

Preston College

Redacted and Abridged¹ Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting held on 21 November 2024 at 5.30 pm, Boardroom

Present:

Mrs Laura Mason Chair
Mrs Helen Curtis
Mrs Jane Hilton
Mrs Lynda Mason
Miss Marya Momand
Mr Simon Nixon Principal and Chief Executive
Mr Jose Sedano-Martinez Until Minute 6
Mrs Jen Walters

Apologies:

Mrs Marie Haworth Vice Principal - Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support
Mr Robert Marshall-Slater

In attendance:

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. The Chair welcomed Mr Jose Sedano-Martinez, Chair of the Governing Body, who had joined the meeting for the Committee's discussion of the Self Assessment Report (SAR).

The Chair welcomed Miss Marya Momand, student governor 16-18, to her first Quality and Standards meeting.

The Committee noted that apologies had been received from Mrs Marie Haworth and Mr Robert Marshall-Slater.

It was noted that a quorum was present.

2. Declaration of interests

Mrs Helen Curtis declared an interest in Item 8 Higher Education and undertook to leave the meeting for this item if the Committee deemed this was necessary.

No other declarations of interest were declared.

¹ Please note that any matters which the Corporation is satisfied should be dealt with on a confidential basis have been removed from these minutes

3. Minutes of the Meeting

The Committee agreed to make the following amendments to the minutes of the meeting of 10 October 2024:

- Re Minute 1 - to add Mrs Curtis to the attendance of the meeting;
- Re Minute 6 - to add “progress of students” to the list of link governor discussion themes of quality, recruitment, progression and destinations, as it was a key role of the Committee to assess student progress against the College’s strategic plan.

With these amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2024 were approved as a correct record.

Resolved: Subject to the amendments agreed, the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 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 2023/24 Outturn

Mr Noblett, Vice Principal - Curriculum Delivery and Planning, presented the Performance against KPIs 2023/24 Outturn presentation. Mr Noblett reported on:

- Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR);
- overall 2023/24 performance outturn;
- 2023/24 performance for English and maths and whilst progress had been made in English achievement, maths remained a challenge and an area for improvement for the College;
- basic skills and functional English and maths achievement rates;
- the Five As of Ambition framework and the focus on attendance across College;
- student attendance reporting and formal intervention.

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

- assurance that whilst the College reviewed data and benchmarked against other colleges, the College’s focus remained on students, addressing issues and making interventions as required;

- College management reviewed case studies on the possible barriers to attendance;
- the importance of developing students' behaviours and attitudes alongside knowledge and skills;
- a query on the number of interventions and suspensions in some Schools and whether management expected the numbers to continue at this level throughout the academic year. Mr Noblett responded that some students, particularly those in the School of Construction and the Built Environment, had previously low levels of school attendance and were in a new environment so there were usually more interventions at the point in the academic year. He also explained that, as in HR, suspensions could be a neutral act to give time for incidents to be investigated;
- the positive impact of interventions;
- feedback from the student governor that some students did not attend English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) lessons if there were too many activities and games. She suggested it would be helpful to have lesson content towards the end of Level 1 which would help students transition to Level 2. Management welcomed the feedback which they would share with the Director of ESOL and Community. Members noted the challenges of teaching ESOL, particularly at Level 1, as abilities of students varied greatly, with some students unable to speak any English;
- the Principal and Chief Executive reported that he had visited the Student Council and discussed matters including attendance and timetabling. He suggested it would be beneficial for governors to meet with Student Council members as part of the Board's stakeholder engagement work;
- ideas for a new teaching model which included inviting subject specialists to attend maths lessons. Management welcomed suggestions and reported that new approaches had also been discussed at recent business planning meetings.

In responses to queries, Mr Noblett undertook to:

- provide data on the actual number of students by the categories measured as some students would be included in more than one category, this data would enable the Committee to get a greater sense of the scale of the challenges the College faced;
- provide data on student interventions and suspensions and how many students had remained in College and achieved and how many excluded at the end of the academic year;
- explore whether there were any correlations between the provision, School, level and the success of interventions;

- consult with students, including the Student Council, on attendance interventions. It was suggested that this could be referenced in the SAR.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

Actions: To provide:

- data on the actual number of students by the categories measured;
- data on student interventions and suspensions and how many had remained in College and achieved and how many excluded at the end of the academic year;
- explore whether there were any correlations between the provision, School, level and the success of interventions;
- consult with students, including the student Council, on attendance interventions. It was suggested that this could be referenced in the SAR.

6. Self-Assessment Report (Session 2) – Grading Review

Mr Noblett presented the draft SAR, at Appendix A. He reported;

- the draft SAR had been validated with feedback from teams and strengths and areas for improvement had been identified;
- on the proposal to grade “2” “Good” for all Ofsted categories apart from Provision for students with high needs and Adult learning programmes which management proposed had progressed to grade “1” “Outstanding”;
- on the proposal for a ‘strong contribution’ for Skills Needs as in previous years;
- the rationale for grading from Provision for students with high needs and Adult learning programmes as “1”;
- that this would be the last time the College would report under the current Education Inspection Framework;
- the draft had been revised to reflect feedback from the Committee including describing the College’s holistic approach to teaching and supporting students.

Members discussed the draft SAR with management and:

- welcomed the grading of Provision for students with high needs and Adult learning programme as 1s and that the narrative in the SAR provided evidence to justify this progression. Members also commented that the College had addressed the changes advised by Ofsted for Provision for students with high needs;

- noted that the Board's feedback on the leadership and management section on board and management culture had been integrated into the SAR;
- requested that the percentage of students from ethnic minority groups should be reviewed as it differed from the percentage in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report;
- highlighted that the SAR indicated an overall strong performance which reflected the hard work and dedication of staff;
- agreed that the SAR read well, highlighting strengths whilst also identifying areas for improvements and the importance of the College continuing to have ambition to progress;
- suggested that it was important to raise the profile of teaching, learning and assessment in the SAR, to add more examples of how the College demonstrated high standards of teaching, learning and assessment and include more references to staff CPD activities;

Members undertook to send any further suggestions on the SAR by email.

Management thanked members for their feedback and undertook to revise the draft SAR.

Resolved: The Committee reviewed the emerging strengths, areas for improvement and proposed grading of the draft Corporate SAR 2023/24.

Action: To update the draft Corporate SAR 2023/24 in light of members' comments before it was considered by the Board on 12 December 2024.

The Chair thanked Mr Sedano-Martinez for his attendance at the meeting.

Mr Sedano-Martinez left the meeting.

7. Student Voice and Student Council

Mr Noblett presented Student Voice and Student Council report. He reported:

- on the Student Voice summary 2023/24 which had raised emerging themes including: lack of external seating across campus, that students felt safe around the High Street area of the campus, but less safe towards the back of campus and that some areas of the campus felt over crowded;
- many of the issues raised by students related the managing the increased growth of student numbers in 2024/25;

- Miss Momand, Student Governor 16-18, had been appointed as Chair of the Student Council;
- the Principal and Chief Executive had recently visited the Student Council and three members of the Council would join the College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Group;
- positive feedback from students on the introduction of an afternoon break.

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

- that whilst initiatives such as staggered lunch breaks, had been put in place to manage increased numbers, students continued to feedback that some areas of College felt over crowded. This would continue to be reviewed;
- the view of the staff governor that staff would reiterate that the feedback that the campus felt too busy in some areas and that staff also welcomed the afternoon break;
- acknowledgement that the increased growth in student numbers was a good challenge which would be addressed over time;
- the importance of making efficient use of the space available;
- the view of the student governor that many students welcomed the afternoon break as it provided an opportunity to pray and that, due to the increase in students, the current multi faith room was too small. The Principal and Chief Executive responded that this feedback had been received a potential solution had been identified. The Chair welcomed the College's efforts to be inclusive.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Student Voice and Student Council report.

8. Higher Education Update

Mr Noblett presented the Higher Education (HE) Update.

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

- that whilst assessment boards functioned effectively, with strong oversight from external examiners and HE Manager. However, certain areas require further support to align with standard board procedures;
- positive feedback on the impact of the HE Manager, which was evident in the HE work of the College;
- positive feedback on the detailed report provided.

A member volunteered to support the College's work on the HE Annual Review, unless there were any conflicts of interest. Management and the Clerk welcomed the suggestion and did not think that this would raise any conflicts of interest.

The Committee noted the Higher Education report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Higher Education report.

9. Quality Improvement Plan Close-down

Mr Noblett presented the Quality Improvement (QIP) Close down report. He reported that, as the post inspection plan had been integrated into the report and all actions taken, the College intended to introduce a more concise QIP for 2024/25.

The Chair welcomed the introduce of a QIP which focused on areas of improvement, whilst also ensuring that other current good performance did not decline.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the performance and progress against key Quality Improvement Plan milestones and the final outturn for 2023/24.

10. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Mr Noblett presented the Teaching, Learning and Assessment report.

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

- that following a request at the previous meeting, a report had been included on progress of staff requiring additional mentoring support. Members welcomed the information on the support for teachers;
- embedding of the 5 As;
- that the student survey response was lower and the possible reasons for this;
- pulse surveys to gain feedback from students;

- plans to change the approach to learning walks in 2024/25.

Members suggested that:

- management should expand the section on HE the TLA report, as it currently did not reflect the excellent progress of the College's HE students, for example the excellent outcomes for BA (Hons) students in dance with 50% receiving first class honours;
- the College could benefit from the success at HE level by sharing learning for FE level teaching.

A member queried why the report referred to Teachers' Standards, which were used in schools, rather than Professional Standards which you would expect to be used in FE. It was noted that it was likely that the College adhered to both standards. Mr Noblett undertook to confirm.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Actions: To address members' feedback for future TLA reports; To confirm whether the College used Professional Standards alongside Teachers' Standards.

11. Curriculum Planning 2024/25

Mr Noblett presented his Curriculum Planning 2024/25 report.

The Chair welcomed the report which provided a detailed overview of the College's curriculum planning process.

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

- that despite extensive preparation of colleges and national media coverage, the market had not yet responded to the introduction of T Levels and all qualifications were currently under review by the new government;
- uncertainties on whether the increase in national insurance would impact on the recruitment of apprentices;
- the introduction of foundation level apprenticeships.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Curriculum Planning 2024/25 report.

12. Link Governors

The Clerk presented the Link Governors report. The Clerk reported:

- the forthcoming link governor vacancies as a result of recent retirements and forthcoming governor retirements;
- that the Safeguarding and Prevent Link Governor role description would be expanded to include oversight of SEND provision.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board the appointment of:

- Mrs Helen Curtis as Safeguarding and Prevent link governor;
- Mrs Laura Mason as Careers link governor;
- Mr Neil Fletcher as Curriculum and Skills Link governor (Science, Engineering and Automotive Technologies);
- Mrs Janet Harrison as Curriculum and Skills Link governor (Business, Health, and Uniform Services).

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and agreed recommend to the Board the appointment of:

- **Mrs Helen Curtis as Safeguarding and Prevent Link Governor;**
- **Mrs Laura Mason as Careers Link Governor;**
- **Mr Neil Fletcher and Mrs Janet Harrison as Curriculum and Skills Link Governors.**

13. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Student Review 2023/24

Mr Noblett presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Student Review 2023/24 report.

The Committee noted that:

- the report provided data on student performance by the protected characteristics in the Equality Act and also data on social economic deprivation areas;
- achievement rates for Gypsy/Irish students had improved.

A member reported on the positive feedback she had been given from a new student at the College on the welcome from Asma Nakhuda, Recruitment, Progression and Careers Advisor (19+), and asked that this feedback and thanks be passed on to Asma.

The staff governor commented that the report reflected the inclusive approach of the College. The Principal and Chief Executive reported on the efforts of staff to welcome, support and engage with students, including the introduction of a designated drop off and pick points for SEND students.

A member commented that whilst sex and gender were often used interchangeably in reporting, the Equality Act 2010 referred to sex as a protected characteristic rather than

gender. Management agreed to review references to gender in the report and replace with sex where appropriate.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Student Review 2023/24.

Actions: To review references to gender in the report and replace with sex where appropriate.

To forward positive feedback to Asma Nakhuda.

14. Any other business

a) Items to Highlight to the Board

The Committee agreed to highlight to the Board that the:

- Committee was fully supportive of the revised grading in the SAR which reflected the progress of the College since the Ofsted inspection;
- supportive culture of the College, for both staff and students, was evident and engagement of staff and students was evident in the teaching, learning and assessment report;
- the Committee had been pleased to note the outcomes of the EDI Student Review. The Committee noted that the Board would consider this report alongside the EDI data on workforce and governors.

The Committee also agreed it would be helpful to share the detailed data on student attendance with the Board.

b) Valediction

The Chair noted that this would be Mrs Lynda Mason's final Quality and Standards Committee meeting and on behalf of the Committee she thanked Mrs Mason for her valued contribution to the Committee's work and her thanks to Lynda for her support.

The Principal and Chief Executive thanked Mrs Mason on behalf of the College.

Mrs Mason thanked members for their comments and reported that she had enjoyed working with everyone at the College.

15. Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 27 February 2025.