

MINUTES



Meeting	Quality and Standards Committee
Date	Tuesday 10 June 2025
Time	17:00-19:00
Venue	Google meet

Attendees:	Donna Clifford (Chair); Katie Asgari; Simon Ashton; Jason Austin; Sally Gillborn; Jack Pike; Ian Sutherland; Fatima Sabir; Carol Stanfield; Louise Woodcock
In attendance:	Tracey Mace-Akroyd (Deputy Principal/CEO); 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); Daniel Stanbra (Director of Adult Education and Contracts and English and Maths); Paul Lomas (Chair of the Board); Karen Connole (Curriculum Manager Hair and Beauty and Hospitality NNC); Sarah Connerty (Director of Governance and minute taker)

	Item	Action
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies The Chair to welcome colleagues to the meeting. Apologies received from Jason Austin and Simon Ashton. The Student Governors did not attend the meeting.	
2.	Declarations of interest There were no declarations received.	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2025 RESOLVED: The minutes from the meeting held on 11 March 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
4.	Matters arising Items were noted as completed or in progress as follows: Action 5 – the link for virtual work experience to be sent to Laura – the Director of Governance to follow up. Action 8 – the proportion of high needs learners in mainstream courses to be added into future reporting – this is included in the curriculum papers for 16-18s. The DCEO noted that this action would continue to be taken forward into the summer across all other areas. Action 10 – more explicit inclusion around the work the Group does around the curriculum and meeting local skills need and whether this needs to be on the risk register – the VP Curriculum noted that he had met with the lead for risk around this action. Action 11-13 – the Stakeholder Strategy is on the agenda at item 11, including the remit of the Committee in the Strategy Action 14 – update on E&M at Rotherham United – is on the agenda at item 13.5	

	ACTIONS from June 2024: Action 2 – in progress - impact KPI on transition to positive impact for care experience learners – the DCEO reported that work is underway as part of the FREDIE and Safeguarding working group. To date retention and predicted achievement are reported and work will continue and be reported to the Committee Action 4 and 5 – in progress as action above - correlation across attendance and achievement, including a look at low attendance/high achievement and the support learners receive.	
5.	Safeguarding and Prevent The Committee considered the report and the Prevent action plan and the Head of Safeguarding and Student Support reported that: • To date, the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team have supported 1464 unique learners, through 2517 interventions. The gender split for learners accessing support is 51% female 49% male, predominantly aged between 16-18 • 54 Looked after Children are enrolled across the Group • The Prevent action plan is updated every month and comes to the Committee regularly • In safeguarding a lot of work has been done since the last meeting around lockdown procedures. There is a lockdown task and finish group which has made significant progress in implementing campus lockdown emergency procedures since Easter. The Group carried out successful lockdown drills on the 8 May 2025 which was really positive • The Health Practitioner role has lots of positives, proactively addressing the needs of students with high-risk medical conditions and demonstrating a positive impact on student support. The recommendation is to extend this role into the next academic year with a change in name to College Nurse to enhance understanding and accessibility of the role. [confidential item] • Trauma informed practice is progressing and the Group are starting to make real strides forward. The upcoming Group Learning Festival in October will have a real focus on this with external speakers. There will be a big push with staff at the end of year with a full launch in October. One governor noted the previous suggestion to hold a session for governors on trauma informed practice. ACTION: It was agreed that the Head of Safeguarding and Student Support would include as part of the annual mandatory safeguarding update for governors and governors will be invited to attend sessions at the upcoming Group Learning Festival. The Chair thanked the Head of Safeguarding and Student Support for the report and for all the work around lockdown procedures and the successful drills on the 8 May.	DCEO/Head of Safeguarding and Student Support/Dir of Gov
6.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion The Committee considered the report, the FREDIE Action Plan 2024-2025 and the FREDIE survey results. The Head of Safeguarding and Student Support reported that: • There has been a big push on FREDIE which was highlighted as an area of further work at the last Investors in Diversity. There was a survey circulated to staff and students which was positive with a good return rate. Responses demonstrated that both staff and students are	

	becoming familiar with FREDIE with 92% feeling that the Group is meeting the spirit of the principles set out by FREDIE • Future work will be on hot topics and preparing for the re accreditation of Investors in Diversity The Chair thanked the Head of Safeguarding and Student Support for the report.	
7.	Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024/2025 and Risk Report Progress against KPIs/Risk register The Director of Quality and Academic Standards provided a summary of the QIP which includes an executive summary to identify work and progress and the key priorities and areas of work for this term and the summer. There are six priority areas aligned with strategic KPIs. As of May 2025, the Group is on target to achieve positive progress across most areas. The DCEO provided an update on the priority areas [confidential item] ACTION: The DCEO agreed to send out an update to the Committee in August, noting the Level 3 exam dates are the week before GCSE day.	DCEO
8.	Higher Education 1. Access and Participation Plan (APP) The Director of Quality and Academic Standards explained that the Group is required by the Office for Students (OfS) to produce an APP. The work is being done now and will come into effect into 2026-7 so there is next year to get plans in place. The plan has been contributed to and reviewed by the SLT, Exec and the HE and the Higher Level Skills Strategy Group a number of times. Part of the requirements from the OfS is to demonstrate the APP has gone through the correct approval processes and feedback is welcomed from the Committee. The Committee considered the executive summary and the APP. External support was provided in the drafting with a significant element of the early work analysing internal and external data from the OfS dashboard. The plan and interventions have been written as a result of the significant data analysis exercise. There are five elements for the Group to work on in the APP which are already underway: <i>Obj1:</i> To remove the continuation gap for FT students eligible for FSM and those not eligible which is 10.5% based on most recently published OfS data aggregated for 2-years (2020/21-2021/22); <i>Obj2:</i> To improve the continuation of young males from 63%, based on internal RNN Group data for 2022/23 to 78%; <i>Obj3:</i> To eliminate the 7.1% continuation gap between disabled students and students not declaring any disability, based on internal RNN Group data for 2023/24; <i>Obj4:</i> To improve the completion of young males from 59.3%, based on internal RNN Group data for 2022/23 to 78%; <i>Obj5:</i> To eliminate the 5.7% completion gap between disabled students and students not declaring any disability, based on internal RNN Group data for 2023/24. One governor asked about feedback from the HE and HLS Strategy Group. The external specialist attended the Group and collectively the Group completed some of the documentation including a risk document. The recommendation is that no further amendments are required.	

	The DCEO noted that the APP action plan 2026-30 include the priorities to achieve based on the data. Some of the Group's own HE actions for students have been dovetailed into the action plan. If the predicted increase for HE students happens in September the aim is to provide a package that will support them to stay and study really well at the University College Rotherham (UCR). A lot of thought has gone into the action plan and the APP has been led by the external specialist, with a lot of work from the Director of Quality and Academic Standards. The Director of Quality and Academic Standards noted that the APP is both a long-term plan and includes work starting from September. The old approach to the APP was very much financial and about giving students a bursary. The new approach is about securing a sense of belonging and support. CPD support is planned for HE students over the summer and the current students will benefit from this support. There are predicted achievement improvements from HE provision for a second year running. RESOLVED: The Committee recommended to approve the Access and Participation Plan prior to submission to the OfS by 31 July 2025.	
9.	Marketing and Learner Recruitment Report Applications and Enrolments 2024-25 The Committee considered the report. The Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment reported on additional activity: • Attendance at open events has gone up on last year by 11% • A new agency is working with the Group and there has been a 200% increase in bookings for Rotherham College last week. It is now about ensuring we get the attendance • Taster events are a great opportunity to showcase the colleges to prospective students. Governors have joined events and are welcome to join future taster days. The Chair asked about internal progression for students. The VP Curriculum noted that the Group is looking at progression much earlier, working with students from the second week before May half term. Course team leaders are working with the students and support is bespoke. Attendance to achieve meetings are updating intended destinations and ensuring the student is progressing at the right level. A 3-year skills development programme for vulnerable learners will focus on how their career aspirations are met. Work is being done looking at the size and length of the qualification because of various factors. The Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment noted that a huge amount of work has been done around HE and a lot of that work is around progression, and thanks go to the curriculum teams for their support. The Group is working with 19 colleges over the summer to promote HE opportunities and a lot of digital work will take place over the summer. The Committee passed on congratulations to the Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment and the team for all the hard work which is leading to an increase in student numbers. [the Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment departs]	
10.	Intended Progression and Destination The VP Curriculum noted that this is the first year data has been collected from May and June (see full report for details). There are 98.2% positive intended	

	destinations. Lots of work is underway to ensure when students go into employment this is captured and sustained.	
11.	Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2022-2027 The Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships explained that he has worked with the VP Curriculum, DCEO and Director of Adult Education and Contracts and E&M on the Strategy updating terminology, stakeholders, and ensuring actions are appropriate. When the Strategy was introduced the Group was onboarding with stakeholders and is now performing at a high level, is part of the Institute of Technology, leading on boards and is highly influencing. There are Employer Academies across all areas and a plan to ensure next year there are academies for all areas across all sites. The Chamber is going to be business sponsor which is excellent news. The next stage of the work is to link everything together. The annual Self Assessment Report is the place to demonstrate stakeholder engagement and all the different types of activity will be pulled together. ACTION: The Director of Governance noted that the AoC Code of Good Governance has been rewritten and is now live and the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee are taking the principle around stakeholder engagement as an action for next year's Governance Improvement Plan so the Strategy can be updated around the Board actions to reflect this change. ACTION: The Chair asked about the status of the Strategy and it was agreed it would evolve as the Group's stakeholder engagement changes and would be considered as part of the Committee's cycle of business regularly.	SGR Committee Dir of Gov/Dir of Business Dev and App
12.	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Report including careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) The Committee considered the report and the Director of Quality and Academic Standards reported that it is pleasing to see that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is solidly good and areas with outstanding practice can be identified which is the first time this has been reported. The Quality Team was a finalist in the Quality Professionals Awards - 'Quality Improvement Team of the Year, one of over 500 individuals and teams that were nominated this year. Reaching the finals was a significant achievement. The Learning Communities have started bringing teaching and learning to the forefront and into conversations around outstanding areas and looking at areas to improve. The staff governor noted that he had attended a session this afternoon around one of policies and use of AI. There were 30 people from a variety of different curriculum areas and work-based learning. It was a really interesting session with dialogue of professionals coming together and discussing concepts in teaching and learning, using specific technology, and how to embrace AI. The Director of Quality and Academic Standards reported that research shows that Learning Communities need to be in place for three to four academic years until they are completely embedded in the culture of the organisation. So far they are well attended by staff and a really good way of improving teaching and learning. The Group knows what it is good and this is one of the ways to move towards great. There is work around sequencing the types of activities that teachers use and still tackling some issues. The Chair passed on congratulations to the team for being nominated for the award. The DCEO referred to the current risk areas discussed under item 7.	

	The VP Curriculum noted that the recent changes to Gatsby could impact positively on the Group around work experience (two weeks of work experience through key stages 3 and 4) which will give students increased experience of work. The colleges are a relatively positive space for careers guidance with industry and vocational staff available to support which is a unique position. The VP Curriculum has his next link governor update in a couple of weeks. To support E&M meetings with all the E&M team to look at pedagogy and sequencing and putting in place CPD with the quality team is in progress, which is a different way to do it.	
13.	Quality of Education Reports Including progression and group performance against national data, attendance and achievement (see full reports for details and data) Study Programmes (including High Needs) Attendance has improved, including E&M and T Levels. Retention has improved. Vocational areas are predicted to be above national rates. There have been positive interventions for teaching and learning, and targeted action plans in place for Animal Care and FLEX. 2. Adults (including detailed subcontracting) 19+ has a positive trend for achievements. E&M represents an ongoing potential risk for headline achievement for end of year. 3. Apprentices A new teacher for plumbing has been recruited. He is coming off the tools and will have training. Currently the Group is relying on agency staff. The Group is discontinuing Level 3 plumbing at Rotherham College and moving to the apprenticeship programme. The team are working with the North Notts team who have experience in this delivery. The aim is to map to a Level 2 City and Guilds apprenticeship in plumbing. There are currently 35 learners already on the Level 3, and most employers are happy to support block weeks for this cohort. Out of Funded learners (Oofs) are down to 65 and the majority are in gateway. This is lower than last year. Attendance is lower by 1% than last year, this is mainly down to E&M, with the majority of apprentices opting out in the change in funding rules. R10 should significantly increase when this is factored in. 4. HE Retention attendance and pred achievement is strong and above last year. The APP is continuing to monitor students in the current plan, there are some areas of spiky profile which the team is working on and disability will continue into the new plan. Much of the development in curriculum planning is around non-traditional HE programmes. This is driven by meeting the skills gaps and local plan for the region and is a big part of the HE strategy. This allows the Group to be more responsive, flexible and agile in its offer. There has been a big increase in HE enrolments in September. 5. English & Maths Across all key areas within E&M current achievement is a positive trend consistently from last year and there has been significant progress in year.	

	Rotherham United is part of the positive trend at 92.37% predicted achievement (compared to 85.39% last year). The key risk remains the proportion of learners to achieve at this time. The Group is learning from previous year trends so is raising this risk now. The DCEO noted the analysis plan over the summer to set out the context for this academic year of where E&M learners come from. The Group is included in the same tables as the sixth form colleges, and it is important to set the context of where our students are when they join us, and the impact on individuals. The Group is dealing with a lot more than other colleges on a daily basis and how the curriculum is delivered and flexed for our students is a priority and the Group are doing a really good job.	
14.	Policies 1. Admissions Policy The DCEO and Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing requested to take the policy away for further changes and inclusion of the three-year progression plan. The Committee agreed that they would be happy to receive the updated policy by electronic resolution in time to recommend to approve to the Board on the 25 June. RESOLVED: The updated Admissions Policy to come to the Committee by Monday 16 June for consideration and recommendation for approval 2. English and Maths Strategy The Director of Adult Education and Contracts and English and Maths reported that the E&M Strategy was considered by the E&M task and finish group and recommended to the Committee and Board for approval. It is currently going through the Exec prior to coming to the Committee. The policy is reflecting the intended approach for E&M next year. The Committee asked if the approval of the Strategy in September/October would impact the timings of the roll out of work and the DCEO reported that there is nothing that would have a significant impact on operational working. There are challenges with the exam assessment arrangements and the Exec would like the strategy to reflect this and the processes going forward. Currently curriculum colleagues are contacting colleges and arranging visits to inform this work and it will be useful to include based on their findings. RESOLVED: The DCEO to include the updated English and Maths Strategy in the August Quality and Standards briefing to the Committee and the Strategy will come to the first meeting in the Autumn term for recommendation for approval	DCEO/ Director of Learner Recruitment and Marketing DCEO/ Director of Adult Education and Contracts and E&M
15.	Committee Governance The Director of Governance noted that the Board's committees annually in the summer term undertake a review of their terms of reference, cycle of business and membership. The aim is to ensure that committees have the right framework in place and are operating efficiently and effectively. 1. Terms of reference A full review of terms of reference took place in September 2025 and there are no further recommendations for update. RESOLVED: The Committee recommended to approve the Quality and Standards terms of reference with no proposed updates. 2. Cycle of Business review of 2024-5 The Committee comfortably followed its cycle, with some minor exceptions. There are no areas of concern from changes to the cycle. The Committee considered five items outside of the cycle: • Access and Participation Plan (now included on the cycle)	

	- English and Maths Task and Finish Group (now included on the cycle) - NSS survey results (now included on the cycle) - Momentous Football Academy - Appointment of a new chair midyear 3. Cycle of Business 2025-6 There are no recommended changes to the cycle. RESOLVED: The Committee recommended to approve the Quality and Standards Committee cycle of business for 2025-6 4. Membership The Committee agreed that the Committee has a strong membership with relevant skills and expertise. Last year the Board recruited two new governors with HE and student voice/SEND experience, and this has strengthened the Committee significantly. The Committee thanked Donna Clifford for stepping up as Chair mid-year. RESOLVED: The Committee confirmed they were happy with their current membership and Chair 5. Review of effectiveness The Committee are part way through completing the survey which will go forward to the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee as part of the Board's self-assessment processes. The report includes progress on actions from last year. Key points to date include: Impact over the last 12 months: - Chair giving opportunity for all members to contribute - Receiving regular reports, ensuring that students are receiving a high quality educational environment, proactively identifying and addressing gaps through constructive challenge and continuous improvement Areas for improvement: - To hear the views of staff and students from each campus - The agendas are very full - Time and opportunity for all members to participate - Ensure all members have cameras on 6. Training and Development The Board has completed mandatory safeguarding, Prevent and EDI training during 2024-5 as well as voluntary bitesize sessions on several key areas including CEIAG, marketing and recruitment, apprenticeships and SEND. There has been excellent governor engagement at learning walks, school taster days and college events. The aim is for the first Board strategy day of 2025-6 to focus on curriculum matters and the Board's duty to review and meet local skills needs.	
16.	English and Maths Task and Finish Group minutes <i>[action 16 from March 2025]</i> The Committee noted the minutes.	
17.	Any other items There were no items received. The Chair thanked colleagues for all the reports and work carried out over the year and the Committee's appreciation for all the work that is being done at the Group. The Chair thanked governors for their commitment and contributions over the year.	
18.	Date of next meetings: Tuesday 30 September 2025 Tuesday 25 November 2025 Tuesday 10 March 2026	

	Tuesday 16 June 2026 All 17.00 start	
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Meeting closed: 18.40