

**College of West Anglia
Minutes of the
Performance Review and Quality Committee
8 March 2023
8.30am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

Present	Sam Fletcher Chris Ashman Scott Leadley David Pomfret	Governor (Chair) Governor Governor Governor (Principal)
Attending	Kerry Heathcote Rob Petto Sarah Anstiss Laura Holland Sue Moore Ria Steventon Fliss Miller Jules Bridges	Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Assistant Principal Funding and Performance Head of Apprenticeships and WBL Head of Faculty – Maths, English, ESOL Head of Faculty – Technology Head of Learning Improvement Observer Head of Governance

No.		Action
1	Apologies Apologies for absence were received from Lee Smith.	
2	Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting – 30 November 2022 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.	
4	Matters Arising The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report. The completed items are to be removed from the table and the items to be carried forward will be resolved between the Chair and Head of Governance.	Chair/HoG
5	Priority Item 1 - Apprenticeships S Anstiss and F Miller joined the meeting at 8.36am Members of the committee had received and read the report ahead of the meeting, so the Chair invited questions from members. Members were content with the progress and impact made that was detailed in the report and commended the comprehensive update and risk register as particularly useful and informative. With regard to the student intake of numbers, a governor commented that it would be useful to have comparative data, i.e., at the same point last year for example so that the committee could gauge if current numbers were positive/negative (up or down) against the previous year intake. The Head of Apprenticeships and WBL commented that a further 60 students are planned that will bring the current intake up to the intake for the previous year. There are a lot of outcomes to come through which will impact this income line. The team are aware and making every effort to complete learners to achieve target. The Principal confirmed that the college's	

expectation is that this year's financial outturn will exceed last years but this is dependent on achievement which is backloaded. Furthermore, the Principal added that next year will be a challenge as we are slightly lower on programme numbers so more starts are needed in order to hit a level playing field in terms of funding.

With regard to the risk assessment, which was detailed and thorough, members noted that expressions in the end column mentioned 'establish', 'rebuild', 'clarity of roles' etc so governors' questioned what progress or mechanism were in place in terms of an action plan and how this was being implemented. The Head of Apprenticeships and WBL confirmed that this is underway, working closely with technology, particularly, transferring one of the apprenticeship advisor team across to support with in learning, to drive timely outcomes and shifting the focus of the team to look at the whole learner journey and ensuring timely reviews. It was agreed that an additional column would be added to the risk register for the progress to be added against these actions. The VPC&Q added that a fortnightly intense scrutiny of the risk register is conducted which hopefully would provide added reassurance to the board.

HoA&WBL

The Chair commented that the committee for some time had been looking for transparency and thanked the Head of Apprenticeships and WBL for providing this and clearly a significant amount of work has been undertaken, giving members the confidence that the current picture is visible enabling oversight of the improvement areas and how this provision can grow. The Chair mentioned the visit to Suffolk New College and asked how beneficial this was. The Head of Apprenticeships and WBL commented that this was valuable, and a great way to share ideas, benchmark and look at their systems and reassuringly exposed that they are sharing some of the same challenges.

It was noted that the report indicated that there is an employer engagement strategy to be established so the committee was keen to know the timescale for this. The Head of Apprenticeships and WBL confirmed that this was linked to the accountability framework so this will be completed over the next few months. The Chair asked if there was a particular area of focus that would be useful for the committee to scrutinise at future meetings. It was agreed that staffing across the learner journey would be the most important area of focus. There is a large staff team at the front end, albeit with high levels of sickness, but there needs to be further scrutiny across the learner journey. The VPC&Q signposted members to the business self-assessment reports and curriculum area performance reviews that now look at all of the seven stages of the learner journey, these appear in the appendices of item 10 of this meeting. In addition, the Quality Improvement Framework for apprenticeships now includes employer oversight so surveys will now be launched and a part of that is to gather employer input and oversight. This work nicely triangulates with all quality systems. The Chair commented that not only did the committee require transparency, but they also wanted the assurance that there was join up across all areas to ensure clarity and a united approach so there is anticipation that positive improvements will now be seen.

S Anstiss left the meeting at 8.49am and R Petto and L Holland joined the meeting

6 Priority Item 2 - Maths

The HoF reported high levels of staff absence impacting the delivery of maths since the October half term and student recruitment continues to be challenging. These issues are not unique to CWA, but it has affected the quality of provision, and the quality of teaching and learning and some sessions have had to be cancelled. The department currently has two vacancies for maths that cannot be filled, and adverts adjusted for relaunch this week.

With regard to the November results, maths results were 41% (national pass rate 25%). The AP1 results (first assessment point results) were really pleasing. The third assessment point (formalised mock exams) take place this week. Functional Skills outcomes are good but exam results for Functional Skills and GCSEs are predicted to be undoubtedly affected by the lack of cover and staffing issues. In terms of attendance the new strategy deployed in January 2023 hasn't been fully implemented due to the number of lessons cancelled so it will be relaunched again at Easter to gain better traction.

On a positive note, against the backdrop of the cost-of-living crisis, the recruitment target (93) for adult English and maths has been exceeded (134). The Multiply (3-year project based on improving numeracy in adult learners) course offer is strong and although take-up has been limited these continue to be marketed and promoted across the region.

For clarification the HoF confirmed that there are three course directors and all three posts have been filled. The gaps in recruitment remain to fill maths teacher vacancies. It was questioned if sickness absence in maths was higher than the average sickness for the college? The Principal commented that there is a pattern of higher sickness where there are higher staff vacancy rates as the two, go hand-in-hand which has a negative impact on our ability to deliver lessons, let alone high-level quality lessons so there is a definite correlation between vacancy rates and absence because of the pressure that it puts upon others. The root cause of the issue is lack of funding for the FE sector, so we are not competitive in pay, but we need to work collaboratively with partners to lobby government and look creatively to recruit and retain staff. The VPC&Q told the committee about the ETF upskilling/multi-skilling level 5 reskilling courses in Functional Skills and GCSE English and maths. There has been a positive uptake across college staff and the VPC&Q has enrolled on the maths GCSE course to see first hand what this looks like and how staff can teach maths effectively alongside other things that they do in college.

After receiving a question from a member, the HoF confirmed that the 90 GCSE entries (41% achieved grade 4+) in November was the total number of entries and the entries (103/29%) for AP1 (assessment point 1) did not include the 90 that sat their exams in November so the percentage at the year end that achieve grade 4+ is therefore predicted to be higher than the 29% at AP1. This does however come with the caveat that those 103 learners at AP1 were taught by a good calibre of staff that were attending and lessons were good quality with limited disruption, so assessment point 3 will give us a clearer indication; a dip in achievement is likely.

The Chair asked the Head of Governance to ensure that the recruitment and retention issues raised at this meeting are a focus area for the Employment Policy Committee.

HoG

S Moore joined the meeting at 9.00am

7 **Priority Item 3 - ESOL**

ESOL remains a priority area for the committee to keep under review. This is a small and complex department that requires improvement. The 8-point action plan remains in place to improve provision. A new curriculum structure has been implemented and is now split into 3 parts in order to improve retention rates. Cohorts therefore run from September to January, January to Easter, and then Easter to July. The impact of this change is yet to emerge in terms of retention, and this won't be evident until the end of the year. The team is working hard to change lessons and change the curriculum structure. Reading for example has been changed from September to January and the team now are looking at speaking and listening. The ESOL intake continues to be fluid as learners do come and go, due

to changes in their home countries and students leaving part way through their learning. With greater flexibility in curriculum structure learners have greater opportunity to return to learning and complete the three elements of the ESOL programme.

ESOL is involved in the Multiply offer and there are 10 courses running, 4 of which are for ESOL students. Uptake has been positive, and the most successful course is the 'Support for Refugee' course, delivered by a Ukraine teacher who supports refugees on issues such as currency, how to avoid scams, online banking, and all other things useful for Ukraine young people new to the country. This is the first Multiply course that was set up and is still going strong. This course is now moving from 4 sessions face to face at Kings Lynn to an additional 2 online to capture some students in Wisbech.

The project has created new relationships with external partners and the team hope to deliver two courses onsite at Access Migrant, the Ferry Project and Freebridge Housing Association soon. A pre-entry course is being delivered at King's Lynn and an additional 17 students have been transferred from another training provider in the Wisbech area for a course at that campus.

Finally, it was noted that a 0.5 Programme Manager for ESOL has been advertised. Interviews take place at the end of this week. The Principal added that this area has been in intervention for too long so recognising that whilst there is a financial challenge around viability for the post it is the right thing to do to kickstart the drive to strong performance as it has the potential to be much stronger than it has been.

A member of the committee commented that it was pleasing to see that attendance was now positive as this was an issue previously and other interventions are clearly turning ESOL provision into a much more positive set of programmes. The committee agreed with the split of the provision into 3 elements (as described above) as they felt this could work for this type of cohort. All of these interventions will no doubt have a positive impact on retention and attendance which is unique to this provision. It was questioned if this area still required the focus of the committee but as the quality of teaching and learning still requires improvement it was agreed that focus should continue so that the improvement that has been made can be shared with governors. The committee would like to see the impact of the Programme Manager role, the focus on improving the quality of teaching, seeing success impacting on practice and therefore providing the assurance and confidence that the ESOL provision is achieving improvement. The VPC&Q added that the Area Performance Review (APR) process will also help to heat map the areas that need to be added for improvement and those that can drop off once achieved.

L Holland left the meeting at 9.27am

8 Priority Item 4 - Technology

S Moore joined the meeting at 9.30am

The report was noted by the committee and the Head of Faculty for Technology was invited by the Chair to point out the highlights of the report. Since writing the report the HoF confirmed that the TSO at Wisbech campus has been recruited and the agency brickwork lecturer has been taken into the team.

Disappointingly the HoF reported behavioural problems in a minority of areas. Some of the issues have been due to unsettled staffing and are concentrated in Brick at Wisbech and Plumbing at Kings Lynn. Young men are very much influenced by Andrew Tate and staff are having conversations at pre-suspension

meetings and this is also being seen in attitudes toward female members of staff and this is being challenged.

The Chair mentioned that attendance and the behavioural issues mentioned in the report were of concern particularly as the attitudes toward staff had been described as appalling. The Chair asked if the Andrew Tate phenomenon was the sole trigger of this behaviour. The HoF said she had anticipated some behavioural issues but had not quite anticipated the heightened levels of poor attitude. The Principal added that there is a definite issue that is wider than the college. There is a gang issue in the town, known to the police, and the college is working with the targeted youth support service contracted to spend time on college campus on a weekly basis supplementing the colleges wider approach. The gang operating in the area has impacted the college as a result of being an open campus and there is an ongoing discussion taking place about whether this remains sustainable or is something that the college will need to address. There is a wider issue and a wider societal challenge that is becoming visible that is being integrated into tutorial programmes where we are confronting those views and trying to deal with cultural issues too, but it is right that this has been flagged with the committee and the Principal intends to also raise awareness with the wider Chairs' group.

Principal

A member of the committee asked if the attitude issues are with female staff or if attitudes exist with female students also. It is felt that the issue is more about misogyny more generally and the wider issues about attitudes from some young men to women. A governor asked if this is something that young men are coming into college from influences at school or is it something that somehow this gang is targeting males at the college. The HoF mentioned that there are some emerging indications, dress code for example, that are influencing young men, hanging out on campus in cluster groups, so it is getting easier to identify the gang culture that is evolving. The Principal reminded the committee that this is very much a minority and not a college wide issue for college students or student groups.

The Chair summarised the discussion and highlighted the positives referenced in the report which detailed how a whole faculty approach is being taken and the positive aspects and the impact the team is seeing in the curriculum and the WorldSkills. Recruitment and the variety of links is also a positive and the report also demonstrates the significant improvement in the information received around the successes of the team that the committee intends to keep in focus. It was noted that sickness absence is stable and the HoF commented that it was less impactful in this faculty, but recruitment and retention will still be required to be kept in focus by the committee. The VPC&Q commended the team on the elevator pitch roadshow that was carried out as the Programme Managers were particularly inspirational in terms of what was presented that looked at meeting skills needs and aspirations for students and development of the provision pathways so there is a real positive vibe among the whole faculty despite the issues highlighted with student behaviour and attitudes.

It was noted that apprenticeship provision is transparent. There is better visibility of the areas where progress is needed as there are several apprentices that are out of funding but still on programme. The HoF explained that this is due partly to COVID legacy, apprentices not taking ownership of the evidence they need to produce, employers not assigning the learner to the right job to be able to create the evidence for their portfolios, and some because of an insufficient number of assessors in some areas to make the assessments timely. Capacity has been increased and a member of staff moved into engineering to support apprentices and additional resource added in groundworks and brick. The HoF was confident that progress has been made whilst accepting that there is still work to be done. The committee was content to continue to keep this area in focus.

S Moore left the meeting at +9.45am

9 **Complaints Review 2022/23**

In addition to the report the Head of Learning Improvement mentioned that as a consequence of the business support SAR meeting the procedure will be enhanced so that there is clarity of ownership and autonomy of roles.

The HoLI acknowledged that the report did not include compliments, so a verbal update was provided at the meeting. Two positive recommendations had been put forward; the inclusion of communications between marketing and quality as a member of the public who had a potential student joining the college with learning difficulties in terms of British sign language recommended that we take up a course and we also managed to clarify the support for that student moving forward because it was felt that this wasn't clear on the college website so this has been resolved. The second recommendation was from an offer of work experience for technology students that has been passed onto the department. Five compliments were received; three related to the Novus restaurant for Christmas lunch; one for the supportive students in public and protective services and a compliment for the HoLI herself from Open Road West Norfolk about the enthusiasm and passion for their deep dive. An additional compliment was received for the staff member that rescued a dog and for security reuniting the dog with their owner.

A committee member asked what the biggest learning outcome from the complaints was that the college has dealt with. The HoLI commented that the majority of complaints arise from staff/student interactions breakdown, and this gives us a clear indication that these tend to stem from, in the main, a miscommunication between relationships which can very easily be rectified.

The Principal asked that in future reports we only include focus on the complaints that are justified or partially justified if there is confidence that those complaints that are unjustified. Just the data of those are to be included, rather than the detail. The committee agreed with this approach and the HoLI will adjust this for the next report.

RSteventon

10 **Operational Oversight Report Learning and Curriculum Report**

The VPC&Q asked the committee to consider approving the digital elevation strategy shared ahead of the meeting but in terms of the report it was noted under item 4.1a that the Century system to support maths and English delivery for adults is being looked in to as this may help alleviate staffing issues. Multiply courses are also available on Century too so this is something else that will be investigated moving forward.

In terms of the difference in maths and English attendance compared to vocational attendance, the report confirms 8% at the time of writing the report and it was 10.3% at July 2022. The VPC&Q mentioned that future reports will show trend analysis so that committee will see context year on year.

Under 1.4b the VPC&Q mentioned that at this point forward the college should be holding onto every single student to avoid the drop off at the end of the year. Performance review 3 details are now being pulled together that will identify robust retention figures. As an aside it was noted that the HE figure for retention is 91.8% at the time of writing the report. The Principal mentioned F04 as the standout area where retention is lower than other areas. This was explained to be attributable to the A level provision which is a two-year programme. There was a large withdrawal of learners in last years' A Level programmes and this currently stands at 56%-57% so these are a legacy of last years' students who have not returned to their second year of learning. The VPC&Q commented that to put this in context at the start of this year retention was at 58% so in year retention has only dropped by 1.5%, best

case. A member of the committee was curious to know if we had the destination data of those early leavers or any evidence that they have progressed onto a positive destination. The HoF for A Levels will investigate and report back. The VPC&Q commented that an analysis of this had been undertaken at the beginning of the year and this exposed that chemistry and biology were the two key areas for the majority of these withdrawals and the Principal has challenged the team on demonstrating why we should be delivering a science-based offer in A Levels given the track record and performance.

Under 1.5b and further to conversations with the APFP the VPC&Q mentioned that discussions have taken place about the development of trend forecasting reports. Robust investigation of grade book, timely use of RAG rating, robust register marking and the student portal for formal disciplinary records will all be looked at and will contribute to the analysis of trend forecasting. As mentioned before, the RAG 'P' rating will be used to identify the 'perilous' aspects for governor scrutiny.

Furthermore, in response to the behavioural and attitude concerns raised above, the VPC&Q is holding fortnightly review meetings and a tutorial deep dive is planned across the college so that there is confidence that conversations are being held and disciplinaries are taking place. The report therefore now reflects comparative data of the number of disciplinary cases taking place to provide the assurance that issues are being dealt with and not left to escalate.

F Miller left the meeting at 10.00am

In terms of item 1.7 the VPC&Q highlighted that the APR documentation is taking a one college approach with a heat map consistent across curriculum and support areas. Finally in 2.1 of the report it was noted that the open university contract has been signed and the college is in the discovery phase for the cyber security offer and three combined professional degree offers. This will be a great model for our adult offer and a great tie in with the digital elevation strategy and the IT infrastructure proposed for approval.

The Chair was appreciative of the significant amount of work and success highlighted. She raised a question about retention in direct maths that showed final outcomes in 2021/22 at 68% and currently they stand at 100%. This has been triple checked and confirmed to be accurate. There are 150 learners, and none have withdrawn. Trend reporting will help analysis and trust of data going forward.

Governors wondered at this time of year how likely we are to lose students on programmes. The VPC&Q was very clear that if we've still got students at this point of the year, they should be staying with us until the end of the year. It is in the gift of every member of staff to minimise the number of withdrawals and messaging to staff is much earlier this year than last, so a more positive retention outcome is expected. The APFP added that the 'P' perilous rating is being applied to reporting so there is earlier and easier identification of those learners at risk of withdrawal. The withdrawal rate appears to manifest itself quite late in the academic year, around May so scrutiny and focus approaching this time will of course increase.

It was noted that the adult community education manager is in post. His focus will be to grow the adult offer and identify the future offer of our adult provision. Finally, the Digital Elevator Strategy was **approved** by the Committee by a show of hands.

11 Quality Improvement Plan

The Head of Learning Improvement commented that face to face updates are now taking place with leads rather than progress chased by electronic means. This is proving to be more effective and instigates a more professional dialogue about how progress is moving forward and updates are completed more timely.

	<p>The Principal mentioned that the action to ‘identify, procure and implement an effective payroll/HR system’ is shown as green and April 2023 is not too far off so this feels as though it shouldn’t be green at this reporting point. This will be reviewed with the Head of HR.</p>	HoLI
12	<p>Teaching Development Strategy 2022-2027</p> <p>The Head of LI explained that the strategy was communicated by video and the Chair commented that this was a brave move to do a video and how impressive and clear this was. Other governors commented that this was an effective way of approaching it.</p> <p>A governor questioned “if they were someone who had more than three years prior teaching experience would I be on the top line of development?” The HoLI explained that this would become clear at the point of initial assessment with the individual at the point of sign up so once the person has been recruited, working with HR, skills scanning, and initial assessment information gleaned prior to their arrival. The objective of the strategy was to identify three clear routes that could be accessed at various stages so it was accepted that someone could enter any of the route’s dependent upon their skills, abilities, interests, desires etc. There will be no option for a recruit not to take part as the teaching qualification is the most important element of an individuals’ development. For clarification a new lecturer would join with a one-day HR induction, followed by a two day ‘welcome on board’ previously known as ‘flying start’.</p> <p>The Chair asked where the success of the strategy would appear for governors in the future. The HoLI suggested that this would transpire through APR (Area Performance Reviews) and/or through HR reports.</p>	
13	<p>Strategic Targets 2022/23 – Progress Review</p> <p>Strategic target owners have updated the termly progress made. A couple of targets have been achieved, and in the main good and reasonable progress has been made against others.</p> <p>It was noted that a code has been added to the RAG rating colours so that progress made could be identified by someone who maybe colour blind. GP for good progress, RS for reasonable progress, BT for behind target and TNA target not achieved.</p>	
14	<p>Any other business</p> <p>The committee commented that there were many appendices in the VPC&Q’s report and members were concerned that their assurance may be lost if details are not drilled into. The VPC&Q suggested to include a summary of the impact and key issues arising in future reports. This approach was welcomed by the committee.</p>	VPC&Q
15	<p>Chair’s items for briefing to Corporation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fliss Miller attended as an observer. Her skillset, if appointed, will supplement the complement of the committee around HE and skills • Maths recruitment and retention issues • Strategies discussed for ratification (Digital Elevator and Teaching Development Strategies) • The Principal to raise awareness of the misogyny issues among a minority number of students in Brick at Wisbech and Plumbing at Kings Lynn campuses with committee Chairs. 	Chair Principal
16	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>Wednesday, 14 June 2023 at 8.30am</p>	

Meeting ended at 10.38am