

<b>Present:</b>	Sue Daley (Chair) J Wakelam	Alan Maltpress (Vice Chair) Nikos Savvas (Principal/CEO)	Karen Points
<b>In Attendance:</b>	L Moody, VP EE Colin Shaw, VP Q&LE D Barton, AM+E A Wright, Head of Admissions C Meredith, Executive Dean J Bridges, Clerk	Alison Hurrell, QM R Kirk, Executive Dean D Coomes, ED K Wilden, PL (CPD) S Graham, GHRD	Andrew Adamson, ED Rachel Boast, M&ED G Jefferson, ED Cathy Durrant, HPC D Ruddy, ED

Members confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to the items of this agenda.

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from D Jugg and E Lawrance.

**2 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

**3 Matters Arising**

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

Governors were encouraged to attend the Subject SAR meetings which will be held on a virtual platform and governors are to contact C Shaw to arrange.

**4 Workforce Update (including Appraisal (SpotLight) Tracking**

To date 64.50% of staff (487 out of 755) have had one or more SpotLight review, with an average of 2 meetings per individual. If we remove those who had a start date of 1 February 2020 or after the percentage completed increases to 67.80%. The HR team continues to work closely with Line Managers to encourage formal completion of the forms. It was noted that the proposal to acquire a new HR platform (iTrent) would implement a more intuitive and trackable feedback system, with fewer steps between one-to-ones and entry onto an online database. There was concern that the number of SpotLight reviews are not satisfactory although it is recognised that regular one-to-ones are taking place but are not being formally recorded. The new system should help improve the recording and tracking process.

The report highlights as at 9 April 2020 that the College had 26 live vacancies and 12 have been filled by advertising. It takes an average of 51 days to fill a post. Governors asked how easy it was for Teaching staff to take up post given the current lockdown circumstances. It was confirmed that recruitment and take up is currently normal despite lockdown and staff are adapting to the virtual environment and learning platforms. Induction is running well and slots with various teams and departments have been diarised and some feedback from recent new starters has been very positive.

Staff absence in the month of March 2020 due to Covid-19 totalled 199 days lost with 64 staff absent. The equates to an absence rate of 5.80% with the

**Action**

All

majority of absence being reported by Support Staff. There were 15 suspected cases of the virus and a further 49 cases of self-isolation.

Absence due to mental health related cases in the month of March 2020 totalled 42½ days which equates to an average of 6.07days lost compared to a national average rate of 21 days lost per employee.

Despite the lockdown and the College closure in March 2020 due to the pandemic 15 new starters commenced in post (2 in Management roles, 2 Teaching staff and 11 in Support roles).

A total of 137 (18.15%) staff (out of 755) are still in their 12-month probationary period. The EDIM report (as a 1 April 2020) shows that 64% of the College workforce is female vs 36% male. Most staff (70%) do not consider themselves to have a disability and the majority of staff (86%) are white British. With regard to religious belief 33% of the workforce are Christian, with smaller percentages following Agnostic or Atheist beliefs. The majority of staff are married (46%) followed by 22% single, 7% divorced or with a partner. Just below half of the workforce are heterosexual and the other half in the main prefer not to say (or it is unknown). A high percentage of the workforce (96%) are of British nationality but the College employs 37 staff from a range of European and non-European countries.

Finally, it was reported that staff turnover in the month of March 2020 was 1.06%; a total of 8 employees left the employment of the College. Governors asked to receive a rolling 12-month report in order to see the annual turnover rate rather than by monthly.

SGraham

## **5 Predicted Achievement**

The report provided governors with a headline overview of the position of the College at the end of the spring term. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown and College closure it was noted that it was not possible to receive an update on student attendance.

We are following guidance to predict student grades for their GCSE qualifications and rank them accordingly on how strongly we feel they would achieve that grade. This information is being provided by Centre split by 16-18s, 19+ and Electively Home Educated (EHE) Students. For Vocational courses (BTEC and other quals that give a licence to practice e.g. Plumbing and Electrical) we are gathering student information to grade what each student would achieve. For Functional Skills (pass or fail) students are further ahead and therefore we can strongly predict that they would achieve, and the teams are pulling all of this data together. This puts the College in a strong position to accurately predict students' target grades and ensure they are not disadvantaged during these unprecedented times. It was noted that there will be an appeal process for those students who may not agree with the grade awarded and the College will support them through this process.

It was reported that assessment progress in the vast majority of areas remains either on or ahead of target, which is significantly ahead of the same time last year and gives a strong foundation for predicting grades.

Retention remains strong for both 16–18 at 94% and 19+ at 95%, which are in line with this time last year. Pleasingly it was reported that some students who had previously withdrawn have subsequently re-engaged with the College and will hopefully complete and achieve their qualifications.

Apprenticeship performance remains strong with 43% current achievement against a Best-Case achievement rate of 80% and current predicted achievement of 78%. However, this is likely to be amended in the coming weeks due to COVID-19. It was pleasing to note that a number of apprentices have already achieved.

It was noted that Proactive Learning is Red RAG rated because it is below national rates. It is an improving trend on previous years', and it was confirmed that all students are now predicted to achieve.

## **6 Early Leavers and Withdrawals Report**

The College has had a total of 133 withdrawals, which is 50 more since the last report in March 2020. The main reasons for withdrawal are students moving into employment (45 students); taking on an apprenticeship (29 students); illness (15 students); or transferred to a different provision with the same provider (12 students – 9%). It is not expected that we will receive many more withdrawals as staff are working really hard to support every learner and every student is currently engaged.

There are currently 17 withdrawals for the 19+ students, which is 5 more since the last report in March 2020. One of these five students withdrew due to financial reasons, two because they gained employment and the other two left for personal reasons.

It was noted that Healthcare and Early Years are still seeing the most withdrawals in one area with 22 students leaving to move into employment, or onto an apprenticeship. Business Management and Tourism have had 16 withdrawals, but Construction Crafts and Art and Design have seen the biggest increased in withdrawals since the last report with both areas losing 8 students each.

## **7 16-18 Maths and English Update**

Since the College closure due to Covid-19 engagement from students online is generally good. English tutors report that work is forthcoming from approximately 80% of the students and the maths response rate to returned feedback from the milestone assessments is approximately 75%. Non-contact is being reported by progress tutors back to vocational teams to help support students who are at a higher risk of 'disappearing'.

The team has developed and created new ways of working through the pandemic by online learning, providing resources, revision materials, practice questions and this has been wholly embraced by the team. Digital platforms are popular and accessible to students using the Padlet, Hegarty, BKSB, WSCMathsTV (Youtube), clip tutorials and virtual classrooms

As reported above the number of students who have achieved their full English Functional Skills qualification at this point in the year is double what it was this time last year. Initial results from the first sitting of the maths exam on the Reform qualifications is disappointingly poor although not unexpected. The qualification now is somewhat more challenging than in previous years.

With regard to GCSEs the team is keeping a close eye on Ofqual and AQA guidance and are preparing to return the appropriate data to inform the GCSE grades for students this summer. The process to predict grades and rank has begun bearing in mind that 95% of our students will achieve a grade 3 or 4

and we have approximately 2,000 students to rank from 1 to 2,000 which will be no mean feat. We are aiming to complete this process by 18 May 2020.

## **8 Adult Maths and English Update**

The Committee was pleased to learn that further to the publication of the 2018/19 QAR which ranks the GCSE Adult provision across all FE providers in the UK, confirms that the College has an achievement rate of 67.6% for maths GCSE grades 4 to 9 which is 32% above the National Rate; the English GCSE achievement rate is 58.6% for grades 4 to 9 which is 18% above National Rate. It was reported that forecast achievements for this academic year and in year retention rates remain above National Rate in the majority of subjects.

For those students who had just started their Functional Skills at the beginning of the lockdown then these were instantly transferred onto virtual learning platforms and engagement with online learning is very positive. These students would have taken their assessments in July 2020 so those whose grades cannot be accurately predicted it is hoped would be given the opportunity to do the assessment live.

During this period of lockdown the staff are keeping themselves active to ensure that their mental health is nurtured and weekly pastoral sessions, email and face-to-face virtual communications with students are helping to keep them informed, positive and on track. All adult maths, English and ESOL teaching has been switched to online learning platforms and engagement levels are high for maths and English (70-75%) and is exceptional for ESOL students, where engagement is 87% and increasing.

Staff are continuing to support remote enrolments within key worker organisations such as NHS hospitals to enable students to progress to nursing pathways for example in 2020/21.

## **9 Level 1 Improvement Report**

The report highlighted the progress made against the Level 1 provision at the end of the spring term. In summary the report confirmed that Level 1 provision is currently predicted to have an overall achievement of 93% compared to 88% last year. Student engagement has been excellent, and several programmes have reported 100% engagement. Where there has been a lack of engagement from students, parents have been contacted

During the period of lockdown, the course teams have prepared and issued work to students through Moodle, Google Classroom, Padlet, SmartScreen access and email to ensure that they remain engaged and motivated throughout this term and in preparation for transition and progression to the next level of their education.

Quality audits and performance review boards are taking place to monitor consistency and compliance across curriculum areas.

## **10 Progress Reports**

### ***i. Plumbing and Electrical Installation***

Plumbing staff and students are of course all now working remotely throughout this period of lockdown. Contact with students is being made through email, Zoom, Microsoft TEAMS, Moodle and Google Classroom. The speed at which staff and students have become accustomed to virtual learning has been impressive with over 45% of the student population early on in lockdown

receiving work or sending work back for marking. Those who have not made contact with the College have been communicated with and encouraged to participate and continue their learning through a variety of means and a concerted team effort.

MarkBook completion for Plumbing students has improved with Level 1 progress now at 58%, Level 2 at 49% and task completion for Level 2 at 70% with work continuing to be submitted by students and uploaded to MarkBook by staff.

The Electrical team have managed to get all Level 2 and Level 3 students through their synoptic assessments the week before the College closed. This is a huge achievement and all of the students' work for both theory and practical has been uploaded to the City and Guilds portal. Plumbing students were due to sit their exams the Tuesday after the College closed, and we await Ofqual and City and Guilds guidance on next steps for these students.

In addition, the Electrical team have all completed the COGASSIST programme to look at their own learning styles to see if this had any effect on how they teach/response to students who are finding things difficult. It was noted that the other teams are due to complete this in the summer term.

## **ii. Science and Automotive**

The Automotive team have made positive steps to re-engage with students and develop study programmes to meet the need of students. Progression to Automotive has been challenging with many students suffering from personal issues. They have been given outstanding pastoral care from their Tutors, PSTs, the Welfare Team and external agencies as required, providing them with the wrap around support that they need, and all are now on target to achieve.

The Level 1 Automotive IMI group has introduced one-to-one support for those students struggling with written assignments and practical write-ups. This has helped to improve the quality of work and the volume being completed and has also given students a sense of progression through their course. The Level 2 Automotive IMI progress has been improved by introducing extra study session support with a second Tutor or Technical Demonstrator within the portfolio session; giving the students the support they need to complete outstanding work. Level 3 students have benefitted from extra revision sessions with their course director to strengthen their knowledge ready for their online tests.

It was noted that assessment completion is now at 63% and retention is now at 96%.

Further to the last report, the Level 2 Science Course Director has been supported to make the improvements required and further support continues. The Level 2 students have engaged in targeted intervention with the majority showing an improvement. Those most at need have been working with the Subject Lead to complete outstanding work.

An application for four HE pathways is currently with the awarding organisation and three new, specialist staff, have been appointed to help facilitate this. Applications for Science have increased substantially, and it is hoped that this will translate into greater student numbers and retention.



It was noted that assessment completion is now at 61% and retention is now at 92%.

Staff have embraced the online learning and virtual platforms, so much so, that post lockdown the team are considering part College learning, part virtual learning going forward.

### **iii. Sport, Public Services, Animal Studies, Healthcare and Early Years**

The Committee was pleased to learn that all of these curriculum areas prepared contingency and continuity plans in the month before lockdown. These plans were scrutinised, shared and in some areas, tested ahead of the Government announcing that with effect from 23 March 2020 all educational establishments are to close.

It was pleasing to note that all students who are retained at this point, should achieve their qualifications however there may be some courses that have professional or industry required assessments to be carried out or may include Licence to Practise, such as Level 3 Childcare, Level 3 Hairdressing and Beauty and AAT (Accounting Technician) qualifications. It is likely therefore that these students would be invited back to complete these assessments.

## **11 2019/20 Quality Improvement Plan**

As reported above, due to Covid-19 the College has moved to an online approach to teaching, learning and assessment and teams have been working exceptionally hard to produce online resources within a short time span.

The College's approach to Microsoft TEAMS for online communication and sharing ideas is proving successful and the sharing of good practice is evident.

Notably the quality of education is being driven by Course teams communicating and working with PSTs to support, engage and motivate students on a daily basis.

It was noted that the FE Choices Learner Satisfaction survey this year has been cancelled by the DfE. All other College surveys however (student exit surveys for example) have been adapted and will continue to be released as planned.

In summary the Quality Manager concluded that there are no red flag targets to report this year and where flags are amber this is because work is in progress rather than of a reportable concern.

In addition, the College has been preparing for Ofsted and is due to release a presentation to outline our journey to outstanding with a Q+A session to staff.

## **12 Lesson Observations (Virtual Learning Platforms)**

The Committee was pleased to learn of the work that the Professional Learning Team has been doing in collaboration with the wider College training teams to drive outstanding, consistent and professional practice across and throughout the College. There was evidence in the report of the current teaching and learning from lesson observations carried out as well as the planned lesson observation due to take place over this period.

Notably teams are working hard to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for their students during these unprecedented times. As well as

this, innovative practice and experiences, new skills and cultures have been developed that will create a legacy of new practice.

### **13 Gatsby Benchmarking**

The College continues to make good progress to successfully achieve the full eight Gatsby benchmarks and to use these as a platform to identify the three Ofsted I's; Intent, Implementation and Impact, of our careers provision. The actions to date were shared with the Committee together with the actions still to progress. It was noted that links with Schools and Employers is paramount to this work and we are leading and supporting them to ensure that students of the future recognise their progression opportunities and are work ready.

The Committee will receive an update on our progress toward achieving all eight of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

### **14 HE Withdrawals and Retention**

The March data shows the withdrawal of students during the reportable period of 1 December to 31 March is 2.9%. This gives a retention rate of 97.1%. We are continuing to ensure that we are doing everything possible to retain students for the remainder of the academic year as we endeavour to retain 96% of our students each year and this will remain as our target. It was noted that currently the number of withdrawals is better than last year by 0.8%

The majority of withdrawals from studies are from Level four students with those leaving for personal/other reasons or making the wrong institution/course/career choice which is not too dissimilar to the reasons for withdrawal the previous year.

### **15 HE Student Experience**

The NSS was launched on 1 February 2020 and the ISS started on 3 March 2020. Currently 64% of eligible students have completed the NSS; however, it was noted that the current COVID 19 situation is a significant barrier. A completion rate of 76% overall completion rate was achieved last year, we hope to match this at least but we are aiming for an 80% completion rate.

For the ISS only 13% of WSC campus students have completed this (only 8% of UoS students have completed); last year completion was 37% and we hope to improve on that despite the current situation. There was only a short window to complete the survey as it opened at the beginning of March and closed unexpectedly at the end of March 2020 and it is thought that this is why the take up rate was so low. The UoS take up was only 8%.

### **16 Any other business**

Governors were extremely complimentary of the efforts of staff and of their commitment to keep students on track to achieve and the awe and admiration of governors will be shared with all staff.

#### **Date of next meeting**

Monday 15 June 2020 at 4.00pm.

The meeting closed at 5.50pm.

CShaw