

Minutes



Meeting	Quality and Standards Committee		
Date	Tuesday 19 November 2024	Time	17:00-19:00
Venue	Google meet		

Membership:	Donna Clifford (acting Chair); Katie Asgari; Simon Ashton; Jason Austin; Heather Barnett; Sally Gillborn; Jack Pike; Ian Sutherland; Fatima Sabir; Carol Stanfield; Louise Woodcock
In attendance:	Tracey Mace-Akroyd (Deputy Principal/CEO (DCEO); Lucy Barnwell (Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing); James Godsell (Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships); Cheryl Martin (Director of Quality and Academic Standards); Laura Reid (Director of Safeguarding and Student Support); Mark Ryan (Vice Principal Curriculum); Dan Stanbra (Director of Adult Education, Contracts and English & maths); Sarah Connerty (Director of Governance and minute taker)

	Item	Action
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting and welcomed new governors Louise and Simon to their first Committee and governors introduced themselves. Apologies received from Katie Asgari, Sally Gillborn and the Student Governors.	
2.	Declarations of interest There were no declarations received.	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2024 RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on the 24 September were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
4.	Matters arising The majority of actions have been completed with three ongoing: Action 2: improving the effectiveness of Board and Committee papers. Work is underway and feedback from governors is coming to the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee on the 27 November. Part of the work will include a session with Jason Thomas around the capabilities of google to support effective papers and storage for governance. Action 1 from the Finance and Resources Committee: assurance that there is granular reporting for adult education. Included on the agenda at item 11. Actions from June 2024: Action 1: Looking at an impact KPI on transition to positive outcomes for care experience learners and Actions 4 and 5: Adult Education and Contracts - correlation when the results come in across attendance and achievement and work with the Director of Adult Education and Contracts on where areas of low attendance and high achievement are to see what other support learners are receiving. It was agreed that a piece of work when the results are in looking at lower attendance and higher grades. The DCEO reported that the Group is now reported on R14 and a report will come to the next meeting covering these actions.	DCEO
5.	Safeguarding and Prevent [action 1 from 24 June] and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	
6.	FREDIE Action Plan 2024-2025 update	

	<p>The Director of Safeguarding and Student Support reported that in response to feedback from the Committee the report now only includes updates since the last meeting. The Committee took the report as read and the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a staffing issue with the Wellbeing mentor post at Rotherham and a new person is joining the team in December. One governor asked if there are any broader issues or support required for the role and it was noted the difficulties were related to personal issues with a bereavement and family illness. Team members have had a course in supervision and formal supervision on a monthly basis • The Health Practitioner has now started in role and this is being monitored and assessed for impact. One governor asked what are the success measures. The role is a temporary contract focusing on reducing the number of learners leaving class and going home and putting in place plans for longer term sickness. This is a very new role and measures will link into attendance and retention • One governor asked about the Increase in high needs students by 55 to 223 which has exceeded the 178 funded places and asked about the capacity to provide the right support and the funding. Rotherham are the lead Local Authority and the numbers are negotiated by Rotherham Borough Council and then sent out to all the other Local Authorities. The Group has made the decision not to increase guaranteed numbers into the next academic year, but the Group will still apply for funding for learners that exceed this number. The Committee noted that the Exec needs to ensure that the right funding is in place for support for high needs students. A new interim staff member has joined the Group (Louise Turner) who is focused on looking at the high needs curriculum and performance for this year, the role reports directly to the DCEO. 	
7.	<p>Self-Assessment Report 2023-2024</p> <p>The Director of Quality and Academic Standards detailed the Self-Assessment Report recommended grades for 2023-4:</p> <p>Self-assess as Good overall with Outstanding features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of education is good; • All types of provision are good, with the exception of adult learning programmes which are outstanding; • All key judgements are good, with the exception of behaviour & attitudes and personal development which are outstanding; • Safeguarding is effective; • The contribution of the Group to meeting skills needs is strong. <p>The SAR is subject to robust professional discussion and scrutiny of Ofsted's Further Education and Skills handbook and the timetable is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAR scrutiny panel, 5 November 2024, comprising: External Representative (Pauline Hughes Vice Principal of Quality and Student Experience at Kirklees College); Chair and members of Quality and Standards Committee; Executive Leadership Team; Senior Leadership Team • Today's SAR validation by the Quality & Standards Committee • SAR ratification by Board, 11 December 2024 <p>One governor confirmed that she had looked through the SAR and the changes from the panel have been implemented. The changes proposed by governors and the external member had been to make the SAR better with evaluative impact evidence, rather than any major issues and it is a really strong document. One main request from the panel was to align the area of focus with the content of the SAR and this has been done. Committee members who were not present at the panel were asked to consider the SAR to see how they view it and the Director of Quality and Academic Standards noted that everyone's feedback is welcome and the comments from the panel were very much valued. Following on from the</p>	

	<p>panel, where the external member and governors felt very strongly that there were elements that had not been graded as positively as they could have done, the Quality of Education sub judgment has been graded Outstanding for intent, noting that it takes a while for the impact to come through.</p> <p>Recommended grades are: Overall Effectiveness – Good Quality of Education – Good Behaviour and Attitudes – Outstanding Personal Development – Outstanding Leadership and Management – Good Governance – Effective Safeguarding – Effective The contribution to the Group meeting skills needs – Strong Education Programmes for Young People – Good Adult Learning Programmes – Outstanding Apprenticeships – Good Provision for Learners who are Vulnerable and Have High Needs – Good</p> <p>One governor noted the reference to Jenny Worsdale and it was confirmed as the SAR is for 2023-4 this is correct. One governor asked about the reference to 11,000 learners and 14,000 learning aims and it was confirmed that some learners have more than one aim.</p> <p>The DCEO noted that the Group has to follow the Ofsted handbook and ensure there is evidence to support the recommended grades. If Ofsted came in next week the Group feels these grades would stand up, be evidenced and they are believed in and owned by staff. In the last inspection in 2022 everything was graded as Good but in almost all criteria there were Outstanding bullets and further progress has been made. For key judgement grades to be outstanding or good, the provision types have to stack up and they all have to be at least Good which they are.</p> <p>Skills contribution has moved up to a Strong contribution. The Group was one of the first colleges to go through the new judgement grade. A key area is developing networking and collaboration and having employers involved in curriculum design, implementation and delivery, skills and outreach work and this has to map across to curriculum intent. The Group feels there is a strong intent in this area and Employer Academies are in place across almost all curriculum areas.</p> <p>One of the new governors noted that it is helpful to have the background of how the Group got here and what would be defended in an Ofsted conversation. The narrative, areas for focus and data all stack up with a really strong narrative. It is reassuring as a governor to see how that was worked through.</p> <p>The Committee thanked the Director of Quality and Academic Standards and everyone who has worked on the SAR for a really good and positive read.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Board recommended to approve the Self-Assessment Report 2023-4 to the Board</p>	
8.	<p>Applications and Enrolments 2024-25 and Curriculum Planning</p> <p>The Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing took the report as read and the following was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HE data – there is a lot of work to do on the pipeline. Last year the Group only recruited low numbers from FE to HE progression delivered at the UCR/campuses. 	

	<p>The team are working hard on this with a progression event scheduled for the 12 December with buses between the campuses to encourage learners to attend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DCEO reported that a decision has been made to pull Sport and Public Services and alternative opportunities are being looked at • Work is underway on the pipeline, intent to progress, looking at application processes and work on raising aspirations to Level 4 and 5 learning, and enrolling more Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and Degree Apprenticeships. ACTION: Further details will come to the next meeting • There is work to do on the progression and pipeline of Level 3 learners One governor noted the information on HE at item 11.4 and work on looking at the HE strategy overall • One governor asked about work with employers and it was agreed that is an important area of focus. The Group are looking at developing a product that is more skills focused and employers are a key part of this. There was a recent meeting at the Bridge Skills Hub focused on how to change the narrative and promote the Skills Hub and what is happening in the Worksoop area. A piece of work through the Employer Forums and getting employers to work on our curriculum will take place • South Yorkshire Colleges are discussing the first wave of HTQs. A lot is around how fit for purpose they are. The target market is to reskill and upskill current employees and asking a joiner at 43 to write an 18000 assignment is not the best fit. There is more flexibility with the Higher National Certificate (HNC) and the Higher National Diploma (HND) to work with employers and employees for what is right for them and include elements relevant for their employee's progression and development. As part of HTQ development the curriculum teams are working with the Business Development team to provide the intent and purpose for the qualification so when the teams are talking with employers they can explain how the Group can support through other areas of curriculum. <p>One governor noted that it is fundamentally about what the purpose of the Group's HE offer is. One governor noted that it is about identifying where your strengths are in the range of HE opportunities in the region, the knock on effects on other large HE providers, working with employers, identifying what is the offer at Level 4 and 5, identifying what is different about the Group's environment and differentiating that offer. The Group has such success with supporting learners and this is a key strength to focus on and market.</p> <p>There was a discussion about targets and how the Group needs to clearly identify what its targets are. Prescribed and non-prescribed HE can sit in the data and it is about how to display and report on the Group's data going forward.</p> <p>The Chair asked for any feedback from the HE strategy group. The DCEO updated that there was a good discussion about where the Group's USP is moving. This is not for Marketing to lead and the Directors of Campus provided examples of what they are doing. This work will be pulled together and an overarching decision will be made on what the Group's USP is for HE, targets will be based on what has been achieved so far, and then it will be shared for wider consultation before Marketing will start their work. It was agreed it is important to know that there is a pipeline.</p> <p>Enrolments are positive at 3732 against a target of 3670. Applications for 2024-5 are 185 compared to 6 last year. The first open event took place at Rotherham College. This year families were taken into departments to see facilities and met with staff and engaged in activities and there were increased numbers of visitors. This Saturday there are open days at NNC and DVC.</p>	DCEO
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	<p>The VP Curriculum reported that on the 25 November a curriculum planning day will take place with externals coming in to share aspects of labour market information (LMI) and the teams will look at growth markets, adults, high needs, USP and direction, HE, marketing, enrolment and numbers. Work is underway around stakeholders and influencing the curriculum. The plan is to constantly look at and progress the curriculum. Some changes have been made to the forecast with three-year reporting looking at birth rates, progression through years and profiling for adults to make it easier for Marketing. It was agreed it is all about delivering the right things for the local area. The link governor for curriculum planning noted that she has been working closely with the VP Curriculum.</p>	
9.	<p>Group data summary report 2023-24 and 2024-5</p> <p>The DCEO reported that all strategic indicators on performance have improved with the exception of the High Needs FLEX provision and some Level 1 vocational provision. The new interim Curriculum Manager is currently looking at this to unpick the details. In GCSE maths there has been a decline in overall achievement rates. In part this is as a result of withdrawing learners in year off study programmes who are also on English and Maths provision. Part of the achievement issue is around retention and in adults around Functional Skills.</p> <p>There has been an improvement in attendance, retention is still very high, the number of learners being withdrawn before 42 days is down to 5.4% and attendance remains high. The Committee noted that it looks like all the hard work is paying off and the DCEO agreed that the Group is on the right trajectory, knows its direction of travel and what further work is needed, particularly around English and Maths and all teams are heavily involved and invested.</p>	
10.	<p>Risk Report (including key Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024/25 aspects and underpinning reports) including progress against KPIs/Risk register and emerging concerns</p> <p>The DCEO noted that the Group are in the process of compiling the QIP and it will be finalised once the SAR is approved. There is assurance that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meet in advance of the Committee to talk about the key risks. At the moment the areas of focus are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing/recruitment in curriculum areas to meet enrolment demands and vacant roles e.g. joinery (RC & NNC), brick (RC) and electrical (RC), maths (Group), learning support staff to meet increased numbers of learners with EHCPs (Group) and wellbeing support staff (RC) <p>One governor asked if difficulties recruiting to specialist roles is impacting on class cancellations. It was noted that staffing is being moved around and everyone has been stepping up to minimise any disruption to learners. The Vice Principal Curriculum confirmed that no classes have been cancelled to date. Upskilling technicians giving further teaching opportunities has had really positive feedback in both brick and plumbing. PGCE students have also been utilised. Extra workloads have been put in some spaces. The Director of Quality and Academic Standards gave assurance that targeted quality support is available to technicians and PGCE students to ensure an appropriate standard. Staff with no teaching qualifications can be put on a qualification and given training to improve their awareness of appropriate delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance- in Hair and Beauty (H&B), ensuring H&B learners feel welcomed in the new salon spaces, understand the high expectations and attend their studies well (NNC), level 1 transition programmes (RC) and construction programmes (DVC) • Apprenticeship provision- Functional Skills maths achievement (45 apprentices) must pass to progress on to the End Point Assessment (EPA) • T levels- continued support for new Animal Care programme/team (DVC) and the facilitation of staff expertise to standardise the approval process (Group) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Needs (FLEX and vocational) provision- ensuring the new interim High Needs Curriculum Manager settles in well and introduces improvements across the Group at pace. The DCEO noted that the interim Curriculum Manager is working really well. 	
11.	<p>Quality of Education Reports</p> <p>1. 16-18 (including High Needs) The VP Curriculum took the report as read. One governor noted the intended destinations and asked that wherever possible actual destinations are included. At the recent Board strategy day this came out really strongly as a key area of interest for the Board. It was noted that MIS are working on this and there is reference to actual destinations in the SAR, using an interim process in place for this academic year and the Committee thanked the Director of Quality and Academic Standards for adding this in. The CEO and Principal noted that actual destinations should be available by December, currently the Group relies on data from previous years but does want to be more timely in its approach and its process for collating and sharing.</p> <p>2. Adults (including detailed subcontracting) The Director of Adult Education and Contracts took the report as read. One governor noted that the work in this area has been outstanding. The DCEO explained that the challenge is around English and Maths. It is recognised that there is a need to drive improvements and the team are working to address this looking at the structure of the department, the focus on teaching and learning and intensive data scrutiny. Positive trends are already being seen in terms of the adult data and there is confidence that at RO4 there will be a positive trend in adult English and Maths data. It was noted that the Finance and Resources Committee will scrutinise the performance of subcontracting at its meeting next week.</p> <p>3. Apprentices The Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships took the report as read. The Committee noted that all the work on Out of Funded (OOF) learners has been effective. It was recognised in the SAR scrutiny panel the amount of work that has gone into the apprenticeship provision. The Apprenticeship Task and Finish Group was closed down a couple of weeks ago and it was agreed that there has been fantastic work by the team to turn around apprenticeship provision. One governor noted that the Task and Finish Group had worked well to successfully drive improvements in apprenticeship provision and the CEO and Principal noted that the same process will be used for English and Maths.</p> <p>4. HE The Vice Principal Curriculum gave assurance that the Group is flexing and adapting to the changes in HE which are largely out of its control and is moving at pace to meet employer and post 16 needs. There are opportunities and pipelines through flexible learning to meet skills gaps and the team is working diligently to look at what that looks like, what to shut off, what to grow and working really closely with employers. One governor asked about the Local authorities and what they can do to support because it is valuable that Rotherham has got this opportunity and it is about how many people can we get on our side to support our community. One governor asked about our alumni and role models. The Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing reported that the team are in the middle of a survey for HE with current learners and are creating pen portraits to go out and target specific audiences. An alumni section has been launched on the website and this needs progressing and time will be allocated for that. One area to look at is how important it is to have a university centre in Rotherham. It is important because it is local and that is a USP. It can meet the needs of our community; it is</p>	Dir of Learner Rec and

	<p>flexible and can provide synchronous delivery. ACTION: It was agreed that an item on the USP of the University Centre will come to the next meeting.</p> <p>5. English & Maths</p> <p>The Director of Adult Education and Contracts reported that a lot is in place to drive improvement.</p> <p>The DCEO noted that the QIP for the next meeting in March will have key 'big hitter' targets focus on English and Maths. Behind this there is a detailed English and Maths QIP because of the amount of work to do.</p> <p>The Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships noted that there are 45 learners that require Functional Skills to pass the End Point Assessment (EPA) and the Group is engaging with a third party to allow more flexibility. Day release will continue for learners who prefer that.</p> <p>The DCEO noted that the interim High Needs Curriculum Manager met with the Head of English and Maths today and will support on this work.</p> <p>The DCEO noted that there are slight changes to move forward and a different QIP is being produced that will include all the big hitting areas, with detailed QIPs sitting underneath.</p> <p>The CEO and Principal reported that E&M is very challenging through the different types of provision. A Task and Finish Group for English and Maths is being set up to oversee and drive forward improvements. ACTION: The CEO and Principal asked for a governor to join the English and Maths Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>One governor noted that on the Apprenticeship Task and Finish Group and employer had joined the group, and if this is appropriate it would be an opportunity for an external voice on the group.</p>	<p>Mar/VP Curriculum /Dir of Quality and Academic Standard</p> <p>All</p>
12.	<p>Policies</p> <p>1. Publishing arrangements for obtaining the views of staff and students on the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the Group (statement)</p> <p>The DCEO introduced the statement noting that further work will be done around the Group's policy for engaging with staff, students and the Student Union.</p> <p>The Director of Governance noted that the Board has a statutory requirement to publish its arrangements for obtaining the views of staff and students on the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the Group. The statement will be published on the governance area of the website. It is proposed that the statement is reviewed every three years on the policy cycle and that the Committee gives approval for any additional elements which strengthen the statement during this time to be added by the Director of Governance.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Committee approved the statement noting that it will be updated periodically as the Group does further work around its engagement with staff and students.</p> <p>ACTION: The Chair suggested adding an additional HE student governor to the Board and it was agreed to take this suggestion forward to the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee for further discussion.</p>	<p>Dir of Gov</p>
13.	<p>Governance - Committee membership and Chair</p> <p>The Director of Governance thanked Donna Clifford for stepping in as Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee. Committee membership is usually agreed at the summer Board meeting for the year. Following the loss of the Chair a mid-year review is underway which will come to the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee next week with any recommendations going to the Board in December. A number of governors have expressed an interest in joining other committees. ACTION: If any Committee member has an interest in taking on the role of Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee they can express an</p>	<p>Cttee</p>

	interest prior to the Search, Governance and Remuneration (SGR) Committee on the 27 November 2024. The SGR Committee is also introducing Vice Chairs on Committees.	
14.	<p>Any other items</p> <p>The Director of Governance noted that a tribute to Jenny Worsdale for all her work for the RNN Group, and her focus on supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds is being looked at. The suggestion is for a student award in Jenny's memory. Further details will come back to the Board when agreed.</p> <p>Going forward a standing item on the agenda will give the opportunity for Committee members to share their experience of any learning walks, deep dives, Group events they have attended.</p> <p>The Director of Governance noted that Jack Pike had attended the annual Association of Colleges Conference in Birmingham for a dedicated overnight session organised by the AoC to support Student Governors and had thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the opportunity to meet other student governors.</p> <p>Carol Stanfield had attended a learning walk at Dearne Valley College and spent an hour and a half learning about learning walks.</p> <p>Donna Clifford had attended a learning walk at North Notts College and encouraged governors to take up the opportunity to see how everything measures up against Committee agendas and discussions and is a good opportunity to meet other members of the Quality Team. Donna visited a T Level Digital class and a Level 1 Motor Vehicle class. The behaviour was excellent and the learners were very focused and were able to talk about their class and how they enjoyed it. The line of questioning was much broader than teaching and learning, including if students felt safe at the campus and who to contact with any concerns. At Motor Vehicle one learner was providing practical help to other learners.</p> <p>The DCEO noted that catering and hospitality students had worked at the AoC conference and had worked really hard and had the opportunity to experience a real working environment.</p> <p>The Principal and CEO noted that he had visited all three colleges and the National Fluid Power Centre with three new governors this week.</p> <p>The Committee agreed it was interesting and valuable to hear about the learning walks and in particular student behaviour. In the SAR this had been graded as Outstanding and it is good to hear from governors that this does triangulate real experiences.</p> <p>The Director of Quality and Academic Standards noted that both members of the Quality Team passed on their thanks to governors and had really valued the activity.</p> <p>One governor asked how learning walks are being recorded and the Director of Governance explained that a log of governor engagement is brought to the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee which includes learning walks, deep dives, governor briefings and training and Group events, and a year-end version will come to the Committees and Board as part of the self-assessment process. The Committee has introduced a request for governors to attend three activities outside of scheduled Board and Committee meetings and this is going well. The aim is to include a standing item on the agenda at each Quality and Standards Committee to give governors the opportunity to share their experiences and feedback to teams.</p> <p>ACTION: The Director of Governance to ensure that acronyms are included in full for all papers and the ED Finance and Estates agreed to share an acronyms list with new governors.</p>	<p>Dir of Gov/ ED Fin and Estates</p>

	The Committee and Group passed on their thanks to Heather Barnett at her last meeting as a governor for all her support and time as a Board and Quality and Standards Committee member, EDI link governor and supporter of the Group.	
15.	Date of next meetings: Tuesday 11 March 2025 Tuesday 10 June 2025 All 17.00 start	

Items carried to the next meeting:

Student Union Constitution – this is in progress and will come to the next meeting.

Meeting closed: 18.45