

**WALSALL COLLEGE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING & QUALITY COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 1630 HRS
VENUE: A339 (BOARDROOM, WISEMORE CAMPUS)**

Attendance Present: **Attendees**
Paul Averis - Chair
Mary Mahoney
Sam Jarvis
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
Rachael Smith (Item 08.23) - Director of Apprenticeships and Workbased Learning
Victoria Lynn-Robinson (Item 10.23) - HE Development Manager
Alison Buick - Head of Governance

Apologies: **None.**

Item	Subject	Who
01.23	<p>CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A particular welcome was extended to Sam Jarvis, new Student Union President and Governor, attending his first meeting.</p> <p>Introductions were made to all.</p>	
02.23	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>None.</p>	
03.23	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no additional declarations made. The Chair reminded Governors that he was Principal of a secondary school in Birmingham.</p> <p>Mary Mahoney noted that she was no longer an employee at the University of Wolverhampton.</p>	
04.23	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2022, having been circulated, were taken as read and approved. The use of the challenge and impact table at the end was discussed.</p> <p>The Chair asked management to provide an update on the areas recorded in the challenge and impact section of the minutes.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Quality and HE noted the changes that had been made following the discussion on careers. There would be an update to the committee later in the year as agreed.</p>	

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	<p>The Assistant Principal Curriculum outlined the work to date to look at professional standards and staff competencies.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Commercial Development commented that work-based learning would be covered in his report later in the agenda.</p>	
05.23	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>Governors reviewed the Action Points Record for Learning and Quality Committee and noted the following:</p> <p><u>Item 30.22</u> The update on Careers had been scheduled for the committee meeting in June 2023.</p> <p><u>Item 32.22</u> The Curriculum Strategy would be covered in the Curriculum report later in the agenda.</p> <p><u>Item 34.22</u> Middle managers and Faculty Directors would invited to meetings later in the year.</p> <p><u>Item 36.22</u> A 'speed dating event' for Governors was being considered.</p>	
06.23	<p>DATA REPORT</p> <p>The Chair thanked staff for the updates that Governors had received since the last meeting. They had been helpful.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>It was too early to present the final results for 2021/22 as there was still data to be processed and added to the system for vocational students and apprentices.</p> <p>Overall vocational achievement excluding Maths and English was currently 85.7% (91.1% in 2018/19, the last year in which there was full assessed data).</p> <p>The emerging picture was stronger for adults at 91.5%, with 16-18 at 78.4%.</p> <p>The fall in achievement was a concern but followed a fall in retention, so was not necessarily an issue with quality of teaching and learning.</p> <p>The GCSE high grades data was noted. For English, grades were 1% higher than in 2018/19 but not as high as the college target. The percentage was considerably higher for adults than 16-18. For Maths, the high grades were considerably lower than in 2018/19 and below the national average for FE colleges this year. Adults had performed better in Maths as well, but at a lower level than in 2018/19.</p> <p>Apprenticeship data continued to be processed but achievement was currently below target.</p>	

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	<p>HE achievement, at 87.5%, was very good.</p> <p>Governors noted the RAG rated KPIs set out in the report coversheet. An update to this would be taken to Corporation in October.</p> <p>T Level results were excellent, with 92.6% achievement.</p> <p>The Chair asked how the vocational results compared to other organisations. The Assistant Principal Curriculum responded that recruitment for the last two years had been challenging. Students came to college with TAG and CAG grades that did not necessarily accurately reflect their ability. The impact of Covid on teaching and learning continued to be felt.</p> <p>There was a lengthy discussion about GCSE results. The Chair observed that the college was teaching both higher and lower ability students, as there were some that had grade 4 but wished to improve to allow their progression to higher level study, and some that had failed to achieve grade 4. There were therefore very mixed ability levels.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Curriculum agreed. There had been 223 students entered for GCSE English that already had a grade 4 but wished to improve or had a grade so low that they were unlikely to achieve a 4, and therefore should not have been entered. Some students that had been entered for exams did not actually sit them.</p> <p>The way in which GCSE Maths and English had been taught in 2021/22 was discussed. There had been a decision to devolve this into curriculum areas rather than have a central Maths and English team. This had been done to try to improve attendance, which had been noted as a weakness in the last Ofsted report.</p> <p>The impact of the curriculum delivery model was discussed. Whilst having high expectations and encouraging GCSE entries was positive, it had reduced the ability to demonstrate high grades. Distance travelled by many students was good.</p> <p>It was agreed that the overall strategy for Maths and English exam entries needed more work. Monitoring points in year were now in place. Streaming was now in place for ability. Staff were confident that the devolved teaching model was right but that some changes to deciding courses and exam entries for students were needed.</p> <p>It was noted that the devolved model had not been popular with all staff. Class sizes and groupings had been a concern for some. The Staff and Student Governors both reflected on their experiences of this.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Data Report.</p>	
07.23	<p>CURRICULUM REPORT</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Curriculum outlined the highlights of his report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T Level results had been excellent. There had been a national issue with results for the T Level in Health, and it was thought that this had suppressed new enrolments due to some reputational damage; 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all of the T Levels offered had sufficient recruitment, so were not running this year. It seemed for some subjects where there was a T Level and another option, students were taking the other option; • There were new processes this year for meeting staff and tracking progress four times per year. <p>Governors asked about the accuracy of marking and assessment. The Assistant Principal Curriculum was bringing in new consultants for Maths and English to standardise and moderate.</p> <p>Governors felt reassured that despite the GCSE results not being at the level hoped for, management were taking actions to secure improvements. The report provided had been reflective and informative. It was agreed that there would be a further one-hour committee meeting in December to receive an update on in year progress.</p> <p><u>Post Meeting Note:</u> Meeting scheduled for Monday 12 December, 4.30pm on Teams.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Curriculum Report.</p>	
08.23	<p>APPRENTICESHIPS AND COMMERCIAL 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"> • Update on the quality of internally delivered apprenticeships and work-based learning; • Update on the Apprenticeship and Workbased Learning (WBL) review which had recently been undertaken and would result in a wider offer to employers; • Update on subcontractor activity to period 13 of 2021/22. <p>Governors noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An apprenticeships and work-based learning review had been taking place, to ensure that the needs of learners and employers were being met within the funding available and the priorities of WNCA; • 2021/22 achievements to date were 51%. There had been some delays to End Point Assessments (EPA) and the predicted outcome was 65% achievement. This was below target and reflected the ongoing impact of Covid, especially in the health sector. Grades being achieved by those who had completed EPA was excellent • 77% of staff had learning walks in 2021/22; • There had been a workforce development day in September and the areas covered were outlined; • The SAR and QIP process was noted; • There had been a functional skills deep dive in April. Actions had been identified and were being tracked. Impacts to date were noted; • The number of out of funded learners had decreased; • There had been a low response rate to the employer survey and some of the results were disappointing. The comments received had been reviewed; 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no concerns with subcontractor activity. There were no new providers and no new qualifications being delivered. All activity had been agreed with WMCA. <p>Questions and comments were invited.</p> <p>The Chair asked whether the current cost of living issues were affecting employer engagement with the college. The Assistant Principal confirmed that inflationary pressures had an impact. Cost pressures in some places had led to redundancies and early leavers (if students had secured better paid employment elsewhere). Reasons for leaving were captured in exit interviews where possible.</p> <p>There was a discussion about learning walks, which were now known as developmental observations, and how these were used.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Apprenticeships and Commercial Report.</p>	
09.23	<p>QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Quality and HE presented his report. Of particular note were the consistently high expectations staff had of students. The 'Ready, Respect, Safe' campaign had been re-launched for the start of term.</p> <p>Attendance was at 86.6%, which was significantly higher than in 2021/22.</p> <p>Staff focus was on ensuring that registers were being marked as there was a significant number of missing marks, despite guidance requiring tutors to mark within the first 15 minutes of a lesson.</p> <p>The Staff and Student Governors commented on register marking, practice for which seemed to vary. The Chair observed that register marking in schools was a legal requirement. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE stated that register marking expectations were being re-enforced.</p> <p>Maths and English attendance was 78.6%, which was higher than last year but lower than target.</p> <p>The new Head of Student Services was looking at attendance and a proposal was due to be taken to SMT. There had been clear impact from the work of Pastoral Support Officers.</p> <p>The Chair asked about the Quality Cycle documents. It was explained that they had been in place for several years, and that there were different versions for Young People, Adults and HE. They were used to keep track of assessment activities, deep dives, themed interventions, monitoring and reporting requirements. Staff were aware of these. Meetings were scheduled in year. Governors agreed that this was a useful tool for the journey back to outstanding. The Assistant Principal acknowledged that some of the meetings within the cycle had not had the impact necessary. Although teams were aware of the areas for improvement, the speed of delivery in some areas had been slow.</p> <p>Governors commented on the importance of the cycles to improving the experiences of students in college. The leadership role in cascading the</p>	

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	<p>messages down was key, particularly as many of the QIP actions were about putting things in place for action this year.</p> <p>The Principal confirmed that all staff and students were aware of attendance expectations though the 'All Managers' briefing. This was critical to achievement. The briefing allowed key messages to be shared in a consistent format every six weeks.</p> <p>Some specific comments were made about the HE Cycle and the need to track the Access and Participation Plan. It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged for the Assistant Principal Quality and HE, HE Development Manager and Mary Mahoney for further discussion.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the targets that the college had set within the Quality Cycles. Some were challenging to meet, especially due to the complexity of funding, assessment and auditing in some areas. It was agreed that this would be reviewed again in the February committee meeting.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Quality Assurance Report</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Quality and HE</p>
<p>10.22</p>	<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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement was at 87% and 90% of destinations were positive; • There were high levels of retention and satisfaction; • A current challenge was the ongoing issue with the Access and Participation Plan, which was still not approved. A Task and Finish group had been set up to look at this and the achievement of objectives within the plan. It was expected that even though approval was needed for this year, a further update would be needed for next year. The current aims and objectives were noted, as set out in the written report; • An HE Deep Dive was in progress and would conclude in December. The outcome would be reported to a future meeting; • A new Task and Finish group had been set up to oversee Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs). New HTQs were planned in nursing, construction and digital; • The HE growth matrix was explained. <p>Questions and comments were invited.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the approval of the Access and Participation plan, which had been expected by 19 September. It was unclear what the current delay was. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE re-capped previous issues with changes to data sets and confirmed that the college had submitted plans and revised plans in line with OfS deadlines. It was suggested that the college submit an appeal due to the delay and this was agreed.</p> <p>The Chair asked whether the last two years of Covid disruption to sixth form students had affected applications to HTQs. The HE Development Manager thought not as numbers remained similar and the cohorts recruited were largely students progressing from within college or adults returning to education.</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Quality and HE</p>

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	<p>The college was continuing with its ‘Stay Local to Go Further’ campaign.</p> <p>Retention was good and group sizes were small. Although the college could not compete with universities on facilities, resources and accommodation, there was better access to staff and course support.</p> <p>The Student Governor asked about funding for HE students with support needs. It was explained that the funding for support was different for HE students compared to FE students, but that support needs were discussed if flagged at application and interview stage for HE students.</p> <p>Some questions were asked about courses no longer running. This was largely due to application numbers being small and therefore courses not being viable.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Higher Education Report.</p>	
11.23	<p>ANNUAL SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS</p> <p>Governors were asked to note the number and nature of complaints in 2021/22, as well as the trends identified. There had been 27 formal and 49 informal complaints in year, which was an increase on the previous year.</p> <p>The Quality team had reviewed and categorised types of complaint, the details of which were in the written report. If there was a particular trend in an area, this was discussed in course monitoring meetings.</p> <p>The Chair asked about Governor involvement in complaints procedures and it was confirmed that, unlike in schools, the procedure did not allow for any Governor involvement at any stage.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Annual Summary of Complaints Report.</p>	
12.23	<p>COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2022/23</p> <p>The workplan had been provided with the written papers. It would be used as the basis for agenda setting in year but was flexible if changes were needed. As usual, Governors were reminded that they could request agenda items.</p> <p>It was suggested that an HE report be added to the February agenda.</p> <p>Governors resolved to note the Committee workplan.</p>	Head of Governance
13.23	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Wednesday 15 February 2023 at 1630 hrs.</p> <p>An additional meeting would be scheduled to review Maths and English as discussed earlier.</p> <p><u>Post Meeting Note</u> – additional meeting to be held on Teams on Monday 12 December at 1630 hrs</p> <p>The meeting ended at 1910 hrs.</p>	

Item	How governors challenged management
06.23	Asked how vocational results compared to those of other colleges.
06.23	Suggested that the overall strategy for Maths and English exam entries be reviewed.

Item	Impact of meeting on college