman were meeting with affected staff on a fortnightly basis, with a shift towards a more meticulous, rigorous and relentless approach to monitoring noticed. This was therefore a major cultural change taking place across the college. C.Tucker advised rapid improvement plans had been shared with all staff and reported he had been visiting staff team meetings and proactively challenging observed practice. From a student perspective, C. Tucker informed the Committee about how high expectations were being set from the very beginning, with new Y1 students being set preparatory work prior to their official first day.

The Committee asked how senior leaders would know improvements would be sustained. C. Tucker advised, through the rapid improvement plans, the emphasis was on continuous and regular improvement that could be observed at all times. J. Carman

informed the Committee this would be supported by structured and impactful staff CPD, and externally validated via the engagement of an Ofsted inspector.

The Committee **noted** the report, including the performance comparisons with the previous year and national averages, and welcomed further updates on the impact of the improvements outlined.

3.2 Attendance

J. Priest presented the year-end report for student attendance and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- Overall college attendance had fallen by 0.5% compared to the previous year (from 85.4% to 84.9%)
- Student numbers attending lessons had improved; however, due to the large cohorts for Maths and English, lower attendance at these classes significantly affected the overall college figure. Performance fell 2% and 3.7% respectively and were both more than 10% below the overall figure
- Sport and Media had made notable improvement, with attendance improving across all measures (course, English and Maths)
- Areas where performance had fallen across all attendance measures were Access to HE, Art & Design, Early Years & Education, Hair, Health, Public Services, Science and Travel & Tourism

J. Williams reported the new staffing structure to support attendance management was now in place, with new roles primarily focused on student attendance and linkages being made with a local school that had received behaviour hub status from the DfE. J. Carman advised the new arrangements had already positively impacted on attendance, due to the relentless approach to follow-up non-attendance and the introduction of new initiatives and rewards. A renewed focus on reducing staff absence would also improve engagement in lessons and ultimately attendance.

The Committee **noted** the outturn performance outlined in the report and looked forward to receiving updates on the impact being made by the new approach to attendance management.

3.3 Progression

J. Priest presented the year-end report for student progression/destinations and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- The proportion of students progressing to a positive destination increased from 95.2% (2023/24) to 96.0%
- Of the 96.0%, 86.3% progressed to further education, 13.1% to higher education and 4.6% to apprenticeships
- 9.8% learners moved directly into paid employment, with the majority working more than 16 hours per week
- The majority of divisions achieved positive destination rates above 95%
- There had been a slight reduction of students progressing to university and the proportion attending Russell Group universities had also decreased
- The economic-focused approach to 'measuring' progression destinations did not reflect the diversity of the student cohort, in particular Foundation students who for many being in stable voluntary roles after college was a positive and fulfilling outcome that had societal value

The Committee noted the data within the report and asked if the proportion of Y1 students who remained in FE were retained at Halesowen College – J. Priest reported this was approx. 90%. J. Williams advised an increasing numbers were going into foundation years at university and that in some cases, students might transfer from the study programme into an apprenticeship at the college.

The Committee asked if the data was collected for vulnerable student groups. J. Priest confirmed, although the statutory duty to track student destinations had been removed, the college would continue to collect the data and would do so for all student group types. It was agreed J. Priest would link with the Head of Careers to ensure this data was reflected in the work on the careers strategy.

JP

The Committee **noted** the report and the performance comparisons with the previous year.

3.4 Safeguarding and wellbeing

S. Bullus presented the 2024/25 annual report for student safeguarding and wellbeing. The Committee thanked S. Bullus for the report, noting how it provided a comprehensive overview of the reports received by the Committee throughout the year.

The Committee noted the increases in recorded safeguarding concerns and asked if there was confidence if the required capacity was in place. S. Bullus advised the recent structural changes had helped to increased the capacity, putting in place the ability to triage issues at an earlier stage, in particular the introduction of the college community campus team and close working between the safeguarding and curriculum teams.

The Committee asked if the college was adequately supported by partners, given the volume and complexity of the safeguarding issues being addressed. S. Bullus confirmed there were good joint working and support arrangements in place with both the local authority and policing teams, and that the Head of Inclusion was actively involved in both local and regional networks.

The Committee **noted** the report and acknowledged the continued safeguarding pressures faced by the college, in terms of both volume and range/complexity.

4 **2025/26 updates**

4.1 Enrolment update

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

- Student programme enrolments increased by 462 compared to last year
- T Level enrolments were above budget but significantly less than the DfE target (as expected)
- Enrolments were still taking place, with some courses having waiting lists
- Digital technology enrolments in particular had declined
- Adult enrolment figures were not yet finalised
- Over the last 5 years, the college had grown by approximately 2000 students
- The continued student growth had significant implications for accommodation, with 100% utilisation on Tuesdays/Wednesdays

The Committee noted the position regarding waiting lists and asked if there were cut-off limits for joining as a new student. J. Priest advised this was typically three weeks.

The Committee noted the decrease in enrolments for T Levels and asked how this compared to other colleges. J. Priest advised a similar reduction had been reported across the sector. J. Carman informed the Committee she was involved in working with tertiary colleges to compare enrolment figures and the impact on college finances and with the AoC regarding the removal of the BTEC for health, in order to collate information/concerns for inclusion within parliamentary conversations. She reported the outcome of the national assessment review was still awaited; therefore, it was still not known the exact courses the college could offer next year (and beyond).

The Committee noted the decrease in Digital enrolment and asked, given this was a national priority, if this was a trend seen elsewhere and if all types of digital T Levels were offered. Governors were advised the reduction was a local trend and that the college was working with the WMCA to review and update the curriculum. It was confirmed all T Level-types for Digital were offered. The Committee asked if the reasons for the reduction was known and it was noted how specific the choice was to study digital technology. J. Williams advised the college's digital offer was being reviewed, including the possibility of expanding the apprenticeship offer.

The Committee **note** the update provided, in particular the areas where there had been growth and reduction.

4.2 Committee-allocated risks

J. Priest presented, via the PowerBi dashboard, the risks that had been allocated to the SCQC and the Committee discussed the following list of risk areas currently assessed as 'high-level', which would be on the agenda for each meeting going forward:

- Uncertainty surrounding a new Ofsted framework
- Student retention
- Providing more effective services for part time students and apprentices
- Providing a safe environment
- Effectively tracking and monitoring students so that they maximise their achievement
- Promoting and sustaining a culture of positive behaviour
- Student attendance
- Understanding local, national and international events and their potential impact on the college
- Generative AI
- Capacity across the college estate

The Committee acknowledged both the opportunities and challenges posed by the use of AI, and asked if work was being done at sector level to support colleges. Governors were informed about the resources and training opportunities provided by sector bodies such as JISC, AoC and the SFCA.

The Committee **noted** the dashboard, in particular the high-level risks listed above, and welcomed the risk discussion being introduced at every meeting.

5 **Students**

5.1 Learner Voice – new arrangements

J. Williams presented her report outlining the college's new arrangements for facilitating learner voice in 2025/26, a key part of which was the resurrection of the Student Union being led by the newly appointed Head of Inclusion.

The Committee asked if progress had been made to run student engagement sessions with governors. S. Morley advised she had liaised with Student Services to agree the timings (November and March/April), the dates/times for which would be confirmed with governors at the earliest opportunity.

The Committee **noted** the report, acknowledged the progress already made and looked forward to the development of the new student union.

5.2 Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Strategy

S. Bullus presented the updated Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Strategy, which built on the 1-year strategy previously presented. The document articulated the college's commitment to and vision for careers, and set out how this would be achieved over the next two years. She informed the Committee of the changes put in place over the last year, including the appointment of a Head of Careers and engagement with the Careers & Enterprise Company's Impact Maturity Model.

The following was highlighted/discussed and the Committee requested the following amendments to the strategy:

- Inclusion of a narrative regarding the 'drive' behind the strategy and a current position statement (including trend data)
- The addition of an executive summary, to summarise the detail contained within the main body of the strategy
- Reference to baseline performance levels for targets (where appropriate)

The Committee thanked S. Bullus for presenting the draft and **requested** the Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Strategy be updated to reflect the meeting discussion and re-presented at the next meeting. SCQC members were asked to provide any further feedback on the strategy to S.Bullus by 10/10/25.

SB
SCQC

6 Curriculum & Quality

6.1 QIP 2024/25 final outcomes

C. Tucker presented the year-end assessment of the 2024/25 quality improvement plan (QIP), which compared college performance for key measures against the college's ambitious targets and national averages. He highlighted the following:

- Overall apprenticeship achievement had not met the challenging target of 75% but was significantly above national average, the high grades achievement rate of 57% was well above the target of 40% and timeliness targets had been met
- Attendance varied significantly across the divisions, with some achieving the college-wide target and improving performance over the final months

The Committee asked if all managers were aware of the targets that had been set and understood how their divisions contributed to overall college performance. C. Tucker confirmed the targets had been communicated at every opportunity and that managers had collectively been provided with the same end-of-year performance information, including divisional breakdowns.

The Committee thanked C. Tucker for the report and asked for his thoughts about the outcomes achieved. C. Tucker reported there had been disappointment for some aspects, in particular the ALPS grade of 7, and he advised the focus was now on embedding a 'trust and verify' model to improve prediction accuracy. He added students spoke very positively about their college experience and this needed to also be the same for every student about their achievement.

The Committee acknowledged the ambition shown by the challenging targets that had been set, demonstrating the desire to be better than being above national average.

The Committee **noted** the report, acknowledging it provided a good picture of direction of travel, and thanked the staff team for all that had been achieved last year.

7 Strategy/policy reviews

7.1 Prevent Strategy

J. Williams presented the updated strategy and advised the changes primarily reflected the new duties being introduced following the enactment of Martyn's Law. She informed the Committee suggested amendments had been received from L. Pass, none of which materially changed the content, and it was agreed these would be incorporated into the final version presented to the Corporation.

The Committee suggested the 'raising awareness' section be strengthened by reflecting the work undertaken with subcontractors and employers, as well as students, staff and volunteers.

The Committee **recommended** the Prevent Strategy for approval by the Corporation, subject to the agreed amendments.

JW

7.2 Safeguarding Policy

J. Williams presented the updated policy and advised the changes reflected this year's update to the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance. She informed the Committee suggested amendments had been received from L. Pass, none of which materially changed the content, and it was agreed these would be incorporated into the final version presented to the Corporation.

The Committee **recommended** the Safeguarding Policy & Procedure for approval by the Corporation, subject to the agreed amendments.

JW

7.3 Student Conduct & Disciplinary Policy

J. Williams presented the updated policy and advised the changes primarily reflected the improved systems and procedures already working well in practice.

The Committee **approved** the Student Conduct & Disciplinary Policy.

8 Any other business

There was no further business for discussion and the Chair closed the meeting at 7:50pm.

2025/26 meeting dates:

- 01 October 2025 (Actual outcomes 24/25)
- 19 November 2025 (SAR 24/25 & QIP 25/26)
- 11 February 2026 (Mid-year updates)
- 24 June 2026 (Predicted outcomes 25/26)

Actions from meeting

Student, Curriculum & Quality Committee – 01 October 2025			
Ref	Action	Owner	Date
2.4	Action tracker: Present data reported by student group (vulnerable/ disadvantaged) at next meeting	JP	19/11/25
3.3	Progression: Link with EW re data for the careers strategy	JP	Nov-25
5.2	Careers Strategy: Update strategy as per meeting feedback and present at next meeting	SB	19/11/25
5.2	Careers Strategy: Provide further feedback to SB for incorporation into final version	SCQC	10/10/25
7.1	Prevent Strategy: Update strategy as per meeting and LP feedback, and present to Corporation for approval	JW	08/10/25
7.1	Safeguarding Policy: Update policy as per meeting and LP feedback, and present to Corporation for approval	JW	08/10/25