

# HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held at Harlow College on Thursday 27 June 2024, 9.30am

Membership:                   \*Caroline Betts  
                                      \*Rod Bristow (Chair)  
                                      \*Hannah Cheesman  
                                      Vic Goddard  
                                      \*Stephen Isherwood  
                                      \*Liz Laycock  
                                      Karen Spencer

\*denotes present

In attendance                Becky Jones, Vice-Principal  
                                      Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal  
                                      Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal  
                                      Kelly Edwards, Executive Director – Quality  
                                      Simon Boyce, Executive Director – Student Services  
                                      Viv Kimeng, Head of Academy  
                                      Tracy Mucci, Director of Supported Education  
                                      Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance

#### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Vic Goddard due to work commitments and Karen Spencer due to personal reasons.

#### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 14 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **4 Matters Arising from the Minutes (not mentioned elsewhere on the agenda)**

There were no matters arising.

#### **5 Key Performance Indicators and Quality Improvement Plan**

##### **5.1 Study Programmes**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Study Programmes, presented by Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal.

Governors were informed that retention has improved this year from 85% in 2022-2023 to a current position of 92.7% for 2023-2024. Laura Wedgbury-Glew reported that it is critical to get everything right from the start of the academic year and this has helped to increase retention.

Attendance this year is broadly in line with last year however some improvements have been made. Attendance at English and maths exams has increased significantly.

750 students and apprentices completed the Ofsted survey and 100% said they would recommend the College which is outstanding. Engagement with the summer internal student survey is lower than last year however this has been attributed to the high number of surveys students are being asked to complete this term.

Ofsted commented that students were confident in articulating the impact the College is having on their own personal development.

Governors acknowledged the hard work that has been done and that things are moving in the right direction. Governors reported that if exam attendance has increased, the results will also hopefully increase.

A Governor asked if the College undertakes analysis of actual grades, high grades and outcomes. Becky Jones reported that high grades and value added are reported in agenda item 5.6 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment and that all students are flagged. Monthly reports are produced which show movement in value added and currently there is a one grade improvement for academic and vocational value added for this academic year compared to last academic year. Governors were informed that some courses allow students to choose their own Final Major Project and for these students, their value added is always higher. Paul Whitehead explained that ALPs calculates value added by taking a student's average GCSE point score on entry compared against the student's predicted grade at Level 3. It is a progress measure that measures distance travelled.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Study Programmes.

## **5.2 Adult Education**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Adult Education, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

The Committee was informed that the new structure in place for the adult team is working well and better processes are in place, with the adult offer growing and expanding. All predicted achievement rates and the retention rate have improved this year compared to last year.

Governors were informed that the overall achievement rate for Access has decreased however this is due to specific issues with the cohort. Retention has been difficult which has had an effect on the achievement rate.

Governors noted that there is only one group for Access to Nursing and Midwifery course and one group for the Access to Medicine course. The College has been validated for Access courses in Criminology and Policing, Early Years and Construction and the Built Environment however has not been able to deliver these due to low application numbers. Governors were informed that Advanced Learner Loans are introducing Level 4 maintenance loans however not for Access courses therefore some students cannot afford to study Access courses.

Becky Jones reported that the College has been successfully delivery Level 2 and Level 3 Counselling courses and is now offering a Level 4 however this course is much more complex and there have been some issues with it which the College is working through. A Governor asked what the issues were and Becky Jones reported that there had been changes in staff and issues with the assessment and requirements of the licence. There has been a review with the Awarding Organisation which the College is awaiting the outcome of. Staff who deliver the course need to hold a Level 6 qualification, a full teaching qualification and an assessor qualification. Governors noted that the Level 4 is a practitioner qualification and a licence to practice.

Becky Jones reported that Ofsted feedback for adult education was positive. There were a couple of minor issues highlighted and these will be followed up within the team.

A Governor asked what the reason for the slow uptake of e-learning is. Governors were informed that at the beginning of the year the College contracted with an external agency to support the recruitment of learners. The College's refined its offer and moved to a different agency due to issues with recruitment with the original one. Recruitment has improved as a result. Current enrolment numbers are 496, with an estimate of 100 to be enrolled prior to the end of the academic year.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Adult Education.

### **5.3 Apprenticeships**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Apprenticeships, presented by Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

Paul Whitehead reported that the College is continuing to work through systems to improve its apprenticeship provision and that a second Learning Co-ordinator has been appointed to focus on teaching, learning and assessment on apprenticeship programmes. The College has developed a more improved and functional system and now needs to improve the quality of its processes. For example, progress reviews are now regularly taking place however there is now a need to look at the quality of the reviews.

Governors were informed that where improvements are needed across the whole provision, the improvements required vary within each area. Senior managers are looking at feedback and are targeting areas for improvement within each team individually. Senior managers were aware of the issues however Ofsted gave a sharper understanding of the critical issues.

The predicted year-end achievement rate is 60% with it currently being 55%. End point assessments are taking place daily and if all learners who undergo end point assessment pass then the final position will be 62%. Governors were informed that the College has high first time pass rates for end point assessment and that the College has created a mock end point assessment centre so that apprentices can practice in advance of their assessment. A Governor asked how many times an apprentice can be put through the end point assessment. Paul Whitehead reported that it is generally two or three times.

Paul Whitehead reported that the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework states achievement should be 60%, which the College is in line with. The national average is 50% which the College is exceeding.

A Governor asked about the QIP actions in relation to the issues being discussed and actioned. Paul Whitehead reported that the QIP includes headline cross-College actions however actions for each team will be different and that the College is already working on plans ready for the start of the next academic year.

Becky Jones reported that the QIP shows significant improvements in the data. There was an issue during the Ofsted inspection with two apprentices being late for their lesson however this was an isolated case. Ofsted reported that British Values are not fully embedded in some teams however this was largely due to the timing of the two tutorials which are delivered by the teams, with one having not yet been delivered by some teams. Ofsted reported that they could see that apprentices are achieving and are successful however it was harder in some cases to see how they got to that point, therefore work on getting a consistent approach to tracking apprentices is required.

Paul Whitehead reported that all of what was being discussed will fit into the normal College cycles for self-assessment and quality improvement and actions will be included in the QIP. Processes are in place and the College is working on actions now in advance of next academic year.

A Governor asked about the difference between pass and achievement rates. Paul Whitehead reported that pass rates are the number of learners achieving a qualification as a percentage of retained learners and the achievement rate is based on retention rates multiplied by pass rates.

A Governor asked about destinations being collected at six to twelve months for apprentices and whether that could be rolled out across all the College's provision. Paul Whitehead reported that destination data is collected in the Autumn Term for the College's 16 – 18 provision and to change this would have a resourcing implication. Apprentices are asked if they have been promoted at work therefore collecting destination data later is more beneficial and is an indicator of how effective the apprentice has been in the workplace. A Governor asked what the College's statutory duty is around destination data collection and Paul Whitehead confirmed that there is no statutory duty for the FE sector.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on apprenticeships.

## 5.4 Maths and English

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Maths and English, presented by Viv Kimeng, Head of Academy.

Governors were informed that there have been some significant improvements to Maths and English this year including regular class attendance. Attendance for English has improved from 64% to 78.7% and for Maths from 66% to 78.8%. A lot of work has been undertaken by staff to investigate what the issues are around those who are not attending. GCSE exam attendance has improved with 91% attendance for English and 89.5% for Maths. A Governor reported that this is great progress. It is believed that this increased attendance will improve achievement rates.

Viv Kimeng highlighted that nationally English is performing better than Maths however for the College they are broadly the same.

A Governor asked if English is still a work in progress in relation to the MIDES report. Viv Kimeng reported that the MIDES report compares colleges nationally on progress made from a grade 3. The College is working on English and will hopefully see a positive impact this year and going forward.

A Governor asked what the predicted achievement is for GCSE grade 4 and above. Becky Jones reported that for Maths 62% achieved a grade 4 or above at the November resits however this was a small cohort. 18.5% of those taking the exams this summer are predicted to achieve a grade 4 or above based on the mock results. Becky Jones reported that the final achievement rate will be available once the results of the summer exams are known. A Governor reported that 18.5% seems low and asked what the rate was last year. Viv Kimeng reported that the overall rate last year was 28% and the College is hoping to achieve this rate or above this year. Only 12% achieved a grade 4 or above in the mocks last year and the overall achievement rate was higher at the end of the year as students work harder for the exams than they do for the mocks and outcomes from the mocks help teachers to focus support and revision before the summer exams.

A Governor asked if the College felt confident that the KPIs are on track and Viv Kimeng reported that the College is positive that they will be achieved. Laura Wedgbury-Glew highlighted that more robust progress checks have been put in place throughout the year to assess if students are on track and the College's tracking is accurate.

A Governor asked about adult Functional Skills and if the College uses all of its budget. Paul Whitehead reported that there is £300k in the adult Maths and English Functional Skills budget and that the College had not fully recruited to this target however there are plans in place to achieve the learner number and funding targets going forward.

A Governor reported it would be helpful to have all KPIs with Maths and English separately.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Maths and English.

## **5.5 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs), presented by Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

Paul Whitehead reported that the end of year predictions are broadly the same as presented at the last Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting. In the majority of cases, achievement gaps are reducing, some more quickly than others. There are still some gaps in relation to socio-economic factors and there are still elements of the issue with ESOL learners moving out of area feeding into this.

Governors were informed that the overwhelming message from Ofsted was that SEN learners have the same or better access to the curriculum and achievement.

A Governor asked if the College has looked into delivering inclusive apprenticeships which are apprenticeships with adaptations that allow learners with disabilities to access them. Paul Whitehead reported that the guidance has been unclear and complex however the College does deliver a very successful supported internship programme in partnership with Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH). The College wants to ensure that the supported internships and apprenticeships are in the best place before delivering inclusive apprenticeships.

A Governor reiterated the success of the supported internships with PAH and asked if this could be considered for inclusive apprenticeships. Paul Whitehead reported that it would depend on the pathway and that dentistry could be a possibility as it will complement the College's existing structures which are being put in place.

Paul Whitehead reported that a large number of supported interns are gaining full time employment and the College is looking at a joint post to be based at PAH to develop this area of work further. A Governor asked about the costs involved with this. Paul Whitehead reported that there is currently a Work Placement Officer working with care homes across the town trying to secure work placements for learners however this is not always the right environment and needs to be more focused which the new post would be. For second year T-Level Health students, there is a need for their placement to be in a healthcare setting.

A Governor asked about the high numbers of SEND learners and Paul Whitehead reported that the data links through from a question on the ILR. It is a subjective question and includes some very complex needs and some more minor needs that not all students will have declared. The College is confident that those who need the support are getting it.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on SEND and EDIMs.

## **5.6 Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Learning, Teaching and Assessment, presented by Kelly Edwards, Executive Director – Quality.

Kelly Edwards reminded Governors that the College's deep dive process was introduced a few years ago to mimic an Ofsted inspection. The process has been positive and helped staff to be able to articulate what they are doing to the inspectors and inspectors fed back that managers and teachers were well prepared. The inspection took place during the last teaching week of term and the inspectors were still expecting to see high quality teaching, learning and assessment.

Governors were informed that moving forward, there is a need to work holistically on value added from day one with the students. In addition, challenge by teachers in lessons is not always being addressed enough. Kelly Edwards reported that the word behaviour will be replaced with engagement going forwards.

There was lots of positive feedback from Ofsted on the 4 Steps to Success, sequential learning and the use of digital technology. A Governor asked if the 4 Steps to Success would be described as pedagogy and Becky Jones confirmed that this was the case. Kelly Edwards reported that expectations of staff are very clear from the outset. Every new teacher is provided with a teaching and learning guide which is a live document with links to numerous support guides and resources. The 4 Steps to Success approach is often commented on externally as a simple and successful way of target setting. A Governor asked if the 4 Steps to Success is picked up in walkthroughs and Kelly Edwards confirmed that this is the case and shows how students progress each lesson. No questions were raised by Ofsted around the College not being able to demonstrate student progress.

Kelly Edwards highlighted the Bodyswaps library which is a suite of VR resources which are used by students. It is also being shared with staff as another layer of support for their own development. A Governor asked if this can be used to help staff with the craft of teaching. Kelly Edwards reported that this is being developed by Bodyswaps. The Student Governor reported that this technology had been rolled out to her class as an experiment and had been a huge help for students, giving them both positive and negative feedback on how they performed in each scenario. It is also useful for students looking to improve their inter-personal skills. A Governor asked if there had been any evaluation of Bodyswaps and Kelly Edwards reported that students and staff complete an evaluation after each session.

A Governor asked if there is a summary on what will take the College from good to outstanding. Becky Jones reported that it is consistency across the whole College and ensuring in some apprenticeship areas that the theory teaching is a

strong as the practical teaching. A Governor asked if the support was in place for staff and Becky Jones confirmed that it is.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

## **5.7 Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes, presented by Simon Boyce, Executive Director – Student Services.

Simon Boyce reported that the College has made good progress with the College-wide approach for the additional 100 hours of enrichment activity outside of the curriculum learning hours. There are key areas which the College is looking to develop and make more progress around, including a more cohesive approach to skills and behaviours and guidance. The College is recruiting a Student Futures' Manager who will bring together and manage work placements, careers, guidance and tutorials. Recording impact measures has been a challenge however a bolt-on for the Grofar software has been purchased to help address this. Additional staff training has been delivered and the bolt-on will be rolled-out across College in September 2024.

A Governor congratulated the College on getting 750 students and apprentices to complete the Ofsted survey, with 100% saying that they would recommend the College.

A Governor commented that from their interactions with staff and students, it is evident that the College has a successful and appropriate holistic approach to the tutorial programme, which is appreciated by staff and students. Laura Wedgbury-Glew reported that the responsiveness of the College and the relationship staff have with students make it the success it is. The Student Governor reported that the enrichment and tutorials are also kept current and this helps with student engagement.

A Governor highlighted that with 429 students accessing a weekly enrichment activity, this equates to only approximately 5% of the College student population. Simon Boyce reported that the programme is aimed at first year 16 – 18 students and currently about 40% of these students are regularly taking part in enrichment activities. Simon Boyce reported that enrichment is not just about playing sport, it encompasses anything that helps with employability and the College is adapting its approach to include this. Paul Whitehead reported that two years ago the College did not have an enrichment programme, so the initial step was to establish a programme. The next step is to make it more holistic and it is being aligned to the Gatsby recommendations.

Simon Boyce highlighted that Ofsted commented that face-to-face enrichment activity is very rare now in Colleges and the College is now looking to ensure that all engagement with enrichment and employability activities are recorded for every student.



A Governor asked if the students who are not engaging with the programme are the ones that are most in need of it and Simon Boyce reported that this is not necessarily the case.

Paul Whitehead highlighted that the figures in the report are for average weekly engagement and some weeks the attendance is higher than the figures in the report. Simon Boyce reported that when teams mapped the 100 hours, it equated to an average of 12 attendances a year per student. Governors were informed that the introduction of the Grofar bolt-on will provide the College with a better overview of the hours, student numbers and types of activity being accessed.

Governors were informed that the enrichment afternoon will be rebranded to include employability skills and behaviours and the Student Governor reported that this will be important and will target a different set of students.

A Governor asked if the accreditation of learning would be beneficial. Paul Whitehead reported that this will be explored in the next phase however it is not straightforward and could be costly. Skills-based accreditation could be good, whereas behaviours are more likely to be talked through with employers rather than accredited. Once the College has got the recording processes in place, students will be able to access evidence of their skills and behaviours for themselves.

A Governor asked why the College is counting activity with local schools as advice and guidance. Simon Boyce reported that this is a starting point with information, advice and guidance before students apply to the College. A Governor asked what the equivalent number of interactions is with existing Harlow College students. Paul Whitehead reported that every student has a moving on meeting and some have further interventions. A Governor asked how many are not engaged in the process. Becky Jones reported that the report could include the number of students who have completed the moving on process. The College has the data as targets are set in students' ILPs and quality audits of ILPs have been undertaken.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes and asked for this agenda item to be moved further up the agenda at future meetings.

## **5.8 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the KPIs for 2022-23, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Governors noted that the KPIs had been largely covered in agenda items 5.1 – 5.7 above.

Becky Jones reported that the majority of KPIs are on track or above target. The validation paperwork for Foundation Degrees and HTQs has been slow which has been beyond the College's control. New programmes cannot start in September 2024 as originally planned and this is having an impact on the College's higher education and Institute of Technology provision.

Reducing the use of agency spend is not on track at present due to key areas which the College cannot recruit to therefore agency staff are required. This is a national issue faced by FE colleges.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the KPIs.

## **5.9 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the QIP, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that the QIP had been covered in agenda items 5.1 – 5.7 above.

Becky Jones reported that across the QIP actions, the data is positive in most parts, with attendance, achievement and retention showing an improving trend.

Becky Jones highlighted that the actions in amber and red are the additional tasks the College set for itself with are not quite completed yet.

Governors were informed that Ofsted had commented that the QIP was lengthy and Becky Jones asked the Committee if they were happy with the length of the QIP. The Committee agreed to keep the QIP as it currently is.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the QIP.

## **6 Higher Education**

### **6.1 Higher Education Update, Quality Assurance Report and OfS Regulatory Requirements**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Higher Education Update, Quality Assurance Report and OfS Regulatory Requirements, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Becky Jones reported that the higher education numbers are small and this is disappointing. A Governor asked why the College is looking at Foundation Degrees rather than HTQs as Foundation Degrees are often not technical or skills focused. Becky Jones reported that Foundation Degrees are better for the College and its students and where they are linked with universities, the College can benefit in terms of recruitment. Higher Nationals have not been successful and the College now offers a HTQ for Engineering however other HTQs have not been recruited to.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Higher Education Update, Quality Assurance Report and OfS Regulatory Requirements.

### **6.2 OfS Reportable Events**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that there has been no OfS reportable events since the Committee last met on 14 March 2024.

## **7 Meeting Local Skills' Needs**

The Standards and Curriculum received and considered the report on Meeting Local Skills' Needs, presented by Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

Governors were informed that the College had received a "strong" judgement from Ofsted on meeting local skills' needs which is the best judgment a college can receive.

Based on a recent employer survey, there is a need to improve consistency of communication. A Governor asked what that meant and Paul Whitehead reported that this could be, for example, feedback to employers on apprentices' progress. A Governor asked if the survey included a question on meeting skills' need and Paul Whitehead confirmed that it did not and there is a need to develop a better framework for this.

The Standards and Curriculum noted the report on Meeting Local Skills' Needs.

## **8 Policies for Approval**

The Standards and Curriculum received and considered the Academic and Assessment Regulations, the Academic Appeals Policy, the HE Student Protection Plan and the Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Governors were informed that there were no proposed amendments to two policies and the amendments to the other policies were minor and highlighted to the Committee.

The Standards and Curriculum approved the Academic and Assessment Regulations, the Academic Appeals Policy, the HE Student Protection Plan and the Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study.

## **9 Any Other Business**

There were no items of any other business.

## **10 Dates of Future Meetings, Terms of Reference, Calendar of Business**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the dates of future meetings, the Committee's Terms of Reference and the Calendar of Business, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the dates of future meetings, the Committee's Terms of Reference and the Calendar of Business.

**Key Points From The Meeting For Corporation:**

**1. Item 1 – Key Performance Indicators**

To receive and note the current position.

**2. Item 2 – Quality Improvement Plan**

To receive and note the current position.

**Action Plan:**

<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>By When</b>
001	5.4 – Maths and English	All KPIs to have Maths and English separately	Becky Jones	Asap
002	5.7 – Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes	Future reports to include the number of students who have completed the moving on process.	Simon Boyce	Next Committee meeting.
003	5.7 – Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes	Agenda item to be moved higher up the agenda for future meetings.	Ruth Lucas	Next Committee meeting.