

**The College of West Anglia**  
**Minutes of**  
**The Performance Review and Quality Committee**  
**9 June 2021**  
**8.30 am**  
**Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

|                  |                   |                                       |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Present</b>   | Samantha Fletcher | Governor (Chair)                      |
|                  | Scott Leadley     | Governor (Vice Chair)                 |
|                  | David Pomfret     | Governor (Principal)                  |
|                  | Roderick Watkins  | Governor                              |
| <b>Attending</b> | Ruth Harrison     | Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality   |
|                  | Laura Holland     | Head of English & Maths, ESOL (part)  |
|                  | Steve Lowery      | Head of Faculty – Technology (part)   |
|                  | Clare Pelling     | Learning Experience Manager           |
|                  | Jane Phillips     | Work Based Learning - Apprenticeships |
|                  | Stephen Halls     | Clerk to the Corporation              |

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**1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Ashman, Lee Smith and Vicky Mann. Roderick Watkins noted that he would need to leave the meeting at 10.00 am.

**2 Declaration of Interests**

Roderick Watkins noted a declaration of interest in Item 13, HE Report–One-Year Plan.

**3 Minutes of the previous meeting – 28 April 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2021 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.

*Laura Holland joined the meeting at 8.31 am*

**5 Mathematics & English**

The Head of Faculty reported that all staff had now returned to site and appeared to be happy and ready to face the current challenges and changes. GCSE teaching had now

ended for the year and staff were focusing on functional skills, where learners were expected to sit exams to complete their respective courses. Functional Skills lessons were now taking the form of revision classes and exam preparation. Learners were being reviewed on an individual basis. Over 800 examinations had been booked and there was much communication between learners, parents, teachers and programme managers. The results for Functional Skills would not be published this year and were expected to be lower than would have been desired. It was considered that some learners entered for exams were not as yet fully prepared for them.

For the teacher assessed grades, the work required had progressed well to date: from an action plan of 14 stages the College was now at stage 11. Evidence of learners' work had been gathered, marked and verified. Further data analysis would now be undertaken in order to make comparisons for exam boards. The Head of Faculty assured the Committee that there would be no grade inflation. English results were expected to be lower than the previous year. Maths results were currently 10% up although this was expected to reduce following a further review.

The Chair thanked the Head of Faculty and her team for their efforts.

The Principal gave his thanks also to the team. The Principal asked about the Functional Skills learners who were not currently fully prepared for their exams and why Functional Skills learners seemed to have struggled more than GCSE learners during the year. The Head of Faculty explained that the majority of concerns were within Maths. Where learners would be continuing their studies in 2021/22 they would be encouraged to take their exam(s) next year, if not fully prepared at the current time. For those whose studies would end in the current year, they would be asked to consider returning on an adult course in 2021/22 just to complete their Maths and/or English. With regard to the challenges faced by learners during the year, the Head of Faculty noted the disruptions caused by the lockdown; the early assumptions that gradings would be based on assessment and then the very late notification that exams would need to be taken after all.

Governors asked about the impact of those who failed their exams. The Head of Faculty said that teaching staff would support learners individually and offer guidance and possible options for continued study in 2021/22, noting that on-line lessons for adults would continue in many areas in the next academic year, which could be a solution for those who were leaving the College this summer. For the College, staff would be disappointed to see any learner fail their course. Funding would not be affected by the results of the exams.

Scott Leadley, Staff Governor, commented that there had been very good communications from the Functional Skills team which had been welcomed by the curriculum staff.

**The report was noted.**

## **6 ESOL**

The Head of Faculty reported that much had been done to support the ESOL team and move forward. Some resistance was still being noticed. A staff meeting was planned for 14 June 2021 to provide support to staff and to discuss expectations. Pass rates were considered to be good, although retention was generally ignored by staff. Expansion plans of the subject area to 16-18 year olds and within communities continued. Meetings had taken place with companies looking at the provision of on-site teaching using the mobile teaching unit (van). Around 150 learners could make use of this service. One company had also begun discussions into setting up apprenticeship opportunities for its staff with the College.

Governors commented positively on the mobile teaching unit, noting that it provided a gateway for the College to reach the community. Governors asked the Head of Faculty to consider the exact geographical locations the unit would be operating in and to ensure

contact was made with all major employers, particularly those in the Fenland area and where, perhaps, funding could be accessed from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority. The Principal added that the College already had a number of contacts with Fenland businesses through its links with apprenticeships and work-based learning, although the provision of ESOL as an additional service would need to be promoted.

**The report was noted.**

*Laura Holland left the meeting at 9.04 am*

*Jane Phillips joined the meeting at 9.04 am*

## **7 Apprenticeships**

The Chair welcomed Jane Phillips to the meeting, who was covering the Apprenticeships report in the absence of Vicky Mann.

An updated on the report was provided, noting that overall achievement rates currently stood at 52% and timely achievement rates at 37%, both slightly higher than was detailed in the report. The report noted that a member of staff responsible for overseeing end point assessment processes would be leaving the College; in the update provided this employee had now left and this area was currently considered to be at risk.

The Chair commented on the fluctuating timely achievement rate and was concerned about resources for supporting end point assessments. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality noted the staffing pressures caused by the member of staff who had recently left the College. Further, additional work had been caused for all staff during the change from 'frameworks' to 'standards.' Additional help would be welcomed from the Exams Department, but they themselves were already working under pressure at the current time. Jane Phillips advised that a commercial trainer was assisting on a temporary basis. The Vice Principal noted the need to have the assessment carried out at the correct time for the learner.

The Principal commented on the circa 100 outstanding end point assessments and asked what the expected achievement rate was likely to be by the end of the year. Jane Phillips noted the 61% final achievement rate currently reported and would liaise with Vicky Mann to provide an up-to-date figure in due course. **ACTION-Head of Apprenticeships & WBL**

The Chair asked about the use of 'Cognassist,' as detailed in the report. The Vice Principal advised that this was a software package used to identify the different learning needs of each individual. This software, reviewed at other colleges, was now being implemented at CWA. Jane Phillips added that the software would be used on the 76 new apprentices commencing between January 2021 and May 2021.

The Chair asked about the support being offered to those apprentices who had been affected by periods of, or continued furlough, during the pandemic. Jane Phillips advised that this continued to be challenging for staff and apprentices. A flexible, individual approach was being taken for all apprentices, some of whom had still not returned to work. Where possible, on-line teaching and practical classes were being arranged.

**The report was noted.**

*Steve Lowery joined the meeting at 9.17 am*

## **8 Technology Faculty Update**

The Head of Faculty highlighted from his report the increase in the learners at Level 1 who were looking to progress to Level 2 in 2021/22; at the King's Lynn campus this proportion currently stood at 85% and indicated the success of the changes made during the academic

year, despite some behavioural issues which continued to be a challenge to resolve. Conversations between teaching staff were stronger now and there was good use of IT across the teaching areas. Two-thirds of the staff had noted their concerns with the use of on-line delivery.

The report noted 17 plumbing apprentices who were overdue. The faculty was working closely with the work-based assessors to progress all apprentices. Recent confirmation had been received from City & Guilds that 5 apprentices could now be certified. In Brickwork, the report noted 3 apprentices booked for assessment in July; this had in fact taken place the previous week. 4 apprentices in Brickwork remained for assessment, to be carried out over the next few weeks. In Carpentry, it was anticipated that all outstanding NVQs would be up to date by the start of the 2021/22 academic year. The Head of Faculty noted that, generally, outstanding City & Guilds reports continued to cause delays for the faculty.

Looking ahead, it was anticipated that a former agricultural shed would be converted into an additional workshop resource, ready for September. The recent area performance reviews showed much improvement. Leadership & Management had been graded at '2'; unfortunately, Apprenticeships had been graded at '3.'

Governors noted the current performance data detailed in the Annex 1 and Annex 2 and asked for the previous year's data to be included in future reports to allow comparison.

#### **ACTION-HoF Technology**

The Head of Faculty advised that he considered overall retention to be around 5% higher than the previous year. Attendance was considered to be lower due to reduced engagement and the start of on-line delivery during the year.

The Chair asked about the successes for the faculty during the year. The Head of Faculty was pleased with the different approaches noted for Level 1's, leading to good progression to Level 2 next year.

The Head of Faculty noted his continuing challenges in relation to staffing: a new cohort of learners had been expected to commence that week, but this had been postponed due to the failure of an expected new member of staff commencing.

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality noted her own concerns with staff recruitment and the impact this had on the faculty. The Vice Principal was pleased with the increased retention numbers from Level 1 to Level 2 and the high numbers of applications for construction.

The Principal advised that in the proposed strategic targets for 2021/22 to be reviewed by the Board at its next meeting, a new post had been included within the HR department to assist in the improvement of staff recruitment.

**The report was noted.**

*Jane Phillips and Steve Lowery left the meeting at 9.32 am*

## **9 HE Report – One Year Plan**

The Chair moved the meeting to Item 13 on the agenda: HR Report – One Year Plan.

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that the report had been updated with the Committee's proposals from the previous meeting (28 April 2021) and now focused on a one-year plan for HE; the ambition for HE would be developed in coming months for future years.

A thorough review had taken place of the curriculum offer with good conversations regarding T Levels and the destinations for learners; further meetings would continue to be held. The Vice Principal was comfortable with the proposed plan and the timings available to develop the next plan.

Governors suggested that the plan should reference the findings of the Augar Review (2019) and the likely reduction of the course fee to £7,500, this being a key strategic driver. The Vice Principal would update this in the plan to be approved by the Board at its next meeting.

**ACTION-VPCQ**

Governors commented that in the conclusion of the report, item iv regarding the development of vet nursing programmes was ambitious and would need to be developed over a longer time period. Governors considered that there was much work to be done in the development of the continued HE strategy and that milestones perhaps ought to be considered to help in the mapping out of the various activities.

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

## **10 Learning & Curriculum Report**

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality reported that work continued to progress in advance of the launch of the 3 T Level courses from September 2021. Monthly updates had continued to be prepared for the ESFA regarding plans. A good number of applications had been received for the courses with the exception of Science, Laboratory Science, where 12 learners had been planned for, but the course would still run if it had a minimum of 10 learners. Future courses for T levels were now being considered in Business Administration in 2022/23 and Animal Care from 2023/24. The Government was publicising its plan to withdraw funding for extended diplomas, but delays were expected with this being actioned.

Drop-ins and observations of teaching and learning continued to take place and more curriculum managers had now returned to on-site working to facilitate this. Staff were responding well to the comments being made and were happy to share what they had learned, particular by using training videos. A teacher training conference had been planned for the end of the summer term. It was noted that some staff were needing to be re-invigorated and re-motivated.

The Principal reported positively that for 2021/22 applications for 16-18 year olds were currently 13% up on the same period last year, which was far higher than the expected demographic increase. Dog Grooming and Animal Care, newly introduced at the Wisbech Campus, had received circa 80 applicants. The Principal added that good work had been undertaken by the Vice Principal and the Assistant Principal Funding & Performance on curriculum planning and understanding the particular local needs.

Governors were pleased to note the increased number of applications being received, particularly at Wisbech. Staff retention was noted as a concern, and the need to ensure good quality managers were in place to lead, develop and motivate staff. The developments for T Levels were noted and asked if Animal Care could not be introduced earlier than 2023/24; the Vice Principal explained that the current roll out programme for T Levels only allowed for Animal Care commencing from September 2023.

Scott Leadley, Staff Governor, reported that staff within the Sports, Leisure and Uniformed Services area had been challenged in condensing their work requirements over recent months. Staff were motivated on their return to on-campus teaching but now faced the difficulties of completing assessments. The Principal highlighted the problems being faced by teachers nationally and noted the recent resignation of Sir Kevan Collins, Education Recovery Commissioner, over the issue of Covid catch-up funding.

The Vice Principal reported that the Learning Practice had been updating its review of curriculum areas to identify those which needed attention.

**The report was noted.**

*Roderick Watkins left the meeting at 9.56 am*

#### **11 Current Performance Data and KPIs 2020/21**

The Vice Principal advised that the review dates at set times throughout the year was a good way for the progress of learners to be monitored. The Assistant Principal Funding & Performance along with Heads of Faculties were using the student portal to RAG rate learners' performance, enabling course directors to monitor progress and take action where needed with individuals during tutorials; this would move to a 20-day update.

Course Director Performance Reports had been completed with the quality of the reports and progress made improving.

Overall achievement rates were expected to dip for 2020/21 for 16-18 year olds, Adults and Functional Skills learners; however, individuals were being fully supported as they planned their next steps in terms of continued learning or moving into the workplace.

**The report was noted.**

#### **12 Quality Improvement Plan 2020/21**

The Vice Principal advised that the report had been updated since it was last presented to the Board at its meeting on 19 May 2021. There were no questions or concerns raised.

**The report was noted.**

#### **13 Quality Framework 2021/22**

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality considered that current processes, such as Support to Improve had worked well across the College, although in some cases the process has taken time, and were beneficial and necessary to support all those involved. The Vice Principal advised that in order to ensure thorough reviews were undertaken an external consultant would be engaged to support the review process. Further, the newly appointed Head of Learning Improvement, Ria Steventon, would be commencing on 21 June 2021. It was envisaged that the areas would be fully reviewed on a biennial process.

On the "Quality Cycle for Course Teams 2021/22" schedule it was noted that there was a typographical error under December: "ADPRs to be completed" should read "APRs to be completed."

**ACTION-VPCQ**

The Chair noted her agreement with the proposals within the framework, adding that it was necessary to regularly review the process to ensure it remained relevant. The Chair agreed with the suggestion to include external consultants in the process to provide independent feedback.

**The Committee agreed to recommend the Quality Framework 2021/22 to the Board for approval.**

#### **14 Applewood Nursery Update**

The Vice Principal reported that College managers continued to monitor the performance and activities within the nursery. Senior management had confidence in the work and

approach of the nursery manager which had helped to create a good atmosphere within the facility. Staff were working well and had benefited from the input and guidance received from external consultants. Staff were currently undertaking various on-line training modules.

There was a concern that the Ofsted inspection may occur during the summer holiday period, resulting in some staff being on annual leave.

There were no questions or comments raised on this report.

**The report was noted.**

*Clare Pelling joined the meeting at 10.17 am*

## **15 Equality & Diversity Objectives 2020/21 - 6 Monthly Review**

The Learning Experience Manager advised that she had recently been appointed to the post and had begun to review the activities of the EDI Committee. Various events were being organised regarding EDI for students to engage in, such as the recent Stephen Lawrence Day. The Learning Experience Manager had reviewed the current EDI policy and had updated it in draft form with appropriate changes for this Committee's review. The Principal confirmed that he felt the proposed changes to the policy were sensible and appropriate.

The Chair asked the Learning Experience Manager what she would like to cover within the first 12 months of overseeing EDI. The Learning Experience Manager noted the need to increase EDI awareness among staff, using the EDI Committee where appropriate to share information and details of the organised activities.

**The Committee agreed to recommend the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy to the Board for approval.**

*Clare Pelling left the meeting at 10.22 am*

## **16 Strategic Targets 2020/21 Progress Review**

The Clerk advised that the latest updates to the strategic targets were reviewed by the Board at its meeting on 19 May 2021. There were no questions or concerns raised.

**The report was noted.**

## **17 Any Other Business**

There were no items of other business.

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

- Across the various reports reviewed by the Committee it was noted that there was good support being offered individually to students by staff. Staff were working hard in helping their students complete their courses this year. The current circumstances remained challenging but the focus on teaching and progress continued.
- The Committee was realistic in noting that achievements rates would be down this year.
- A regular report was received regarding Apprenticeships. The Committee was concerned about the level of overdue apprenticeships and although funding would not be affected (merely moved to next year), the impact on the individual apprentices and their employers was a concern. The Committee would continue to monitor this.

**19 Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday, 22 September 2021 at 8.30 am.

**The meeting closed at 10.31 am**