

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Thursday 28th November 2024

GOVERNORS

Ben Owen, Chair

PRESENT:

Andrew Spencer, Staff Governor (Business Support)

Jane Peacock

Keith Spiers (until 18:30)

Kit Salt

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE:

Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement and Student Experience

Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality

Sarah Morley, Assistant Principal: Quality and Standards

Arina Borscakova, Student Governor

Kirsty Walsh, Assistant Principal: Engineering

Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies

Nikki Slack, Assistant Principal: Health, Education and Service Industries

Megan McQueen, Teacher: A Level Law and Politics (observing)

Eloise Hopkinson, Clerk to the Corporation

- | | | ACTION
by whom | DATE
by when |
|----------|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | <u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>
Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Cropley, Scott Smith, Ella Brookes and Flynn Bainbridge. | | |
| 2 | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>
The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on agenda items to be discussed. Jane Peacock declared an interest in agenda item 3. Standing declarations were noted.

Jane Peacock left the meeting. | | |
| 3 | <u>APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIR</u>
The committee was informed that Jane Peacock has expressed an interest in being vice-chair of the Standards Committee. Members were asked to approve this appointment. Committee members were unanimously in support of this proposal. | | |

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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AGREED: to approve Jane Peacock as vice chair of the Standards Committee.

Jane Peacock re-joined the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH OCTOBER 2024

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2024.

There were no matters arising.

5 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The committee was happy to note the content of the update provided.

6 SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2023/24 AND SUMMARY OF POSITION STATEMENTS

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her report and the Self-Assessment Report 2023/24. The committee was asked to recommend the latter to the Corporation Board for approval. The following points were particularly highlighted and discussed:

- The self-assessment process is comprehensive. It commences in August, and the vice principal meets with each curriculum area to discuss strengths and key areas for development. These meetings enable proposed grades to be agreed.
- Meetings to validate these grades took place in November. Some of these meetings involved members of the board and critical friends from Wolverhampton College. They involved much debate and dialogue. All heads of department put across their opinions very well, and the vice principal was pleased to see this articulation and how the writing of the self-assessment reports has developed.
- Overall, the large majority of areas were judged to be 'good' or better.
- This year, two more curriculum areas tipped into outstanding – these were performing arts and computer science.
- Many other areas have consolidated and bolstered a lot of key strengths and have worked hard to rectify areas for development. These areas are a strong 'good' and the vice principal was optimistic that more areas will move to 'outstanding' in the next self-assessment in 2025.
- Some areas still require improvement, particularly those which have been dealing with staff churn and have had to take on staff fresh from industry. While these new teachers are very keen, it takes time for them to master pedagogical techniques. However,

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the vice principal was confident that most of these areas are in a strong position to progress to 'good' this academic year.

- Lincoln and Loughborough Colleges gave feedback on the Self-Assessment Report, as did the Executive team. Overall, there was found to be a good balance of critical challenge. Very good ideas were put forward and the recommended changes have been made to the document presented to the committee. The proposed grades were endorsed, and the external partners particularly commented on how well-written the report was.
- The external partners also commented particularly on the improvement in vocational outcomes, particularly high grades.
- An annual increase has been seen in the number of students sitting GCSE Maths and English. Attendance continues to be a challenge and has never returned to pre-pandemic levels – a lot of this is due to mental health, and the college continues to try to be inclusive and meet the needs of local young people, including those who have not been in mainstream education and training for some time. The vice principal was able to inform governors that many of these young people have improved their attendance compared to when they were at school.

One governor agreed that the Self-Assessment Report was a comprehensive and well written document, acknowledging the hard work which has gone into this. She raised a question in relation to whether the newer teachers and those in areas judged to require improvement are monitored in relation to their usage of HOW2s and other teacher training software. The vice principal indicated that they are, and that continuous professional development is discussed at the five performance management review meetings throughout the year. Furthermore, the data is presented at the weekly curriculum and quality meetings, and quality forums also take place involving heads of department. The 'top 10 users' of the software were going to be celebrated in the weekly briefing on 29th November.

Another governor agreed with the comments made and indicated that the SAR is helpful for governors who are new to the committee. He also felt that the document itself and the vice principal's covering summary gave a lot of confidence.

Following mention of the document unavoidably including a number of acronyms, the clerk indicated that she would go through and compile a list in order to aid governors in deciphering these.

One governor stated that it was positive to see how the college has moved on. Feedback was provided that the context could perhaps include more information in relation to the most up-to-date aspirations for the area from the point of view of the mayor and the new government. The partnership with NTU was described as having huge

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potential, and more of detail of this potential, as well as impact, and aspirations for the future, could be included. Thirdly, in relation to teaching to the top, the governor suggested that more could be included about this, as well as how adaptive teaching is being embedded and how effective this is.

The committee chair pointed out that there is a national crisis in relation to resit numbers and normal ways of working for GCSE Maths and English. He suggested that this could be included in the national context, particularly considering the recent press focus on out-of-work young adults and the impact of COVID. He reminded the committee of last year's low attendance in class but high attendance to exams, and he suggested that having more context and background information could make it clear that the college does aspire to improve teaching, attendance and outcomes for students but, at the same time, its ability to deliver these improvements is hampered by the experience those young people have before they come to college. However, the chair agreed with the external validators' comments that not the college is not far away from 'outstanding'.

One governor raised a question in relation to the leadership and management grade and asked what else is needed to get this to 'outstanding'. The vice principal indicated that the college needs its maths and English and A Levels outcomes to be better. She indicated that this was debated at length in meetings with assistant principals, the principal, the critical friends, and the Executive team.

AGREED:

- to note the detail and content of the report provided
- to recommend that the Corporation Board approve the Self-Assessment Report 2023/24, with the amendments and comments as described above.

7

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN (QIAP)

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed report, which focused on attendance and apprenticeships.

Attendance

- Overall attendance is 1.9% better than at the end of term 1 in 2023. However, leaders would prefer attendance to be over 90% and RAG-rated green
- Maths and English continues to be a focus, and governors were assured that staff have been doing all they can to drive improvements. There is a maths and English steering group in place, and the standards coach has been looking at attendance, which is a key focus. During the first week of December, text messages will be sent to all students who are marked absent from maths and English to ensure that they are genuinely absent

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from college and not skipping their maths and English lessons. The college has invested in attendance chasers – there are three in place and two vacancies remaining – managed by assistant principals who will instruct them as to where they should focus their efforts. Until the attendance chasers have all been recruited, there is a team working evenings to call parents and follow up on attendance, on top of the calls made by teachers and support coaches.

- Apprenticeships attendance shows improvement in comparison to last year.

Governors agreed that they can see improvements in attendance already, compared to last year, and that it is good to see some impact of the measures put in place.

One governor asked whether the college obtains feedback from students as to why they are not attending and what the general reason for absence tends to be. The vice principal: curriculum and quality indicated that some young people are put off by the study of older literary texts or because they have previously been told that they are not good at the subject. When young people have not performed well in their exams, they feel that they will never be successful. Some students suffer from a lack of resilience or social anxiety. Overall, there are numerous reasons for non-attendance, but the college is doing its best to support these students. Some heads of department are even taking young people in their areas to lessons to ensure they attend. Timetabling has been planned to ensure English and maths lessons take place in the middle of a normal vocational day rather than early in the morning or last thing in the afternoon, or on days when there are no other lessons scheduled, all of which make it easier for students to avoid the lessons.

The student governor indicated that motivation is low for some students who have failed in the past. They do not believe in themselves and so do not attend. She suggested that inspiring and praising students and giving them reassurance could motivate them to attend.

One governor questioned whether more could be done to link maths and English with vocational subjects, which would better enable young people to see the value of maths and English in the context of their chosen area of study. The vice principal confirmed that this is done consistently in those areas where teaching is 'good' or better. However, in other areas, this is not as common. This year, in August, schemes of learning were sent to vocational teams by English and maths teachers so that the topics could be mirrored into vocational lessons where possible.

The vice principal assured governors that the college is starting to see an incremental increase in resilience and willingness to study, particularly as the pandemic falls further into the past. The resources put in place to

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provide support and coaching for English and maths are also starting to reap results.

Apprenticeships

- Retention is better than last year – all areas are RAG-rated green.
- There are very few apprentices left to complete in health and social care and motor vehicle this year. However, low numbers on programme can cause more of an impact on retention data if learners withdraw.
- Retail is flagged at the moment as a risk and concern.
- Retention within future years does not currently show any concerns.
- There is work to do in relation to high grades – this has been evidenced in areas' quality improvement plans, and apprenticeship managers and their teams are working on this. The vice principal indicated that it is really important to highlight that endpoint assessments for apprenticeships cannot be compared as they vary greatly from standard to standard.
- The accountability framework at R14 (the close of last academic year) shows that the college is no longer flagged as 'at risk' and is now 'needs improvement' in all areas. The college's predicted achievement was met, which is positive.
- The employer feedback measure is still felt to be slightly inappropriate as it is only taken from the start of the year; therefore, the college has been judged as 'needs improvement' based on only one review.
- The college is heading in the right direction in relation to achievement and retention, but the data can take a while to show improvements due to the length of stay of apprentices.
- The vice principal explained that it is hard to compare the college's position to that of other providers due to differences in the provision offered. There is a clear improvement plan in place which is kept up-to-date and has been sent to the Department for Education for monitoring.
- The DfE is offering apprenticeships training, and the vice principal has arranged for a visit on 26th February. The focus of this will be maths and English and reviews. She will share the outcomes with the committee once this training is complete.

VP: C&Q

Mar 2025

The chair indicated that it seems progress is being made. He stated that this has been a challenge for a while, but it is pleasing to see the R14 position, particularly considering the position last year. He questioned where the college is in terms of timely reviews and whether there were any concerns. In response, the vice principal indicated that there has been a noticeable improvement. A couple of areas still have dips, but this is mostly due to staffing issues and having to use staff to cover classroom-based learning. Staff are aware of what they need to do in terms of the planning and arrangement of these reviews, but there is still some work

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to do. The vice principal indicated that she will explicitly include this data within this report next time.

VP: C&Q

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Governors agreed that it is good to see these improvements in the data and congratulated the vice principal on keeping the ESFA close as this is very important. The vice principal was asked whether the ESFA links have attended any apprenticeship meetings this year – she confirmed that they have not, but she or the principal will invite them to do so. She also shares the quality improvement plan updates with them automatically, rather than waiting to be asked. She confirmed that she has also been putting the college forward for any and all training opportunities to show the desire to improve and a willingness to engage. The vice principal also indicated that national rates are now below the minimum expectations of the framework, so the college is setting its expectations higher.

VP: C&Q /
Principal

Mar 2025

AGREED: to note the content of the report and updates provided.

8

EMERGING GOVERNMENT POLICY

The vice principal: curriculum and quality provided a verbal update, as follows:

- Ofsted has been in consultation in relation to proposed changes to its approach, and it seems very likely that Further Education will have the overall effectiveness grades removed in favour of a scorecard model. Ofsted is looking at how to take the provider context into account, and there will be a sharper focus on inclusion, which is a positive thing for WNC. The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience has been involved in a roundtable to shape what inclusion might look like in an Ofsted framework. A positive point from this roundtable was that Ofsted has demonstrated a willingness to look how it might judge inclusion in ways that are not just about data (e.g. college context; how the college responds to the needs of its most vulnerable students; and looking at outcomes through the lens of inclusion, rather than how Ofsted would usually look at data). Possible negatives include concern as to how this might be implemented as it is quite bespoke and will give individual inspectors a lot of free rein in terms of how these judgements are made. There is another meeting of this roundtable in January, which the vice principal will also attend. Governors will be provided with an update following this meeting.
- A pause and review was put in place in July on the first cycle of curriculum reform, which concerns the defunding of Level 3 courses. This could impact early years, health and social care, and construction. The outcome of this is due to be published at Christmas. In curriculum planning, college leaders are now looking at plan A and plan B options.
- Alongside the above, there is also a curriculum and assessment review (CAR) to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the

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education system. Anyone can comment and provide evidence. This has a strong focus on core subjects and is also looking at subjects such as the arts, with a greater focus on equality and inclusion. Early years education and extracurricular activities such as enrichment and work placement are not included within this review. It is felt that there will be some light-touch changes and short-, medium- and long-term plans. The core theme is that there is too much content in the curriculum. However, there is still a commitment to exams and a cautious approach to digital assessment. The review team is working with Ofsted to ensure there is synergy.

- More information is awaited in relation to shorter foundation apprenticeships.
- Some new information suggests that the government is moving away from the increase to four hours of maths delivery. Instead, the suggestion is 100 hours of standalone core teaching but with providers being asked to consider giving students an extra 35 hours of maths. Furthermore, the tolerance in learners not taking English and maths is now being reduced to 2.5% rather than 0%. Learners with EHCPs can have maths and English delivered differently, but this will still involve GCSE or Level 2 Functional Skills and some stepping stones qualifications. Learners with a grade 2 will need to study GCSE; if they have lower than a grade 2, it is expected that colleges will decide whether GCSE or Functional Skills is the best option for each learner. However, the vice principal explained that Level 2 Functional Skills can be difficult. WNC already has an exemption board process to look at learners on case-by-case basis, where they are struggling – this ensures that an informed decision is made on what is right for the young person.
- There has been talk of a 'Getting Britain Working' white paper. The East Midlands is involved in eight trailblazers as part of this.
- £300m has been pledged by the government for FE, but there are currently no details as to what this is for and how it will be allocated.

The committee chair asked that any changes which will directly affect the college are brought to governors' attention straight away.

Exec /
Clerk

Ongoing

AGREED: to note the update provided.

9 **A LEVELS MONITORING – IN-YEAR UPDATES**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed written report, and key matters highlighted were:

- Attendance is 4% better than at the same point last year.
- The residual score for the academic progress check for Year 13 is -0.75 against a target of 0.00 by the end of the academic year. This is an improvement on the previous year.

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- Almost all subjects show improved ALPS ratings. However, it is very early in the year and there is still a long way to go. Students will need to remember and apply more information as time passes.
- Retention, at 81%, is 4.1% better than last year but is still lower than expectations.
- Year 12 students have settled in very well and there are currently no significant concerns in relation to these learners. It is still very early in terms of the progress score and ALPS for the year.
- The new curriculum area lead (CAL) structure is in place and the interim head of sixth form is predicting that the college will finish this year with an ALPS score of 6. Currently, the ALPS score for Year 12 is 5, suggesting that progress is predicted to slip slightly as the work gets more difficult. However, this will still put the college at white on the ALPS chart, which would be positive.
- Interventions are in place for a range of subjects in A Levels.

Governors were pleased to note the positive start to the year.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

10

BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND ANNUAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed report, which particularly focused on the Ofsted areas for improvement. As part of this twice-yearly update, a number of key points were raised.

- Planning of on- and off-the-job training was presented with comments against each area. This is regularly audited by the teaching and learning coach and assessed in deep dives. Good progress is being made, although there is still more work to do in some areas – such as engineering – where there needs to be more synergy between assessment in the workplace and classroom-based activity. However, the college is on the right track and improvements are being made. The outcomes are all detailed in departmental quality improvement plans. Heads know their departments very well, and the vice principal was confident that the college will move forward at a swifter pace this year.
- The second area for development was in relation to the electrical team. A lot of work has been done and there is now a stable staffing medley in place. Some restructuring was done in-year, and the area is now under new management. It is felt that the department is the strongest it has been in a while. Progress is currently -0.2, which means that learners are where they should be, particularly as these qualifications are very technical and demanding.
- Deep dives show that teaching and learning is improving, particularly in vocational areas.

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- The college saw a 22% increase in technical qualifications last year, going along with the government's drive to provide these in favour of the alternatives.
- There is still more work to do in some areas in terms of setting demanding work, but this is improving and adaptive teaching is continuing. HOW2s are used and the college is celebrating the top users of these, and CPD is individualised. The assistant principal: quality and standards spends a lot of time with heads of department to formulate outcomes based on quality improvement plans.
- In terms of assessment and checking of learning, a minority of areas still have some work to do, but there is good evidence of where this is working effectively. Again, CPD plans are in place.
- The college shows strong, critical self-assessment.
- Performance management review meetings have provided and evidenced further progress in terms of closing down these areas for improvement.

In general discussion, one governor asked how the arrangement with Protocol is having a positive impact on curriculum. It was confirmed that, in the main, this is working well – some areas are a challenge to recruit to but, at this stage, these are in the minority. English and maths teachers are a particular challenge, but this is a national issue. Leaders feel that the Protocol arrangement has been worthwhile so far. One assistant principal informed the committee that Protocol was able to provide a very strong individual for the engineering team, and the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience indicated that some very strong learning support assistants have also been sourced through Protocol.

The chair particularly noted that it is positive to see that the college is getting a stable and content group of staff in place in engineering.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

11 **RISK REPORT (RED RAG-RATED ITEMS) – REVIEW OF RISKS WITH STANDARDS COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented the report, providing an update against the red risks that were not covered elsewhere within the reports to the committee.

Hard-to-fill vacancies

The main challenge is the air conditioning and refrigeration role. The college has now recruited someone fresh from industry, and another individual is also coming in. the head of apprenticeships in construction is doing as much as possible alongside HR to fill this role.

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The college has also struggled to recruit maths teachers, and it is currently proving to be a challenge to get an A-Level Maths teacher in place. A former employee is coming back short-term to cover.

There are also some vacancies in brick and plumbing, but this is still undeniably an improvement on the historical position. Governors acknowledged that recruitment challenges are a national issue, particularly in some subject areas.

Failure to improve target grades

It is very early in the academic year, but there are currently no concerns in vocational provision for either 16-18 or 19+. Neither are there any concerns as yet in maths and English, but the complexity will increase as the year progresses. The best indicator of outcomes will be the February mocks, which will be sat under JCQ conditions. Students will sit two papers for maths this year, instead of three, as the college has moved to EDUQAS.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

12 PERFORMANCE REPORT – DATA ON A PAGE

The assistant principal: quality and standards introduced this item. Governors were informed that there was no report run in November 2023, and December's data was reported on in January; therefore, this report's comparisons are against October 2023. The assistant principal particularly drew the committee's attention to the following data:

Education programmes for young people

- Attendance (87.3%) is 0.1% below where it was at both the previous committee meeting (October 2024) and in October 2023.
- Retention (97.6%) is 0.3% below the position in October 2024 but is still 1% above the 2023 position. It is 8.7% above the national average.
- Vocational attendance (88.9%) is 0.1% below October 2024 and is at the same level as in October 2023.
- The vocational progress score is -0.46.
- English attendance (82.4%) is 2% above October 2024 and 2.5% above October 2023.
- The English progress score is -1.04.
- Maths attendance (81.7%) is 0.7% above October 2024 and 1.2% above October 2023.
- The maths progress score is -0.83.

Adult learning programmes

- Direct delivery attendance (87.7%) is 1.5% below the position at the previous committee meeting but still 1.6% above October 2023.

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- Direct delivery retention (96.4%) is 0.5% above the position at the previous committee meeting but still 0.4% below October 2023. This is above the national average of 92.2%.
- Subcontracted delivery retention (92.2%) is 0.9% below the position reported to the previous committee meeting and is 0.7% above October 2023. It is level with the national average. Achievement (84%) is 4.2% below the position reported to the committee in October 2024. This is still 12.6% above the same point last year but is 2.8% below the national average.
- Community delivery retention (97%) is 1.2% above the same point in 2023 and 4.8% above the national average; however, it has reduced by 3% since October 2024. Achievement (85.7%) is 1.8% below the report to the last committee meeting, 0.4% below October 2023, and 1.1% below the national average.

Apprenticeships – direct delivery

- Attendance (90.4%) is 1.7% above the position in October 2024 and 1.5% above October 2023.
- Retention (79.7%) is 7.3% above the position in October 2023, but this is a 2.1% reduction since October 2024.
- Achievement (16.8%) is 16.8% above October 2023 and 6.8% above October 2024. Although this is still 37.8% below the national average, this will rise as the academic year progresses.
- Recording of 20% off-the-job training (23.2%) is 1.3% below the position in October 2023 and 0.3% below the report to the previous committee meeting.
- Recording of six hours of off-the job training (7.2%) is 0.3% above the position in October 2023 and a 1.1% reduction since October 2024.
- Reviews in the last three months (87.2%) is 3.4% above the position in October 2023, a 5.4% increase since October 2024.

Learners with high needs

- Overall attendance is 87.9%, which is 2% below the figure in October 2023. Retention is 97%, which is 0.4% below the position in October 2023. The progress score is -0.66.
- Vocational attendance is 89.4%, which is 2.4% below the position in October 2023. The vocational progress score is -0.35.
- English attendance is 84.5%, which is 0.2% above the position in October 2023. The English progress score is -0.89.
- Maths attendance is 84.9%, which is 0.3% below the position in October 2023. The maths progress score is -0.87.

Free school meals

- Attendance (86.9%) is 1.2% above the position in October 2023 but 1.4% below October 2024.

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- Retention (97.2%) is 0.4% below the position in October 2024 and 1.9% below October 2023.
- The progress score is -0.70, which is an improvement on October 2023.

BAME

- Attendance (89.1%) is 0.3% above October 2023 and 1.1% above October 2024.
- Retention (98.1%) is 0.8% below the position in October 2023 and is at the same level as was reported to the previous meeting.
- The progress score is -0.56.

Deep dives meeting expectations (percentage grade 2 or better)

- Deep dives of classroom-based learning show that 83.3% (five out of six) achieved 'good' or better.
- Deep dives of apprenticeships show that 50% (one of two deep dives carried out) achieved 'good' or better.
- No other deep dives had been carried out at the point of the dashboard being presented.

The chair questioned in relation to the decline against target in subcontracting, and it was confirmed that this is simply due to the timing of the update. One governor questioned whether there is an acceptable variance as the differences with many of the 'slightly down' measures are very slight, and these could be higher in a week or so. It was confirmed that this is the case.

Governors again gave very positive feedback on the presentation and clarity of this data, and it was agreed to be a definite improvement on the old format.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

13

2024/25 IN-YEAR EXCEPTIONS REPORTS

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her detailed report. As this was the first instance of the three matters – safeguarding and Prevent; equality, diversity and inclusion (students); and priority groups – being combined in one report, governors were invited to feed back their thoughts in relation to this method of presentation.

Key matters were particularly highlighted as follows:

- Data shows that the college had a busy start to the year from a safeguarding point of view, having taken over 200 more concerns through CPOMS than last year. Of the 933 concerns, 261 were attendance-related, which supports how much is being done to improve attendance.

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- The college continues to see a significant increase in the complexity surrounding some of the college's young people – the number of students open to social care on a child protection or child in need plan is significantly above last year's figure. This comes with additional load for the Safeguarding team in terms of attending meetings with professionals – for some young people, these meetings are held every week or every other week.
- Wellbeing, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts continues to be the largest category of concerns.
- The combined safeguarding and Prevent risk register shows no significant change but does indicate progress in terms of mitigating risk. There are some concerns around drugs, particularly at Derby Road, so the vice principal hopes to have a search dogs exercise carried out on campus prior to Christmas.
- The government's response to the recommendations from the independent review of social care has been published in the form of the document 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive'. The decisions include the fact that education is not being made the fourth safeguarding partner, but the current safeguarding partners are being mandated to ensure education is involved in strategic level decisions locally. The college can evidence good practice alongside Nottinghamshire County Council, and it is hoped that this can be reflected nationally.
- The vice principal, principal and assistant principal: inclusion met with Derbyshire County Council to discuss some concerns, not least of which was the disbanding of the council's early help team. The college is now expected to undertake early help assessments and, if necessary, pull together a team around the family assessment. Another meeting is planned to really understand the implications of this for the college.
- The vice principal was pleased to see the expansion of the virtual head role to take on oversight of any young person who is not living in a family situation, regardless of whether or not that young person is officially a looked after child.
- The college is participating in a peer review for SEND with City College Norwich. This will involve some learning walks and looking at target setting for young people with SEND, particularly around English and maths. City College Norwich will be asked to look at WNC's dyslexia provision in order to enable WNC to drive improvements.
- The key KPIs have also been combined across what would have been the three reports. The vice principal used a RAG-rating to show where these were largely on track and where they were falling behind. All the red ratings were around attendance, including learners in supported housing and residential care and those closed to a child in need plan. The vice principal explained that she is looking into reasons behind this, and the college continues to have productive meetings with the local authority

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in relation to young people in supported housing. This involves exploring the possibility for the college to be involved in placement planning meetings alongside the local authority and other professionals to enable work to commence in relation to supporting young people into college. Other ideas include having a 'pre-start' week so that the college can meet key staff working with young people; face-to-face meetings with the YMCA to share challenges and agree productive ways forward; and talking to the YMCA's key workers to look at whether college staff can attend the accommodation during a student's first couple of weeks of residency to support in getting the young person to attend college.

Governors expressed confidence that the vice principal and her team are engaged in doing the best they possibly can for students. Governors also fed back that it was good to see the three reports and the data pulled together into one report.

One governor commented on the increased complexity and number of incidents the team is dealing with and asked whether the team and the vice principal feel supported and sufficiently knowledgeable, particularly in respect of the early help assessment issue emerging from Derbyshire County Council. The governor asked whether any further support can be put in place for the team and the vice principal. The vice principal indicated that a request has been logged with the finance director with for an additional safeguarding team member, and this is top of his approvals list once he has more clarity around the finances in the new year. The vice principal was hoping to have an advert out prior to Christmas for an early new year start. The vice principal explained that the second discussion with Derbyshire County Council will focus particularly on the training and support available for colleges and schools to undertake the team around the family assessments, as these are complex and often involve pulling together several services.

One governor raised the matter of link governors. There is an expectation for colleges to have a SEND link governor in place and a recommendation for an EDI link, but the college does not currently have either of these. The clerk indicated that she has drafted new guidance and submitted this to the existing link governors for feedback. This will be taken to the board in December and, if approved, the clerk can then work on filling these roles.

Clerk

Dec 2024

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided

14

INTERNAL STUDENT PROGRESSION – 2023/24 INTO 2024/25

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her report. Governors' attention was particularly drawn to the following points:

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- This data was taken from the learners who actually progressed with the college, so governors were informed that the percentages may change when the post-Christmas data is presented.
- The number of learners repeating a level has reduced compared to the previous year.
- The number of students studying at a lower level has gone up quite significantly. The vice principal has attended the curriculum and quality meeting to discuss this – some anomalies have been noticed, which heads of department will be asked to look into. Of the 160 students studying at a lower level, 11 had withdrawn quite early in the previous year and did not complete; nine were adult learners who progressed to community programmes; 68 studied at Level 3, and 45 of these moved to a programme in a different subject area where Level 2 is the highest possible start point. One student did move to a Level 1 programme, and the reasons for this need to be explored. The remainder of these learners moved to T Level, which is categorised as 'Level X' and so throws up a data anomaly; therefore, this is not a concern.
- Of the 170 students who moved to a course at the same level, 30 learners studied at Level 3 last year and then returned to study another Level 3 course – some of these were A-Level students who completed Year 1 and then moved to a vocational course. 20 of these 170 learners moved from Step Up and Progress into core vocational provision, which would be counted as positive progression. 94 learners studied at Level 2: of those, 37 progressed onto programmes where the Level 2 is the entry point. 24 learners repeated a Level 1 programme within another curriculum area.

Governors were pleased to see the detail and continued challenge, as well as the narrative to provide an explanation where students have not progressed to a higher level.

AGREED:

- to note the contents of the report.

15 LEARNER VOICE – 2024/25 MONITORING AND APPRENTICESHIP SURVEY

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her report.

The apprenticeships exit survey was largely positive but had a disappointingly low response rate. The vice principal intends to work with the assistant principal: quality and standards and her team to work out ways to promote this. The vice principal: curriculum and quality indicated that sickness absence within the team this delayed the survey,

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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but the response rate does tend to be low every year so there is still some work to do to improve this.

The response rate to the first Rate Your Course survey was 1,400 students, which is quite high. Responses were mostly very positive, but only 82% of A-Level students would recommend the college to a friend, which is much lower than other directorates.

Three cross-college learner voice meetings have been held so far this year: two induction sessions and then the first full Your Voice meeting. On the whole, feedback was incredibly positive. Students talked positively about the start to the year and made excellent suggestions for additions to the tutorial programme, such as first aid, sign language, and autism awareness. From the learner reps' induction, 30 to 40 learners agreed to work with the vice principal around bullying and how to reduce the number of incidents in college. The vice principal will be meeting these students at each site after Christmas. This group has also provided some helpful feedback in relation to the code of conduct and behaviour policy.

A decision to reverse the restrictions on what can be purchased by students in receipt of free college meals was positively received by the learner reps.

Governors agreed that it was positive to see the notes from the learner rep meetings and the engagement from staff. Governors questioned whether actions are communicated back to students so that they know these forums are worthwhile. The vice principal confirmed that a Teams channel has been set up for reps, and recordings of the Your Voice meetings are posted there along with the minutes and the action log. The communications manager then chases up responses from senior leaders so that these can be shared with the learner reps, and the reps are asked to feed outcomes back to their peers. Many of the actions are closed within the meetings, but the manager is very good at feeding back in relation to all actions, including those which have to be taken outside of the meetings themselves.

Following a question from one of the governors, it was confirmed that the student governors will be involved in the learner rep process from the next Your Voice meeting onwards. They will also be invited to attend the student panel meetings with governors and the lead learner reps.

The chair challenged the assistant principal: academic, creative, community, digital and professional studies on the survey outcomes from the A-Levels department. He indicated that the amount of homework seems to be the topic of most of the comments, and he was interested in unpicking this response. The assistant principal indicated that she needed to look into this result and the reasons for it. She

AP:
ACCDPS

Jan 2025

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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suspected that it was due to timetable changes, as Year 13 students now have a different timetable structure than they had when they were in Year 12. The student governor was invited to feed back on this outcome – she indicated that a lot of students have issues with the teaching methods of some staff – for example, some do not offer the right support to students in class. Not all students feel supported to achieve better grades. The assistant principal asked that the student governor come and speak to her directly so that she can explore this. It was also suggested that it would be good for the chair to visit Chesterfield Road in the new year, and the clerk will liaise with the assistant principal and the chair to arrange this visit once the new head of sixth form has commenced in post.

Clerk

Jan 2025

The assistant principal: quality and standards indicated that one thing emerging from recent deep dive discussions with learners was inconsistency in feedback and feedforward from teachers. Some teachers are very thorough, but others are not. The general theme coming through from this was that learners want more feedback and more concise feedforward on how to improve. There has been some discussion with teachers on having a standardised and more consistent approach.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

Keith Spiers left the meeting at 18:50.

16 COMPLAINTS – ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her report. She particularly highlighted the fact that the report shows a significant reduction in complaints relating to transport, which really shows that it was positive to move to the public bus scheme.

One governor specifically asked about a GDPR complaint and the facts surrounding this. The vice principal explained that this complaint is submitted by the same individual every year. It has been looked at many times, and the college is definitely not in breach of GDPR. This is fed back to the individual every time the complaint is received. Governors were assured by this explanation.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of additional business.

18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

This was confirmed to be Thursday 23rd January 2025 at 17:00.

Meeting closed at 18:55.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 23/01/2025

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Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 23/01/2025