

Students, Curriculum & Quality Committee

Wednesday 24 June 2026, 6:00-8:00pm

Via Microsoft Teams



Meeting papers link: [SCQC 24 June 2026](#) (GovernorHub)

Committee members in attendance:

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

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Bullus, Assistant Principal – Safeguarding & Students
Steph Morley, Director of Governance
Jon Priest, Chief Information Officer
Craig Tucker, Assistant Principal – Apprenticeships & HE
Jo Williams, Deputy Principal/CEO

APPROVED MINUTES

Item	Discussion	Action
1	Welcome and introductions The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. As the meeting was virtual, the Chair confirmed all attendees were able to hear and contribute.	
2	Procedural matters	
2.1	<u>Apologies</u> Apologies were received and accepted from J. Carman and I. Evans.	
2.2	<u>Declarations of interest</u> There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.	
2.3	<u>Confidential item(s)</u> There were no items to be held in Confidential session.	
2.4	<u>Minutes of last meeting and actions/matters arising</u> The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 03 March 2026. Actions from previous meeting: - Ref 25, re sharing alumni contact information – COMPLETED - Ref 26, re baseline data for careers – to be rolled forward to next year and include trend data	
2.5	<u>Approvals since last meeting</u> There had been no approvals to report.	

3 Delivering the strategic plan

3.1 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

J. Williams presented the latest QIP update. She advised further progress was required in relation to value added, noting this remained a two-year improvement project. Attendance would continue to be a key focus, with a new structure and handbook being introduced from September and Engagement Support Officers being reassigned to improve impact.

The Committee challenged whether a one percentage point improvement in attendance was sufficient and asked at what point the new arrangements would be considered ineffective. J. Williams advised a fuller assessment would be possible at the same point next year, following two further terms of operation and a more directive approach from September.

The Committee asked about the MESMA platform referred to at Corporation. J. Williams advised the platform had been purchased and one of its uses would be to use the SAR to produce the QIP. J. Priest explained MESMA was an AI-assisted platform that would support lesson observations, SAR and QIP activity, action setting and tracking at both individual and divisional level, drawing on a range of data sources. It did not currently link with other systems, though this was being explored.

The Committee asked whether there were any unexpected red flags or concerns that could trigger an early Ofsted inspection. J. Williams advised that leaders would continue to review performance carefully and give greater attention to areas where this was needed.

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

3.2 Performance update

J. Priest presented the performance update and advised a typographical error had led to the updated paper being issued. The following was highlighted/discussed:

- Attendance was 0.8% higher than the previous year, with variations across the divisions
- English and Maths GCSE attendance had increased by 2% and 3% respectively; however, an additional Engagement Support Officer would be appointed to drive further attendance improvement in these areas
- Retention was also 0.8% higher than the previous year and, as more linear aims came on board, would become more challenging.
- The projected overall Value Added (VA) for A2 was Grade 6 following meetings with subject leads and further moderation with Curriculum Directors. The VA for A1 using mock data was Grade 7; however, this had not yet been moderated and would be reviewed again at the start of the year.

The Committee asked whether achieving the target VA from the current position was realistic. J. Williams advised subjects causing concern would be engaged in intervention and have a rapid improvement plan. A new progression policy would assess the likelihood of achievement and would not permit progression to A2 where A1 year-end results were Us (except in extenuating circumstances).

The Committee discussed the increased emphasis on prediction accuracy, the use of ALPS

reports and how learning walks would be structured. In response to questions, J. Williams confirmed that unannounced learning walks were well established and that the next step was more structured reporting. J. Priest confirmed the process was designed to be quick and mobile for managers to use, thus reducing the impact on workload.

The Committee **noted** the performance update.

3.3 Feedback from departmental performance reviews

J. Williams reported departmental performance reviews were ongoing, with 17 completed to date. The following was highlighted/discussed:

- Despite staffing issues throughout the year, Health & Social Care had performed well; although Level 3 Y2 outcomes were expected to be slightly below target
- Outcomes for Digital & IT were positive but further work was needed on teaching and learning, and strengthening industry links
- Art & Design and Health & Beauty had performed well across the board
- Science showed improvement and an upward trajectory, including apprenticeships
- For Early Years and Education, Level 1 remained a concern due to year-on-year decline, although this year's outcomes were awaited
- Adult and ESOL achievement had shown significant improvement following a range of action taken this year.
- The annual DPR stock-take would again take place during the Autumn term

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

3.4 Committee-allocated risks

J. Williams advised the main emerging risk was the government's curriculum and assessment review. In response to a question from the Committee, it was confirmed this was adequately reflected in the risk register and it was suggested the impact score level be reviewed. J. Priest reported that there had been no substantial change to the risks since the last meeting and that the main residual risk remained retention.

JW/JP

The Committee **noted** the risks allocated to the SCQC and the mitigating action being taken.

4 In-year updates - Students

4.1 Learner Voice

J. Williams presented the Learner Voice update and reported a fairly stable picture. There had been more responses, although this was alongside an increase in student numbers. Strengths remained steady and consistent, as were areas for improvement, including students knowing their target grades. The introduction of the Halesowen Standard was expected to address this.

The Committee noted the Learner Voice feedback and asked if the themes were new or repeating. J. Williams advised that, at a global level, they were similar to those raised each year and explained how the area-level analysis would be used to make more localised improvement, including to inform Curriculum Director appraisals.

The Committee noted the high proportion of students feeling safe, which was reflected within

the report for the upcoming safeguarding item, but asked about a slight dip highlighted by the data. J. Williams advised that responses related to overcrowded coaches and feeling overwhelmed. No concerns had been raised through the survey, despite students being encouraged to use the survey to report them.

The Committee asked how response rates could be improved further. J. Williams advised that greater participation would be encouraged, as richer and more representative data would provide greater assurance, and spoke about the plans to achieve this.

The Committee welcomed the positive evidence against performing targets and asked whether this would be reflected in action plan reporting to demonstrate impact. J. Williams confirmed the outcomes fed into the SAR, had been used during the strategic conversation with the DfE and would be used where possible to provide assurance.

The Committee **noted** the report.

4.2 Student governor update

S. Morley advised the Committee the new arrangements recently approved by the Corporation for student governors would be implemented for the next academic year.

4.3 Safeguarding and wellbeing

S. Bullus presented the safeguarding and wellbeing update, and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- Demand had been sustained rather than continuing to grow, which reflected positively on the team
- 972 students were recorded as accessing one-off support across more than 1,000 interactions, with themes including anxiety, stress, low mood and academic pressure
- Behaviour incidents had increased, including online safety concerns. The team was supporting students to avoid digital risks
- Prevent duty work remained embedded and the team continued to engage in external fora and networks
- Priorities included early intervention, keeping pace with digital safety support, adapting to estate changes and anticipating the impact of further student growth

The Committee emphasised the importance of acknowledging the death of a student reported within the safeguarding report and the impact this would have had on those involved with the young person. S. Bullus confirmed support was being provided to both staff and students.

The Committee discussed the impact of social media, including how this was addressed with students through induction and proactive conversations. The Committee noted the importance of balancing safety with preparing young people for the world of work and recognising that some courses, including digital and media-related provision, required access to digital platforms.

The Committee asked about the effectiveness of the 24/7 support line. S. Bullus advised 300 students were registered and that the annual report of usage was expected imminently. It was agreed that information about usage and effectiveness would be included in future reports.

SB

The Committee **noted** the update and thanked the team for their continued support of students.

4.4 Inclusion action plan

S. Bullus presented the updated Inclusion Action Plan and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- The college was moving towards a more coherent whole-college model. The strategy for inclusion had been re-framed and a Head of SEND & Inclusion was now in place
- An inclusion specialist had helped to develop the action plan and would continue to support the work into the Autumn term
- Individual support plan arrangements were being changed, with consultation taking place and a focus on presenting information in a more appropriate and accessible way for colleagues working with students
- Staffing capacity had been increased and appointments had been made

The Committee asked for further detail about the action relating to capacity. S. Bullus advised the college had reviewed internal staffing, sought additional capacity and used agency support to determine exact capacity requirements. The role had been renamed to Learning Support Practitioner to better reflect its professional status and four new appointments had been made.

The Committee asked for clarification about the leadership arrangements for inclusion. S. Bullus explained, following the Head of SEND's in-year departure and the recommendations from the external review, the Head of Inclusion's role had been expanded to include SEND. This would be reviewed after December to allow the impact of the new arrangements to be assessed after a full term of delivery.

The Committee welcomed the position and noted the positive external assurance received to date, including recognition from an AoC colleague who had praised the Head of Inclusion & SEND and identified Halesowen College as delivering best practice.

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

4.5 Careers and progression

S. Bullus presented the careers and progression update and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- 962 UCAS applications had been made across all provision types, including 284 applications to Russell Group universities
- Parent engagement activity, including webinars and networks, had helped to communicate key careers and progression messages
- The careers strategy had strengthened data capture systems and next year's reporting would include trends, a key focus for the following year

The Committee discussed opportunities to increase community and parent engagement, including using parents, schools, alumni and governors, to support work placements and strengthen employer engagement. It was agreed a mechanism should be explored for college stakeholders to provide information and potential support they could offer.

SB/SM

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

5 In-year updates – Curriculum and quality

5.1 Learning, teaching and assessment

J. Williams presented the learning, teaching and assessment update. She advised observations were planned so teachers knew when these would take place and that the DPRs had highlighted strengths and areas for development.

The Committee asked whether areas for development would be incorporated into an action plan and whether progress would be reported. J. Williams advised that the areas identified would inform divisional reviews and that progress reported and monitored via this process.

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

5.2 Apprenticeships

C. Tucker presented the apprenticeships update and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- All Apprenticeship Accountability Framework measures were all on track
- Achievement had increased further since the report was prepared, with achievement at 74%, compared with 57% and 38% in the previous two years respectively, and 80% of achievements at merit or distinction
- Planned apprenticeship growth would focus on numbers and standards aligned to local need and policy direction. Potential growth areas included Digital, higher level apprenticeship standards, Business, foundation apprenticeships, Early Years and, in the longer term, Construction
- Labour market intelligence was being reviewed to identify progression opportunities

The Committee asked whether Dental had been removed from the curriculum as there was no mention within the report - C. Tucker confirmed this was due to Dental not being a new standard, with the first new cohort was due to start in the next few months. The Committee also asked about T Level progression into apprenticeships and C. Tucker advised work was taking place with Curriculum Directors, the Business Development team, apprenticeships colleagues and through employer engagement to identify progression routes.

The Committee asked how the college could be assured it was ready for apprenticeship growth. C. Tucker advised that apprenticeships carried a range of risks, all of which were being mitigated through support, pipeline management, metric monitoring and a focus on quality outcomes. Growth was measured rather than scattergun, with employer voice informing the response to local and regional need.

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

5.3 Sub-contracting

It was confirmed there was currently no subcontracting in place.

5.4 Higher education (HE)

C. Tucker presented the HE update and described HE as a small but purposeful part of the college's provision. The college worked with core local universities to provide opportunities for students to access HE and counter negative perceptions of HE. He advised growth was pursued where appropriate and in line with strategic objectives.

C. Tucker highlighted relevant factors and priority areas, including Lifelong Learning Entitlement arrangements, technical focus, avoiding unnecessary overlap, OfS quality requirements and possible changes arising from the Teaching Excellence Framework consultation. The college's internal learner voice survey for HE students was based on the National Student Survey and would be benchmarked against the annual NSS data once published.

The Committee asked whether growth was expected in 2026/27. C. Tucker advised a similar position to the current year was expected. In response to a question about minimum viable student numbers, he advised each course would be considered individually, with J. Priest looking at a costed curriculum to ensure viability. Marketing and partnerships with local universities would continue, including helping universities to understand T Levels.

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

6 Planning for 2026/27

6.1 Curriculum and assessment review

J. Williams presented the update on the curriculum and assessment review. She advised that the position was clear for the next few years; however, the situation was complex and uncertainty remained about future qualification arrangements.

The Committee asked whether there had been national engagement with universities regarding the new qualifications. J. Williams advised the DfE had indicated this was the case, but further information was still awaited, particularly in relation to curriculum content. The Committee noted there were many unanswered questions but also opportunities to engage nationally.

The Committee welcomed the layout of the report and **noted** that it provided a comprehensive overview.

6.2 Applications

J. Priest presented the applications update and reported further growth, with approximately 1,000 more applications than the previous year - 50% of which were related to the new Construction Centre. Only four areas had seen a reduction (Art and Design, Digital/Technology, Foundation and Performing Arts) and increases were generally seen in areas considered less likely to be impacted by AI.

J. Priest advised the current conversion rate was around 60%, which if repeated for 2026/27 would translate to more than 350 additional students at the already over-capacity Whittingham Road campus. T Level growth was also projected, with approximately 1,000 or more T Level students. This would be challenging, particularly for Health and Social Care, which had 520 applications including 300 at Level 3, creating significant placement requirements.

The Committee asked how the position would impact on quality and whether growth was being balanced appropriately. J. Williams advised that applications had been capped and the college would begin to reject candidates (if required), while exploring new courses to ensure quality could be maintained.

The Committee discussed T Level placements and the need to raise the challenges placed on employers at the highest levels. It was noted that changes to delivery models could help design placement experiences more strategically, alongside managing students' expectations about placements. The Committee the discussed entry requirements and the complexity of planning in the context of the curriculum and assessment review.

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

7 Any other business

7.1 Student Awards 2025/26

J. Williams and J. Priest advised that three Student Awards would be given as Governors' Awards for ICARE - reflecting the college values. It was agreed S. Morley would circulate the nominations the following day and that Committee members would vote for their preferred candidates by 26/06/26. S. Morley would then inform S. Bullus of the award winners' names.

SM

There was no further business for discussion and the Chair closed the meeting at 8:00pm.

Actions from this meeting

Ref	Action	Owner	Date
1	Roll forward careers baseline data to the next academic year and include trend data in future careers reporting.	SB	Autumn 2026
2	Review the impact of the curriculum and assessment review within the Committee risk register and update the residual risk position as appropriate.	JW/JP	Autumn 2026
3	Include information from the 24/7 support line annual report in future safeguarding and wellbeing reports, including usage and effectiveness where available.	SB	Autumn 2026
4	Explore a mechanism for parents and Corporation members to provide information about their workplaces and potential support for placements, employer engagement or careers activity.	SB/SM	Autumn 2026
5	Circulate Student Award nominees to Committee members, collate votes by Friday and inform S. Bullus of the award winners.	SM	29/06/26