

Minutes of Curriculum and Quality Committee

Date: 13th March 2025

Time: 4.30 - 5.40 pm

Location: In College, S11

Present: Mrs S Hammett - Chair
Mr A Fitt
Mrs M Harris-Bridge

Mr B Jones
Mr A Scott - Principal
Mrs I Henson

In attendance: Mrs R Stratton - Deputy Principal

Miss F McIntyre - Clerk

Apologies: Ms S Garner

Mr M Stancheris

1 Apologies

Apologies received and accepted as above. Governors were informed that Mr M Brown has resigned as a governor due to time constraints.

2 Declarations of interest

No new declarations were received.

3 Minutes of the last meetings

Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st November 2024 were reviewed.

Q: 25% unknown for destination data - has there been any improvements?

A: Can be brought to the next meeting.

Action RS

Actions:

Employment - discussions on how to share - next meeting

7.5 - typos

10

4 Review of the College QIP

The review of the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) indicated positive progress. Attendance has increased by 4% compared to the same period last year, reflecting the effectiveness of ongoing initiatives.

Q: The reported retention figure is 83.4%. Is this different from previous data?

A: Data fluctuates and needs to be verified.

Action: RS to review.

4.1 Retention

A-Level retention encompasses two-year retention and includes students due to complete this summer. Last year's issues stemmed from first-year dropouts, which have not recurred this year.

Q: Do we have national comparative retention data?

A: Not for the current year, but last year's data will be provided in the next governor's report.

Action: RS

Q: Are Level 1 and Level 2 retention figures monitored?

A: Yes, overall retention data includes A-Level figures separately. These figures are monitored weekly at the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) level. A gender split analysis is available.

Retention rates are slightly above the same point last year, marking a positive trend.

4.2 Value added

Progress grades are monitored in December, followed by mock exams. This helps identify subject-specific interventions. However, due to multiple variables, governor reporting on value-added metrics is complex. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be reported after Easter.

Q: What is Value Added?

A: Students' GCSE scores generate expected aspirational grades. Progress is monitored throughout the year to ensure students remain on track. It helps indicate who is on track and who needs more support.

4.3 QIP Progress

Strong progress has been made, particularly in CPD. However, concerns remain regarding the equality objective, specifically the gender gap in achievement levels. A breakdown by level has been conducted, highlighting the need for additional engagement strategies.

Attendance and retention rates among female students remain areas of concern. National trends suggest boys tend to outperform girls at post-16. Strategies to support silent students or those with hidden disabilities were discussed.

Q: Is there a significant difference in male and female student numbers?

A: Not overall, though gender distribution varies across courses.

Q: Has CPD addressed female attendance specifically?

A: Yes, targeted CPD has been implemented to address this issue.

Q: Are similar trends observed in other colleges?

A: SFCA reports indicate this is a common trend.

Q: Any relevant feedback from the October qualitative survey?

A: Teaching teams have leveraged feedback to refine CPD and curriculum development. Key insights will be presented to governors in the summer term.

Q: Has anything been added to QIP in year?

A: No amendments have been made to the QIP this year. However, CPD priorities have evolved. Any new insights from QAR will be incorporated. Planned at start of year to what has been delivered has changed. If something came out of QAR would add to QIP.

Q: Attendance, would it be useful to set success criteria targets at each level?

A: Yes can include breakdown.

Q: Can see CPD on SEND, this is huge. How is this done, in one go and how to choose what to cover?

A: CPD has included podcasts and stored materials for staff to access as needed. Trauma-informed practices have been particularly beneficial. Resources are there for staff to drop in. It is also a response to staff need.

Q: Is there a system for teachers to report back concerns about a student?

A: Yes, a structured reporting mechanism exists.

5 Curriculum Development

Recent government changes have impacted the curriculum, though A-Level provision remains stable. No new A-Level courses are planned for September, though expanding the offer remains a priority.

Q: Are newer A-Level courses attracting strong enrollment?

A: Ancient History and Technology have good numbers; Dance has lower enrollment. Happy to start with smaller groups and let it build up.

Q: Is there an intention to expand Performing Arts?

A: Expansion aligns with student interest rather than competitor activity. Have a dance studio and a skilled team so it was straight forward.

5.1 Level 3 Vocational Courses

Adjustments have been made in response to applied general qualification changes. T Levels are being marketed, but triple business remains available. A vocational science course has been introduced for students seeking medical careers.

Q: What is the status of government reform for applied generals?

A: Some qualifications (e.g., Level 3 Childcare) have been defunded, while others are under review.

5.2 *Q: How are numbers on T levels?*

A: Childcare in second year. Started health is progressing well. A lot comes into play when health students go out for placements. Will start media, content and creation in September. Not had good recruitment so far. Marketing - confident with that. Starting law and the hardest one to be confident in. May be postponed for another year.

Level 2 - Adjustments are being made to business and IT, alongside an expanded applied science qualification. There remains a broad offer which is important to College. Reforming applied science to offer a larger qualification. This will allow students who want science pathways but don't have GCSE.

Adult learning changes are ongoing, particularly concerning Multiply contract closure and skills bootcamp expansion.

Q: Are there curriculum gaps based on regional needs?

A: Things that cannot be offered as do not have facilities such as restaurant for catering. There is a need for 16-18 ESOL (english second language) provision. Would like to take forward when can.

6 Report on College performance from external sources

The Department for Education (DfE) has introduced a new Further Education (FE) dashboard. It is expected to become a key external assessment tool.

Q: Why does Itchen appear to perform well except for progression metrics?

A: The methodology remains unclear. Students progressing from Level 1 may not always appear in expected progression figures.

Q: Can providers be selected for comparison?

A: Yes, selective comparisons with local colleges or sixth-form providers are possible.

Q: Is training available on the dashboard?

A: A webinar has been held.

Governors were advised to familiarise themselves with the new system. A training session may be arranged when appropriate.

7 AOB

Itchen governors are encouraged to respond to the Ofsted consultation. AF will collate responses on behalf of the Chair. Information to be shared with governors.

Action AF

Principal and RS asked for their views on changes:

Thread on inclusion throughout is important and positive. Worry about the importance of data. There are mixed messages on that. Inclusions and quality of education moves forward but data is very tangible. Some inspectors may get ahold of that and make more judgements.

It is complicated to look at and for parents there is more information but hard to understand and get to grips with.

Discussion on AI and which committee should be responsible for the use in College. Suggested for the start of next year as the curriculum team advanced and can see benefits and how it can save time. Further behind with support areas. Have time in summer and going to ask all staff to engage with it. After this report would be useful for governors.

Training and development session in Autumn term suggested for governors.

Q: Do staff use it for lessons planning?

A: Yes.

8 Meeting impact, action review and possible visits

Add agenda as an item so it can be printed. - MHB

Sarah H - internet issues

Questions and discussions

9 Date of next meeting – 19th June 2025

Meeting concluded at 540pm and was quorate at all times.