

Preston College

Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting held on 27 February 2025 at 5.30 pm, Boardroom

Present:

Mrs Laura Mason	Chair
Mrs Helen Curtis	
Ms Giulia D'Ambrosio	
Miss Marya Momand	
Mr Simon Nixon	Principal and Chief Executive
Mrs Jen Walters	

Apologies:

Mr Robert Marshall-Slater

In attendance:

Mrs Marie Haworth	Vice Principal - Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support (from Minute 6)
Mr Mick Noblett	Vice Principal - Curriculum Delivery and Planning
Mrs Clare Rayner	Clerk to the Board

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed Ms Giulia D'Ambrosio to her first meeting of the Committee. The Chair welcomed questions on all items.

The Committee noted that:

- apologies had been received from Mr Robert Marshall-Slater;
- a quorum was present;
- Mrs Marie Haworth was dealing with an urgent matter and would join the meeting as soon as possible.

2. Declaration of interests

Mrs Helen Curtis declared an interest in the Agenda Item 10 – HE Update report, as an employee of the University of Central Lancashire, and undertook to leave the meeting for any part of this item if required by the Committee.

3. Minutes of the Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2024 were approved as a correct record.

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted the Matters Arising report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Matters arising report.

5. Performance against KPIs 2024/25

Mr Noblett, Vice Principal - Curriculum Delivery and Planning, presented the Performance against KPIs 2024/25. Mr Noblett reported:

- that the College's key focus areas of recruitment and attendance had been discussed with the Committee in detail in November;
- the correlation between attendance and level;
- the impact of teacher assessed grades during Covid meant that in previous years some students had not been on the most appropriate course;
- in year attendance was positive;
- continued focus on maths and English GCSE with maths being a particular challenge;
- initiatives to improve GCSE maths and English attendance, including a pilot to teach some lessons in the technical classroom rather than centrally;
- the challenge of meeting the new government requirement to teach maths for four hours a week;
- the College was currently recruiting staff to support timetabling.

The Committee discussed with management the challenges in improving GCSE maths and English attendance and performance. During discussion the Committee noted:

- that the FE sector continued to encourage the government to consider the introduction of alternative maths and English qualification options which embedded the required learning into the curriculum e.g. maths for construction;
- the improvement in performance at the November GCSE resits demonstrated that the interventions were beneficial;
- a suggestion from a member to consider teaching "retrieval practices." Management welcomed ideas from members;
- the impact of trauma informed training;

- consideration of a School based approach to maths and English GCSE rather than a central model. It was noted that the current pilot would help ascertain if teaching maths GCSE in College School setting was beneficial;
- that there was evidence of gradual progress in GCSE performance and without the interventions attendance and performance could decline;
- the teaching challenges for when students were unmotivated and that teacher recruitment for GCSE maths and English in the FE sector was challenging.

The Committee recorded its thanks to staff for their hard work.

Miss Marya Momand, the student governor, commented that she had gone to the Point for additional support for her GCSE work which she had found valuable and suggested that more students should be signposted to the Point for additional support.

The Committee discussed with management the challenges in improving student attendance across all provision. During discussion the Committee noted:

- the impact of written warnings to students on attendance;
- the reasons why suspension was not usually used as a sanction prior to exclusion and whether this should be considered;
- the separation of disciplinaries and attendance was a positive step.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

6. Curriculum Strategy Update

Mr Noblett presented the Curriculum Strategy Update. Mr Noblett reported:

- on the eight core objectives of the College's Curriculum Strategy;
- on the continued improvements in student engagement, recruitment and growth;
- on ongoing engagement of employers;
- on the College's review of feedback from stakeholders;
- on the College's approach to Careers Education, Information Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) and that the College had recently been successfully assessed for the Quality in Careers Award;
- during the assessment the Quality in Careers assessor had met with Mrs Laura Mason, the Board's Careers Link Governor;

- themed learning walks had been undertaken;
- continued growth in student numbers;
- on the Student Numbers and Market Analysis at Appendix A.

The Chair reported positively on the meeting with the careers assessor who had been complimentary about the College's careers provision.

In response to questions and comments from members, the Committee discussed with management:

- the continued positive impact of the recruitment team led by Mr David Elliot;
- the College's approach of engaging with students during recruitment and throughout their journey at College;
- future projections for growth of c. 2,500 students and the impact of local demographics;
- the College was able to find industry placement for students. However, if T Levels became the qualification of choice this could become more challenging;
- potential growth areas and that the NHS delivered its own apprenticeship training.

The Committee noted the Curriculum Strategy Update.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Curriculum Strategy Update.

Mrs Haworth joined the meeting.

7. Student Voice/Student Council Update

Mr Noblett presented the Student Voice/Student Council Update report. He reported:

- on the Student Voice programme and how management had responded to feedback from students;
- that the key issues had been campus safety around smoking shelters and improving social spaces. He outlined how management had addressed these issues;
- that HE student Voice was included in the HE Update report.

The Committee discussed with management the importance of good quality spaces around College for students and the importance of creating a sense of belonging for students. The Committee noted that a number of new spaces had been created, including a new social space following the relocation of Starbucks and the renovation of larger classrooms to make more flexible spaces.

The Principal and Chief Executive reported that as the Lancashire Teaching Hospital's current arrangement with the College would cease, more classrooms would be available for College use.

Miss Momand, Student Governor and Chair of the Student Council, reported that attendance and engagement had improved at the Student Council compared to previous years. Miss Momand reported on the activities of the Student Council, including a Culture Day and charity fundraising.

The Principal and Chief Executive reported that he had attended the Student Council to consult with students on a number of themes.

Following a suggestion, Mr Noblett undertook to share the Student Voice information by College School with Curriculum and Skills link governors.

The Committee noted the report.

**Resolved: The Committee noted the Student Voice/Student Council Update.
Action: To share Student Voice information by College School with Curriculum and Skills link governors.**

8. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Mid Year Report

Mrs Haworth, Vice Principal Quality, Teaching, Learning and Student Support presented the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Mid Year Report. Mrs Haworth reported:

- that the formal teacher observation process was ongoing and that 75% of observations would be completed by the end of March 2025;
- that the increased numbers of students for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English and maths GCSE had created logistical challenges.

In response to questions and comments from members, the Committee noted:

- how the rating system worked. It was noted that the rating should be reviewed with caution as there could be different sample sizes and professional discussions with teachers was the key;
- that following a discussion on the importance of the Board having oversight and understanding of TLA, Ms Haworth undertook provide an analysis of each curriculum area with strengths, areas of good practice and areas for improvement.
- that monthly reviews took place with employers, apprentices and work based tutors;
- that reference to lack of governor involvement in the report was a possible risk rather than a current risk.

Ms Haworth undertook to check the figures in the table in paragraph 9.

Resolved: The Committee discussed and noted the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Mid Year Report.

Action: Ms Haworth to include a summary of each curriculum area in the TLA report for the next meeting.

To check the figures in the table in paragraph 9.

9. The Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25

Mrs Haworth presented the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) report. She reported:

- on initiatives to improve high grade success in all subject areas;
- on the ongoing impact of teacher assessed grades;
- on the growth in the number of students resitting maths and English GCSE and a requirement for students to study four hours a week of maths from September 2025;
- on the KPI chart.

In response to questions and comments from members, the Committee noted:

- that class sizes were c. 25;
- the necessity to invest in teaching staff and the recruitment challenges, particularly for FE;
- the importance of managing behaviour;
- that all students, including SEND and ESOL students, must complete four hours of maths;
- an update on the Employer Portal. Ms Haworth undertook to keep the Committee update on the progress of the review.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the QIP report 2024/25.

Action: Ms Haworth to keep the Committee updated on the progress of the Employer Portal review.

10. Higher Education Update

Mrs Haworth presented the HE Update report. Mrs Haworth reported:

- on HE Student Voice;
- on HE attendance;
- on the introduction of a new Office for Students (OfS) condition of funding H6 – on Harassment and Sexual Misconduct;
- that the University of Central Lancashire would change its name to the University of Lancashire;
- that Ofsted would complete a monitoring visit on the College's initial teacher education (ITE) in March 2025.

In response to questions and comments from members, the Committee noted:

- the reasons the Ofsted monitoring visit was separate from the Ofsted inspection;
- the scale of the inspection which would take place over three days;
- that the College would not be graded or receive formal reports or feedback following the inspection;
- that the monitoring visit would provide useful preparation for the next ITE Ofsted inspection which was due.

Members commented:

- that the positive impact of Penny Mackay, HE Manager, was evident;
- that HE attendance of 97.8% was "very good" or "high" rather than good as stated in the report. The Committee requested that the report was updated before it was considered by the Board;
- the College should use the forthcoming monitoring visit as an opportunity to demonstrate the good practice at the College.

Mrs Curtis referred to the reference to lack of governor involvement as a risk in the report and reiterated her offer to support management on HE reporting. Management welcomed the offer and the Committee noted that the reference to lack of governor involvement in the report related to a hypothetical risk if governors did not test and challenge reports, rather than a current risk.

Resolved: The Committee discussed and noted the Higher Education Update Action: To amend the reference to attendance in the report.

11. Items to be raised with the Board

The Committee agreed to highlight to the Board;

- the ongoing challenges for teaching GCSE maths and English in the FE sector including increased student numbers, student attendance and staff recruitment challenges;
- that the Committee had discussed with management the pilot for contextualising an hour of maths GCSE in College Schools (skills hour) rather than centrally;
- changes to the approach to learning walks and the introduction of the rating system in teaching, learning and assessment;
- the College's ongoing engagement with employers and students.

The Committee that the Student Numbers and Market Analysis presentation would be shared with the Board and the report would be reviewed by the Resources Committee to support budget setting.

A member suggested it would be helpful for the Committee to know where the excellent (rated 5), teaching practices had been identified in the College, alongside the averages provided.

12. Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 19 June 2025.