

**The College of West Anglia  
Minutes of  
The Performance Review and Quality Committee  
12 February 2020  
8.30 am  
Meeting Room, Principal's Suite, King's Lynn Campus**

<b>Present</b>	Samantha Penn	Governor (Chair)
	Chris Ashman	Governor
	Scott Leadley	Governor (Vice Chair)
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)
	Lee Smith	Governor
<b>Attending</b>	Andrew Gedge	Assistant Principal Quality & Students
	Ruth Harrison	Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning
	Laura Holland	Head of English & Maths (part)
	Vicky Mann	Head of Apprenticeships & Work Based Learning (part)
	Charlotte Marriott	Quality Coordinator (part)
	Steve Lowery	Head of Faculty – Technology (part)
	Samantha Thompson	Applewood Manager (part)
	Stephen Halls	Clerk to the Corporation

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**1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Roderick Watkins. David Pomfret would be arriving later for the meeting. Lee Smith advised that he would need to leave before the end of the meeting due to a work commitment.

**2 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

During the meeting Sam Penn declared an interest in Item 8 – Applewood Nursery Update, which was noted at that time.

**3 Minutes of the previous meeting – 13 November 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2019 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

#### 4 Matters Arising

The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report for item 4.

With regard to the curriculum planning strategy report (Item 9, discussed 25/9/19) Governors asked if the new T Levels would be included in the next revision of the strategy. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning advised that the new courses would be included within the strategy. The College had been successful in its bid for providing 2 courses and would commence teaching the new T Levels from 2021/22. Staff had begun their preparations by looking at CPD requirements and engaging in peer exchange of knowledge and practices. An update would be provided within the Learning & Curriculum Report at the next meeting (29 April 2020). The Board would receive a briefing on T Levels at its meeting on 20 May 2020.

**ACTION-VPCL**

#### 5 Mathematics & English

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning advised that staff had been busy managing students for the November resit exams. Reform work to Maths Level 2 had been carried out with significant changes. Assessments for Maths students had been tightened up. Good work was being carried out during the Golden Hours for teaching staff.

*David Pomfret joined the meeting at 8.35 am*

The Vice Principal continued: Recent changes in GCSE teaching methods would result in improvements, especially for 16-year olds. Progress was being made with Maths through Support to Improve. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students was providing good support.

Governors commented on the functional skills results noting the decline in Maths on the previous year. The Vice Principal confirmed that students were now only being entered for assessment when it was considered that they were fully prepared for it, noting that assessments could be undertaken at various times throughout the year. Future improvements were certainly expected for Level 1. Expectations for Level 2 were a little more cautious.

*Laura Holland joined the meeting at 8.38 am*

The Head of English & Maths reported on the issues being faced with Maths teaching due to recent changes by Pearson. The reforms were rather cumbersome. The wording being used, especially for ESOL students was considered to be inappropriate. The Chair asked if any additional support was required to manage the current issues being faced. The Head of Department advised that all was progressing well and was confident with the entry of students. Some good exchanges had taken place with other colleges which were all experiencing the same difficulties. The Vice Principal added that the College had a good reputation and was managing the challenges well and moving in the right direction.

Governors asked about entry data which was not yet available. The Head of Department explained that there had been difficulties in the reporting of some information due to the running of both old and new systems. This would be available for the next meeting.

The Chair acknowledged the challenges being faced and the work being undertaken to resolve the issues. The Vice Principal added that the HR department was providing support where needed and that the Head of Department was supporting her new teachers well. The Chair noted the many activities being undertaken to support the staff. The Assistant Principal Quality

& Students reported that there had been in-year improvements to attendance in mathematics and English but this was still below last year. Recent headline performance progress results published had provided an improved position for maths when compared to the previous year.

**The report was noted.**

*Laura Holland left the meeting at 8.48 am*

*Vicky Mann joined the meeting at 8.49 am*

## **6 Apprenticeships**

The Chair asked about the achievement rates being reported which were showing a decline against the previous two years. The Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning reported that there were a number of notable overdue achievements in Plumbing and Electrical which were being rigorously chased. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning advised that staffing difficulties were causing issues, both in the shortage of trained staff and in the competency of some staff members (continuing to practice outdated methods). The College was currently looking for additional staff to provide support to the Work Based Learning team.

Governors noted that the current statistics were far from ideal and asked about the expected year end out-turn. The Head of Department expected the situation would improve with the measures now being introduced, particularly in the second half of the spring term. The Chair commented that a long-term solution would be required. The Head of Department considered that the approach taken by some of the existing staff needed to change. The Vice Principal added that coaching would be required for staff who visited employers and who explained the exact requirements of training and the end-point assessments so that everyone was clear on what was expected. Everyone would work hard to ensure students were successful, results were good, and the reputation of the College was maintained. The Chair noted that the responsibilities for performance sat within the teaching faculties.

The Principal reported that income targets were currently being achieved although there was a continued need to monitor risk and pressure points. The Chair was concerned about staffing issues and the ability for staff to change their current practices. The Head of Department reported on the difficulties of recruiting appropriate teaching staff into some areas due to the pay scales available. The Chair was concerned about the impact on quality due to the inability to recruit appropriate staff and would raise this as an issue for the Chairs' Meeting Group at its next meeting.

**ACTION-CHAIR**

The Principal noted that 50% of apprentices within the College fell within the Technology Faculty which had a number of staffing issues. Governors asked about salary differentials and the ability for the College to be flexible with recruitment packages. The Principal advised that the College had limited options for flexibility due to financial constraints and had to be mindful of not upsetting existing staff who did not benefit from recruitment incentives.

Governors discussed the use of part-time staff and the possibility of employers being asked to contribute to the training more, perhaps with the offer of an income incentive in return.

Governors were concerned that there were 65 apprentices pending. The Head of Department advised that it was expected that these apprentices would commence in April, so although they had not been lost, most of the income to be received would slip to the next financial year.

Governors noted that the cohort numbers for timely achievement had reduced from 239 at R04 to 224 at R05 and asked for further information. The Head of Department would investigate this, and the Clerk would circulate the information once received. **ACTION-HoWBL/CLERK**

Governors were pleased to note the Functional Skills results, particularly the first-time pass rates. Governors asked for the report next time to include actual numbers (rather than percentages) so that cohort sizes could be appreciated. **ACTION-HoWBL**

Governors discussed the need for the College to improve its management information reporting so that reports were available in a timely and detailed manner as there continued to be confusion over which system provided the necessary information (PICS or ProAchieve). The Assistant Principal Quality & Students advised that this matter was being reviewed by the Head of Funding & Exams, noting that a visit to City College Norwich had taken place recently to review its reporting systems. The Chair asked which committee was best placed to manage this concern. The Principal considered that PR&Q should have oversight as the management information data related to performance. The Head of Funding & Exams would be asked to provide a report to the next meeting. **ACTION-HoFE**

**The report was noted.**

*Vicky Mann left the meeting at 9.14 am*

*Steve Lowery joined the meeting at 9.14 am*

## **7 Technology Faculty Update**

The Chair welcomed Steve Lowery, Head of Faculty for Technology to the meeting.

Governors asked about the delay in the timely completions for apprentices. The Head of Faculty reported that most of the delays were within Carpentry.

Governors asked the Head of Faculty for his reflection on the Support to Improve process. The Head of Faculty explained that faculty colleagues had been involved in the process and had taken part in discussions. The main issue causing the performance concerns was staff shortages for which in many cases only short-term solutions were being identified. The Head of Faculty noted that the Support to Improve group comprised The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning, the Assistant Principal Quality & Students, HR, the Head of Faculty and Programme Managers.

Governors asked what was currently being done to speed the process along and to move the faculty out of the Support to Improve process. The Head of Faculty explained that meetings were now concentrating on one particular department at a time which helped to focus on specific issues in that area. The Vice Principal advised that immediate actions were being identified and followed up without any disruption for learners where possible. A lecturer for plumbing was currently being recruited.

The Chair accepted that work was being carried out to resolve issues but was not reassured that the long-term solutions had been identified. The Head of Faculty responded that most of the issues centred around staffing. The Chair noted that staff roles needed to change due to new teaching methods and particularly with regard to assessment and asked if faculty staff would accept this and do it. The Head of Faculty advised that additional staff training was required, particularly for the new standards. Future training plans and development was known but the recruitment and retention of staff to provide the teaching was the concern. Governors asked if

Programme Managers were fully engaged and shared the responsibilities. The Head of Faculty confirmed that this was so.

The Chair considered that there was a concern in the pace of change which needed closer monitoring. Due to the overlap between the issues within Technology and those being experienced within Apprenticeships, for the next two meetings both department heads would be invited into the meeting at the same time to jointly answer questions during the Apprenticeships report. **ACTION-CLERK**

The Issues and Progress table within the report to be represented in the form of a “QIP” table, clearly identifying each issue, action to be taken, current progress and RAG rated. This to be presented within the report for next time. **ACTION-VPCL/HoF Technology**

**The report was noted.**

*Steve Lowery left the meeting at 9.28 am*

*The following discussion was deemed “confidential.”*

*Sam Thompson joined the meeting at 9.34 am*

## **8 Applewood Nursery Update**

The Chair welcomed Sam Thompson, Applewood Manager, to the meeting.

The Head of Department reported that the Early Years Adviser from Norfolk County Council had visited the nursery on Monday (10/2/20) and had been impressed with the standard of the displays on show. Governors asked about the frequency of the visits. The Head of Department advised that the previous visit took place just before the Christmas closure, with the next visit expected before the Easter holiday. Governors asked if the Head of Department had confidence in the guidance and advice being given by the Adviser. The Head of Department confirmed that in most instances she was confident and assured by the advice being given with the exception of comments received in respect of the nursery’s breakfast provision which disagreed with the views expressed by parents. On this occasion the advice given had not been followed.

The Head of Department invited Governors to visit the Nursery should they wish to do so.

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning reported that staffing issues were in the process of being resolved. A new team leader would be joining the staff on 24 February 2020. The Applewood Manager was being supported by the Head of Faculty and the Vice Principal. Previous concerns with children’s learning and engagement, particularly in the Grasshopper room had been addressed and the children were very happy. There had been improved opportunities for children who spoke English as an additional language.

The Chair declared an interest in this item due to her employment with Norfolk County Council (providers of the Early Years Adviser).

The Chair asked when the report from the Early Years Adviser would be received. The Head of Department advised that the report had been received and had been shared with colleagues. The current advice was considered to be helpful. Governors asked about the purpose and the value received from these visits. The Head of Department advised that it was a requirement following a “Requires Improvement” OfSTED grading for providers to be visited by an Early

Years Adviser. The visits were valued, especially as the improvements being implemented were being noticed.

Governors asked about the performance of the staff team. The Head of Department reported that since the staff changes the atmosphere within the nursery had improved and that this had been noticed by parents. Parents were concerned about the direction being given regarding English as an additional language (EAL). The requirement was for all languages to be developed, whereas parents were insisting that their children only spoke English whilst at the nursery, noting that there were 7 languages currently being spoken within the nursery.

The Chair asked if the Early Years Adviser had recommended any good nursery settings to visit. The Head of Department advised that 2 staff members had recently visited a nursery which was performing well. Governors suggested contact with other college nurseries for support and guidance. The Head of Department expressed that with the recent changes, particularly with regard to staffing, she was confident of an improved outcome at the next inspection.

**The report was noted.**

*Sam Thompson left the meeting at 9.47 am*

*Charlotte Marriott joined the meeting at 9.48 am*

## **9 The Quality Unit**

The Chair welcomed Charlotte Marriott, Quality Coordinator, to the meeting.

Governors asked how the work of the Quality Unit had been defined by the responsibility that was engrained in high standards, ambition and expectations, as noted in the report. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students advised that an holistic approach had been adopted within the College, looking at quality systems, the use of improvement plans and bringing in external experts to assess and report on what was taking place at the College.

Governors commented on the College's aim to focus on high performance and enquired how problem areas were identified and addressed. The Quality Coordinator advised that the Support to Improve programme provided a good opportunity to address issues within a particular area and which swiftly led to changes for improvement being implemented. Diagnostic assessments were carried out from time to time in areas of possible concern to monitor performance and consider any actions that may be required. The Assistant Principal added that feedback from the Student Voice had improved over the last couple of years and provided a good indication of where performance was poor and in need of attention.

Governors asked who was responsible for "quality" at the College. The Assistant Principal advised that individuals, teams and managers were responsible for quality within their own respective areas – it was not just the responsibility of the Quality Unit.

The Principal commented that teaching and learning had improved for the College and asked about the Quality Unit's involvement in this. The Quality Coordinator replied that the Unit served as the central contact point between awarding bodies and the teaching departments; new requirements or changes to the teaching requirements would be coordinated by the Unit. The Quality Unit would also be responsible for arranging training and providing advice and guidance to the teaching departments for curriculum changes. The Assistant Principal added that the Unit carried out deep-dives when needed, reviewed student feedback and liaised with The Learning Practice when required, where staff now had quality as a responsibility in their job descriptions as a result of the restructure changes last summer.

The Chair asked how the impact of the Quality Unit could be monitored. The Assistant Principal advised that the overall results on quality would be seen in the key performance indicators, student voice survey results and from the number of complaints received.

The Chair commented that on occasions some departments that had gone through the Support to Improve process found themselves back in the scheme a few months later as performance began to dip. The Assistant Principal advised that in those circumstances an assessment would take place looking at which actions were successful and those which failed, with a view to understanding why the failed actions had not been sustainable and what measures could be put in place moving forward. The Chair asked if more should be done to monitor those departments once they had moved out of Support to Improve. The Quality Coordinator responded that the Learning Practice staff would be checking quality during its various visits and learning walks within those departments, thereby identifying issues early.

The Chair asked what the key headline items were to monitor for quality. The Assistant Principal listed attendance, withdrawals, student voice feedback and line management discussions.

Governors commented that all areas should be focusing on quality improvement at all times. The Assistant Principal reminded Governors that quality and performance was regularly monitored, particularly via the Self Assessments Review process (SARs), Area Performance Reviews (termly) and the KPIs as reported at each meeting.

**The report was noted.**

*Charlotte Marriott left the meeting at 10.02 am*

*Lee Smith left the meeting at 10.02 am*

## **10 Current Performance Data and KPIs 2019/20**

The Assistant Principal Quality & Students advised that there were emerging concerns with Chemistry A level, Wisbech Uniform Services, Hair & Beauty and Function Skills L2 Maths. The Chair asked for further information on what action was being taken to support these areas. The Assistant Principal advised that Uniform Services had been moved into Support to Improve, noting that this small department was operated by 2 staff. For Hair and Beauty which had suffered from recent staffing issues (staff sickness, leavers etc) now had an interim manager in place. Chemistry A Level had suffered from both staff performance and now maternity leave.

Governors suggested that the report would also benefit from a brief, bullet point summary on those areas within the College which were performing well. **ACTION-APQS**

Governors were concerned with the number of disciplinaries being recorded within the Technology faculty. The Chair was pleased to note the positive responses within the TLA survey.

Governors queried why, in Appendix 4, out-turn data was being presented for 2014/15. This would be investigated and corrected where necessary for the next report. **ACTION-APQS**

**The report was noted.**

## **11 Quality Improvement Plan 2019/20**

Governors commented again on the lack of progress being made around apprenticeship data, as already discussed in Item 6 – Apprenticeships.

Many of the items in the report were currently rated as Amber. QIP Action number 23 regarding Behaviour & Attitudes was rated as Red; concerns around the attendance for Maths classes was discussed.

**The report was noted.**

## **12 Higher Education Report**

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning reported that the target of 135 enrolments had not been achieved. The College was currently working with ARU to finalise the accreditation for a number of courses. The Principal noted that ARU was a leading provider of degree apprenticeship courses and did not work with any other partners. The College would need to work with ARU in order to increase its HE provision and its number of students. The College was currently discussing with ARU (and other associated partners) its plans to develop a School of Nursing using a franchise model. The Vice Principal added that the college was also looking to increase the number and range of courses currently being offered at the Cambridge Campus, alongside the very successful vet nursing programme.

**The report was noted.**

## **13 Learning & Curriculum Report**

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning introduced the new style and content for this report, taking into account the request by Governors at the previous meeting (13 November 2019). The Principal noted that he expected to receive positive comments regarding curriculum planning from the FE Commissioner following the recent visit on 4 February 2020.

The Vice Principal advised that assessment was still a priority for the College, noting that the number of extended learning walks had now reached 206. It was considered positive and beneficial to have department managers and heads of faculties attend this meeting to discuss issues and answer questions from the Committee.

The Chair asked about any initial plans or concerns regarding the introduction of T Levels from 2021/22. The Principal noted that the FE Commissioner had so far not raised any concerns regarding T Levels, and that the Vice Principal and other managers were adopting the correct focus on launching this new qualification; staff were enabled and engaged with the new qualification.

Under the new Education and Inspection Framework (EIF), Governors asked if “intent” was being considered. The Vice Principal advised that since the start of the academic year, meetings with Heads of Faculties and Programme Managers had included discussions on the requirement for Level 1 and Level 2 courses to enable students to obtain suitable employment, as well as to push students to obtain their qualifications in English and Maths. The EIF had been discussed in team meetings and Golden Hours with departments. Scott Leadley, as Programme Manager for Sport reported that some cleansing of courses for Level 1 and Level 2 had taken place for 2020/21 with a reviewed offer now in place. Governors asked if the changes were being reflected in the College’s marketing information. Scott Leadley advised that new banners and logos had been produced and that the department was ready for its open days. The Chair emphasised the need to review all courses and ensure resources were in place. The

Vice Principal added that the college needed to ensure students were directed to the most appropriate level to aid both their education and employment.

The Chair asked for this item to be included earlier on the agenda at the next meeting to allow for more discussion.

**ACTION-CLERK**

**The report was noted.**

#### **14 Complaints (Current)**

The Assistant Principal Quality & Students advised that the College's new policy for complaints handling had commenced from January 2020. There were currently no complaints in relation to Higher Education lodged with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The Chair commented positively on the reduction around the volume of complaints received overall so far in this academic year compared to the same period last year (23 this year compared to 34 last year).

**The report was noted.**

#### **15 Any Other Business**

There were no items of other business.

#### **16 Chair's items for briefing to the Corporation**

- Current areas of concern with regard to performance:
  - Chemistry A Level
  - Wisbech Uniformed Services
  - Hair & Beauty
  - Functional Skills Level 2 Maths
- The work being undertaken by the Quality Unit in supporting teaching areas to monitor and improve quality across the College.

The Chair confirmed that she would also be raising her concerns about the impact on quality due to the inability to recruit appropriate staff at the next meeting of the Chairs' Meeting Group.

#### **17 Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday, 29 April 2020 at 8.30 am, King's Lynn Campus.

**The meeting closed at 10.39 am**