

THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the meeting of the Further Education Curriculum & Quality Committee
held at 5.30pm on Monday 15 March 2023
in the Boardroom at the Altrincham Campus Trafford College**

Present:	Sarah Drake	Chairperson
	Charlotte Barratt	
	Olivia Bussey	
	Adele Carney*	
	Ashley Hartle	Deputy Student Governor
	Graham Luccock*	
	Michelle McLaughlin	Staff Governor/ Student Experience Manager
	Marcia Reynolds*	
	Uswah Sayyed	Student Governor
In Attendance:	Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	Deputy Principal
	Yvette Hansbury-Robinson	Assistant Principal, Student Experience and Support
	Danielle Judge	Assistant Principal, Apprenticeships
	Jane Nickisson*	Assistant Principal, Higher Education and Skills
	Adam Sinnott	Interim Director of Quality, Performance and Standards
	Helen Wood	Assistant Principal, Study Programmes – Academic
	Tracey Wood	Assistant Principal, Adults & Employer Engagement
	Alison Duncalf	Deputy Corporation Secretary

* Joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams

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FEC&Q/01/23 Apologies for Absence

The Deputy Corporation Secretary (DCS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from Imaan Aurangzaib, Glad Capewell, Mollieann Jeacott and James Scott.

It was further reported that the Corporation Secretary was unable to attend the meeting.

There was confirmation that Imaan Aurangzaib, who was a BTEC L3 Foundation Diploma in Applied Science student, had recently taken up the position of Deputy Student Governor however due to a prior commitment had not been able to attend the meeting.

A welcome was also extended to Danielle Judge, Assistant Principal, Apprenticeships (APA).

FEC&Q/02/32 Declaration of Direct or Indirect Interest in any of the following Items

There were no declarations of either direct or indirect interest in any of the meeting's business items.

FEC&Q/03/23 Minutes of the FE Curriculum & Quality Committee Meeting held on 28 November 2022

The minutes of the meeting were approved and accepted as a correct account of the meeting's proceedings.

FEC&Q/04/23 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Chairperson referred members to the previously circulated summary of actions arising from the minutes and the progress attained therein.

Minute No**i) FEC&Q/39/22 – Student Outcomes Report**

The Deputy Principal (DP), with respect to pre-internships, reported that in conjunction with Stockport MBC a small cohort was now underway, adding that it was good to see the commencement of the initiative.

It was further noted that there had also been a recent announcement by the Government around future investment in this type of initiative.

ii) FEC&Q/39/22 – Student Outcomes Report

With respect to the MiDES report, inclusive of information in relation to English and maths data as well as value add information, the DP undertook to share the report with the DCS for circulation to members of the Committee.

Action: Interim Director of Quality Performance and Standards/Deputy Corporation Secretary

iii) FECC&Q/42/22 – Curriculum Development Area Reviews (CDARs) Update Report

There was confirmation that the Mac computers within Creative Arts at Altrincham had been replaced and updated accordingly.

iv) FEC&Q/46/22 – Employer Engagement Update Report

The DP reported that in respect of the local needs and the Community Responsive Strategy the action plan was under construction and, moving forward, progress against this plan would be reported to the Committee. There was confirmation that reporting also took place as part of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

There were no further matters raised by members arising from the minutes that had not been actioned or were on the meeting's agenda.

FEC&Q/05/22**Quality Improvement Plan and Performance Indicators Report 2022/2023**

The DP referred members to the previously circulated report and an update on the progress of the Group's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and Key Performance Indicators for 2022-2023.

There was confirmation that the annual QIP, as set in the autumn term, was in response to the key areas for improvement as identified within the Group Self-Assessment Report (SAR).

With reference to the supporting documentation and summary report the DP confirmed that the majority of the 8 objectives were currently RAG rated as at least amber, which was indicative of the progress being made. There was confirmation that a RAG rating of green would only be attained when an objective was progressing toward achievement.

In summary the DP stated that good progress was being made in-year and that there were no elements with a RAG rating of red.

The DP highlighted the detail provided in relation to objective 8, *further develop the merged college group's response towards making a significant contribution to meeting local needs*. There was confirmation that this was a new section within the QIP and the information provided a flavour of the work taking place with local employers and the community.

In addition, it was reported that retention continued to be positive (93.5%) and overall satisfaction was high (88%) however overall attendance was at 84% which was of concern (objective 1).

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With respect to apprenticeships (objective 2) the DP stated that there had been significant progress in this area with a relentless approach being taken to improving the quality of the provision, stabilising staffing issues in key areas, engaging with employers and developing the skills of the Group's workforce.

It was further noted that the new Assistant Principal, Apprenticeships (APA) had also recently joined the Group.

The DP highlighted the legacy issues and large numbers of new staff in some areas. Reference was made to the apprenticeship achievement rate of 70% set for 2022/2023 which had been set in advance of the knowledge of the outcomes for the previous year (47%). The DP suggested that this rate was now considered to be over ambitious and a proposal was presented for the in-year adoption of an amended KPI of 65% for the 2022/2023 academic year.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- In relation to the proposed revision to the achievement rate a member asked if the reason the original target would not be met related to retention.

The DP responded that on completion of the programme students would achieve, adding that the issue was one of legacy within which some students had indicated that they were going to complete but had not, plus there had been a lack of support from some employers, in terms of not being able to give their learners the required time off to complete. The DP stated that in such instances the difficult decision had been taken to terminate.

The Assistant Principal, Adults & Employer Engagement (APAE) added that several variables were taken into consideration when setting the targets.

The APA indicated that a significant amount of work was taking place in relation to the profiling of learners due to complete by 31 July 2023. Reassurance was provided that the achievement rate, which would be published at the end of March, and the revised target of 65% were considered to be realistic targets but remained challenging.

- A further question was asked by a member in relation to the monitoring of student progress and the setting of SMART targets and as to whether the inconsistencies in some areas were those previously reported or if they were new ones.

The DP responded that there continued to be some issues in Engineering as well as in Health and Social Care with the latter being linked to staffing (30% of whom were permanent staff and the remainder agency staff).

The Interim Director of Quality Performance and Standards (IDQPS) reported that analysis of the mid-year survey indicated that satisfaction was lower in areas where there had been staffing issues. It was stated that the monitoring of student progress and the setting of SMART targets was a significant agenda item of the Progress Boards in particular the targeting of one-to-one meetings where students were not achieving. There was confirmation that staff were being encouraged to have regular meetings with their students at which targets and progress therein could be reviewed. In addition, it was stated there was a focus upon attendance, consistent with low attendance impacting upon achievement. The IDQPS stated that conversations with students were also being held at an earlier point in the academic year than previously.

- In relation to the proposed new KPI achievement rate of 65% and the indication that this was consistent with national standards, a member asked as to how the Group compared with the wider sector.

The APA responded that the achievement rates referenced related to in-year sector feedback with the official position for the previous academic year's National Achievement Rates table

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being due to be published later in the year. The DP undertook to share this information when it was published which was likely to be in April 2023.

Action: Deputy Principal

- A member referenced the previous discussions of the Committee in relation to changes to attendance KPIs with the response at that time being that there was a desire to maintain high aspirations. It was asked how the position differed for apprenticeships.

The APA stated that a target of 65% continued to be highly aspirational particularly in the context of the national benchmark which was in the mid-50s as well as the legacy of Covid impacting on learners. It was further suggested that a target of 70% was considered to be unachievable at this time and adoption of a slightly lower target supported the managing of expectations. It was reiterated that a target of 65% still delivered improvement of 18% on the previous year.

The DP added that more information was now available to inform the revised target which had not been available at the time of setting the original target. It was further suggested that whilst student attendance impacted on outcomes for English and maths the position was less linear for apprenticeships within which there was less control.

- A member raised the issue of end point assessment (EPA) and its allocation.

There was confirmation that, following allocation of the EPA, the Group did not have control in terms of delay in this taking place. It was noted that Ofsted was sympathetic around this issue.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that:

- (a) the Quality Improvement Plan and Performance Indicator Report 2022/2023 and progress therein be received and noted:**
- (b) it be recommended to the Board of the Corporation that the Key Performance Indicator in respect of the apprenticeship achievement rate for 2022/2023 be amended from 70% to 65%.**

Action: Board of the Corporation**FEC&Q/06/23****Quality of Education Report**

The IDQPS referred members to the previously circulated report and an overview of the quality processes undertaken to drive continuous improvement since the last meeting of the Committee, alongside a summary of the in-year performance data.

The following areas of key updates were highlighted:

- **2021-2022 Performance Data**
 - the publication of performance data (16-18 performance measures) for 2021/2022, the first time that this data had been published since 2018/2019
 - that these are measures were designed to provide a rounded picture of school and college performance to inform student choice, inform an institution's own self-assessment and benchmarking, inform Ofsted inspection, and inform government's oversight of the 16-18 sector
 - that an average point score per A level entry expressed as a grade was C+ (B for England schools and colleges)

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- that an average point score per applied general entry expressed as a vocational grade was Merit+ (Distinction for England schools and colleges)
- that an average point per score tech entry expressed as a vocational grade was Distinction (Distinction for schools and colleges).

- **Response to Ofsted Inspection**

- in respect of Apprenticeships, Employer Advisory Boards were now set up and taking place in all areas
- there was improved engagement of employers in progress reviews as evidenced by a sample of 50 progress reviews across 10 different apprenticeship areas, currently 18% were showing no employer involvement
- an employer survey had taken place asking a range of questions including “I am involved and contribute to the 8-week progress review of my apprentice, and I know my apprentice’s targets” (81%) and “Would you recommend the Trafford College Group to your network” (81%)
- the majority of curriculum areas were now utilising scorecards to initially assess apprentices at their point of commencing their apprenticeship and thereafter plan individual future development of skills, knowledge and behaviours, SMART targets were being set and some good practice was being seen
- the “Choices” programme was demonstrating 100% retention and all learners were attending external placements or volunteering/community activities
- there was recognition that further work needed to take place in relation to attendance which was currently 1.1% above the same point in the last academic year; English attendance was up by 4% and maths by 2%; and overall attendance stood at 83.5% as at February 2023.

- A member asked as to whether the Maths and English Attendance Officer was having an impact.

The IDQPS responded that impact was being seen in terms of both attendance and punctuality. It was added that nationally English and maths were areas of focus and small improvements of 1 or 2% were seen as positive and steps in the right direction.

- **Update on the Quality Improvement Cycle**

- following the completion of 12 CDARs the priority for the remainder of the academic year was upon quality improvement rather than quality assurance, and to identify, support and monitor “at risk” courses to ensure outcomes were maximised
- Progress Boards were continuing to take place with all curriculum areas having undertaken a minimum of 3 at this point in the academic year
- the focus on at-risk courses in order to prioritise those for close intervention
- of 368 courses, 32 were currently identified as being at significant risk and 44 as at moderate risk.

- The question was asked by a member in relation to the impact being achieved in relation to the at-risk courses.

There was assurance that close oversight was maintained until there was resolution of concerns. The Assistant Principal, Study Programmes – Academic (APSPA) added that there could be a number of issues as to why a course may be at risk.

- **Predicted Value Added**

In respect of A-Level Value Added as at February 2023:

- the position in relation the predicted A-Level Value Added (ALPs) as at February 2023 was below the position at the same time the previous year
- there was recognition that work needed to take place to drive forward the value added

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- Marple was on track for the same outcome as the previous year (ALPS 4); there was work to do at Cheadle (ALPs 7, 6 the previous year) where there was correlation to a number of at-risk courses; and at Altrincham (ALPs 7, 3 the previous year) a pessimistic approach had been adopted with a view to using the score as a motivational tool both with students and via parental reports.

The APSPA added that with a return to pre-pandemic gradings there was recognition that there was a lot of work to do. Reference was also made to the gaps in students' knowledge prior to the commencement of their A-Level courses. It was suggested that at the time of the next progress grade, in April 2023, there was an expectation that real progress would be seen.

- A member asked a question around the impact of the teacher assessed GCSE grades.

The APSPA responded that this would be the final year of students coming through with teacher assessed grades. It was added that a greater impact was being seen in the areas of maths and science than humanities.

In terms of Vocational Value Added (One Grade) as at February 2023:

- there was confirmation that zero was the target outcome, with above the grade being a + (positive) and below the grade – (negative)
 - Applied General qualifications currently stood at -0.12 (-0.27 for 2021/2022)
 - Level 2 Other qualifications was presenting a positive position and a much-improved position (+0.41 versus -0.02 for the previous year)
 - an improved position in relation to Technical qualifications
 - there was recognition that there continued to be work to do over the remaining few months of the academic year.
- A member, with reference to A-Levels, asked as to whether there were any particular problem areas.

The APSPA referred to the detail in the report adding that there were the same number of A-Level learners at both Altrincham and Cheadle.

It was added that Psychology was an issue at both campuses and Maths at Altrincham was also a challenge. The IDQPS stated that where a course was not achieving the first elements to be looked at were the teaching and learners. There was confirmation that for Psychology at the Altrincham campus very strong teachers were in place, there was good teaching and attendance was also good. In reviewing the provision, it was reported an issue had been identified in relation to independent learning. There was confirmation that moving forward there was an intention to determine a common approach for students' independent learning.

- **Predicted Achievement**

- based on the current predicted grades from February 2023, the current predicted achievement for EFA funded learners was 84% compared to 79.1% in 2021/2022
- it was stated that it was considered an increase of 5% was attainable
- a significant factor in terms of achievement was attendance.
- retention was 3.3% higher when compared to RO6 the previous years.

The DP cautioned that there was an element of risk to achieving a final outcome of 84% consistent with March being an early point and adding that all curriculum areas were seeking to identify any learners that were at risk of withdrawing or failing their course with appropriate interventions being progressed.

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- **Lesson Visits and TLA Outcomes**

- an overview of the lesson visits and TLA outcomes was presented, there was confirmation that to date 158 developmental lesson visits had been carried out and 171 short lesson visits
- 50 staff (30%) had been identified to share good practice; 98 (64%) were meeting expectations or be recommended CPD; and 10 (6%) staff had been referred for mentoring
- expertise and subject knowledge, learner attitude and behaviour and quality of learning resources had been identified as key strengths in developmental lesson visits
- learner attitude and behaviour as a strength, was 20% higher than in the previous academic year.
- A member asked that where a member of staff had been recommended for CPD was this tracked.

The IDQPS confirmed that close oversight was maintained and recorded. It was added that mentoring also took place and that there was a flow in and out of the process. Reference was made to the positive impact seen during the CDARs of curriculum areas.

- **Teaching, Learning and Assessment CPD (Continuous Professional Development)**

- there had been significantly higher engagement with the optional Tier 2 CPD during the current academic year, as a result of the protected Wednesday afternoon slot, with the highest attendance for a session being 233, compared to the highest attendance the previous year of 87
- Tier 1 CPD groups also took place on a Wednesday, attendance at which had been very positive
- a positive impact from CPD was being seen in lesson visits
- there had been 6 separate sessions for apprenticeship assessors, which had been rolled out from January, the highest attendance for which had been 35 (80% of assessors)
- 24 new staff had completed the Passport to TLA process across 11 curriculum areas, the feedback from which had been very positive
- all members of the Teaching Learning and Innovation Team had completed an ETF mentoring course.

- **Student Mid-Year Survey Outcomes**

- good compliance (66%) had been attained with 5,070 responses out of 7,747 learners
- the overall satisfaction rate of 88% was the same as the previous year
- examples of the questions asked were shared with both the highest and lowest scoring questions highlighted as well as the breakdown by campus
- there was recognition that further work needed to take place in response to the lower scoring questions
- confirmation that the Progress Boards were analysing the data at subject level.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration the Quality of Education Report was received and noted.

FEC&Q/07/23

Curriculum Development Areas (CDARs) Update Report

The IDQPS referred members to the previously circulated paper and an update on the progress of the Curriculum Development Area Reviews (CDAR) during the current academic year including the action plans arising.

There was confirmation that CDARs were an important element of the Group's quality assurance processes and were well embedded although relatively new to Cheadle and Marple.

It was reported that 4 CDARs had been completed since the last meeting of the Committee and that in total 12 had been completed during the current academic year.

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A summary of the CDAR activity to date was presented and the reports in respect of the following areas were highlighted - Technical Excellence; English and Maths; Built Environment; and Tutorials.

There was confirmation that the reports for each area of provision identified key areas for development and recommendations for study programmes and the IDQPS went through each report and outlined the process following the completion of the report and the link with Progress Boards in terms of monitoring actions and improvements.

- Technical Excellence

It was reported that some thematic CDARs had now been undertaken. In relation to Technical Excellence there was confirmation that at two points in the academic year (January and May) vocational learners were assessed for their development of technical excellence.

It was noted that pressure points presented an opportunity for greater buy-in from students and the knowledge was an indicator that there was uniformity of practice across a department and the same expectations.

The IDQPS stated that it was considered that the tests added value to what students did. It was added that it was known some students were already doing well but the tests presented the opportunity for extension to everyone.

The Technical Excellence Week, which would take place in May 2023 was highlighted, there was confirmation that the week would be directed to vocational courses in which practical skills were important, and would present opportunities to measure progress since week 1.

The IDQPS reported that the CDAR indicated that there were areas of excellence but that there continued to be some work to do. It was noted that there was a clear plan of action to ensure technical excellence was embedded in all areas.

- English and Maths

The IDQPS reported that this CDAR had been extensive and involved considerable effort and time. It was noted that there was a detailed report arising with agreed actions and a plan for moving forward.

There was confirmation that there was some good teaching in English and maths with pockets of outstanding aspects.

In terms of the issues around attendance it was suggested that this came down to timetabling. It was added that it was considered that it was critical as to what happened in first couple of months of a course and that this was something that needed to be addressed moving forward. The view was expressed that it was about the creation of a culture in the first few weeks of the first term.

The APSPA added that the issues in the main were not around the quality of teaching and learning and that it was the timetabling issues that needed to be addressed.

It was reported that the Group had recently invested in the Century platform, to support independent learning, and which tailored learning to that which had previously been undertaken. It was stated that, in order to take the platform to the next level, training staff would be undertaking on how to use the platform effectively. It was noted that full roll out of the platform to all curriculum areas was taking place with a view it being established from September 2023.

In relation to Learning Facilitators (LFs) it was reported that some excellent practice had been observed and that the LFs were having a positive impact on the culture of lessons. It was

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noted however that there was some variability across areas and that a bespoke CPD package was being progressed to support the LFs.

- Built Environment

The IDQPS reported that there continued to be work to do around the built environment some of which was around basic teaching and learning. It was added however that there had been some new staff who had made an impression and were good staff to have in place. There was confirmation that mentoring of the new starters, supported by CPD, was being progressed.

It was noted that one-to-one tutor meetings were some of the lowest in number that had been seen, which was due in some instances to staffing issues and in others where the tutorial process had not been embedded.

- Tutorial

The IDQPS reported that in conjunction with the Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support (APSES) and Head of Learner Services observations of tutorials had taken place. There was confirmation that good mandatory sessions had been seen arising from which there were some “tweaks” recommended.

In addition, it was noted that some good one-to ones had been seen but that there was a need to ensure that all students were in receipt of this experience. Recommendations in relation to mandatory sessions around study skills and the embedding of skills were highlighted, including the inclusion of some World Skills UK modules around developing confidence, resilience, goal setting and self-esteem, were highlighted.

Questions and comments from members were invited.

- It was asked by a member as to how improved attendance at tutorial sessions could be attained.

The IDQPS responded that there was a need to close the gap in terms of the quality of the tutorial sessions and to make students’ attendance worthwhile. Emphasis was placed on the need to make mandatory sessions both engaging and interactive. It was reiterated that there was recognition that there was work to do with some tutors being more skilful in their delivery than others. Reference was also made to the need for some CPD for staff and to resolve what happens in a session when one-to-ones were taking place.

The APSPA added that there was also a need to make sure that materials were developed suitable to the different levels, particularly in terms of there being sufficient challenge and of a weight pertinent to the various levels. It was further suggested that tutors also needed to be comfortable with the available materials and that the content presented post 16 offered challenge and was not a repeat of that which had been delivered in school.

The APSES referred to the feedback and advice provided to tutors and the work taking place to provide support around delivery and attaining comfort with the subject matter.

It was further stated by the DP that this level of scrutiny had not previously been applied to tutorials but that it was important that recognition be given to this aspect of programmes.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Curriculum Development Area Reviews Update Report be received and noted.

Minute No**FEC&Q/08/22 Student Governors Update Report**

The Chairperson invited the Student Governor (SG) and Deputy Student Governor (DSG) to present the Student Governor Report to the Committee.

The Student Governors presented a full and comprehensive report of the activities undertaken since the last meeting of the Committee.

The following were highlighted:

- the Debate Club and second event which had been held at the Altrincham campus, for which the theme was globalization;
- the Student Conference which had been hosted by Loudspeaker and attended by Student Leaders, Course Representatives and Campaign Groups with a focus on the Group value of “Resilience”;
- the launch of Plant Earth Games at the Student Conference with each campus having a Climate Champion taking the lead on activities;
- Dragons Den, for which 68 Level 3 Business Studies students worked to develop a business idea or event to support the Community College Kitchen, with the winning idea coming from Stockport College;
- the Equalities Council came together for a video to launch the of Mind the Skills Gap campaign and a drive for more funding for the FE sector;
- the Equalities Council subsequently delivered the Campaign to the Stockport and Trafford Councils respectively;
- the Muslim Arts and Culture Festival which was held in March at the Stockport and Trafford sites;
- participation in the Association of Colleges (AoC) Creative Writing Competition;
- the work that was taking place with The Writing Squad and the delivery of 8 workshops across the Group;
- attendance by A-Level students at a convention in preparation for UCAS;
- National Careers Week which involved a careers marketplace being available at all sites;
- the Leader of the Trafford Council was due to meet campaign groups at the Altrincham campus and was also due to attend the Debate Club to explore what issues were of importance to young people in Trafford;
- the launch of Planet Earth Games at the Student Conference which had a focus upon sustainability, health and wellbeing and the support of conservation;
- Climate Champions being in place for each college;
- a delegation from the Green College Assembly had attended an accredited Carbon Literacy Course delivered and funded by Stockport Council with a member of the Student Experience Team also attending the course and who was now accredited to deliver the one-day course to staff and students;
- the holding of a Youth Climate Assembly and the submission of ideas to Stockport Council to address sustainability and the journey to carbon neutral, 5 of which had been selected to be debated in the presence of the Leader of the Council and councillors on 21 March 2023
- the College leadership and the Equalities Council had been invited to attend the One Stockport Partnership Event the focus of which would be community partnerships;
- participation by Mental Health and Wellbeing Champions and the LGBTQ+ groups in a research project with MIND in relation to stigma;
- workshop delivery from Sustrans and SUEZ in relation to health, wellbeing, sustainable transport options and the journey to carbon neutral;
- work to support a rewilding project in Stockport town centre;
- students from Cheadle College, Health and Social Care have been the founder members of a new Group-wide Butterfly Book Club, working with library staff to provide book recommendations and reviews, as well as the production of bookmarks with a distinctive butterfly logo, sales of which will support the Community College Kitchen; and
- the plans in place for a mini-Pride event at the Cheadle Campus hosted by the LGBTQ+ group.

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Questions and comments were invited from members.

- The Chairperson thanked the students in attendance for their informative report and summary of the breadth of student activities taking place across the Group.
- A member commented on the level of interaction with external bodies and congratulated the students on the work that was taking place.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and it was resolved that the Student Governors' Report be received and noted.

FEC&Q/09/23**Student Experience Update Report**

The Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support (APSES) referred members to the previously circulated report and an update on the student experience and student engagement activities that added value and developed students personally, socially, culturally and emotionally in preparation for their next steps.

The refocused and improved content of the report was referenced by the Chairperson.

The APSES provided an overview of the content of the report and highlighted the following: -

- the summary of events and activities that students had participated in which had been provided as an appendix to the report
- the level of activity recorded and the number of students who had participated in the activities organized by the Student Experience Team (SET)
- the activities taking place to support the improvement of student skills
- the correlation of activities to the Group's values as well as British values
- the significant increase in the offer of trips and experiences, with 302 activities having taken place to date in the current academic year compared to 112 for the whole of the previous year
- the re-commencement of student trips abroad
- the hosting of Careers Fairs across the Group to celebrate National Careers Week 2023 which would include 16 universities and 63 employers/training providers
- a week-long event focusing on Apprenticeships and Careers led by the Assistant Principal, Adults & Employer Engagement (APAE) involving over 200 students and 100 employers in the classroom, an impactful event and a much-improved position compared to the previous 2 years
- an increase in the focus on students with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and an emphasis on access to the Careers Service with options for both individual and group appointments, with expanded participation presenting an 62% increase in attendance at individual appointments compared to the same time last year
- confirmation that entries for WorldSkills were currently open and the encouragement to students to access this opportunity to enhance their technical skills, increase their employability and help their career options.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A question was asked by a member as to what the Employability Skills Assessment involved.

The APAEE responded that skills activities were recorded and monitored via the central Navigate system, adding that during their first 6 weeks at the college all students participated in the assessment as part of their tutorials. There was confirmation that a further assessment would then take place in May to assess how far each student had travelled.

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The APSES added that much greater engagement with the Navigate system was being seen. The DP suggested that the title of “employability assessment” was perhaps misleading as the process also incorporated softer skills. It was reiterated that the aim was to increase the chances for students to become employable.

There was confirmation that the skills included competencies such as talking with other people and managing conflict, with the system enabling the tracking of progress, as well as supporting activities that could change behaviours and improve confidence.

It was further stated that the assessed skills were consistent with those identified by Employer Boards and further, that surveys fed in the skills identification and areas where skills improvement was sought.

- A member commented that the Committee had seen significant progress in terms of the ability of the Group to assess student skills.
- The member further commented on their recent attendance at the Altrincham Student Conference. The view was expressed that pre Covid it was believed attendance was much higher. It was asked as to what the rationale was in restricting attendance to specific groups.

The Student Experience Manager (SEM) responded that a driver in respect of attendance was to attain representation from groups and curriculum areas across the establishments.

There was recognition that the attendance varied over the sites and for Altrincham there had been 121 students invited of which 80 had been expected but only 54 had attended. It was stated that during Covid the conferences had been virtual and attendance had been open to all students. There was a suggestion that by opening the event to specific groups of students, it was anticipated attendance would reflect those students who wanted to engage.

The Assistant Principal, Study Programmes – Academic (APSPA) commented that the Cheadle Student Conference had been very well attended with broader representation. The view was expressed that where there was wider representation and attendance there was perhaps a need to consider how best to manage contributions. It was added that the event had generated a lot of debate and questions but that there was scope for improved oversight.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Student Experience Update Report be noted.

FEC/10/23**Student Support Update Report**

The Assistant Principal Student Experience Support (APSES) referred members to the previously circulated Student Support Report, encompassing matters relating to both a pastoral and a learning support (inclusion) perspective.

It was reiterated that student support was key to learner success with the focus being upon ensuring that the support to learners was consistently excellent, delivered in a timely way and was effective in addressing barriers to students’ participation and achievement of their programme, development, and further progression.

The following aspects of the report were highlighted:

- the increased number of referrals (1,743 learners compared to 1,238 at the same time the previous year) consistent with the national picture
- the increase in referrals to Pastoral Mentors (PSMs) and House Monitors with the primary reasons for accessing the mentor team being social concerns, stress and attendance/punctuality.
- the commitment to supporting vulnerable students and those in danger of dropping out and becoming NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and the offer of an Engage programme, a bespoke offer that students could enrol onto throughout the year

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- the College Ready programme of which 76% of the original attendees had enrolled on to courses at the college with overall attendance currently being 83%
- there had been an increase in safeguarding referrals at all campuses excepting Altrincham with the top 3 safeguarding referral categories being mental health, risk of suicide and self-harm, which was consistent with the national picture
- the position in relation to Prevent reporting of which there had been 9 referrals (as compared to 12 referrals at the same point in the previous academic year) with referral categories being very much in line with the national picture
- external trends and issues which had included toxic masculinity and to which the team had created additional tutorial sessions addressing the key themes
- the positive impact seen in relation to learning support and inclusion areas within the provision for high needs learners
- confirmation that the Group had seen a significant increase in the number of learners needing extra support
- the positive impact of the inclusion area, which encompassed the review process for EHCP learners and for which all reviews were currently on track
- the positive relationships with the local authorities.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A question was asked by a member in relation to the background to the College Ready Programme.

The SEM confirmed that the Programme had been developed during Covid and had originally been targeted toward Looked After Children and young carers. It was stated that the programme had evolved into a wider transition programme with work taking place with both local high schools and local authorities.

It was further added that delivery of an on-line programme was also been explored with the local authorities and, further, that the recent CDAR had provided positive feedback with additional training planned going forward.

- A member highlighted the conflicting information within the supporting papers around increased behavioural incidents.

The APSES responded that behavioural incidents largely occurred out of lessons and was low level in nature often relating to anti-social incidents. It was further stated that staff were increasingly confident around challenging behaviour and that all incidences, no matter how minor, were now recorded. There was confirmation that a significant number of reported incidences related to on-site vaping.

- The member commented that it was good to see that the increased recording of behavioural incidents and observed that there had not seen a corresponding increase in exclusions.

The APSPA stated that in relation to the Cheadle and Marple sites the reporting and recording of behavioural incidents was significantly improved supported by improved training for staff and a consistent security team.

- Clarity was sought from a member in relation to retention on the College Ready Programme.

The DP undertook to clarify the pertinent retention position.

Action: Deputy Principal

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Student Support Update Report be received and noted.

Minute No**FEC&Q/11/23 English and Maths Strategy Action Plan Update**

The APSPA referred members to the previously circulated report and an update in respect of the Maths and English Strategy Action Plan as at March 2023.

The following key issues were highlighted:

- maths and English were returning to pre-pandemic standards with the results for 2022/2023 to be based on national examinations and with grading returning to pre-pandemic standards
- significant strides had been made, in part as a result of the positive impact of the initial assessment which was introduced at the commencement of the 2022/2023 academic year
- the view that the initial subject assessment approach, undertaken during the first 3 weeks of the term and involving short diagnostic tests, was the correct approach that now needed to be embedded further in terms of the model and compliance, with a view to its further development for the next academic year
- the GCSE English and maths examination re-sits took place in November 2022 with a revised approach to ensure careful management of the process and successful outcomes
- the results from the November examinations were positive against the national picture with English being above national by 2.5% for 4-9 grades and maths 13.8%, albeit they were both relatively small in terms of the number of entries
- GCSE results were strong and the outcomes were pleasing, moving forward the intention was to look at an increased entry for November but there was need to get the timetable right from the start of September
- the managed implementation of Century which had delivered 1,800 hours of self-directed support to maths and English students
- the positive impact of the maths and English Attendance Officer and the text messaging system now in place
- predicted achievement was considered to be strong but further work needed to take place.

The APSPA concluded that there was a lot of work taking place and a key point in the year had been reached. The view was expressed that, in common with the wider sector, maths and English continued to be a work in progress but it was considered that the Group was on the right trajectory.

Reference was made to the revised strategy at Cheadle and Marple and the different approach and methodology. The marrying of cultures and sharing of good practice was highlighted as well as the need now to focus upon attaining good attendance levels.

Questions and comments from members were invited.

- A comment was made by a member in respect of the achievement and attendance rates where there was additional support in the classroom.

The APSPA responded that there was a minimal difference in terms of the impact upon attendance (in the region of 2%) and indicated that further analysis of this aspect would take place post the consideration of the mock examination results.

Action: Assistant Principal Study Programmes – Academic

The DP added that part of the issue was making the subject matter relevant to students.

- A member highlighted the identified potential emerging issue in relation to the retention of adults on Functional Skills and GCSE for maths and English.

The additional targeted support being directed to these learners post the successful Greater Manchester Enhanced Multiply bid was noted.

Minute No

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the English and Maths update report in respect of the action plan for 2022-2023 be received and noted.

FEC&Q/12/23**Any Other Business**

The Chairperson raised the recent announcement by the Government in relation to T levels and the deferral of the starting date of 4 courses which had been due to commence in September 2023.

It was asked whether this was likely to impact upon the Group.

The DP responded that the T levels for Hairdressing, Creative Media and Hospitality had all been delayed the former two by one year until 2024 and the latter to beyond 2024 to allow time to consult with employers and sector bodies to ensure that this T level meets all the needs of the sector.

There was confirmation that preparations had been advanced in some areas including recruitment plans however it was stated that a cautious approach had been adopted and there had been parallel recruitment to other courses.

It was recognised that these delays were not helpful to the sector particularly when colleges were seeking to promote and embed these new qualifications.

It was suggested that a training session in relation to qualification reform would be helpful to members.

Action: Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal Adult & Employer Engagement/Assistant Principal Apprenticeships

There were no further matters raised by members under any other business.

FEC&Q/13/22**Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 28 June 2023.

Action: Corporation Secretary

The meeting closed at 7.40pm

The Assistant Principal, Higher Education and Skills left the meeting at 6.10pm during consideration of agenda item 6.

The Student Governors left the meeting at 7.00pm following agenda item 8.