

Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee

on Wednesday 5 February 2025 from 4.00pm – 6.00pm

via Microsoft Teams

01/25 APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies were received from Dr David Ndzi. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.

02/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

03/25 APPROVAL OF THE NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 6 NOVEMBER 2024

The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held 6 November 2024 were approved as a true record.

04/25 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 6 NOVEMBER 2024

The Committee were assured on the Monitoring of actions and Matters Arising to January 2025.

05/25 CATERING DEPARTMENT – PROGRESS REPORT

Ms Jane Slade-Whetton, Head of Learning, joined the meeting. The Principal presented a report on the Catering Department and provided an overview of an unannounced Environmental Health Agency inspection in November 2024. The final report was received in December 2024 and a food hygiene rating of one star was awarded. The Chair of Corporation had been briefed immediately and the staff team were hugely disappointed with the result. The Principal outlined the key findings of the report, the actions identified requiring completion, and progress in implementing these and the impact of interventions to date. The challenges created by the delayed new build were noted and the Committee were assured that there had been significant investment to improve the existing catering facilities.

There was some discussion regarding the communication of the inspection result with a measured and transparent approach taken that sought to avoid an impression of defensiveness. There would be a comprehensive marketing effort following successful reinspection. The College was ready for reinspection and would apply upon completion of the ceiling works.

There was also some discussion regarding the appointment of a new Head Chef which was unrelated to the inspection. Recruitment had been challenging and the College awaited the start of the new appointee following relocation.

A Member requested an update on progress regarding the new build. The Principal responded that there was no new information available and that she had asked the Department for Education (DfE) for an update and further meeting.

The Committee NOTED the report to be ALERTED to Corporation.

Ms Jane Slade-Whetton left the meeting.

06/25 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRESS REPORT WITH BALANCED SCORECARD

The Assistant Principals presented the Performance Improvement Progress Report with Balanced Scorecard. The Chair acknowledged that the Balanced Scorecard was a work in progress and feedback was welcome. It was noted

that there were some data gaps and progress variances still being addressed with ongoing refinements to improve accuracy and effectiveness.

There was some discussion regarding the need to explore a mechanism to reflect progress at different points during the year rather than solely focusing on end of year targets which result in metrics appearing more negative than was the case. A Member added that there may be some areas that were potentially a cause for concern that were hard to identify. The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) responded that there were some categories and their measures that were still being determined.

The Support Staff Governor raised a question regarding Looked After Children and students disclosing mental health conditions. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) responded that targets were not set in these respects. The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) reported that there was work being undertaken in the Quality department regarding tracking vulnerable groups and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) measures.

The Support Staff Governor raised a question regarding skills competition figures. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) clarified that the figures represented student participation and that the target indicated was annual rather than monthly. The Chair requested an additional column indicating the annual target.

The Support Staff Governor queried the definition of student engagement. The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) responded that this had not previously been captured in concrete data but could encompass Student Voice, the Student Executive Committee, personal tutorials, and enrichment. However, she confirmed that a clearer definition was required for data capture purposes.

The Support Staff Governor enquired whether there were any targets where there was concern that they may not be met. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) responded that attendance was a concern, particularly with reference to the target of 87% attendance across all aims including English and Maths.

A Member asked for more information on work placement targets in the reporting. She also suggested including apprenticeship achievement rates as the information is collected throughout the year. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) welcomed the feedback and said she would add these.

A Member highlighted the need for more accessible language in the targets column. She gave the example of IAG (Information, Advice & Guidance) sessions and the need to clarify what the target of 300 represented. She suggested adding notes to explain the targets for those who were not from an education background. The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) welcomed the feedback. The Member added that the Balanced Scorecard was considerably more accessible than the previous KPIs (Key Performance Indicators).

Following a query from a Student Governor the acronyms for IAG and KPI were outlined.

The Chair requested a briefing on IAG in a similar mode to the webinar briefing offered on safeguarding. The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) welcomed this and also suggested a briefing for Governors on the updates to Gatsby benchmarks.

The Committee NOTED the report for ASSURANCE to Corporation.

07/25 CURRICULUM UPDATE

The Assistant Principals presented the Curriculum Update report. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) provided an overview of the curriculum planning process which involved academic panels with Heads of Learning to determine provision for the next academic year across all areas. The College was utilising 4cast software for course planning and staff deployment. This streamlined the process and improved transparency, she reported.

GCSE English and Maths resits in November 2024 were reported on. There had been a decline of 13.8% in English pass at resit, and an increase of 15.9% in Maths pass at resit.

A Member enquired regarding the discrepancy in English and Maths passes at resit and any potential changes to approach for the following year. The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) responded that there had been a stringent selection process for resits but that there had been a change in the grading boundaries made by the awarding body. She added that the English results were reflective of national data showing a significant decline in pass rates for English. The English team has revised the curriculum to align with the change in grading boundaries and was considering changing awarding body. In response to a further query from the Member, she confirmed that exam resit attendance was good.

There was some further discussion on the grade boundary change. The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) confirmed that data would be analysed and in-year progress tracked and reported to the Committee. This would include value-added measures based on mock exam predictions and prior attainment.

The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) reported on apprenticeships. She outlined tables in her report. The first showing the College's position at the end of the previous academic year with achievement rates below the threshold. The second showing the current year's progress with improved retention and achievement rates. 16% of current apprentices were passed their planned end date (PPED). A Member enquired regarding the potential for withdrawals. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) reported that the College had a four-year projection which helped to identify potential dips. The College had, where necessary, strategically withdrawn apprentices who were unlikely to complete. However, in the case of the current apprentices who were PPED, all were currently engaged, she reported.

A Member enquired regarding variation in achievement rates across different apprenticeship standards. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) responded that small cohort sizes could make it difficult to analyse achievement rates for individual standards. There were currently 40 apprenticeship standards. She added that she would provide further detail on these in the next report.

Interim data on the student survey was provided. The Support Staff Governor queried whether there was any perception regarding the current reported drops in satisfaction for Foundation Learning, 14-16s, and Work-Based Learning. The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) responded that student focus groups were currently being conducted to gather feedback. Initial findings suggested that an error in the administration of the questionnaire may be a factor. However, she added that 14-16s had raised concerns about facilities and had indicated that they would like a common room space. She was currently capturing all feedback and would provide a summary and Action Plan. A follow up survey would be conducted with Student Voice mechanisms established. The Support Staff Governor welcomed the action being taken in response to the interim survey feedback.

In response to a further query from the Support Staff Governor it was confirmed that a separate bespoke survey for Pathways was underway.

The Committee NOTED the report for ASSURANCE to Corporation.

08/25 TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Assistant Principals presented the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Report. There had been 118 observations with seven staff identified as requiring further support.

The Chair enquired regarding the structure of academic leadership within teams and how the College supported the Heads of Learning. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) outlined the role of Teaching and Learning

Managers (TLM) and in response to a further query from the Chair she confirmed that there were dedicated TLMs for English and Maths.

The Chair also enquired regarding teaching qualifications. The Assistant Principal responded that unqualified teachers would begin with the Award in Education and Training (AET) which was a 12-week introductory course. For those already holding the AET they would proceed to either the Certificate in Education (Level 5) or the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) where they hold a degree.

The Chair commended the positive impact of observations and training on teaching quality.

The Committee NOTED the report for ASSURANCE to Corporation.

09/25 GOVERNOR LEARNING WALKS FEEDBACK

The Chair reported on Governor Learning Walks held during November 2024. She commented that she had found it valuable to observe, alongside a Student Governor, GCSE classes in English and Maths and to engage in conversations with staff and students. The Student Governor highlighted the interactive nature of the lessons though she noted differences in student engagement and attendance between classes.

The Chair welcomed feedback on how Learning Walks could be more accessible. One Member responded that she did not consider accessibility to be a problem but noted scheduling conflicts could be a challenge. She asked how students were prepared for the Learning Walks. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic & Vocational) responded that whilst there wasn't a formal process for informing students, the TLMs would be aware of the visits and inform teachers. She acknowledged the pros and cons of informing students in advance.

A Member reported that feedback she received from students during the Learning Walks was spontaneous and positive.

A Member expressed discomfort with the current format which she considered did not match her skill set. The Assistant Principal responded that further guidance on what to look for could be provided. She also proposed exploring different types of Learning Walks or pairing Governors with complementary skills sets. The Principal suggested Learning Walks aligned to Governor skills sets and backgrounds, for example financial specialists visiting the Finance department.

A Member enquired whether there were any remote observation opportunities. The Assistant Principal responded that there were no live online classes and so remote observation was not possible.

The Committee NOTED the report for ASSURANCE to Corporation.

10/25 TERMLY SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) presented the Termly Safeguarding Report. She reported that there had been a number of significant incidents since the finalisation of the report, and safeguarding instances had risen as a result of these recent incidents. Security measures had been extended across the College site and would be reviewed. Regular meetings with the Designated Lead Governor for Safeguarding continued. The Designated Lead Governor expressed her confidence in the safeguarding team at the College and commended their thoroughness and understanding of the portfolio.

The Support Staff Governor commended positive trends in the report particularly regarding monitoring categories for vulnerable students and noting the impact of specific tracking and measures implemented in the current year. The Assistant Principal responded that whilst numbers were small, there could be a significant impact and that the improved data reflected the focused efforts in this area.

The Chair thanked staff for their comprehensive work and dedication to student safety, emphasizing the importance of this. She also commended the comprehensiveness of the report.

It was suggested that the name of the Lead Governor where relevant be included on the reporting template. The Director of Governance would add this.

The Committee NOTED the report for ASSURANCE to Corporation.

11/25 EDI/PSED REPORT ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) presented the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) report on policy and objectives, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) report. She provided an overview of EDI work including a re-written policy and the involvement of a staff working group which was now progressing with student input, including from the new Student Executive. She reported on actions taken during 2024/25 to work towards achievement of the 2024-2028 objectives with one-year action plans for each year during this period. She outlined key developments including a new contemplation room, revised Student Charter to improve accessibility and the completion of the accessibility audit with student input including from one of the Student Governors. She noted positive feedback from students regarding feeling safe, included and supported but emphasized the need for greater student involvement and increased visibility of EDI efforts both within and outside the College, for example in terms of social media and marketing.

The Support Staff Governor queried the decision to retain the term equality over equity and enquired about the standards used for checking EDI compliance of Canvas materials. The Assistant Principal responded that overarching guidance from the Association of Colleges (AoC) Equity Exchange and additional benchmarks were utilised with English and Maths departments currently piloting.

The Support Staff Governor pointed out that Appendix 2 of the proposed revised EDI Policy was staff-focused and should be labelled accordingly. She also suggested using a different example on page 22 to avoid reinforcing stereotypes. The Assistant Principal thanked the Member for her feedback and would revise accordingly.

The Assistant Principal reported on the PSED Report. She explained that public sector organisations are required to publish information on their EDI status. She discussed the ongoing work with HR (human resources) to improve data collection for staff noting limitations due to the current HR system. The new CIPHR system was expected to improve data collection, though populating it with existing staff data would take time. The PSED report for this year included College and Island context for both staff and students, along with new objectives.

A Member enquired regarding analysis of staff composition compared to the local community. The Assistant Principal responded that benchmarking was currently undertaken against national further education (FE) college profiles. Data for male/female staff composition was similar to national averages, with slightly higher representation of staff with disabilities. Ethnic diversity was below the national average for FE colleges, reflecting the Isle of Wight community. The Assistant Principal noted an increase in ethnic minority students in the current academic year (16-19 cohort). She confirmed that community data was available and comparisons could be made as desired.

The Committee RECOMMENDED the EDI Policy to Corporation for APPROVAL subject to the amendments requested above.

The Committee RECOMMENDED the PSED Report to Corporation for APPROVAL.

Mrs Jessica Garbett left the meeting at this point.

12/25 DRAFT 3As REPORT TO MARCH CORPORATION

The Director of Governance explained that this would form the Committee's report to Corporation of those items that the Committee wished to alert Corporation to, assure Corporation on, and recommend for approval or action. The

report would be drafted in consultation with the Chair and SLT lead and circulated to Members for comment and approval prior to inclusion in the board pack.

13/25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

14/25 SELF-ASSESSMENT OF MEETING

The Chair led Members in a self-assessment of the meeting.

In response to a query from a Student Governor, the Director of Governance clarified the role of the Committee in monitoring, scrutinising and reviewing reports and policies but that overall responsibility lay with the Corporation as a whole and that this was why the Committee assured, alerted and requested action of the Corporation for example in approving policies and reports.

A Member commended the amount of work undertaken by the Assistant Principals.

A Member requested more information in future meetings regarding careers, and meeting local skills needs. The Assistant Principal (SEND & Foundation Skills) responded that there was a lot of work currently being undertaken on IAG and Gatsby Benchmarks and further information could be provided on this as noted earlier in the meeting (see item 25/24).

In response to a query from a Member regarding an item on the agenda for the next meeting, she explained that PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census) data outlined what the College could expect for market share in terms of future learner numbers.

15/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 30th April 2025