

THE TRAFFORD & STOCKPORT COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Further Education Curriculum & Quality Committee
held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 13 March 2024
in the Boardroom at the Altrincham Campus Trafford College**

Present

Sarah Drake	Chairperson
Charlotte Barratt	
Olivia Bussey	
Graham Luccock	
Michelle McLaughlin	Staff Member
Marcia Reynolds	
James Scott	Principal and Chief Executive Officer
**Blerta Shira	Student Member
**Sabine Van der Veer	Co-opted Member

In Attendance:

Rebecca Clare	Corporation Secretary
Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	Deputy Principal
Danielle Judge	Assistant Principal - Apprenticeships
Adam Sinnott	Assistant Principal – Quality, Student Experience and Support
Helen Wood	Assistant Principal - Study Programmes - Academic
Alison Duncalf	Deputy Corporation Secretary

** Joined via Microsoft Teams

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FEC&Q/01/24 Apologies for Absence

The Corporation Secretary (CS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from Uswah Sayyed (Student Member) and Evie Wainwright (Deputy Student Member).

Sapphire Oferi-Anakwa (Deputy Student Member) was not in attendance at the meeting.

It was reported that the Assistant Principal Higher Education and Skills and the Assistant Principal Adults and Employer Engagement were unable to attend the meeting.

FEC&Q/02/24 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/03/24 Minutes of the FE Curriculum & Quality Committee Meeting held on 8 November 2023

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

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FEC&Q/04/24 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, from which the following was reported:

i) FEC&Q/34/23 Student Outcomes Report 2022-2023

In relation to the fuller outsourced Student Destinations Report there was confirmation that this report would be available from April 2024.

Action: Assistant Principal Quality, Student Experience and Support/Corporation Secretary

There was agreement that the report will be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee.

ii) FEC&Q/38/23 Quality of Education Update Report – SAR Validation Process in relation to Enabling Teams

There was confirmation that the process in relation to the validation of the enabling team SARs continued to be developed.

The Principal and CEO (PCEO) indicated that it was proposed that moving forward the SAR would be made up of two parts, the first as currently presented in relation to the curriculum areas and the other in relation to enabling teams.

The view was expressed that the process would offer greater visibility to members in relation to the enabling team functions.

iii) FEC&Q/38/23 Quality of Education Update Report – List of Enabling Areas

Action: Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal Quality, Student Experience and Support

There was confirmation that the list of the 27 enabling areas would be shared with members.

iv) FEC&Q/41/23 Student Support Update Report – October 2023

The Assistant Principal Quality, Student Experience and Support (APQSES) confirmed that further work was required in relation to suspensions and its impact on learning.

Action: Assistant Principal Quality, Student Experience and Support

There was agreement that the previous action on the proforma remain open.

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- v) FEC&Q/42/23 GMCA Education Leaders Report – CEIAG – The Trafford College Group – September 2023

There was confirmation that the Link Governor meeting was scheduled to take place in April and that at this time the work taking place in relation to the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate would be explored further.

- vi) FEC&Q/47/23 Arrangements for future meetings

There was agreement that this action was now closed.

- vii) FEC&Q39/23 Student Governors Report

In relation to the issues raised by the Student Governors around the website and the provision of information directed to prospective students there was confirmation that the Director of Marketing and External Relations had held a meeting with the Student Governors to explore further their experience as prospective students.

It was noted that the prospectus had since been altered following input from the Deputy Student Governor and included development of the point made around Marple being a small and friendly campus.

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

FEC&Q/05/24 Curriculum Reform Update

The Assistant Principal Study Programmes (APSP) was invited to make a presentation to the Committee in relation to a curriculum reform update.

The presentation encompassed the following:

- an overview of the 16-19 qualification Reform journey;
- a qualification landscape overview in relation to both Academic and Technical, for which Technical presented the biggest area of change;
- clarity in relation to those subjects where a small alternative academic qualification would be considered for funding and those subjects where large alternative academic qualifications would be considered for funding;
- the position as at now and what this would mean for September 2024, with funding being removed from qualifications where there were low/no enrolments and with 18 T levels now being offered;
- confirmation that in September 2024 T levels in craft and design and media, broadcast and production would be launched; hair, barbering and beauty T levels would be withdrawn; and funding will be removed from qualifications that overlapped with T levels;
- an overview of the position moving forward into 2025 through to 2028;
- in 2025 a Marketing T level was to be launched; there would be teaching of Cycle 1 Technical Occupational Qualifications (TOQs) and Applied Academic Qualifications (AAQs); and there would be further defunding where there was T level overlap;

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- moving into 2026 there would be the first teaching of Cycle 2 TOQs and AAQs; in 2027 cross-cutting of qualifications; and 2028 Entry and Level 1 maths and ESOL;
- a summary of the planned TSCG T level offer for 2024-2025 and the campuses from which they would be delivered;
- a synopsis of the impact of reform on TSCG learners by curriculum and detailing learner numbers within which the areas of risk in relation to business and science were highlighted;
- information in relation to the Advanced British Standard (ABS), which the current government proposed to introduce for 16–19-year-olds, and which was being described as a new baccalaureate- style qualification taking the best of A levels and T Levels combined into a single qualification, and replacing all other non-apprenticeship qualifications, and which was expected to be launched in 10-years-time;
- the key principles of the ABS which included all 16-18-year-olds studying English and maths until 18 years old, an offer of greater breadth with subjects made up of majors and minors and provision for an academic, technical or a mixed pathway; and
- an assessment of the opportunities (focus and investment in Technical Education and clear line of sight in terms of progression from T levels to Higher Technical Qualifications in some areas) and risks, which included potential for curriculum offer gaps; challenges in the recruitment of staff; the progression of learners; T level placement capacity; and stakeholder understanding.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- Clarity was sought by a member in relation to the proposed curriculum changes.

The APSP suggested that a challenge moving forward would be around deciding whether Applied Academic Qualifications (AAQs) could be studied alongside A Levels. It was added that there was also an issue around sequencing and determination of appropriate pathways.

Clarity was further provided that the Group was not currently looking to move its entry qualifications, particularly in relation to English and maths. Current entry GCSE qualifications were confirmed to be 5 GCSEs at grade 5 for A levels and 5 GCSEs at grade 4 for T Levels.

Discussion followed around the basis for government removing and making changes to qualifications. It was suggested that current qualifications were not translating into jobs and there was a governmental view that the purpose of education was to meet the needs of the economy.

It was stated that, should there be a change in government at the next general election, the Labour Party was committed to a “pause and review” of this work as opposed to reversing it.

The Deputy Principal (DP) commented that for teachers the changes brought extra work on top of their existing workload which added to the ongoing

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concerns over the impact on the workforce including support teams. Concerns were further expressed from a workforce retention perspective.

In terms of student recruitment to T levels for the next academic year it was reported that the position was positive however there were challenges in the areas of science and digital. Members noted that Year 10 taster classes had commenced, supported by engagement from employers, as the Group sought to improve wider understanding of T levels.

- A question was asked by a member in relation to the status of workplace placements.

The APSP responded that 100% of placements had been secured in the current academic year, adding that should the curriculum plan come to fruition, for next academic year the Group would be seeking to secure 400 rather than the 100 placements, presenting both a risk and a challenge. There was recognition, however, that there had been some movement of what a placement should look like and they now included aspects such as a project.

The DP added that moving forward securing workplace placements were likely to become a national issue and that work was currently taking place to explore the ways in which transferable skills could be addressed in such circumstances.

Members thanked the APSP for the informative presentation.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the presentation and update in relation to Curriculum Reform be received and noted.

FEC&Q/06/24

FE Quality Improvement Plan and Performance Indicators Report 2023/2024 (including Apprenticeship Accountability Framework)

The Deputy Principal (DP) referred members to the previously circulated reports and an update on the progress of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2023-2024 as well as a report in relation to the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework (AAF).

Quality Improvement Plan and Key Performance Indicators 2023-2024

A progress update against the 8 objectives or Areas for Improvement (AIs) was presented within which the areas of concern were highlighted.

The DP reported that the main area of concern related to attendance which was too low. There was confirmation that attendance for adult learners was currently 83%, for young people was at 83% and for apprentices 85%. In addition, it was noted that attendance for English and maths was currently at 65%, a real concern for both the Group and the wider sector where a similar pattern of attendance was prevalent.

It was stated however that whilst attendance overall was a significant issue, retention was currently presenting as positive for all types of learners (94%

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against a target of 92% for 16-19 learners). There was recognition, however, that those learners who were not attending would not be learning as much as they should be. The DP outlined some of the remedial strategies being progressed which included increased tracking and follow up of non-attendance on an individual basis.

In relation to work experience it was reported that positive progress was being made but that the Group needed to continue to ensure that all students are able to participate.

The PCEO added that in relation to attendance there was no shortage in terms of the efforts taking place to address this issue. It was stated that there was a need to reconcile the link between low attendance, mental health and the cost-of-living crisis. The view was expressed that it was believed that many young people were balancing college and work commitments but that there was a need to secure information to evidence this.

The APQSES shared the example of work that had been undertaken at a Liverpool college where additional analysis had taken place for those students whose attendance was below 70% and that the data arising had been accepted by Ofsted. The PCEO added that this was the type of analysis that was currently being progressed by the Group.

The DP added from the perspective of Ofsted there was a need to be prepared with explanations of what they may find during an inspection and the reasons that this was the case.

- A member asked, that given the student attendance in English and maths was so low, whether there was data to support the theory that students were not attending their English and maths classes but that they were attending the rest of their course.

The APSP responded that this evidence had been gathered and had demonstrated some stark differences in terms of attendance for some departments. There was recognition that this issue continued to be an ongoing challenge.

The PCEO reiterated that attendance was the Group's significant stress point at the moment. It was noted that the AoC had recently launched a survey of colleges around the challenges of attendance. It was further noted that some colleges dealt with attendance differently with some recording a "tick" for the day as opposed to recording attendance at individual lessons.

- A member raised the issue of the planned increase in study hours for English and maths from 2025 and asked about the plans of the Group for the next academic year.

The APSP confirmed that the current plan for the next academic year was to maintain the hours as they were now but to maintain a focus upon improving attendance via taking opportunities to target particular cohorts utilising additional resource including additional teaching sessions pre the November examination resits.

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In terms of assurance the PCEO reported that English and maths had been the main area of discussion at the most recent North West Principals' Group meeting. It was stated that the consensus approach was not necessarily around increasing the teaching hours for next year but about adopting creative ways in its delivery i.e. incorporating the teaching via other means than direct classroom delivery.

It was stated that whilst the message may appear negative the position post the mock examinations was looking positive and there was an increased number of learners undertaking resits.

The APSP further reported that 3 maths and English hubs had recently been set up, the aim of which was to engage with English and maths at an early point. It was further noted that the impact of the Century initiative, which the Group had chosen to focus on English and maths, was also being assessed.

It was stated that anecdotal evidence suggested that students were choosing to work from home and were accessing Century materials accordingly. The view was expressed that this was indicative of an environment where working remotely was seen as increasingly more acceptable.

- A member made reference to the value-added data (1d) and sought clarity over the 3 areas with a minus value added and one with zero value added.

The APQSES provided assurance that the gap was closing and that value added was heading in the right direction. In relation to the Technical levels it was stated that the 0.00 KPI meant that learners were "hitting" their predicted outcomes. It was noted that further reporting was provided under the next item.

Apprenticeship Accountability Framework

The Assistant Principal Apprenticeships (APA) referred members to the previously circulated report and an overview of the Group's position in relation to the national set of Apprenticeship Accountability Framework (AAF) metrics. There was confirmation that the information provided an insight into any areas that could be of concern along with those improving, plus the next steps and/or recommendations to be actioned to support further improvements.

A summary of the key issues was presented within which the following was highlighted:

- that reasonable progress was being made against the AAF across several areas
- increased achievement in 2022-2023 had moved the Group from "at risk" to "requires improvement"
- the retention KPI was circa 70% and to continue to be graded as good there was a need to above 62%
- employer feedback was currently 3 out of 4 stars (good) based on 264 reviews

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- apprentice feedback remains too low and was not favourable, currently being listed as 2 out of 4 stars (poor) and with only 36 reviews having been completed
- moving forward there was need to encourage completion of internal surveys to enable more in-depth information to be gathered
- withdrawals for starts this year currently stood at 7% with Early Years having been identified as the biggest risk and for which remedial action was being progressed
- the position in relation to breaks in learning (0.7%)
- whilst the Ofsted criteria for the AAF formed part of the overall grade for the Group, of good, apprenticeship provision needed to improve to be self-assessed as good for 2023-2024.

In terms of the next steps the following was noted.

- the need to continue to promote internal employer and apprentice voice surveys to capture data and facilitate drill down to help drive improvements
- continued use of the AAF dashboard on Strata to facilitate drilling down by department and standard level to help shape the apprenticeship offer and to review those areas flagged as requires improvement or at risk
- to ensure continued monitoring of 2023-2024 completers to deliver improved achievement
- the AAF, moving forward, to be considered at each Apprenticeship Progress Board
- the AAF to be considered as part of the curriculum planning/Apprenticeship review and the Group's offer for 2024-2025 and beyond.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member, in relation to breaks in learning, asked as to the likelihood of the learners coming back and completing.

The APA responded that there was work to be undertaken with these learners to verify and determine whether they had actually withdrawn, however, it was known that some breaks in learning were due to reasons such as maternity leave and further, that it could be an employer leading on notification of a break.

- A question was asked by a member in relation to the end point assessment and the risk, of the previous year, in terms of accessing assessors and whether there would be the same risk for the current academic year

The APA responded that end point assessment was determined by the timing of when a learner finishes their mandatory qualification. It was stated that there would always be a risk around the availability of an assessor, however, there had been some improvement in the turnaround of assessments. There was confirmation that there would be a clearer picture of the position moving forward in April.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the FE Quality Improvement Plan and

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Performance Indicators Report 2023/2024 (including Apprenticeship Accountability Framework) be received and noted.

FEC&Q/07/24 Quality of Education Update Report (including T Level and Learner Voice Update)

The Assistant Principal Quality, Student Experience and Support (APQSES) referred members to the previously circulated reports and an overview of the quality of education and analysis of how continuous improvement was being driven.

The following was highlighted:

- that predicted achievement for 16-18 funded provision was 88% based on progress grade 2, a significant increase of 7% on 2022-2023, if achieved
- that this was a healthy position whilst recognising that this was, at this stage, a prediction
- value-added predictions were A Level -0.23; Applied General -0.13; Level 2 - 0.05; Technical Certificate 0.00; and Technical Level 0.45, as referenced under the last agenda item
- confirmation that the current focus was upon A levels and Applied Generals and preparation for exams
- that a new approach was being undertaken by the Quality Team to ensure there was close intervention and support of all courses that were significantly underperforming via “uplift activity”
- this change in approach and pausing of most of the CDARs had been in response to concerns that there was potential to dilute the work that needed to take place where there were pockets of underperformance and, further, enable the use of other metrics such as attendance data so that work could take place with particular courses where it had been identified that supported was needed
- confirmation that the team was happy with this approach and believed it to be much more impactful
- CDARs had been completed for Academic Altrincham; Health, Care and Early Years; Construction; Apprenticeships; Adult and Community; and Academic Cheadle
- further CDARs were to be undertaken in T-Levels and HE with reports to be available at the next meeting of the Committee
- that all enabling teams had now completed a SAR and QIP following an equivalent process to that for curriculum teams and with a view to driving high standards and quality across all teams
- confirmation that feedback from the enabling teams was that the process had generally been well received and was a useful reflective exercise in terms of the support being given to the achievement of education KPIs
- recognition that the enabling team SARs were a work in progress and that the next step was monitoring the impact of the individual QIPs arising
- that the mid-year student survey had delivered an 89% overall satisfaction score, which was an increase (by 1%) compared to the mid-way survey for 2022-2023 and for which there had been approaching 6,000 responses
- confirmation that the results in relation to the 26 questions, covering aspects such as teaching and learning and the embedding of English and maths, had

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been followed up with emphasis upon individual Heads taking greater ownership of the outcomes for their curriculum area

- that the apprenticeship survey had produced very mixed results with varying satisfaction across curriculum areas with each curriculum area now being tasked to analyse their results
- a revised evidence-based approach to lesson visits was now being followed using Rosenshines's Principles of Instruction as the basis of analysis
- that learning walks were being conducted with curriculum areas by Heads of Study and Programme Leaders as a further method to support the quality of teaching learning and assessment (TLA), with 233 having been recorded so far
- confirmation that the challenge in conducting learning walks was the gaining of consistency of approach across all teams, with training being provided to support this greater consistency
- that One Practice Change was central to the Group's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) approach for 2023-2024 with tutors been tasked to develop one area of their teaching practice for improvement throughout the year, as well as fostering self-led development and opportunities for reflection and discussion with colleagues
- from 2024-2025 there were plans in place to have two dedicated TLA training days incorporated into the Group's calendar, which would have a real focus on pedagogy
- that colleagues across the Group were taking part in a variety of LSIF CPD as part of the LSIF Workforce Development strand.

In terms of the next steps, they were confirmed to be as follows:

- targeted uplift activity to be undertaken with at risk courses to improve achievement outcomes and value-added
- to monitor curriculum area QIPs for progress against AFIs and impact actions
- to monitor enabling teams' QIPs for progress against AFIs and impact of actions
- to review the quality of T-Level provision through bespoke CDAR activity
- to follow up student mid-year survey results through targeted activity and student focus groups
- to review the impact of the One Practice Change CPD model and plan a celebration event
- to continue to implement the new TLA lesson visit criteria to analyse key areas for further development, including promotion of regular learning walks within curriculum areas.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A question was asked in relation to the Apprenticeship survey where there were examples of strength in Business but not so for Pharmacy. It was asked as to whether there were other areas of concern.

The APA highlighted the need for greater consistency of assessors and teachers in some areas including Building Services, Electrical and Plumbing. It was stated that it was believed that progress was being made. The APQSES added that the onus was now about following up on the feedback.

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It was added that the same applied to the parent survey (Parents Evening) and that, whilst the return had not been huge, there had been follow up on an individual basis.

- Members recognised the increased level of engagement with parents.

The APQSES responded that this aspect was something that the Group would continue to build upon and which included plans for a parent newsletter.

- A member made reference to achievement (attendance and pass rate) and asked as to why the previous year there had been a big difference between actual and predicted achievement.

The APQSES confirmed that this year there had been greater analysis of the underlying data stating that in the current academic year there was confidence, particularly in relation to the preparation of students for their examinations as well as some refinements in terms of early entry to exams.

- In relation to the CDAR and uplift activity a member asked as to whether it was planned that they would run side by side next year.

The APQSES responded that reflection would take place toward the end of the current academic year with input from the CDAR team. Reference was made to the emerging benefits of the uplift activity and the opportunities presented to take a more interventionist and targeted approach.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Quality of Education Update Report (including T Level and Learner Voice Update) be received and noted.

FEC&Q/08/24 Student Digital Entitlement

The APQSES referred members to the previously circulated report and an update on the implementation of the new Student Digital Entitlement (SDE) as part of the Group's Digital Strategy.

The following key issues were outlined:

- the SDE was an opportunity presented to students to enable them to build core and essential digital skills to best equip them for life, progression into further and higher education, or the workplace
- the approach was underpinned and influenced by the outcomes of the recent Greater Manchester (GM) Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and skills report, and aimed to ensure that the Group was developing basic and subject-related digital skills for all students
- there were 3 core strands and 1 optional strand
 1. Everyday interaction with Microsoft Class Teams and associated technologies
 2. Building essential Digital Skills and Key Competencies for education, life and work
 3. Building subject specific digital skills and competencies

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4. An optional strand of opportunity for students to be a Digital Pioneer via the Curriculum Skills Builder Team
 - a Student Digital Skills survey had been shared at digital tutorial sessions from which there had been 555 respondents
 - there was strong evidence that Microsoft Teams was being used effectively across the Group and that students found it useful
 - 3 digital sessions had been delivered within tutorial sessions
 - Digital Week had been introduced in the assessment calendar and took place in January 2024
 - a Digital Pioneers Group had been established as part of the Skills Builder Team
 - digital CPD continued to be delivered as part of the Wednesday CPD calendar
 - the ability to access IT remained a significant barrier to the ongoing development of student digital skills.

In terms of next steps, these were identified to be:

- to continue to drive the active use and development of Class Teams to support everyday TLA, to improve ways of working and the student experience
- to continue to consistently and effectively implement TLA communication and support through Class Teams channels, with Teams being used to share everyday tasks, homework, deadlines, resources, and to present additional learning opportunities for students both inside and outside the classroom
- to continue to provide effective Digital CPD to teachers
- to review and reflect on the impact of the digital tutorial sessions and plan for further improvement in 2024-2025
- to support curriculum areas in identifying and embedding subject-specific digital skills into schemes of work and to support students moving forward, both in terms of their education and employment
- to ensure that the SDE continues to be at the forefront of the new Digital Strategy.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member asked as to what were the barriers to digital skills.

The APQSES responded that a key barrier related to access to laptops as opposed to students' own devices which, on occasion, could be a phone. It was added that further work needed to take place in relation to student access to resources.

The comment was further made that the laptops acquired during Covid were largely of a very poor quality.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the reporting in respect of Student Digital Entitlement be received and noted.

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FEC&Q/09/24 **Student Governor Report**

The Chairperson invited the Student Governor in attendance to present the Student Governor Report to the Committee.

The following wide ranging and extensive range of activities undertaken since the last meeting of the Committee were highlighted:

- Student Conferences had been held during National Apprenticeship Week during which there had been guest speakers applicable to students choosing apprenticeships
- Colleges Week, for which the remit had been “Influencing, Engaging and Celebrating”
- the holding of hustings, during Colleges Week, which had been attended by 75 students from across the two Trafford sites and during which councillors, from the main four parties, had answered questions in relation to services for Trafford
- a Round Table Event, on business, education and local government, had been held at Stockport College, that provided information in relation to the forthcoming elections
- MACFest had taken place across all five sites with local community councillors attending each of the events
- Welcome Wednesday continued to take place with the theme at Cheadle being “Better Together” and for Marple “Spring and Sprung”
- a number of workshops had been delivered which included Network Rail (student safety); plumbers at the Stockport site; and Public Health which focused on enrichment and career opportunities for Public Services and Sports students
- publication of the latest Student Newsletter has taken place with a new editor, look and title
- Mayoral hustings were due to take place on 19 April 2024 to which mayoral candidates from the main parties would be attending
- a Dragons’ Den type event, in which 70 plus students had been invited to produce business ideas with a view to the top four ideas being developed further, to support and raise funds for the Community College Kitchen.

The Student Governor also expanded upon her own experience of participation in the hustings event.

The Student Governor went on to make a short presentation in relation to Student Experience highlighting, by site, that which was going well and areas of challenge. In terms of what was going well reference was made to “feeling safe at college” at the Altrincham, Stretford, Marple and Cheadle campuses. Being on the right course, making progress and being prepared for the next steps were also highlighted. In terms of challenges requests were made for bigger faith rooms at the Altrincham and Stretford sites and other aspects around the canteen pricing and Wi-fi issues had also raised by some of the sites.

The Chairperson thanked the Student Governor for her informative report and presentation.

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Questions and comments were invited from members.

- In respect of the comments made around feeling safe at college, it was highlighted that there was no reference to this aspect from the Stockport site. It was asked as to whether, from a student voice point of view, if there had been concerns over safety voiced at Stockport.

The Student Governor clarified that the responses from the Stockport site were indicative of the feedback as opposed to there being any concerns over students not feeling safe.

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

FEC&Q/10/24 Student Experience Update Report – October 2023

The APQSES presented a report which provided members with an update on the Group's student experience and student engagement activities that add value and develop students personally, culturally, and emotionally for their next steps.

The APQSES confirmed that the report provided additional information in relation to the student experience activities as referred to within the Student Governor Report.

The APQSES drew particular attention to the broad range of activities that students had engaged in throughout the academic year and highlighted the following:

- the provision of information in relation to student experience by campus for 16-19 students which at the Altrincham campus comprised 1,259 (56% of the student population); Cheadle 562 (62%); Marple 342 (69%) Stockport 1,054 (65%); and Stretford 365 (43%)
- recognition of the concerns raised by students in relation to the availability and suitability of multi-faith rooms to conduct prayers across all sites, for which there were currently allocated rooms at all 5 campuses, although there were different access arrangements in place due to the location of rooms and security and with the concerns raised being progressed via the Equality and Diversity Committee
- in relation to careers, every student would be undertaking one-to-one interviews with their tutors with additional support being in place for those students with no clear plans moving forward
- the position in relation to employability and work experience which presented an increase in terms of engagement compared with the previous year.

In terms of the next steps and timeline the following was reported:

- the Student Experience Strategy and action plan was to be reviewed in terms of its effectiveness to support the personal, social, cultural development of students for the next academic year

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- the careers team was working to ensure that information and guidance was being provided to all students, who were unsure of their next steps, through targets, intervention and support
- curriculum teams were working to meet Personal and Professional Development (PPD) targets through increased opportunities in the summer term.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- Members recognised the excellent level of participation in the World Skills Event and the positive results, which included a number of first place placings.

The PCEO added that the Event showcased the skills, behaviour and attitudes of students, and delivered an assessment of the core competencies required in the workplace.

- It was commented that the careers reporting had been informative and very helpful.

The PCEO indicated that a presentation would be made to the next meeting of the Committee in relation to careers and the Gatsby benchmarks.

Action: Assistant Principal Quality, Student Experience and Support

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

FEC&Q/11/24

Student Support Report

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

The following aspects of the report were highlighted:

- in relation to **learner support**, mentor appointments had significantly increased with 2,032 learners (15% increase compared to 2022-2023) having been seen and 5,428 one-to-one sessions having been carried out, a 43% increase compared to the previous year
- that there had been an increase in the number of 16-18 students being referred for and accessing support
- 6% less males had accessed mentoring compared to the percentage for the Group population
- the team had received 669 mental health declarations to date, an increase of 12% compared to the same point in the 2022-2023 academic year
- **safeguarding** referrals presented a 114% increase in referrals compared to the previous year
- the top 5 safeguarding referral categories were mental health; home/parenting issues; peer on peer abuse; risk of suicide; and bullying

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- a lot of work to support staff to support students in relation to mental health was taking place, including the development of a Trauma Informed Approach, a 2-year project which had commenced with an audit which, in turn, would be used to influence staff CPD plus an action plan to support the embedding of a trauma informed approach
- 2 members of the Board of the Corporation had attended the audit event with their attendance having been very well received by the external agency supporting the Group in its trauma informed journey
- in relation to **Learning Support and Inclusion** and the increase in the number of High Needs learners there was recognition of the additional pressures this brought, however, it was suggested that the position, which was consistent with a gap countrywide, was a little better with action having been taken, the previous year, of “grow your own” courses
- for **Student Behaviour**, student suspensions (236) had increased compared to the previous year, consistent with the amended and more robust approach to behaviour introduced earlier in the year; reference was made to the breakdown presented by curriculum area and suspension category, and the assurance that this area continued to be a priority
- a number of new initiatives, as part of **Alternative Provision and Curriculum Development**, had been introduced during the current academic year in response to the significant increase in NEETS. as recognised by Trafford LA in the SEND Forum
- programmes included the successful implementation of “Step into Learning” at Stockport, a 10-week alternative curriculum programme; the positive impact of the Supported Internships (at Stepping Hill Hospital and Trafford General Hospital plus a new Supported Internship based at Trafford Town Hall); as well as the Engage programme at Altrincham and Stockport providing a programme for those learners who would otherwise drop out of college
- the position in relation to College Ready Students, the initiative progressed over the summer period and was attended by 65 learners in July 2023 of which 60 had progressed on to full-time courses, with retention of 91% and 84% attendance.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member asked as to how staff were coping where there was a deficit in Learning Facilitators.

The DP responded that cover was being provided via agency staff and students were also being signposted as appropriate. There was assurance that students were receiving support.

The PCEO shared a comment from a long-standing member of staff who had expressed the view that learning support was the best that it had been for a significant period of time. The Link Governor for Progression added that this aspect had been explored as part of her link visits and the longer-term plans of the Group in this area had been shared.

- A question was asked by the Student Governor in relation to the undertaking of background checks when accepting students.

Minute No

There was confirmation that, whilst not all students were subject to background checks, liaison took place with schools and local authorities and, furthermore, students were also required to make a self-declaration at enrolment.

- A further question was asked in relation to attendance and whether a stricter approach would improve results.

The APQSES confirmed that where attendance fell below 50% a targeted and firm approach was adopted.

- In relation to the Trauma Informed Approach initiative, it was requested that additional information be shared with the Committee in terms of impact.

Action: Assistant Principal Quality, Student Experience and Support

The APQSES undertook to provide this information to the Autumn Term meeting of the Committee.

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

FEC&Q/12/24

Quality Assurance Policy

The APQSES referred members to the previously circulated report and the appended updated Quality Assurance (QA) Policy.

There was confirmation that the Policy commits the Group to embedding a culture that maintains and improves the quality of education through processes that enable continuous improvement and effective quality assurance.

It was further stated that the Policy relates to the quality of education and was underpinned via intent, implementation and impact.

A summary of the updates to the policy were outlined and it was noted that the changes largely related to the updating of terminology and a more accurate reflection of current practice.

There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration and deliberation it was resolved that the Quality Assurance Policy be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

FEC&Q/13/24

Any Other Business

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

FEC&Q/14/23

Date of the Next Meeting

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 26 June 2024 at 5.30pm.

Action: Corporation Secretary

Minute No

The meeting closed at 7.43pm.

Sabine Van der Veer left the meeting at 6.34pm during consideration of agenda item 6.