

The College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Performance Review and Quality Committee
2 December 2020
8.30 am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Present	Samantha Fletcher	Governor (Chair)
	Chris Ashman	Governor
	Scott Leadley	Governor (Vice Chair)
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)
	Lee Smith	Governor
	Roderick Watkins	Governor
Attending	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)
	Steve Lowery	Head of Faculty – Technology (part)
	Paul O'Shea	Head of Marketing & Student Services
	Stephen Halls	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence received.

2 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting – 23 September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2020 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate record.

4 Matters Arising

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

Governors noted that a number of historic actions remained outstanding and were concerned if any of the outstanding items were having a negative impact on operations or performance. The Principal commented that the issues relating to data flow and reporting intelligence, particularly with regard to Apprenticeships were concerning. The Chair said that although some items

remained outstanding, progress had been achieved with other matters, such as within Maths and English. The Clerk would review the outstanding items and look to combine similar items so that the listing became more manageable. **ACTION-CLERK**

Laura Holland joined the meeting at 8.40 am

5 Mathematics & English

The Head of Faculty advised that it had been decided for English and Maths delivery to remain on-line until the February 2021 half-term. Staff were supporting students in using the College's network and student portal – Learn, with weekly training sessions being provided by the TEL team. The College was addressing the issues of digital poverty and poor digital literacy. The department had reviewed and amended its on-line teaching sessions with lessons now being delivered at a slower pace. Attendance of 75% was concerning as this was 10% lower than would have been liked. Engaging students online was sometimes proving to be difficult and trying to increase interactivity with learners was being encouraged. Staff were performing well with their performance being monitored. Staff remained healthy. The two co-ordinators had recently enrolled onto an ETF middle management programme. Two course directors were now undertaking a Stepping into Leadership course.

The number of adult teaching groups had increased with a second cohort planned for the spring term with good numbers expected. The DASH to GCSE course would be repeated this year.

Governors asked for more information regarding digital poverty. The Head of Faculty explained that the College had invested in further headsets for learners to encourage interactivity in lessons. Students were being given guidance on how best to use their devices. Students were able to use the LRC facilities.

Governors were concerned about the 75% attendance figure. The Head of Faculty said that there was currently a push to contact learners individually, trying to ascertain the reasons for non-attendance and to provide solutions. Meetings were taking place with Programme Managers to discuss individual's progress. Governors suggested the use of an expected minimum attendance indicator and then report who was not meeting that lower figure.

Governors asked how the adult courses were being managed differently to the other students. The Head of Faculty explained that adult enrolment was taking place on site, rather than on-line. Further, individual meetings were taking place with each adult to understand their reasons for undertaking the course, giving the opportunity for staff to discuss the workload and commitment required for each course. The first two weeks of teaching would be provided on-campus to allow for bonding within the group and to promote attendance.

The Assistant Principal Quality & Students asked about the progress made since the last Ofsted inspection in January 2019. The Head of Faculty considered that English had progressed well, although Maths remained a concern and was being supported through Support to Improve. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning added that Ofsted was fully aware of the national issues surrounding English and Maths. There was a concern with the first-time pass rates for functional skills with there being a need to establish robust assessment strategies for learners. The Vice Principal was confident with the approach being taken by the College and the ethos.

Scott Leadley, Staff Governor, commented that learners in the classroom grasped the theory well, whereas those learning on-line took longer to understand the teaching subject, and wondered if the skills could be cascaded to those providing blended lessons. The Head of Faculty said that developments in on-line teaching continued, particularly for adult classes and

agreed that skills and knowledge could be shared. The Vice Principal added that teachers were being encouraged to review different teaching tools and use those most appropriate for each lesson.

The Vice Principal advised that the College was using its allocation of 16-19 Catch-Up Funding, with each faculty having been given a budget to help those students in need of additional support.

The Chair recognised that this remained a challenging area and the risk it imposed on the College. Some “quick-wins” would help to reduce some of the urgency but the effort this required was acknowledged.

The report was noted.

Laura Holland left the meeting at 9.05 am

Vicky Mann joined the meeting at 9.05 am

6 Apprenticeships

From the report, Governors asked about the overdue apprenticeships that had been caused by centre blocks and sanctions and how these could be avoided. The Head of Department explained that these were caused by an awarding body that had outstanding checks to carry out on college procedures and processes, and until such time that it had reviewed these, certification was on hold. At the present time, 20 plumbing apprentices were on hold awaiting the awarding body to complete its checks. In order to avoid this, an early appeal was needed against the concern raised by the awarding body, or the swift return of any evidence or data to support the College’s position so that it could be reviewed. Additionally, a good dialogue with the external verifier was key to maintaining good relations. Governors asked if there was a key performance indicator to monitor this issue and to track progress. The Head of Department advised that there was a procedure in place for all departments to follow which was monitored by the Quality Department. Additionally, the apprenticeships department would review outstanding issues with the appropriate Head of Faculty on a regular basis. The Head of Department emphasised the need to ensure that internal quality assessments were prioritised and supported by all departments across the College.

The Principal explained that in terms of assessment there was still a need to improve this, and that this was monitored within the strategic targets and reviewed regularly at meetings of the College Leadership Team. An explicit KPI gave governor visibility.

Governors were concerned about the impact that the delays caused by the centre blocks were having on apprenticeships. The Head of Department considered that this was a major concern and although employers were patient and understanding of the situation, regular complaints were being received. The Plumbing area had not received a visit from an external verifier for 2 years. City & Guilds had themselves cancelled previously planned visits to the College. Governors were keen to know the expected timeframe of these matters being resolved. The Head of Department was hopeful that all current concerns would be resolved by February 2021.

Governors asked about current performance levels. The Assistant Principal noted that it was difficult to predict with accuracy at this stage what the likely year end performance figures would be like. The Head of Department noted her concerns due to the difficulties of recruitment suitable staff to the Technology faculty. The Head of Department would look to work with the

Head of Funding & Exams to develop a modelling tool to predict achievement rates. The Assistant Principal noted that this would help to prioritise the behaviours of learners.

ACTION-HoWBL

Governors asked how serious the College viewed the centre blocks/sanctions. The Head of Department reported that the matter was discussed regularly with the Vice Principal and Head of Technology. The College was mindful of any reputational damage this could cause. The Principal added that this had been RAG rated as RED in key performance indicators. The Chair noted that internal procedures needed to be resolved swiftly. Governors asked if applicants were made aware of the current difficulties at the time of recruitment. The Head of Department advised that new apprentices were not informed of the current centre blocks, adding that recruitment generally was good.

The report was noted.

Vicky Mann left the meeting at 9.33 am

(Due to technical difficulties being incurred by the Head of Technology, the Chair moved the meeting to the Safeguarding Monitoring Report).

Paul O'Shea joined the meeting at 9.33 am

7 Annual Safeguarding Monitoring Report 2019/20

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, in light of the recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit on 23 November 2020 regarding sub-contractor partners, noted that the statistics contained within the report referred to CWA's students but did not include those for sub-contractor partners. With immediate effect, sub-contractors would be using the College software system, "My Concern" to record any safeguarding issues with the data being included within the statistics for the 2020/21 report.

Governors reviewed the data and commented positively that male students had been reporting issues of concern and that students generally felt comfortable and safe when they were raising personal issues with College staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead reported that from September 2020 an on-line disclosure form had been made available for students' use on the student portal and that this had helped students to raise their concerns; telephone disclosures were also considered to be a more comfortable method for students to make contact in the first instance.

Governors reviewed the data and noted that there were no issues raised from students under the ESOL programme area. The Designated Safeguarding Lead advised that this was a small curriculum and so low numbers would be expected. It was considered that with a high proportion of students from mixed backgrounds in this area there may be ethnic or cultural effects to take into account.

Governors were pleased to note that the number of domestic violence concerns had reduced considerably from the previous year, but were surprised since with the pressures caused by the first national lockdown and household members having to remain indoors much of the time the number of concerns were expected to be higher.

Governors asked about homelessness and if this was an issue for College students. The Designated Safeguarding Lead explained that the College worked with the relevant local

authority of the student's home town, and also with local charities. The College had worked with the Purfleet Trust in King's Lynn, particularly with the issue of foodbank vouchers.

The Chair noted the need for future reports to include safeguarding information relating to sub-contract partners and asked if there were any evolving issues for the current year. The Designated Safeguarding Lead noted that the number of concerns raised so far this year was high compared to the same period last year; there were more cases being deemed as significant risk; the impact of county lines was now being seen (drug trafficking); more complex mental health cases were being reported and the engagement with local authority professionals had greatly increased.

The Chair asked if there were any concerns with any non-attending students or students who had a poor/intermittent attendance record. The Designated Safeguarding Lead advised that there were no concerns to note, although there had been one instance, and this related to county lines and was being managed.

Governors asked about the College's safeguarding responsibilities for students of sub-contractor partners. The Designated Safeguarding Lead explained that the College was fully responsible for its learners, even though the provision was managed by the sub-contractor partner. The Principal advised that there had been no concerns raised by Ofsted as to how the College discharged its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.

The report was noted.

Paul O'Shea left the meeting at 9.50 am

Steve Lowery joined the meeting at 9.50 am

8 Technology Faculty Update

The Head of Faculty reported that targets for individual managers had now been included in the action plan for the faculty, and that managers were indeed leading on progressing the various targets in that plan.

Within plumbing, one teacher (part-time) had left the College and this vacancy was being covered by agency staffing. Governors asked why the member of staff had left: this was discussed although there were no concerns regarding performance of the individual or the College as an employer.

Governors noted the Amber rating against 20 apprentices awaiting certification. The Head of Faculty advised that this would be resolved later in the academic year, following the planned visit of the City & Guilds external verifier in February 2021. Governors considered that this item should be marked as a higher risk. Governors discussed the assessment process and who would be involved in the meeting with City & Guilds. Governors asked the Head of Faculty how confident he was that the assessment would be successful, and the blocks/sanctions lifted. The Head of Faculty was confident that all would be well, noting that informal review meetings would take place beforehand to check progress.

Governors asked about the improvements in the management within Construction, what support was being provided to help develop staff and how this was being monitored. The Head of Faculty noted that each manager had their own targets to work towards and that monthly meetings, faculty meetings and informal chats with staff were all used to monitor progress.

Governors were interested in the Internal Quality Assurance progress. The Head of Faculty advised that plans were in place and all was ready for the February meeting. The Vice Principal added that this was discussed on a regular basis, with the Head of Faculty, Head of Apprenticeships and the Quality Co-ordinator.

The Chair considered that with so much still to be done that the ratings did not reflect the true status of the various tasks, taking into account the urgency, risk and impact of targets not being achieved, suggesting that most targets ought to be rated as Red, rather than Amber. The Vice Principal commented that the situation would improve as the Head of Faculty worked alongside the Head of Apprenticeships in dealing with the outstanding matters. Governors asked if staff supported the targets. The Head of Faculty considered that the majority of staff supported the targets, although there were one or two exceptions.

The Chair stressed the need for the targets to be met by February 2021.

The report was noted.

Steve Lowery left the meeting at 10.06 am

The following 2 items on the agenda were taken together:

9 Learning & Curriculum Report & 10 Learning Strategy Annual Review

The Vice Principal highlighted the courses currently in intervention which provided a focus of where action was required. Teaching and learning assessments were being carried out, although there were difficulties with dropping in on remote lessons without disrupting the teaching taking place. Appendix 2 provided a summary of the findings from recent assessments.

With regard to the Learning Strategy for 2020/21, the Vice Principal advised that this document had been updated to include on-line learning practices, although in a future update more would be included on assessments. The Vice Principal noted that the latest strategy included the findings from the recent area performance reviews and input from course directors. The Chair considered the strategy to be very detailed, focused and indicated a forward moving direction of travel.

The Chair asked about confidence in the assessments and how these were used to aid progression. The Vice Principal responded that the assessments were based on standards and behaviours and provided a deeper understanding of what was required in each area. Together with the IQA schedules these would be very effective in moving forward. This presented a cultural change for staff, particularly for the Technology Faculty and the Apprenticeship department which would both need to work closely together to achieve success.

Governors questioned the emerging strengths and weaknesses within the Technology faculty. The Vice Principal said there was a need to hold all managers to account and to challenge when needed; this was carried out through one-to-one meetings with faculty managers.

Governors noted that Dog Grooming was listed within the strengths section of Land Based Studies (Appendix 3), and that it was also listed under courses in intervention (Appendix 1). The Vice Principal advised that on the whole, the department was making good progress although some complaints were still being received and for this reason it fell into both areas when being analysed.

Governors noted the importance of the Vice Principal having oversight of all areas but emphasised the need for faculty managers to be fully responsible for their areas. Governors expressed their concerns with the continuing issues within the Technology faculty.

The Learning & Curriculum Report was noted.

The Committee approved the Learning Strategy 2020/21 for recommendation to the Board.

11 Applewood Nursery Update

The Vice Principal highlighted the interim visit report from Ofsted and the NCC Early Years report, both attached as appendices. The report from the Early Years adviser was considered to be informative. An Early Years specialist had been engaged to work with the nursery over a 4-week period to both support and challenge the staff in preparing for inspection. The Vice Principal and Head of Faculty continued to visit the nursery on a regular basis. The Chair asked the Vice Principal to thank nursery staff for their efforts so far in preparing the nursery for inspection.

ACTION-VPCL

The report was noted.

12 Current Performance Data and KPIs 2020/21

The Assistant Principal Quality & Students reported that retention appeared to be strong for the autumn term. Many of the KPIs were currently showing as Red rated at this point in time. Updated figures would be presented at the Board meeting on 9 December 2020.

The report was noted.

Roderick Watkins left the meeting at 10.30 am

13 Quality Improvement Plan 2020/21

Due to time constraints this report was not discussed. The Chair advised that the report would be presented at the next Board meeting (9 December 2020) and would provide an opportunity for questions from committee members.

The report was noted.

14 Single Equality Scheme & Equality Objectives

Governors noted the document.

The committee agreed to recommend the document to the Board for approval at its next meeting (9 December 2020)

15 Complaints (current)

The Assistant Principal Quality & Students noted that complaints regarding dog grooming had been received, with communications being sent to both managers and governors. This was currently being investigated and would be escalated to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

The report was noted.

16 Any Other Business

There were no items of other business.

17 Chair's items for briefing to the Corporation

The Committee continued to focus on the same 3 areas:

- Maths & English
- Apprenticeships
- Technology

The evidence and verbal reports received from the managers of Maths & English and Apprenticeships indicated the enormous amount of work that had been carried out. The committee had confidence in the management of these two departments.

The committee was positive about the improvements made in the Applewood Nursery and the monitoring and assessment being carried out in advance of the anticipated inspection by Ofsted in January.

18 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 10 February 2021 at 8.30 am.

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting for Andrew Gedge, Assistant Principal Quality & Students. Andrew had worked for CWA for 28 years and was leaving for a position as Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality at the recently merged Brooksby Melton / Stephenson College. The Chair thanked Andrew for his efforts and for his support of the both the committee and the College and wished him well in his new role.

The meeting closed at 10.36 am