



THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

'Deep Dive' into Langley College Quality Improvement Plan

Tuesday 20 June 2023 at 5.00pm (*online via Zoom*)

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| PRESENT: | Tina Coates | Chair |
| | Paul Britton | Governor |
| | Nathan Garat | Governor |
| | Anthony Haines | Governor |
| | Rob Lewis | Governor |
| | Janet Robertson | Staff Governor BCA |
| | Signe Sutherland | Governor |
| | Gillian May | Group Principal & Chief Executive |
| | Antonia Spinks | Co-opted Member of Q&C Committee (<i>part attendance</i>) |
| | Alison Wheatley | Governor |
| | Angela Wellings | Chair of Corporation |
| | Aaina Khan | Student Governor FE |

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| IN ATTENDANCE: | Amanda Down | Principal, Sixth Form |
| | Anne Entwistle | Principal, FE |
| | Jessica Berry | Vice Principal (FE) Curriculum Quality and Innovation |
| | Laura Peters | Assistant Principal FE |
| | Tracy Reeve | Director of Governance |

MINUTE

No

1. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies had been received from Angela Wellings, Signe Sutherland, Mobalaji Alabi and Aaina Khan.
2. **Notification of any other urgent business**
There was no other business notified.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
No member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.
4. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 May 2023**
The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 May 2023, 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. **Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Held on 23 May 2023**
It was noted that all matters arising had been actioned or would be covered within this agenda.
6. **LANGLEY COLLEGE 'DEEP DIVE'**
- 6.1 **Langley College Quality Improvement Plan**
The Principal FE (AE) presented the report which gave governors an update on progress against the improvement plan for Langley College; AE highlighted the progress made during the year and the more positive picture for Langley College. The meeting was reminded that data was not yet available to evidence the improvement but positive feedback from students and staff supported the cultural change which had been achieved over the last two years. The meeting considered specific progress with the areas highlighted within the Langley College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

ACTION

➤ English and Maths

AE highlighted the effort that had been put into improving attendance at English and Maths lessons and the resulting examination this year. Curriculum teams and support staff had worked together and had responded quickly to poor attendance. AE informed the meeting that management were thrilled with the high level of attendance at the GCSE exams this year. Attendance at GCSE resit exams had been close or equal to 90% for all sittings and the third of three maths papers had an attendance rate of 95% (> 15% higher than in the previous year). AE informed the meeting that students had proved to be very resilient in managing to get into college for the exams even when faced with train strikes. Learners had walked and cycled into campus and the minibus had been despatched to pick up stranded students. The meeting noted that GCSE revision sessions had been held in the half term holiday period for the first time at Langley and were well attended. This practice would be carried forward to future years.

➤ Industry placement

AE confirmed that all curriculum areas now recognised the importance of a purposeful industry placement (IP) for their students; the IP team had worked closely with teaching staff, students, and employers to set clear expectations. The meeting noted that all students had attended a placement linked to their course of study and career aspirations. Students' part-time places of work had not been accepted s placements and students were encouraged to gain a wider understanding of their chosen industry. Curriculum staff had carried out up to 50% of placement visits which allowed staff to see the difference that being on placement made to learners. This had also allowed Langley College staff to develop relevant employer links. AE confirmed that one of the elements tested in the recent Quality Review Boards had centred around staff interactions with relevant employers. The meeting noted that student feedback had indicated that the industry placement element of their study programme was very important in helping learners to choose their next steps. Teaching staff reported an improvement in student focus, motivation and maturity following this experience. AE confirmed that, year-to-date 2022/23 63% of Langley students had completed a full placement. This number would increase by the end of the academic year as some students were currently mid placement, and some were still to start. Management was hoping that this figure would reach 70% by year end 2022/23 which would be a significant improvement on the prior year.

➤ Tutorial provision

AE informed the meeting that there was still work to be done on this element of the QIP. The meeting noted that individual tutorials were not yet consistent, and students were not always aware of their progress or 'smart' targets. There was also a lack of emphasis on destinations. Governors were assured that further staff training was planned prior to September 2023. AE reminded the meeting that a lot of the group tutorial material was quite challenging for staff to deliver, and they needed to be given the skill set to tackle these 'difficult' subjects e.g. addiction, county lines, safeguarding. AE informed the meeting that an online tutorials resource called 'The Day' had been introduced to provide materials for group tutorials; these sessions were essential to prepare all learners for life in the wider world. AE assured the meeting that robust monitoring and auditing of tutorial delivery was planned for 2023/24 to ensure equality of opportunity and consistency across TWFCG.

➤ Consistency in quality of provision

AE confirmed that good progress had been made in consistency and the quality of provision across Langley College. This had been achieved by the use of peer involvement in deep dive and learning walk activity as well as weekly 'bite-sized' curriculum briefings. These had allowed staff to observe and share good practice across all FE provision and feedback had informed training and professional development planning. The meeting was assured that Curriculum Directors were encouraged to analyse individual and team learning walk/deep dive feedback alongside student attendance, outcomes and learner voice feedback to fully recognise and understand areas of strength and areas for improvement. AE confirmed that the weekly curriculum leader and manager meetings were well attended. All of the above sharing of good practice across the Group was yielding real quality improvement.

➤ Parent/carer engagement

AE confirmed that this element of the QIP continued to be a challenge and a plan to improve engagement with parents and carers was underway. Parents and carers had been invited to attend the student celebrations at the end of the academic year. The meeting noted that planned changes to the enrolment process would encourage parents to attend to see the college and to meet the team. In addition, all students would be required to bring in proof of

identity and address at enrolment and parents would also be asked for their contact details. This would mitigate the lack of parental contact data or wrong data being given at enrolment by students which had caused issues during the current academic year. It was also noted that for 2023/24, information, joining instructions and invitations to parents' events would be offered in different languages to ensure inclusivity and understanding.

➤ Safeguarding

AE assured the meeting that safeguarding all students and apprentices was management's highest priority. Attendance and engagement with the recent Safeguarding Week held at Langley College had been excellent. Police, mental health agencies, ex-professional footballers and other key external professionals were amongst speakers who covered a wide range of relevant and diverse topics. These talks informed learners of local risks, how to make positive choices and how to keep themselves safe. This helped to provide a focus for learners on the local and contextualised risks. In addition, many external organisations offered drop-in support and guidance during every lunch break. Across the week 1,500 students attended at least one session. Feedback from speakers reported that Langley students were well behaved, engaged and respectful.

➤ Student support

AE informed the meeting that Langley College was gaining an improved reputation for student support. Curriculum staff now worked closely with all support departments. Staff training during 2022/23 had increased awareness of student needs and strategies for effectively supporting students in their learning environment. Costed learning support had been increased for students with disclosed learning needs and/or Education and Health Care (EHC) plans. Pastoral tutors supported positive attendance and retention by removing barriers to learning and all elements of Student Services were based in the same area of the college – the Learning Centre - to encourage collaboration and a joined-up approach to student support (academic, financial and pastoral). This reputational improvement was evidenced by the fact that the Foundation Department in Langley had received 50 applications compared with 30 for the same time last year.

➤ Student experience and behaviour

AE reminded the meeting that student experience and behaviour would be a focus for any Ofsted inspection. AE confirmed that her experience of student behaviour at Langley during 2022/23 was exemplary, she had not seen any instances of trouble. Learners respected each other and the staff; feedback from employers in the workplace or when they had come into the Langley Campus had also been very positive in relation to student behaviour. AE informed the meeting that staff just need to work on ensuring consistency in students' readiness to learn i.e. having the correct equipment, being in the room and ready to start lessons. This would be a focus from the start of 2023/24.

The meeting noted that newly appointed student development officers (SDOs) had run a wide range of enrichment activities at Langley with strong student and apprentice participation at all events. Students had enjoyed a diverse range of sports and creative activities plus out-of-hours cookery classes. AE informed the meeting that since the end of February 700 students had engaged with these activities with a core group of more than 50 learners attending regularly. The meeting was pleased to note that these activities had challenged stereotypes with female students playing sport in male dominant space and more male than female students attending the cookery classes. Student feedback had reported improved confidence in the cohort, they felt recognised and supported as many activities celebrated culture and difference. The student voice was now largely positive, with students talking enthusiastically about their experience at Langley College. Feedback also confirmed that learners felt safe and that they appreciated the calm and inclusive environment.

The Link Governor for Langley (NG) talked about his recent visit into Langley Campus and how impressed he had been with the changes in culture and the positive environment. NG asserted that the students all seemed very focussed and knew what they were aiming to do in terms of next steps and destinations. AE asserted the value of governors coming on site and confirmed that the students had all been really keen to meet and talk to NG. VP Further Education (JB) confirmed that governors would always be welcomed to come in and meet students as there were lots more groups who did not get to interact with NG on the day.

The meeting discussed the issues with 'readiness to learn' facing some students. Governors sought clarification on whether this was a local issue or something that was generically affecting all colleges post-pandemic. AE asserted that this had always been an issue with learners, they needed to see the classroom in the same way that they viewed a workplace.

Assistant Principal FE (LP) confirmed that the issue was consistency and ensuring that all learners were ready to learn. LP informed the meeting that the student management processes for 2023/24 had just been finalised; this would include clear expectations for staff and student behaviour which would support with readiness to learn. Good habits in classroom behaviour and management would be established at the start of the next academic year.

6.2 **Langley retention data**

The meeting noted the three-year retention trend and was pleased to see the improvement with 16-18 retention now at 91% for year-to-date 2022/23 versus 87% in the prior year and 86% in 2020/21. AE was hopeful that this rate would be maintained until the year-end 2022/23. The retention rate for 19+ learners was flat at 88% for the last three years. AE highlighted that the development of clear curriculum pathways now ensured an inclusive offer with progression opportunities for all; it was crucial to ensure that students were on the right course for them to maximise success. The additional learning team were involved in interviews, where appropriate, to ensure that student support needs were recognised and that arrangements were in place so that they would be fully met from September 2023. This was expected to have a positive impact on recruitment and retention for 2023/24.

[Antonia Spinks joined the meeting.]

6.3 **Ongoing challenges at Langley College**

➤ Attendance reporting

AE highlighted the ongoing challenges in relation to attendance reporting at Langley. Historically attendance reporting had not always been transparent. It had recently come to light – as management explored main course attendance against GCSE resit classes – that a 'P' mark had been accepted as a positive register mark. AE explained that a 'P' indicated that students had been given 'private study' but were not required to be in college or in the classroom. AE confirmed that staff had been using this P designation for reasons that were not necessarily student focussed. Governors were assured that now this practice had been discovered staff now knew it was not an appropriate course of action and it would not happen in the future. The meeting noted that Curriculum Directors and leads now understood that this was no longer an option. The meeting considered the risk matrix which showed actual attendance versus reported attendance. The meeting considered the areas with low attendance and the biggest area was within Professional Development which probably reflected poor quality of delivery. AE confirmed that this area would be a focus for quality support in 2023/24, management would be working with the teams to secure improvement, but it was important for governors to recognise the starting point. The meeting noted the detailed data by curriculum area showing reported attendance, actual attendance, maths and English attendance and professional development attendance.

➤ Data

AE informed the meeting that data reports continued to be complicated and difficult to navigate. User friendly data dashboards were planned to be available for the new academic year but teaching staff would require training to understand the value of these reports and how to use them effectively to inform intervention and business needs.

➤ Stretch and challenge

The meeting noted that some departments at Langley did not yet set high enough expectations and were not sufficiently aspirational for their students' academic outcomes and destinations. AE confirmed that Level 3 students target grades were calculated via the ALPS system but historically this was not done for L1 and 2 learners. The meeting noted that from September 2023 this would be done for all learners to encourage stretch and challenge.

The Chair of the Committee thanked AE for the update and commended the progress made at Langley College during the last two years (pre- and post-merger). The student experience as well as outcomes had been positively transformed. The CEO confirmed that staff and the senior management team felt very positive about Langley College now, it was a nice place to work, and the sense of community was now strong. It was an exciting promising environment for work and learning.

The Quality Improvement Plan update for Langley College was NOTED and RECEIVED.

ACTION: An update on the Langley College outcomes to be provided to the September 2023 Quality & Curriculum Committee meeting.

AE/ TR

7.

Apprenticeship Update

The CEO (GM) presented an update report and a new Risk Register which had been drawn up to reflect the current concerns around Apprenticeships at TWFCG. This provided the Quality & Curriculum Committee with an update following the 'deep dive' meeting held on 25 April 2023 specifically to look at Apprenticeships. GM provided an update to the governing body with respect to the current and forecasted performance of the apprenticeship provision and the risks associated with the provision (as documented in the apprenticeship risk register). GM confirmed that she had discussed this new Risk Register with the Link Governor for Apprenticeships (SS).

➤ *Forecast Achievement 2022/23*

GM updated the meeting on the current position with forecast achievement for Apprenticeships across the college group. The following was highlighted:

- The forecasted achievement at year-end 2022/23 for the group was 64.5% (the current figure was 48.6%). Governors were reminded that the ESFA had set a minimum target of 60% for 2022/23. It was noted that there were a number of apprentices at BCA that needed to be put through their End Point Assessment (EPA) but action was being taken to rectify this; 14 BCA apprentices completed their EPA in the preceding week. However, there was still risk around the achievement rate for 2022/23 at BCA.
- Achievement at Langley College was positive – at circa 68% - and ahead by 10% on the prior year. Governors were pleased to note that there was evidence of 'Outstanding' provision in construction and engineering (Motor Vehicle).
- The Apprenticeship programme at BCA was still in recovery. The key curriculum areas that management had under review were Horticulture and Landscape where predicted achievement was 26%. GM confirmed that there appeared to be too many continuers and too many withdrawals; a recent exercise had been undertaken to cleanse the data at BCA and withdraw all learners who should have been taken off the ILR already. This had resulted in a drop in the year-end forecast income from £2.5m to £2.1m for 2022/23 but the meeting was reminded that this was £450,000 more than generated in the prior year. GM confirmed that this level of income would be held steady for 2023/24 as quality improvement needed to be assured before contract growth was sought.
- It had been identified that further training was required to ensure that the skills coaches at BCA understood the mechanics of 'standards' (as opposed to 'frameworks'). GM confirmed that the HR Team were looking at contracts for the BCA Apprenticeship staff and what needed to be done to create a strong team. GM highlighted that historically the support team/ back-office function for Apprenticeships at BCA had been under-resourced. This had been exacerbated by the problems with the DAS account after merger and BCA being required to manually move their employers onto the WFCG DAS account. GM confirmed that the ESFA were well aware of this procedural challenge post-merger.

➤ *Key Risks Associated With The Apprenticeship Provision*

The meeting discussed the Apprenticeship Risk Register which had the following key risks that the Group faced going into a potential Ofsted inspection:

- i. Failure to meet the National Average due to achievement challenges at BCA.
- ii. The current on-line method of delivery for functional skills does not deliver the outcomes needed for our learners.
- iii. Data Errors and onboarding rates for BCA apprentices leading to lower funding.
- iv. A slow-down in the recruitment of apprentices for 2023 resulting in falling income for 2023/24.
- v. Insufficient employer feedback does not allow for improvements to provision.

GM asserted that she saw the biggest challenge around the delivery of English and maths (E&M) as well as Functional Skills (FS). Online delivery had been tried as well as block delivery on a face-to-face basis. GM informed the meeting that the block delivery model was going to be tried again with FS and E&M being frontloaded. AE highlighted the struggle that was often faced by the College with some employers being reticent to release apprentices for FS and E&M. VP FE (JB) informed the meeting that the E&M Lead at Langley College was now part of the AoC national team looking at methods of getting disengaged learners to engage with E&M. The College would be rolling out the results of this work to all learners at TWFCG including Apprentices. Governors noted that the implementation plan for TWFCG would look at the strategy around block delivery and what order the modules were delivered

in and why; this rationale would be shared with learners, parents and employers to increase understanding and engagement. There was also a need to ensure that the best teachers were used to deliver the FS modules in a short period. This would be harder to achieve with English as there was three elements to the qualification. However, the focus would be on using the expertise within the WFCG to its best advantage.

The meeting discussed the risks and Governors (AH) sought confirmation on whether the college understood the hurdles of the apprenticeship paperwork for learners and reasons for withdrawals. GM informed the meeting that withdrawal was often due to personal reasons or the loss of employment; often this information was not passed on to the college. In addition, Apprentices were often young employees in the world of work and the working and studying route was not necessarily right for everyone. GM confirmed that it was a key aim to ensure that the same level of pastoral care was provided for apprentices as for 16-18 learners as they faced the same challenges.

The meeting took the detailed tracking sheet – showing the various frameworks and standards - as read but were assured that management were confident that the year-end position would not breach the minimum level of performance. Governors were please to note that a large number of carpentry apprentices had achieved 'Distinction' in their EPA. The committee chair (TC) questioned why the numbers on some apprenticeship routes were so low and whether these were cost effective in terms of delivery. GM reminded the meeting that each different framework/ standard had a different monetary value and timeframe for delivery. Arboriculture was the highest value and Hairdressing was at the lowest end in terms of funding value. GM informed the meeting that the management team had just completed a comprehensive curriculum planning process which had looked at 16-18 group sizes. This exercise would now be taken forward for Apprenticeships and whether delivery would be better through a broader – less targeted - apprenticeship with bigger numbers. GM confirmed that the current pipeline for some apprenticeship programmes would mean that changes were needed. The meeting commended the good work undertaken by the apprenticeship team to flush the data issues through.

The meeting agreed that it was crucial for update reporting on Apprenticeships to be provided to Quality & Curriculum Committee to reflect the level of ongoing risk. GM confirmed that the Group VP Business Development had agreed to take on responsibility for keeping a forensic eye on the apprenticeship data and tracking to ensure that the planned changes were having a positive effect.

The Apprenticeship Update report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

ACTION: Standing update report on Apprenticeships (including the Apprenticeship Risk Register) to be brought to the Quality & Curriculum Committee.

GM/ TR

8. **Dates and Times of Future Meetings**

The draft meeting dates for 2023/24 were noted as:

- Tuesday 26 September 2023, 5.00pm 'Deep Dives 2022/23 Update'
- Tuesday 21 November 2023, 5.00pm
- Thursday 14 March 2024, 5.00pm
- Wednesday 19 June 2024, 5.00pm

(All to be held online via Zoom.)

The Director of Governance (TR) confirmed that these dates would be confirmed after the meeting timetable was approved by the Board on 5 July 2023.

NOTED

9. **Any Urgent Business**

There was no urgent other business notified.

The meeting ended at 6.05 pm

Chair Date