

College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Performance Review and Quality Committee
30 November 2022
8.30 am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Present	Sam Fletcher Chris Ashman Scott Leadley David Pomfret	Governor (Chair) Governor Governor Governor (Principal)
Also present	Gill Rejzl Dave Clark Carolyn Rand	Corporation (part) Governor (part) Governor (part)
Attending	Kerry Heathcote Rob Petto Paul O'Shea Ria Steventon Clare Pelling Stephen Halls	Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality Assistant Principal Funding & Performance Assistant Principal Student Services Head of Learning Improvement Learning Experience Manager Clerk to the Corporation

The Chair welcomed Gill Rejzl, Dave Clark and Carolyn Rand, who were joining the meeting for the review of the Overall College Self-Assessment, at Item 3 on the agenda. Gill Rejzl would then remain in the meeting as an observer as part of her development as Corporation Chair. The Chair advised that Ria Steventon would be attending for the whole meeting, not only to present her usual reports but also as part of her development as Head of Learning Improvement.

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Lee Smith.

2 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

3 Overall College Self-Assessment Review 2021/22

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality presented the Overall College Self-Assessment Review for 2021/22 report, noting that various sources of data and similar evidence had been analysed and considered during the preparation of the report. The final reporting grade had been given as '2-Good.' The Vice Principal advised that after the initial reviews of the curriculum area the reports had been returned to managers for further consideration and action; when these were later re-submitted some changes to the scoring within some departments had been made. The final individual reviews were then moderated by the Vice Principal and the Assistant Principal Funding & Performance. The Vice Principal was confident that should the overall review and grading be challenged, these could be defended by reference to the data collated.

The Principal asked the Vice Principal to explain why the Landex review received a specific focus in the report; the Vice Principal responded that Landex provided good external scrutiny of the operations and performance at the Cambridge Campus (land-based), that observations from an external source were unbiased and reassuring and that the Landex report itself provided good evidence of the justification of a grade 2 faculty.

Governors referred to the conclusion of the covering report which noted that some areas of the college perhaps did not reflect the 'good' grading if considered in isolation. The Vice Principal explained that in terms of education and training, the programme areas reviewed were found to be 22% outstanding and 27% good, with the evidence obtained resulting in the overall 'good' grade; within HE areas, scores of 80% or better had been achieved; Apprenticeships was an area where scores were lower, but action was being taken to address this with close support and monitoring.

Governors asked if Apprenticeships was the only area to note for improvement; the Vice Principal responded that Maths & English and ESOL remained as areas for attention and support from management, and again, actions were being taken to address those areas. The Chair reminded governors that Apprenticeships was being closely monitored by the Committee and that a regular monitoring report from the department would be reviewed later in the meeting. The Chair welcomed the confidence and positive outlook for Apprenticeships but asked the Vice Principal to consider the risks that the actions being taken would not lead to improvement and the mitigations for this; the Vice Principal noted that the newly introduced Risk Register for Apprenticeships was providing the focus on areas to address, with fortnightly reviews; processes were being reviewed, rationalised and consolidated. The Principal noted that Apprenticeships had been reviewed greatly by the senior management team and the grading carefully considered; the Principal noted that performance within Apprenticeships was similar within the sector, with some colleges now considering whether or not they would continue with this provision due to difficulties with quality and finance. The Principal was confident that with the appointment of the new Head of Department over the summer period, continued support from the Quality Team, and with the work being undertaken to improve systems, such as the project being led by Mandy Lakey, improved performance would be achieved.

Governors considered the governance aspect of the report and noted that the Vice Principal had provided good communications, confidence and assurance, but accepted that the overall responsibility was with the Board. The enthusiastic involvement from staff was positive. The Vice Principal advised that a training session on review and self-assessment had taken place the previous day (29 November 2022) with a follow up session planned for March 2023; good feedback had been received from those who attended, which included managers from both curriculum and support areas.

The Principal referred to the 'deep-dives' that had been carried out in various areas which included an element of external review and judgement; the process provided challenge, the opportunity for staff to develop their thinking and to discuss and share best practice across departments and faculties. The Principal noted that Alison Barber, Head of Faculty-Landbased, was currently undertaking training with Ofsted, with this insight being useful to both the Landbased faculty and the college generally.

Governors commented that the final report did not include the data analysed and was concerned that if the report was challenged, would the Vice Principal be able to identify specific examples to justify the commentary; the Vice Principal was confident that the corresponding data could be identified and shared relating to each section of the report if requested; further, Ofsted inspectors would already have access to datasets from the previous year for information. The Vice Principal added that under the current inspection regime inspectors would be focusing on what was observed and questioned during their visit

to the college, rather than the review of historic data. The Vice Principal considered that the inclusion of the data as evidence would not provide any additional value to the report.

Governors asked about the benefit of including a summary section within the report on the positive areas of the college, those requiring attention and action points planned; the Vice Principal advised that there was a risk of sharing too much detailed information in the one report, which could become confusing to the reader; the Vice Principal reminded the committee that further information was required, if needed, within the Quality Improvement Plan which was regularly reviewed at meetings of this committee.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal and those involved in the report.

The Committee agreed to recommend the Overall College Self-Assessment Review to the Board for approval.

Dave Clark and Carolyn Rand left the meeting at 9.01 am

4 Minutes of the previous meeting – 21 September 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2022 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate record.

5 Matters Arising

The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report for Item 4. The Clerk referred to Item 10 from the meeting held on 15 June 2022 regarding the vacant position of Link Governor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; the Clerk explained that Kay Driver had been asked to consider taking on this role and Clare Pelling had been asked to make contact with Kay Driver to discuss this opportunity.

Paul O'Shea joined the meeting at 9.03 am

6 Annual Safeguarding Monitoring Report 2021/22

Governors thanked the Assistant Principal Student Services for his report. Governors asked if the Assistant Principal considered that the services provided by the college were sufficient to meet the needs of its learners. The Assistant Principal considered that ideally more could be provided for learners and that improvements were needed in the societal support services which were currently inadequate to meet the mental health support needs within the local area; this was reflective of the national picture. The Assistant Principal highlighted that an additional post of Mental Health Practitioner had recently been created to support the work of the existing team but that, to date, the college had been unable to recruit to this position; other support agencies across Norfolk were also reporting difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified staff. The Assistant Principal considered that the support offered by the college was good, and the breadth and depth of experience and skills within the safeguarding and welfare team enabled the college to manage all significant, complex and emergency concerns effectively. However, there was a concern that, should the current levels of external support not improve, the team may become unable to cope with the growing number of chronic and ongoing issues within the student body, where many individuals received little or no support other than through the college. The Assistant Principal was confident that the college provided the support required to meet its statutory duty to learners.

Governors asked if the outcomes from those students who were being supported were reviewed. The Assistant Principal advised that reporting was possible on special categories, such as safeguarding; it was generally noted that achievement in this group of students was lower than that in other groups and that trend analysis over a period of time could be useful in assessing the impact caused by the difficulties faced by students.

The Principal reported that the college leadership team changes carried out in 2021 had impacted positively on the support now being provided to students; the Principal considered the team to be well led by Paul O'Shea and Julie Robinson, adding that Julie had been chosen as the winner of the Leadership Award at the Staff Awards held on 29 November 2022. Regular training for all staff continued on safeguarding matters and referrals.

Scott Leadley, Staff Governor, reported that he had received positive feedback from staff members and learners on the support received from the safeguarding and welfare team.

Governors noted that there were a number of staff members who worked above and beyond their contractual obligations for the benefit of the students and the college, and although management and the Board appreciated this commitment, it represented a potential threat to the continuation of high levels of performance within areas should those individuals leave the college.

Governors noted that this report would also be received by the Board and questioned if there was a duplication of responsibilities. The Clerk would review this with the Corporation Chair.

ACTION-CLERK/CORP CHAIR

The Chair asked if there was any correlation in the number of issues raised when analysed against faculty area; the Assistant Principal advised that this was monitored as part of safeguarding management and that, in general, proportional changes in numbers of safeguarding concerns in individual curriculum areas was student-specific rather than an issue related to the curriculum area. The Principal added that there had been an increase in issues following the return of students to the campus after the Coronavirus lockdown period, caused by the social maturity of the younger students.

The Chair commented on the quality and quantity of training being provided for staff and the work being done by the welfare team in their support of the students, accepting that resources were limited. The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for his report.

The report was noted.

Paul O'Shea left the meeting at 9.22 am

Clare Pelling joined the meeting at 9.23 am

7 Single Equality Scheme & Equality Objectives 2022/23

Governors asked how the impact of the activities undertaken were measured against the aims; The Learning Experience Manager advised that a 3-year plan had been set with specific aims to achieve agreed targets and that these were regularly reviewed.

Governors asked if there was a link between the activities undertaken and the Student Voice, and also if any of the feedback received from students linked to any safeguarding concerns, and specifically, if students felt safe when at college. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality responded that work was being undertaken by the Learning Experience Manager and the Assistant Principal Student Services to support students in this area. Matters were discussed at EDI meetings and the Safeguarding Oversight Committee; in time it was anticipated that the reporting of student matters would be consolidated.

Governors noted the need for clarification of what was expected to be achieved in the final outcomes, and a need for there to be a link between the culture and expected values of the college, accepting that this would be difficult to measure; certainly there was a need to know if the activities undertaken had been worthwhile and beneficial for students; triangulation with this report and others would be necessary to ascertain an overall view of effectiveness. The Board would need to consider the culture and values of the college in due course.

The Vice Principal referred to the 'deep-dive' exercises undertaken during which students were asked "What was it like to be a learner at the college?" giving scope for students to respond to any area of the college they felt was necessary, such as teaching and learning, but also welfare and EDI matters. The Head of Learning Improvement added that responses from focus groups were also adding into the feedback received.

The Principal suggested that this area of work could be reviewed further once an EDI link governor had been appointed, and considered also whether this area of responsibility should be reported directly to the Board, rather than being reviewed initially by this committee. The Clerk would review this with the Corporation Chair. **ACTION-CLERK/CORP CHAIR**

The Committee agreed to recommend the plan to the Board for approval.

Clare Pelling left the meeting at 9.34 am

8 Strategic Oversight Report

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that a meeting had taken place with the Corporation Chair, Committee Chair and herself to review the reporting of information to the committee and to the Board. The former Teaching, Learning & Assessment report had been renamed as the Strategic Oversight Report and would now focus on the strategic areas identified for this committee, with further developments still to come in the future. The Vice Principal thanked the Head of Learning Improvement and the Learning Experience Manager for their work in supplying the appendices to the report.

The Chair asked about the performance of the Business, Humanities, Science & Computing Faculty where attendance was lower than other areas. The Vice Principal advised that this faculty was a current focus for management, particularly with regard to A levels. Scott Leadley, Staff Governor, and Head of Faculty for this area advised that he was reacting to the concerns being raised; some issues had carried over from the previous year and were now being addressed. Scott Leadley had recently had separate meetings with the Link Governor for A Levels (Chris Ashman) and the Link Governor for the Adult Programme (Dave Clark). With regard to attendance levels, the Vice Principal advised that record keeping had been highlighted as a possible issue and that staff were being reminded to fully complete class registers to ensure the accuracy of data.

The Chair asked if there were processes in place to provide an early warning when performance dropped, to ensure prompt action could be taken; the Vice Principal advised that work was progressing with the Assistant Principal Funding & Performance on trend forecasting analysis to produce useful management information for this.

The Chair noted the useful information contained within Appendix 3 of the report on the process for observing teaching, learning and assessment. The Vice Principal advised that further work would continue in the spring term 2023 to include focus groups and learning walks; consideration would also be given to governors' involvement in such activities. The Head of Learning Improvement added that additional training sessions had been planned for new staff members, those new into teaching roles and those who required a refresher.

Governors asked about the numbers of students who joined the college at the beginning of the academic year but failed to remain at the census point; the Vice Principal advised that 97.39% retention had been achieved by the census point, ahead of the target of 97%; this information was being reported to the Board at its meeting on 7 December 2022. Governors asked about the students who left the college during this period; the Vice Principal noted that work was carried out on the withdrawals to obtain destination data, adding that increased attention was being focused on systems to identify and support students before they actually stopped attending college. The Principal noted that Andrew Tyley, Deputy FE Commission,

reported at the recent finance training session for governors that the sector withdrawal rate was between 5% and 6% and so CWA was ahead of other colleges in this respect.

The report was noted.

9 Digital Technologies within Teaching & Learning

The Vice Principal thanked the Head of Learning Improvement and the Learning Experience Manager for their work in producing this report. The Vice Principal explained that work was progressing with the use of the digital elevation tool and that a digital strategy for use within teaching was being developed. It was noted that a JISC tool was also available for governors to engage with, should they wish.

Governors asked about the expectations for the strategy now being developed; the Vice Principal listed the aims as being: to challenge and transform the perception of digital learning; to develop, drive and inspire the use of Technology Enhanced learning for all and to maximise the current digital capability to its fullest potential, thus empowering all stakeholders. The objectives would be to improve the retention, attainment and experience of all stakeholders; to work towards streamlining, systemising and supporting all processes and procedures and to maintain relevance and currency in the highly competitive market place.

The report was noted.

10 Maths & English

Governors reviewed the paper and noted that performance within the English had improved. It was agreed that English was currently operating well and that close scrutiny of this area by the committee was no longer necessary. The Vice Principal welcomed the change and noted the positive message that this action would give to the English teaching staff. The Clerk would amend future agendas to focus purely on Maths. **ACTION-CLERK**

Governors noted the need for management to ensure monitoring of English continued so that current performance was maintained; there was concern that adverse indicators could be noticed too late for corrective action to be taken. The Vice Principal explained that predictive grades and assessments at various milestones would identify immediately if performance was dropping.

Governors noted that for Functional Skills L2, this qualification was considered no longer suitable for 16-18 year olds, and asked about alternative courses; the Vice Principal advised that GCSE Maths had been available, or alternatively L3 Core Maths; in some circumstances the FS L2 Maths course would still be made available to selected students, on an individually assessed basis only.

Governors asked about the teaching of Maths and English to apprentices; the Vice Principal considered that the provision and delivery to apprentices was good and that in time, reporting on this specific area would be made available for review by the committee.

The report was noted.

11 ESOL

The Vice Principal Corporate Services advised that interviews had been planned to recruit to the new position of Adult Education Co-ordinator; this post being funded with support from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority. The post holder, once appointed, would assist in the development and promotion of ESOL courses.

Governors noted that this area of provision had been under regular review for some time by this committee and asked about future plans to improve the situation; the Vice Principal advised that actions were being identified for the spring term 2023, and the review of trend forecasting would help to improve monitoring of the provision. The Assistant Principal continued that a new member of staff had just been appointed for the Wisbech Campus and the post for an hourly-paid lecturer was currently out to advert, both of which would help to improve delivery. Long courses had been restructured into smaller, shorter courses which individuals could achieve separately and over a longer period, helping retention rates and reducing the overall number of withdrawals.

The Head of Learning Improvement noted that the ESOL manager, Laura Holland, had recently returned from maternity leave and so would be focusing on this area; further, Learning Practice staff would be working closely with ESOL staff providing active support in the classroom, improving communications with learners and encouraging learner voice feedback. Additionally, it was noted that awarding organisations had approved the new strategy being adopted by the college with regard to ESOL.

The report was noted.

12 Apprenticeships

Governors noted the overall intake number of 202 and asked if this number was reasonable; governors noted that although this area was under close scrutiny, and many actions were being taken but were concerned that there seemed to be much still to do, and asked if there were sufficient resources to address all of the necessary actions in a timely manner. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality assured the committee that the Head of Department, since her appointment in the summer, had thoroughly reviewed the department and its processes, had clear visibility of the areas for improvement and had a wealth of sector experience to bring best practice solutions into the department.

The Assistant Principal noted the work being carried out by Mandy Lakey, System Implementation Manager, with improvements expected in the CRM system and data management; this particular area of improvement was being closely monitored and reported to the Audit Committee, with the last update on progress reported at its meeting on 23 November 2022. It was considered that the new system would bring benefits for the apprentices, employers, and the college.

The Chair referred to Appendix 2 which highlighted the overall achievement rates over a 3-year period, and noted that performance had reduced over this time, with only 52.38% being achieved in 2021/22. The Vice Principal advised that the Head of Department was reviewing the apprenticeship offer from the college: the courses offered, those that perhaps could be removed and new courses to be introduced. Additionally, the use of the bespoke Risk Register introduced for this area of provision was greatly helping to provide focus and attention for management.

Governors asked about off-the-job training and the poor press reports that had been published regarding this nationally. The Vice Principal explained that for some of the smaller employers they were not always operationally or financially able to release their apprentices for the required amount of off-the-job training, which then caused compliance issues. Individual learning plans were being agreed between the apprentice, employer and the college so that all were fully aware of the expectations. The Assistant Principal noted that the curriculum planning exercise for the college would commence shortly and that there would be a strong involvement from the Apprenticeships departments, particularly with regard to reviewing the standards currently being offered.

Governors noted the need for the comments made in the various reports to committees and to the Board to be triangulated to ensure that the same messages were being conveyed.

The Chair noted the need for this committee to focus in more detail on Apprentices and asked for this item to be placed earlier on the agenda at future meetings. **ACTION-CLERK**

The report was noted.

Gill Rejzl gave her thanks to the Chair and to the meeting and left at 10.40 am

13 Technology Faculty – Deep Dive Report

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality reported on the deep-dive carried out in the Technology faculty during September 2022; challenges were experienced in that the MIS services did not easily interoperate which frustrated the attempt to obtain an overview of the learner journey in a simple manner, but, although noted, this did not impede or adversely affect the deep-dive process.

The Chair commented that the report on the deep-dive gave a fair balance of good areas and those where improvement was needed and asked management to consider when it was likely that Technology would be removed from close scrutiny measures and Support to Improve. The Vice Principal advised that the new, permanent Head of Faculty for Technology, Sue Moore, would transfer from her current post in January 2023 and would present a report on her new curriculum area to the committee at its next meeting in March 2023. **ACTION-HoF-Technology**

The report was noted.

14 Complaints – Current – 2022/23

The Head of Learning Improvement reported that 6 complaints were currently outstanding. One complaint had been justified and later resolved; this related to Apprenticeships.

To date, 6 compliments had now been received and recorded.

The Head of Learning Improvement asked if there was sufficient detail in the report for the committee's consideration; the committee noted its agreement to the format and level of detail within the report.

The report was noted.

15 Quality Improvement Plan 2022/23

The Chair echoed comments made by governors earlier in the meeting for the need to ensure comments noted in reports corresponded and triangulated with other documents, and in this instance, with the content within the Quality Improvement Plan.

Completed items were noted, as were the actions being taken to address those items still progressing. The Chair asked managers to ensure target dates for actions were not missed to avoid slippage on progress.

The Head of Learning Improvement advised that some areas would now be updated following work on the digital strategy resulting in some items being completed or updated accordingly on the plan.

The report was noted.

16 Strategic Targets 2022/23 – Progress Review

There were no questions or comments raised on the updates against the strategic targets under the responsibility of this committee. The Chair noted that much discussion had already taken place throughout the meeting on the various targets listed within the report.

The report was noted.

17 Any Other Business

There were no items of other business.

18 Chair's items for briefing to the Corporation

- The meeting included the review of the overall college self-assessment report;
- The committee focused on its usual priority areas of maths & English, ESOL, Apprenticeships and Technology; English was now performing effectively and so would be removed from regular review;
- Reporting of information between the committee and the Board was being reviewed to avoid duplication.

19 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 6 March 2023 at 8.30 am.

The meeting closed at 10.52 am