

**WALSALL COLLEGE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING & QUALITY COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 1630 HRS
VENUE: A339 (BOARDROOM, WISEMORE CAMPUS)**

Attendance Present: **Attendees**
Paul Averis - Chair
Heather Lodge
Rani Sahota

Together with: **Jat Sharma - Principal and Chief Executive**
David Turner - Assistant Principal Quality and HE
Richard Brennan - Assistant Principal Curriculum
James Norris - Assistant Principal Commercial Development
Victoria Lynn-Robinson (Item 25.23) - HE Development Manager
Rachael Smith (Item 27.23) – Director of Faculty, Apprenticeships and Workbased Learning
Sarah Cattell (Item 28.23) - Workforce Development Manager
Alison Buick - Head of Governance

Apologies: **Mary Mahoney**

Absent, No Apologies: **Sam Jarvis**

Item	Subject	Who
19.23	CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. The efforts of the staff in producing a comprehensive set of papers were noted.	
20.23	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Mary Mahoney.	
21.23	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no additional declarations made.	
22.23	MINUTES The minutes of the meetings held on 28 September and 12 December 2022, having been circulated, were taken as read and approved.	
23.23	MATTERS ARISING Governors reviewed the Action Points Record for Learning and Quality Committee and noted the following: <u>Item 30.22</u> The update on Careers had been scheduled for the committee meeting in June 2023. <u>Item 34.22</u> Middle managers and Faculty Directors had been invited to this meeting. <u>Item 36.22</u> A 'speed dating event' for Governors had been added to the rolling list of potential Governor training topics.	

Item	Subject	Who
	<p><u>Item 09.23</u> A meeting had taken place with Mary Mahoney as agreed.</p>	
	<p><u>Item 10.23</u> The OfS plan had been agreed and there had been no need for an appeal.</p>	
	<p><u>Item 12.23</u> An HE report was on the agenda for later in the meeting.</p>	
	<p><u>Item 17.23.1</u> New Maths and English data was on the agenda and would be updated as required for future meetings.</p>	
	<p><u>Item 17.23.2</u> Consideration had been given to the purchase of a system to run online parents' evenings, but no current products were able to manage the scale of the college numbers. It had therefore been decided to develop the college Moodle system. A demonstration of this would be brought to the next meeting. A Governor noted her experience of parents' evening at another college, where staff had arranged their own appointments and held the meetings on Teams.</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Curriculum</p>
24.23	<p>DATA REPORT The Assistant Principal Quality and HE commented on his report which contained key data on retention, KPIs and other areas. It was important for Governors to have a view of current performance and the following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall vocational retention was 96.9% at the time of writing the report but was now 95.8%. Despite the drop, this was still above target and stronger than last year; • HE retention was 91%, compare to more usual figures of 96-97%; • High Needs retention was 95.9%; • Attendance was 81.4% overall. Faculty level and apprenticeship attendance was explained. This was discussed weekly at SMT meetings; • Work continued to encourage students to add their reflections to their profiles, including for work experience <p>Governors asked about lower levels of retention for adults on Level 4 courses. The Assistant Principal confirmed that these were professional courses with low student numbers. Attendance and cost of living challenges were being seen across the adult cohorts. Low numbers made percentage changes greater. The Assistant Principal Curriculum added that he was aware of issues on a specific course and that he was supporting staff to deal with them.</p> <p>The Chair noted that college-based retention was back to pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>There was a discussion about attendance recording, which continued to be a hard measure of whether a student was in or out of college. Staff regularly challenged students on attendance and punctuality. Improvements had been made since Covid. Support was provided where needed.</p> <p>Governors considered the ways in which students were expected to reflect on their learning. Completed reflections had increased but not to the level expected. They were not always viewed as a core requirement, so work was needed to embed practice further and make expectations clearer at induction.</p>	

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	<p>This was also the case with apprenticeship provision. Staff would be challenged on this in the next round of Quality Summits.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Data Report.</p>	
25.23	<p>HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT</p> <p>The report was presented by the HE Development Manager, and gave an update on key aspects of the provision. Particular attention was drawn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approval of the OfS Access and Participation Plan. It had been confirmed that this did not need to be updated in this year. A useful meeting had been held with Mary Mahoney and a number of areas had been discussed; • EDI data for HE students; • Capital funding that had been awarded for development of new Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) from September 2024. These would be in Engineering and Business Admin. The college currently offered Digital and Construction. The HTQs would offer a re-branding of existing Pearson qualifications; • Partnership activities in January with the University of Wolverhampton. Teacher training would be moved to Wolverhampton from BCU, after BCU had received a poor Ofsted rating. <p>Questions and comments were invited.</p> <p>Reasons for the changes to teacher education were noted. Staff confirmed that the students were being well supported and that there were no risks to their learning.</p> <p>The Chair asked whether the extra funding for HTQs would increase numbers. UCAS numbers for September 2023 were not yet known as the deadline for applications had only recently passed. Confirmed numbers were expected by Easter.</p> <p>The Chair asked about expected outcomes for the current academic year. The HE Development Manager was confident that there were no quality or achievement concerns for this year. Student engagement was good, survey feedback was positive and reps attended meetings regularly.</p> <p>There was a discussion about HE recruitment. An awareness event for HTQs was being planned. The HE Strategy needed to be updated. This was a piece of work that would come back to committee in due course and need Corporation approval. It formed part of a wider review of adult provision and was linked to curriculum planning.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Higher Education Report.</p>	
26.23	<p>CURRICULUM REPORT</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Curriculum outlined the highlights of his report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government continued to push <u>T Levels</u> as an alternative to A Levels. Walsall's provision in this area was strong, had excellent results and was growing. Finding a sufficient number of meaningful placements was a challenge, however DfE had recently announced some changes to the requirements; 	

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- The current T Level offer, enrolments for 2022/23 and planned new areas were all noted. It was expected that Ofsted would return to do a further T level review during this term.

The Chair asked whether DfE changes were being made due to college feedback. Staff felt that this was more to do with feedback from employers and the need to ensure that T Level take up was high. Some employers had limited capacity to offer placements so this was a concern.

The Chair asked whether the likelihood of a General Election within the next academic year may change policy, but staff thought not.

- The current A Level offer was noted. The design of the curriculum aligned strongly to the DfE's latest guidance on Level 3 qualification reform, which included Small Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) (for example, a Level 3 qualification in Criminology, equivalent to one A Level) and Large Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) (for example, an Extended Diploma in Performing Arts, equivalent to three A Levels). Planned changes at Walsall were also noted, as set out in the written report. These would change the character of the vocational offer.

The Chair noted the considerable changes planned but that the college was well prepared for this. The Assistant Principal planned to further discuss this with staff at the summer term curriculum conference.

A Governor asked what HE institutions view of the changing qualifications was. Many were familiar with the wide range of qualifications that could lead into HE, but others were less aware. The college needed to ensure that the qualifications had value and were accepted as entry requirements for HE. It was agreed that some HE institutions were less well informed than others, and this was a challenge.

- The National Tutor Fund usage was going well in the year to date. It was expected that all funds would be used;
- Work was continuing to review the adult offer. In year performance for attendance and achievement was variable, but staff were reviewing and providing support where needed;
- In Maths and English, GCSE entries had been reviewed and streamlined. Results from November's re-sits had been good. A second set of assessments had recently been carried out and further mock exams were planned for April. There was some staff absence in Maths. Attendance was higher than last year.

The Chair asked about quality. The Head of Personal Development confirmed that standardisation was taking place with the Maths team. A new Maths expert was to be recruited to offer coaching and mentoring to Maths teachers. Their role was explained. It was agreed that an external view would be helpful.

Maths results were discussed and it was agreed that these would be provided to the Chair.

The Chair asked about interventions in place and planned. National Tutor Funding was being used to support this area. Curriculum Managers were

Assistant
Principal
Curriculum

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	<p>making decisions on student needs. The Committee wished to be assured that impact would be seen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Deep Dive</u> information was noted. Reports were provided for the year to date • Areas in scope for <u>Course Monitoring meetings</u> were explained. Processes were ongoing. <p>The Chair asked about the impact of Deep Dives. The Assistant Principal Curriculum was reviewing agreed actions with the Curriculum Development Managers.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chair, Assistant Principal Curriculum and Head of Personal Development would have a catch-up meeting in the second half of the Spring term.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Curriculum Report.</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Curriculum</p>
27.23	<p>APPRENTICESHIPS AND WORKBASED REPORT</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Commercial Development and Director of Apprenticeships and Workbased Learning presented their report, which covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final apprenticeship achievement close down position for last academic year following the R14 close.; • An update on the in-year position for apprenticeship and Employment Gateway retention measured as best-case achievement. • An update on sub-contractor quality performance to date. • An update on the College plans against the new Ofsted judgment to meet skills needs and the new Duty to Review skills now required by Governing Bodies as part of the Skill and Post-16 Education Act 2022. <p>Governors noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2021/22 outturn had been presented at November Corporation and was positive compared to the national picture; • The forecast outturn for 2022/23 was 76.3% currently. There was greater confidence in data accuracy this year; • Apprenticeship achievement continued to be high; • The return rate for learner voice surveys was fairly low but responses were very positive; • The number of learners out of funding had reduced. The college took a harder measure on this than the ESFA; • Final outturn for Employment Gateway was explained. Feedback on this was consistently high; • The college had held a range of events in the previous week to support National Apprenticeships Week. • The recent Apprenticeships conference in college had been well attended. <p>Questions and comments were invited.</p> <p>The Chair asked what challenges were being seen now in the area. The Faculty Director commented on changes to the curriculum and plans for next year. Some areas recruited better than others so there was ongoing review as part of</p>	

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	<p>the curriculum planning. Provision at Level 3 and above was more attractive to employers. There was potential for growth in STEAM areas. There were still some staffing gaps in areas, so growth was being restricted by this in some cases. Two new managers were being recruited to support the Faculty Director.</p> <p>The Principal commented that the context for delivering apprenticeships remained challenging. Nationally, the numbers and quality were declining.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Commercial Development confirmed that there were no concerns about subcontractor delivery and there were no approvals required at this meeting.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Commercial Development commented on the new Ofsted judgement on Meeting Skills Needs. This was now a specific focus within Ofsted inspections. Governors had received a presentation on the requirements, including the Governors' duty to review the needs, at the training session earlier in the month. An initial draft report would be presented at the March Corporation, with the final for approval to the May Corporation. A cycle of activities had been agreed. The role of this committee was to review the judgements relating to curriculum areas.</p> <p>Governors noted that the process proposed by the college appeared to be robust. Charlotte Bosworth and Julie Haywood would be link governors for this.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Apprenticeships and Workbased Report.</p>	
28.23	<p>QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Quality and HE presented his report, with input from the Head of Personal Development and the Workforce Development Manager. Governors noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current SAR grades for each curriculum area. It was expected that the term two round of Quality Summits would see improvements in lower graded areas; • Personal Development was still graded as Requires Improvement, as several areas needed more development and embedding. Work experience had improved but the level and quality of recorded student reflections was weak in some areas. Some tutorial topics were being mandated; <p>There was a discussion about how tutorial topics were delivered. It was clear that tutors were more comfortable with some topics than others, which suggested a training need. Engaging students in some topics could be difficult. Some students did not retain information on key topics. Developing longer term memory was an area to be worked on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Development activities for staff were included at every Workforce Development day. Staff were asked to showcase the activities that they felt went well, to share good practice with colleagues; • The Click Associates report had been received, following their recent work in college. The report was largely positive. It had confirmed that teaching and learning had improved significantly and that the SAR was 	

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	<p>accurate. The report would be used to plan further improvements in the next year. Ofsted were expected in the next 12 to 18 months;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were some staffing gaps within the team, and this was creating capacity challenges; • Fitness to study processes were being sharpened up. <p>Governors resolved to receive the Quality Assurance Report</p>	
29.23	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING Wednesday 28 June 2023 at 1630 hrs.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 1850 hrs.</p>	

Item	How governors challenged management
24.23	Questioned lower levels of retention for adults on Level 4 courses.
25.23	Asked about expected HE outcomes for the year.
26.23	Asked about quality assurance processes in Maths and English.
26.23	Asked about planned interventions in Maths

Item	Impact of meeting on college