



THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
 Wednesday 15 March 2023 at 4.15pm
 Held on MS Teams

			<u>Meetings Attendance</u>
PRESENT:	Tina Coates	Chair	(2 out of 2)
	Gillian May	Group Principal & Chief Executive	(2 out of 2)
	Angela Wellings	Chair of Corporation	(2 out of 2)
	Nathan Garat	Governor	(2 out of 2)
	Janet Robertson	Staff Governor BCA	(1 out of 2)
	Natalie Viola	Staff Governor Strode's	(2 out of 2)
	Alison Wheatley	Staff Governor Langley	(2 out of 2)
	Sali Adams	Student Governor 6 th Form	(2 out of 2)
	Tammi Emms	Student Governor FE	(1 out of 2)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Amanda Down	Principal, Sixth Form	
	Anne Entwistle	Principal, FE	
	Karen Griffiths	Vice Principal Sixth Form	
	Kathryn Seal	VP Apprenticeships, Adults and Commercial	
	Jessica Berry	VP Curriculum Quality and Innovation	
	Laura Peters	Assistant Principal Safeguarding Curriculum & SEND	
	Tracy Reeve	Director of Governance	

<u>MINUTE</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
<u>No</u>		
1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies had been received from Rob Lewis, Signe Sutherland and Mobalaji Alabi.	
2.	<u>Notification of any other urgent business</u> There was no other business notified.	
3.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> No member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.	
4.	<u>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 November 2022</u> The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 November 2022, having been previously sent to members, were agreed as a true record and would be taken as signed by the Chair. All Members were agreed.	
5.	<u>Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Held on 28 November 2022</u> It was noted that all matters arising had been actioned or would be covered within this agenda.	
6.	<u>Curriculum Risk Register 2022/23</u> This item was presented by the Group Principal (GM). Members considered the curriculum risk register 2022/23 detailing the key strategic risks. Members were reminded of the six priorities for TWFCG, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Growth - with a particular focus on 16-19 study programmes. ii. Finance - to maintain "Good" financial health. iii. Quality - to raise academic standards and approve student outcomes to agreed targets. iv. Inclusion - to enhance social mobility through improved access to college provision. v. Alliances - to develop alliances and secure the strategic future of the Group. vi. Resources – to maintain investment in the Colleges resources to provide inspirational teaching and learning. 	

The Group Principal (GM) reminded Governors that the changes to the Risk Register since last seen by the committee were highlighted to aid visibility. The meeting considered the following risks in more detail:

New Risk 1: Uncertainty and risks associated with emerging national curriculum reforms (Current risk score of 16 'amber' after mitigation). The meeting discussed the introduction of technical qualifications at L2 and L3 which would be largely assessed by external exams alongside widespread L3 reforms including the introduction of T-Levels and removal of current BTEC qualifications. As previously highlighted these were likely to have a negative impact on progression options for TWFCG learners and on the College income if provision was defunded. The meeting noted that this would be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

Risk 2: Financial and Quality risk associated with the self-assessed RI grade for Langley College (Current risk score at 16 'amber'). This risk reflected the recently self-assessed grade of 'Requires improvement' for the Langley College Self-Assessment 2021/22. The detailed mitigation was noted by the meeting and GM highlighted the role of Vice-Chair Rob Lewis in acting as a Langley College Link Ambassador to monitor progress with the improvement plan.

Risk 3: Ongoing recruitment & retention of key staff/ Higher staffing costs/ Potential Trade Union action (Current risk score at 16 'amber'). The meeting was reminded of the issue with 'hard-to-fill' vacancies across the FE sector and TWFCG was struggling to deliver some adult courses due to a lack of specialist staff. The meeting discussed the ongoing pressure on staffing costs which was being exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. The meeting also noted the ongoing work on pay harmonisation across the post-merger college group. The Chair of Governors (AW) cited the example of the Early Years sector which was struggling to find staff as many providers were unable to match supermarket salaries.

Risk 4: Under recruitment leads to non-financially viable curriculum areas (Current risk score at 12 'amber'). GM highlighted that this key risk associated with 16-18 enrolment was being closely monitored and managed but remained a challenge.

The meeting discussed the current apparent pay disparity being highlighted in the media with junior doctors potentially being paid less than baristas in coffee shops. However, it was agreed that students needed to be guided towards looking at the longer-term potential with regard to salaries and that by studying they were investing in their future. Principal Sixth Form (AD) informed the meeting that it had become apparent recently that there were a number of learners whose commitment to their studies was being compromised by part-time work. In many cases this was due to family pressures and some students were working long hours. The buoyant job market was compounding this issue, but it was agreed that learners needed to be reminded of the balance between long-term goals and short-term wins. JB suggested that as the college developed closer relationships with local employers there was a need to help them to understand the value of students completing their studies. KS reminded the meeting that the new TWFCG websites and marketing had a clear focus on possible future careers progression and included outline salary rates for future senior positions.

The Curriculum Risk Register was NOTED and RECEIVED.

7. Academic Report

- *In-Year Performance 2022/23:*

The meeting was given a verbal update by the Principal, Sixth Form (AD) and the Principal FE (AE).

Further Education: AE confirmed that current retention was strong across both colleges: BCA at 96.6% and Langley 96.1% against the target of 93%. Attendance at BCA was currently 90.5% for main course (target of 92%), 86.3% for English and 85% for maths. The attendance figure at Langley was 89.3% for main course provision, 76.5% for English and 75.3% for maths. The meeting was reminded that recent rail strikes, and teaching strikes had adversely affected attendance. Although still too low, AE highlighted the improvement in English and Maths attendance at Langley which had been 60% during the prior year). Governors were assured that there was a lot of work being undertaken to follow-up on non-attendance at English and maths which included communication between college and home and celebrating good attendance e.g., 'commendation for good attendance' post cards sent home. The 'progress against target grade' data for BCA was noted as 72.5% at or above target (the KPI

target was noted as 75%). AE informed the meeting that this tracking data was not yet finalised for Langley College but was being expedited.

- *Construction update:* The report also contained an update on the Construction Department. The meeting was reminded that the construction department at Langley College was now under new leadership in order to improve the student experience, quality, and outcomes. under new leadership. Ae confirmed that headway was being made but there was still some way to go. Attendance and all aspects of the Study Programme had improved. Engagement with relevant employers was now a key part of the delivery and curriculum design. A series of webinars - for staff and students – which were part of a Kings College programme had focussed on the construction industry and the way the industry was becoming more digitalised. Vice Principal Curriculum Quality & Innovation (JB) informed the meeting that a deep dive review in construction had taken place on Friday 10 March and a big improvement had been evidence since the last review in December 2022. Students were now on the right courses and very focussed on progression. JB also confirmed that she had seen good Teaching and Learning during the review.

- *Teaching Shapes:* The meeting was given an update on the Teaching Shapes CPD initiative designed and developed at BVCA during 2021/22 and now rolled out to Langley post-merger. JB confirmed that 92% of eligible staff at Langley were now taking part; staff were keen to take part and support each other. The completion rate at BCA was 87% but this was due to the difference in the staffing profile with more part-time staff at BCA. JB highlighted the regular sharing of good practice at weekly Curriculum Briefings on Tuesday at BCA and Wednesdays at Langley. There was now a very positive attitude in relation to development and progressing in Teaching and Learning skills. The meeting noted that 35 staff had applied for the Team Leader apprenticeship across all four colleges.

Sixth Form: Principal Sixth Form (AD) highlighted the ongoing impact of the Covid pandemic which was causing some students to request dropping a course/ reduced programmes. The meeting was also reminded that A level provision was over a two-year programme which was harder to get good retention. Two-year retention was better (79.1% at Strode's and 84.1% at Windsor) but there was still a tail from Covid where learners with TAGs and CAGs were essentially at a lower baseline than their GCSE results suggested, and the academic demands of A Level courses were a challenge for them. The meeting was pleased to note that first year retention had improved. Attendance continued to be an area of focus with actual attendance impacted by travel, sickness and mental health issues. Actual and authorised attendance was 92.7% at Strode's with actual attendance at 85.9% whilst at Windsor, authorised attendance was 92% with actual attendance at 86%. AD confirmed that the college was looking at ways of building resilience in students and parents.

AD highlighted the growth in recruitment across the Sixth Form for 2022-23 with 1014 students enrolled on study programmes at Strode's (compared to 864 in 2021-22) and 603 at Windsor compared to 520. The meeting commended this very strong enrolment.

The in-year Performance 2022/23 report was NOTED.

- *Progress against Quality Improvement Plans 2022/23*

Sixth Form: AD confirmed that the QIP was being fully implemented and monitored, the meeting noted the detailed QIP with current progress clearly identified. The meeting commended the clear format with the visibility of the necessary actions 'towards outstanding'. Ad assured the meeting that clear quality assurance processes and interventions were in place with underperforming courses (Value Added and High Grades) being closely monitored by leaders and managers. The mock exam results for A Level courses had reported 108 U grades across the two colleges but this was expected with the return to the grade boundaries last used in 2019. However, predicted grades were more positive with only 29 currently identified as potential U grades. It was anticipated that this would reduce with student management and interventions between now and the summer exam series. The meeting was pleased to note that the Navigate system was now in place and that it would be used to record student engagement with wider opportunities beyond their programmes of study including work placements, visits to HE providers and employers, workshops, masterclasses and visiting speakers. The Chair (TC) commended this return to a programme of external visits and learning opportunities which were so valuable for learners.

The meeting noted that Wellbeing Rooms had been created on each site, providing a safe place for students who needed additional wellbeing support and guidance. These have been positively received by students as had the Health & Wellbeing Hub on our Student Services

Google site. AD also confirmed that Safeguarding and Prevent training had taken place with all staff and students; the safeguarding team remained highly responsive and had addressed emerging local and national issues to ensure all are informed and safe. Governors noted that 91% of students who completed the January 2023 survey had reported that they felt safe on college site and follow-up calls were made to those who identified concerns. It was noted that many of these were concerns with travel to and from college.

The Skills Agenda remained a focus for the Sixth Form and staff training had been delivered. Staff were collating information on links with businesses, employers, civic groups and HE providers. Key staff were also attending LSIP meetings and plans were in hand to host Business Breakfast meetings at Strode's with planned development of a space to establish a wider engagement hub on site to support growing relationships. The meeting commended the growing relationship with Royal Holloway University.

FE Colleges: AE presented the QIP for Further Education across TWFCG which had a matrix Risk Register behind it. The format of this QIP encouraged ownership throughout all levels of BCA and Langley College. Governors noted that curriculum leads had updated the progress on the QIP monthly and look for any other areas of intervention necessary. Progress against the key areas for improvement (Afls) were noted – many of which related to Langley College. The meeting discussed the following aspects of the FE QIP in more detail.

- Employers – AE confirmed that staff were working more closely with employers so that they would understand what would be asked of them during an Ofsted inspection.
- Parents – staff were working to engage more fully with parents to help build resilience and commitment within the family unit. 'Parent training' drop-in sessions were being provided.
- Safeguarding – this remained a key focus. Students were not always aware of local risks and were often not able to recognise radicalisation threats. Staff were working to ensure that learners were able to verbalise any safeguarding threats. The Chair sought clarity on how management were assuring the necessary ongoing vigilance on safeguarding. AE confirmed that the approach would be to ensure that staff were talking about safeguarding threats all the time to learners to keep them vigilant. Assistant Principal Safeguarding (LP) informed the meeting that the FE Colleges would be holding a Safeguarding Week after the Easter holidays including a focus on knife crime and gambling. A powerful speaker who was a vicar from Inner London was providing a series of hard-hitting speakers to raise learners' awareness over this full week of activities.
- Data reporting was still an issue; BCA data had only just been put into the EBS system.
- The college was trying to encourage value added and high aspirations for students. There was also a focus on progression routes for all so that learners knew the real options to get to where they wanted to be.
- Industry Placement was very strong at both FE Colleges with 678 completed so far at BCA and 455 at Langley. There were a further 642 FE placements planned for completion during the next few months. The Group Principal reminded the meeting that work placement in Sixth Form was managed differently. AD confirmed that this was undertaken in one block during the first week in June after exams. This then led into Progression Days where the learners reflected on their placement and looked at their next steps. This would usually lead to a UCAS application or Higher Apprenticeship being started in early July. AD highlighted that ongoing remote or hybrid working in many areas - e.g accountancy and law – was still presenting challenges in securing work placements. Science placements were also hard to secure due to the age of the learners (under 18) and insurance restrictions in many science or laboratory settings. However, management were looking at how best to manage these limitations to secure the necessary industry placements.

The meeting considered the report and asked questions. Chair of Corporation (AW) suggested that TWFCG should consider using successful alumni stories more in marketing material. The meeting agreed that aspirational displays and stories about real learners were a great motivation e.g. Tom Kerridge attending Gloucester College. AE informed the meeting that Tom Kerridge was working with TWFCG and would be coming into the training restaurant Zest to deliver some masterclasses as well as the Head Chef from Cliveden and a previous MasterChef winner.

The detailed Risk Matrix in the pack relating to Langley College was taken as read but the profile and progress was noted. The Chair (TC) sought clarity on why the whole of the second page of this Risk Matrix was showing as RAG rated red. AE confirmed that this was due to the time of year and the need to wait for data to be available.

It was AGREED that the Risk Matrix data would be updated as soon as possible and circulated to Governors for assurance.

- *Apprenticeships provision*

The meeting noted an update report from VP Adults Apprenticeships and Commercial (KS) which provided an update for Governor on progress made in Apprenticeships since the last Ofsted inspections. The meeting was reminded that at the last two college Ofsted inspections (BCA in 2017 and TWFCG in 2019) the Apprenticeship provision was graded Good at TWFCG and Requires Improvement at BCA. KS reminded the meeting of the main findings in relation to these Ofsted grades.

Key points – Bca RI and TWFCG 'Good'. As per report. KS went through the report. 2019 standards new – TWFCG. Not sure of what involved in EPAs at that point. Highlighted bit.

GM – Amanda Spellman come out this week against online delivery. Drop in sessions for FS delivery so they have support in the room.

72 in pipeline invited to a 'prep-up' programme to get Level 1/ 2 FS before they start on programme. (Starting after Easter.)

561 to complete this year 58% ach Langley and BCA 68% likely outturn 62% across the group (NA 57%). Need to be above 60% (GM) ???

- *High Needs provision*

Laura – High Needs – as per report

Gillian – spoke to lead for Foundation at Langley today. From 2 years ago were aiming for 60 learners 23/24. New applications on track for 60. Much better balance post-merger of foundation students between BCA and Langley.

Very confident about that area at inspection.

Laura – easily make 60. Looking at offer across the board – hospitality, hair and beauty offer at Langley. Make offer for campus based on curriculum area.

AW – numbers great. High Needs view – cosy but not prepared for jobs and continued learning so that makes absolute sense. Great to know about long term outcomes and destinations even those with most complex needs. Laura – yes agree.

That why focussing on supported internships. Need to be mindful of exit routes and progress.

ACTION – destination of Foundation learners for next meeting.

- *Higher Education (HE) and Access to HE*

The meeting noted a report which updated the meeting on further progress made since last reported in November 2022. Growth in enrolment numbers for 2022-23 had been secured with 155 students enrolled across the college group on HE and Access to HE programmes (September 2022). Principal Sixth Form (AD) highlighted the positive impact of the new team structure - amalgamating HE and Access to HE – which had enabled more effective support for staff to be put in place and greater consistency in approach and delivery. A new Pastoral and Welfare Support Tutor, appointed at the start of the academic year, had improved student support and the promotion of wider engagement. Students and staff commented on the positive benefits of this role in a recent survey which included delivery of tutorials and engagement with the wider skills agenda.

New courses in both HE and Access to HE were successfully launched in September 2022: Access to HE in Criminology and Law and Foundation Degree in Professional Practice in Health & Social Care.

AD also highlighted the successful application to the Higher Technical Education Skills Injection Fund which would be used to support the development of new facilities and resources for HE courses in L4 Intense Laser Therapy & the Foundation Degree in Professional Practice in Health and Social Care.

A new Foundation Year with Education would be delivered in conjunction with St Mary's University from September 2023 providing alternative pathways for students interested in

progressing into education and/or teaching (progression also available into University of West London).

The meeting noted that a successful Internal Quality Review (IQR) had been completed with key strengths and areas for development identified. Staff and students had found the review useful, and the meeting was assured that a clear action plan was in place to secure improvements. Current priorities included:

- A review of the interviewing and enrolment processes for Access to HE to ensure improved student experience and high-quality Information and Guidance (IAG) to support improved retention.
- Further training and quality assurance checks to ensure continued consistency in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment across the provision.
- The need to support ESOL students on Pre-Access and Access programmes with English for Academic Purposes.
- The new College Marketing team were working on an updated strategy to support improved promotion of HE and Access to HE courses. A particular focus would be given to planned new courses including HND in Digital Technologies, Foundation Year Education Studies, Foundation Degree in Professional Practice in Health & Social Care and Access to Criminology and Law to be agreed.
- Planning and preparation for new courses (September 2024) including Access to Veterinary Nursing and Animal Management to be completed.
- Planning and preparation for L5 Learning and Skills Teacher apprenticeship to be completed.

The meeting commended the strong enrolment and in-year performance as well as the clear developmental action plan.

The Academic Report was NOTED and RECEIVED

8. Student Voice Feedback

The meeting noted the detailed positive feedback from recent Student and Parent surveys much of which had been centered on the entry level and foundation learning students.

Other student feedback had flagged consistency as an issue whilst moving from Moodle to Google, but governors were assured that many of the issues had now been addressed. The meeting talked about the Study Plus requirement for 40+ hours of delivery which was a new 'ask' for students and staff. The feedback on learners seeking additional 'skills' training needed clarification on what was required as additionality, but current thinking was that this was in relation to study skills and time management. The meeting was pleased to hear that the Student Parliament was about to restart at Langley College and commended the clear mechanisms for student voice.

The Student Voice report was NOTED.

9. Applications Report

- *16-18 Learners*

The Group Principal (GM) presented the current position with applications for 2023/24 as recorded on 7 March 2023. Across the group applications were 12.6% higher than at the same point in the prior year. The individual colleges were showing growth in applications as follows:

- BCA 1218 applicants (19% increase)
- Langley 545 applicants (27.6% increase)
- Strode's 1128 applicants (7.1% increase)
- Windsor 681 applicants (2.4% increase)

GM reminded the meeting that the applications at Windsor had seen a very large increase for 2022/23 so any further growth on the current baseline was impressive. Governors noted that updated data would be brought to the Corporation on 22 March 2023. It was also highlighted that the majority of interviews would be completed by the end of April 2023.

- *Adult recruitment*

GM highlighted the strong in-year funding performance against the GLA allocation. The College was currently forecasting to be at 120% of allocation and had submitted a growth request. The performance against the Adult Education Budget was also very strong – 75%

achievement Year-to-date with 110% predicted at year-end. GM highlighted the positive impact made by the new VP Adults (KS) who was confident that the previous poor AEB performance could be turned around. The meeting commended this major step forward and agreed that it was very positive to be able to talk about growth in this provision. This improved performance would be reflected in the mid-year reforecast 2022/23 coming to the Governing Body on 22 March 2023 along with the increased Apprenticeship income now forecast at £2.1m for 2022/23 (£1.6m in the prior year).

The Applications Report was NOTED.

10. Curriculum Development: 16-18 Study Programmes

The meeting noted a report which gave the meeting an update on a recent announcement in relation to an uplift in T Level funding.

Proposed changes to level 3 qualifications: The meeting noted the exchange of letters that had taken place between the College and the Skills Minister (Robert Halfon) in relation to concerns around the proposed changes to level 3 qualifications, i.e. the move to T Levels with BTECs being defunded. The Group Principal (GM) confirmed that this was part of a sector-wide campaign being orchestrated by the Association of Colleges (AoC) to lobby local MPs. GM also gave the meeting a verbal update on the meeting that had been held at BCA with Theresa May to raise concerns around the defunding of specific BTECS which had no T Level replacement. Protective Services Students had attended this meeting and talked very articulately about the value of the BTEC to them and their long-term career outcomes. As a result of this meeting TM had agreed to approach the Skills Minister directly to raise these specific concerns. The AoC was also using this example as a case-study within the arguments against de-listing of BTECs. GM also reminded the meeting that another affected area of the curriculum would be Travel and Tourism (T&T) where there was no planned T Level, but the BTEC would be delisted. This was not sensible for colleges such as TWFCG where proximity to Windsor and Heathrow Airport meant that careers in T&T were key to the locality. The meeting was reminded of the very successful work that Langley College was doing with Jobcentre + in this area; nine adults who had undertaken the training at TWFCG were interviewed last week by EasyJet and all received a job offer. The meeting agreed that this was great validation for the LEP funded aviation centre at Langley College. VP Apprenticeships Adults and Commercial (KS) informed the meeting that representatives of Heathrow Airport had been into Langley College earlier in the day to look at starting short course training for staff in retail and security. After a short course at TWFCG participants would then be interviewed for a role at Heathrow. GM confirmed that other local MPs were also being lobbied – Windsor and Surrey – and meetings were being scheduled to raise their awareness of the issues around level 3 qualifications.

The Curriculum Development Report was NOTED

11. Ofsted Update

The Director of Governance (TR) highlighted a PowerPoint ***presentation from Ofsted*** Inspector, Paul Joyce, that had been presented to a recent conference for Governance Professionals. This provided current data on the overall performance of the sector within the Ofsted Inspection Framework, highlighted the current challenges facing FE colleges and gave more detail on the new Enhanced Inspection regime now in place which would also review how well colleges were identifying and contributing to local skills needs. The Group Principal Confirmed that TWFCG was feeling all of the challenges identified in the Ofsted presentation including: the ongoing impact and recovery from the Covid pandemic; funding rates; recruiting and retaining staff; and ongoing inflationary pressures on non-pay and pay costs.

- *Ofsted Careers Visit:*

The Principal FE (AE) informed the meeting that an ex-Ofsted HMI had been in BCA earlier in the day to talk about careers and guidance (IAG). Now an inspector for the Gatsby Institute this researcher had met staff, students, and leaders to talk about IAG across the College Group. AE was pleased to report to the meeting that she had received positive feedback after the visit on how well careers was integrated into the FE portfolio. Although he had focussed on BCA, discussions had also included changes being implemented at Langley College. At the end of the day the 'inspector' had cited a strong student-centred approach with numerous examples of exemplary practice. He had agreed that the Gatsby Benchmarks for IAG had been fully met. However, the Group Principal did assert her belief that the SLT did need to

develop a stronger cross-college careers strategy with a cohesive careers hub. The meeting agreed that this had been a very positive result and was great preparation for any forthcoming Ofsted inspection.

The Ofsted Update was NOTED

- 12. Dates and Times of Future Meetings
These were noted as: Wednesday 14 June 2023 @ 5pm (online)
- 13. Any Urgent Business
There was no urgent other business notified.

The meeting ended at 6.00pm

Chair Date