

**Approved Minutes of Teaching & Learning Committee
Held on Tuesday 4 March 2025 at 5.30pm Via Teams**

Present:

Gaynor Cheshire (Chair)
Michelle Dowse (Principal)
Jane Britton (Governor)
Adam Hall (Governor)
Julie Hurlston-McKeown (Staff Governor)
Allen McConaghie (Governor)
David Ash (Chair of Corporation)(Observing)
Donna Gibson (Clerk to the Corporation)

In Attendance

Simon Kibble (Deputy Principal)
Matt Gower (Vice Principal, Quality)
Mo Horan ((Vice Principal, Apprenticeships, Partnerships & Skills)
Peter Robinson (Vice Principal, HE, Adult & Curriculum Development)
Julia Breakwell (Vice Principal, Student Experience & Support)

Item	Item	Action For:
5.1	<p>Welcome & Apologies Apologies were received from Steve Stanier (Governor). The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>The Chair advised that papers were taken as having been read in advance.</p>	
5.2	<p>Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
5.3	<p>Approved minutes of the previous Meeting – 5 November 2024 The approved minutes of the meeting on 5 November 2024 were received.</p>	
5.4	<p>Matters Arising Matters arising were noted as being complete, or on the agenda.</p>	
5.5	<p>Determination of Any Other Business The Principal advised that they had an item to be considered at the end of the meeting, as a confidential item.</p>	
5.6	<p>Ofsted The Deputy Principal provided an update on the current position:</p> <p>Headlines in terms of changes to the inspection framework and the relevance to FE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No overall effectiveness grade • Five evaluation judgements ranging from causing concern to exemplary. • Twenty evaluation points (we would be in scope for all twenty as we deliver all four provision types – see below) <p>Whole college:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Inclusion • Safeguarding (met/not met) • Contribution to meeting skills needs (limited/reasonable/strong) <p>For each provision type (programmes for young people, learners with high needs, apprentices, and adults) there will be an evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Developing teaching and training • Achievement • Participation and development 	

Current strengths and areas for improvement

The Deputy Principal emphasised that as we approach reinspection our view of ourselves needs to shift to that of being a 'secure' college. Our 24/25 SAR will be written against the current EIF and will demonstrate (with appropriate supporting evidence) that we are a 'Good' college. In support of this our validated 23/24 SAR (where we remained RI) will be submitted to the Ofsted portal with an in-year position paper that reflects our shift towards 'Good.' Recent inspection and consultant work indicates that other colleges have secured 'Good' for overall effectiveness against the EIF with similarities to our current position.

Strengths

- Curriculum intent at department level
- QIPs at department level
- Learner achievement forecasting at individual learner level
- Oversight of in year retention through the work of the Learner Equity and Opportunity Panel

Areas for improvement

- Consistent impact of Rapid Improvement Groups
- Qualification achievement with higher grades
- Impact of support and development plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Impact evidence that supports the actions in the PIAP

The Principal reaffirmed that our primary focus remains on continuing the work we are currently undertaking. Staff wellbeing remains a key priority, and a recent Pulse Survey has been conducted to evaluate our current position.

A joint session for the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is scheduled for the upcoming CPD day to review the proposed Ofsted framework and consider its potential implications. The College may be among the first to experience the new style of inspection.

In terms of preparation, the Vice Principal has participated in two recent inspections, and the insights gained from those experiences have been valuable. The Further Education Commissioner (FEC) Team continues to offer strong support, and we are actively managing relationships with stakeholders and partners.

Regarding the sector-wide consultation, the College will consider any submission made by the Association of Colleges (AoC), who are expected to respond on behalf of the sector. Feedback gathered from sector contacts has been triangulated and suggests that inspections under the new framework are unlikely to begin before November.

The Principal assured the Committee that we will remain focused on our priorities during the time available and will avoid becoming involved in political discourse once the new framework is in place.

The Chair of Corporation provided a summary of what had been discussed at the AoC Briefing for Chairs and had noted that some pilot inspections were underway.

The Deputy Principal reiterated that we are shifting towards being a secure college. The 24/25 SAR will be drafted against the current framework, an approach that is being seen in other colleges. We will maintain a balance between areas of improvement and the positive progress made. The Committee were reminded that 23/4 SAR had been validated as requires improvement and showed that we understood the strengths and weaknesses. An in-year position statement will support the next SAR.

<p>The Committee received further assurance through the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum intent – we are capturing what we are delivering and linking intent to destination. • QIPs are robust at department level. The Quality Manager is actively challenging areas and recording evidence that can be readily available (given that scrutiny at inspection is limited) • Learner achievement has improved and there is a better understanding of the learners' position and the outcomes. Those learners at risk (184 exc SEN and Progression) are known and means of intervention to support those are being tested. • The expansion of the Quality Team, as supported by Governors, is improving quality, and helping towards the College being in an improved position. • The LEOP Panel has oversight of retention and actively challenges withdrawals and attendance. <p>The Committee Chair fed back that recent learning walks and the scrutiny reviews demonstrated a huge improvement from the position twelve months ago. The quality of papers is improving, and they are providing more clarity. The structure of how papers are presented makes them easier to read and navigate.</p> <p><i>A Governor fed back that the papers provided a very useful picture and demonstrated a good focus on most areas, but not enough focus on learner progress in lessons. Can we say how we gauging that progress? It was agreed to revisit later in the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor reiterated that the papers were good and the recent learning walks do triangulate with what is being reported. They questioned what is being captured on walks and how is it evidenced? Management responded that feedback is captured in that verbal feedback is provided to staff; quality actions are addressed and reflected upon, and support provided where required. The Governor responded that their understanding is that learning walks are a business as usual activity, noting that they are a useful way of demonstrating what takes place.</i></p> <p>The Principal suggested that the recent Governor Learning Walks had provided Governors with the experience of visiting classes and that whatever was taken away from those walks would enable Governors to articulate their findings for Ofsted and demonstrate their understanding of the Colleges position.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal provided an update on areas for improvement and the impact of the RIGs Process which is proving to be effective.</p> <p>Reporting via the PIAP is being kept as honest and transparent and all impacts should be rated Green by the summer.</p> <p><i>A Governor questioned the dashboard testing and whether there was a timetable for action or any indication of how far away we are? The Vice Principal for Partnerships and Skills advised that the dashboard had been rolled out to some staff and was being used by them so that any tweaks or improvements can be identified.</i></p> <p>The Committee noted that Grofar had been rolled out in the previous week and seven hundred assessments had been completed, noting that Management stated that it had taken a significant amount of time to undertake training and then launch the product,</p> <p>The Committee acknowledged that work was being done on destinations and that an update would be provided at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Deputy Principal</p>
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5.7	<p>Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP)</p> <p><i>A Governor commended how much of the PIAP was now Green and was encouraged by that. They questioned if there were still issues with recruiting, noting that the challenges have previously been reported, however Governors do not always have a clear and definitive view of those areas where the challenges are being seen. Management responded that there are still challenges, we have a number of vacancies that are unfilled and the disparity around pay continues to be an issue. The Principal confirmed that the struggles being faced are mirrored in other colleges. There have been a number of internal staff who have progressed and been promoted which is pleasing. Recruiting technical specialists is difficult. The Committee acknowledged that an update for the next meeting would be useful for them to have oversight of the areas where the challenges are having an impact.</i></p> <p>The Committee noted that other factors include staff leaving when challenged, and the high costs of using agency lecturers.</p> <p>A Governor confirmed that they have seen some of the recent adverts for roles in the College.</p>	
5.8	<p>Curriculum & Quality KPIs</p> <p>The Committee noted that the position around retention is positive. Again, as mentioned the LEOP continues to help the push towards improved credibility.</p> <p>Specific areas are being dealt with and staff in areas where no significant improvement is being seeing are being held accountable and must account for the position those areas are in.</p> <p>We are reflecting sector averages quite well. Attendance across the sector is challenging but is supported by similar feedback being received from employers. The Committee Chair acknowledged that the AoC Survey is informative and asked whether we record events that have any impact on attendance – public transport strikes, inclement weather such as flooding?</p> <p>Another Governor supported the question above and questioned if there is no national data what do we think about when considering target setting? The Principal summarised that targets must be aspirational, and we need to consider what they should look like a year in advance. We need to consider how aspirational do we want to be as this is linked to the quality of teaching and learning, simply put learners needs to attend lessons and are more likely to do so if the teaching and learning experience is good.</p> <p><i>A Governor observed that it is difficult to see attendance figures in the 80+% range and questioned, in the absence of national data, can any data comparison be undertaken, or could the correlation between attendance and achievement be explored? Additionally, reference is made to attendance data but not about data for retention or achievement – how is this tracked across the year? Management responded that a 42 day period can be challenging, and we must be mindful of what awarding bodies allow for assessment. Typically, the sector does not record this, schools do, but it is an area that could be explored and developed.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor suggested that the vast difference between school learners and those attending colleges and the challenges faced could be a factor.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor agreed that Post 16 education does have some similarities in the challenges faced as academies and schools do. The Principal agreed that there are some barriers, but our focus is on the 13% (30 students). It was agreed that the Committee would benefit from the recent work on checkpoints being shared with them, whilst it is a new and evolving process it would be provide a useful insight and would address the question asked about reporting retention and achievement. It was agreed that data and how it is reported and presented could be looked at further outside of the meeting.</i></p>	
5.9	<p>Study programme target setting.</p> <p>The paper was noted and showed that those learners at risk are being identified.</p>	

	<p><i>A Governor challenged that the pillar that included main qualification looked too late? Management responded that the checkpoint was tested in December and may now need to be revisited. The process is a pilot for this year. The scrutiny work shows that we are on track to achieve. The process will be developed for 25/26.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor challenged how rigorous is the approach that is taken? They were advised that the process is rigorous and looks at targets being passed, prior achievement and the minimum expected grade. The Deputy Principal reminded the Committee that valued added had been stopped and we only have 2019 data for that. The Principal summarised that we are checking if we are late looking at progress, acknowledging that the process is new, improvements will be made for 25/26 and any issues will be ironed out this year (the pilot year).</i></p> <p>The Committee Chair asked whether there would be additional points for grade collection. The Principal confirmed that, in line with the Governors' request, there will be five data collection points in a typical academic year, rather than the three initially proposed.</p>	
5.10	<p>Curriculum Planning 24/25 The paper was noted, and the Committee was informed that the process remains on track.</p> <p><i>A Governor asked how the new CRQ structure was doing. They were advised that so far it has been very positive. The staff now report to the Deputy Principal so there is a good line of sight. Coaching is in place where it is needed.</i></p> <p>A member of ELT supported the comments made and recorded that they were impressed with how the staff have met the challenge. Relationships have developed quickly, and a collaborative approach has evolved.</p> <p>The Committee Chair reminded members of the importance of remaining open to new ventures and opportunities, ensuring they are not overlooked amidst other priorities. The Clerk advised that the item has been added to the agenda for Governance & Search Committee.</p> <p>PR left the meeting at this point.</p>	
5.11	<p>Apprenticeships The Committee noted that some of the text was missing. The Clerk would arrange for the full report to be circulated once the text had been added. It was also reported that recruitment for the bricklaying programme has been unsuccessful. A Level 2 Assistant Apprenticeship would be available September onwards. Governors acknowledged that progress has been made since the monitoring visit.</p> <p><i>A Governor asked why development plans are still in progress? They were advised that these are areas where issues are known – i.e., staffing, completions of plans not being completed. The Governor further questioned are we confident that progress is happening? Management confirmed that a new manager has been recruited who has significant experience in apprenticeships.</i></p> <p>The Vice Principal for Apprenticeships, Skills, and Partnerships informed the Committee that employers have access to Smart Assessor, which allows them to monitor learner progress against the standard and review progress updates every 12 weeks. Additionally, depending on the programme, observations and workplace visits are conducted. However, it remains unclear to what extent employers are actively engaging with or utilising Smart Assessor.</p> <p><i>A Governor questioned if the Governments relaxation around English and maths requires employers to sanction this? The Principal acknowledged the tight deadlines associated with the announcement. Previously the employer had not been required to sign the withdrawal form, which is not the case now, the form will be signed by employers to evidence that they made the</i></p>	Clerk

	<p><i>decision. Staff are busy liaising with learners and employers who it has an impact upon – estimated at around fifty-seven learners. The Governor acknowledged that is a small number but could impact upon end dates? They were advised that we will remain ambitious and support them to ensure they achieve what is required.</i></p> <p>For the benefit of new members, the Principal explained that the College had previously ranked among the lowest nationally—eighth from the bottom—in terms of apprenticeship achievement rates. All noted the significant progress made and the substantial efforts undertaken to improve performance in this area.</p> <p><i>A Governor saw that there are thirty-three referred to and wondered out of how many does that refer to? They were advised that is it thirty-three out of 519. Going forward the report will give the detail in both numbers and %.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor challenged the key action for completion at end of February for development plans. They were advised that areas are still being targeted with some being easier to complete than others.</i></p> <p>The Chair of Corporation referred to the proposed change to the minimum term of 12 months to 8 months and wondered what would we be looking at? They were advised that there has been no significant detail provided yet and this makes planning ahead difficult. We are monitoring for updates; three trailblazers have been noted but we would not be developing those. Any future programme will deliver quality regardless of its length.</p>	<p>VP – Apprenticeships, Partnerships & Skills</p>
5.12	<p>Quality Update</p> <p>The Committee noted the headline points and were pleased to see substantial quality items on the agenda that included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update on the expanded Quality Team, who it was noted are getting involved in intervention and coaching support. • The Foundation Standard supporting improved assessments by managers. • Teaching and Learning Plans for areas for improvement • The work of the AQPs • Quality Processes in place – 260 learning walks have been completed, outstanding learning walks to be completed by Easter. • Lesson visits are in place, supported by a moderation process. • Intervention is in place where it is required. • The impact of CPD is being seen – the next CPD event will focus on the 6L's and high level performance in class. VP Quality will share a more detailed update at the next meeting. • Themes have been identified including culture, use of resources, student engagement, a push in skills development across all areas. • Work in progress includes classroom management, questioning in class (stretch and challenge) and consistency. • Student progress in lessons is being picked up via good quality questioning – what, why and when, progress over a unit is being looked at as well as across the programme in its entirety. • Attendance in areas with low attendance is being address, targeted support is being provided if needed once it is understood why attendance is low, what will help to support and identifying any barriers – for example timetabling issues. • Leaders of Learning are receiving coaching, and a training day is planned for April. • Some forecasting has been done, at the request of the Committee, Scrutiny Reviews have been looking at the details. Main aim will hit its achievement rate. The Committee were advised that this is a new process that is rigorous but in its early stages. • A draft Teaching & Learning Strategy has been prepared – Governors can feedback via the Clerk. It is intended to set out the standards, vision, best practice, and the aspirations going forward. 	<p>VP Quality</p>

	<p>The Committee Chair expressed their appreciation for the summary and commended the significant progress made when compared to the College's previous position. They noted that the measures being implemented are clearly having a positive impact, and the expansion of the Quality Team is proving to be effective.</p> <p><i>A Governor questioned neurodiversity, is this tracked in development plans, does it have any influence on an individual's learning progress? They were advised that there is a rising awareness around neurodiversity and there will be sessions at the CPD day. The sector is still considering how to progress it and are working together to learn more and to keep it in sight.</i></p> <p>A Governor observed that the update was impressive, with that and the responses to questions it is apparent that a lot of progress has been made.</p>	
5.13	<p>Equality & Diversity Impacts Measures</p> <p>The Committee were updated on a new approach that sees a number of cross college staff involved. As it has only been introduced recently the impact will not really be seen until next year.</p> <p>The Committee noted the update in the paper around the RAG ratings on the action plan measures.</p> <p><i>A Governor wondered if there had been any push back to any of the issues seen in the news of late. Are we doubling down on any key messages? Management responded that as we are in the public sector now, we are carrying on as usual, which is the right thing to do. Students can talk about issues if they want to, it is usually dependent on what they are seeing in the press or on social media. At a higher level we attend meetings that discuss counter terrorism issues, concerns, and initiatives.</i></p>	
5.14	<p>Accountability Statement</p> <p>An update was provided at the Strategic Planning Day. A draft will be ready in April and will incorporate the feedback from Governors. It will be a robust statement that will encompass all that we do and highlighting key points.</p>	
5.15	<p>Committee Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been good challenge, the best example of challenge to date. • Responses to questions had been good and there was a willingness to address questions posed. • There were impressive examples of data being provided to the Board. • Papers were efficient, precise, and easy to navigate. • The reading room was useful. 	
5.16	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There were no items of any other business.</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting: 3 June 2025 at 5.30pm via Teams</p>	