

**Minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Meeting held on  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at  
Bedford College, Cauldwell St, Tower boardroom  
16:00**

**Governors Present:** Catherine Barr (online)  
John Butcher  
Kasar Singh (online)  
Laura-Jane Rawlings  
Richard Dimbleby (Chair)  
Sheila Selwood  
Yiannis Kouris

**In attendance:** Alasdair Simmons (observer)  
Ann Harris (observer – online)  
Caroline Biddle (Executive Director of Human Resources)  
Debbie Houghton (Executive Director of Apprenticeships, BD & Commercial)  
Em Lowe (Deputy CEO Education)  
Karen Campbell (Principal, Bedford)  
Nina Sharp (Vice Principal SEND and additional learning support)  
Rachel Nicol (Group Director of Governance)  
Robin Webber-Jones (Principal, Northants)  
Sara Gonzalez (Senior Governance Coordinator) (Minutes)  
Sarah Baxter (Executive Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment)  
Sarah Mortimer (Principal, CBC) (online)

#### **CQ/27/24 Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

##### Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

##### Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest relevant to the matters on the agenda.

#### **CQ/28/24 Matters Arising not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda**

The Chair started the meeting by welcoming the new members and the observers as well as thanking the report writers for the quality of the reports.

The CEO communicated to the Committee that there will be another Ofsted visit next week to finalise their inspection. [Minute redaction for commercial sensitivity and confidentiality].



## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### CQ/29/24 Quality of Education Report and Teaching, learning and assessment update

The Deputy CEO reported that during the Ofsted inspection the team saw that Quality of Education is good and most teachers deliver effective lessons. The areas already recognised for further improvement include attendance in English and Math and in teaching, learning and assessment, the focus is on assessment for learning, which means making sure the students are ready to go further on their Learning Journey.

Quality and outcomes are considered to have improved; it is clear the amount of work that has been put in place this year.

To this topic, committee members asked questions regarding modernisation of the room set up in order to increase students' engagement. The college is looking into new way to set up rooms to encourage engagement. Also, adding learning coaches to the classrooms has made a big difference in supporting teachers to improve engagement and interest levels.

When asked about the teachers' developments, the Deputy CEO explained that each individual has their own personalised plan and it is a cross-functional activity that focuses on their development plans.

The Committee requested more information on why the Information Advice and Guidance is not being used by all students, but only 'some' based on the report. **It was agreed that the strategy for careers, advice and guidance will be brought into the next meeting.**

Members asked when the 2025/26 curriculum will be discussed. To this, the Deputy CEO responded that in Spring there will be a meeting, and then they will be able to share information with the Committee.

Regarding the quality of the report, it was flagged that there was a lot of information on news and areas of improvement, but with action plans for improvement less clear. The Deputy CEO explained that the Quality Improvement Plan sets out a number of actions.

**The Committee approved that the report provides assurance.**

### CQ/30/24 Apprenticeships



The Executive Director of Apprenticeships gave a summary of the report highlights, focusing on both positive areas and areas of improvement. To the positives she highlighted:

- They have worked on eradicating inconsistencies
- The way the curriculum has been structured is focusing on the delivery of theory better complementing the practical elements
- Feedback and impact are good

On the areas of improvement, she highlighted:

- Progress reviews have improved. The inspection from Ofsted helped understand what could be improved and how.
- Our achievement is improving and attendance too.
- We are expecting apprenticeship achievement to be 90% following the improvements.
- We get snapshots each month on achievement and so far, the Group is on track to achieve the target by the end of the academic year.

The Executive Director of Apprenticeships further, highlighted that apprentices are generally very well behaved and enjoy their campus life. Induction surveys are looking positive, although the November one is still finishing.

The Committee asked questions regarding the report: why was career advice and guidance not mentioned on the report? As most apprentices already have a job, they are not as robust in accessing this area, but The Executive Director of Apprenticeships will reflect on how this could be strengthened.

Is the College anticipating a drop on the number of employers engaging in apprenticeships (due to NI increase as the raise on the minimum wage)? They have had some conversations with employers and no concern has been raised but it is something to monitor in terms of overall costs to employers. Nonetheless, for the micro employers, the college should check how these changes might impact them.

### **The Committee approved that the report provided assurance**

#### **CQ/30/24 English and Maths**

The Deputy CEO gave the Committee a summary on the report, highlighting that the report provides an overview of the summer GCSE exams. The report outlines both the success of the learners in terms of overall results but also the progress they made. The aim of the GCSE strategy is that all learners progress from their starting point. To best facilitate and measure this, the TBCG has 2 metrics, one for learners who have achieved a grade 3 already, and one for those yet to do so. The report details the success of this strategy. TBCG is introducing further measures in 2024/25 to build on these results. In addition to the increased delivery hours provided for in the funding agreement measures include streaming and introducing further classroom support.

The report also shows that there has been a better attendance from the Summer sitting. Ofsted want to see progress and progression, and that is what TBCG is working on as well as building up the students' confidence.

The DfE have been visiting today and tomorrow on an immersion visit and are visiting English and Maths classrooms to understand the impact of funding policy on delivery.

The Committee had questions regarding the report; acknowledging that national re-take pass rates are very low, are teachers sufficiently skilled to teach the GCSE? Have teachers identified the gaps / barriers to achievement? Have teachers liaised with counterparts in local schools? To this, the Deputy CEO responded that teachers are skilled and they have identified areas to improve, supported by the learning excellence team. Regarding the second question, the cross-institutional work could be better and more efficient.

To this, the CEO added that TBCG as well as improving the teaching, will also focus on the learning. The results are not always linked to poor teaching, but the lack of ability to prepare students for exam-based assessment.

### **The Committee approved that the report provided assurance**

#### **CQ/31/24 Learner Destinations PT**

The Executive Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment summarised the report to the Committee, focusing on the fact that almost three quarters of part-time students studying in 2023/24 progressed onto a positive destination (education, apprenticeship or employment). Nonetheless, only 20% of the students that were sent the survey responded. To this, she flagged that there is a risk when unable to evidence positive learning outcomes and destinations, as it might affect TBCG's ability to access funding.

The Committee raised the lack of EDI analysis on the survey data, which makes it very hard to see if there has been an improvement or not from the past year. To this, the Executive Director of Marketing & Student Recruitment responded that students are reluctant to give EDI information. For full time (FT) students they used a third-party company who surveyed through WhatsApp which seemed to be very successful so they are looking to potentially using it for the part time (PT) students.

Positive destinations were understood to be defined by the DfE and it would be good to capture where students go who don't go to positive destination and how the destination matches their initial intentions.

### **The Committee approved that the report provided assurance**



### **CQ/32/24 Complaints**

All Education Centres have a formal complaints process. This report focuses on the data gathered between May and October 2024. The process is improving, resolving complaints quickly and positively.

TBCG policy has a target of 21 days to resolve any complaint. So far, the Group has been successful at it, the average time being 14 working days.

Of the 115 cases, 25 relate to concerns about staff, 21 relate to communication or information, 19 relate to the quality of education, 15 relate to enrolment, 7 relate to discrimination, examinations and facilities and services, 4 relate to finance and 1 relates to bullying or harassment. 9 cases relate to other areas not specifically defined.

To this, the Committee asked if there is a recurrent topic. The Executive Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment responded that there isn't a pattern on the complaints. To her, complaints are actionable insights and help TBCG improve and grow. The Committee also asked if the students are aware of how to make a complaint, the process and people to talk to. The Executive Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment provided assurance that the students have multiple ways to communicate a complaint: over teams, physical or electronic form, email address and over the phone. It was also explained that staff complaints come through HR primarily, depending on the subject. There is no information about how many of the complaints resulted in learnings for TBCG and she will add this information to the next report. The Committee asked if any complaint has gone through the appeals process or to level 3 (Governors). It was confirmed that in the period reported against no such referrals had been required.

### **The Committee approved that the report provided assurance**

### **CQ/33/24 Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan**

The Deputy CEO set out the context and methodology for the Self-assessment report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to the Committee. A number of members had been involved in the SAR validation process and provided feedback on their experience.

The SAR and QIP are shared with Ofsted. The team internally used their feedback from the previous meeting with Ofsted for further improvements. Therefore, the report shared with the Committee had both what TBCG had written in October plus the feedback from Ofsted's visit.



This report explains that attendance in English and Maths and improvement needed in the adult curriculum and level 3 19 plus outcomes are key areas for improvement. National achievement rates are not published until March, and although TBCG has improved since last year, it is imperative to keep focusing on retention and achievement.

TBCG is working at pace on further improvements to safeguarding processes to embed further a culture of safeguarding Governor CB agreed to review the SAR amendments that the Deputy CEO and designated safeguarding lead are working on.

### **CQ/34/24 HE Self-Evaluation Document and Quality Improvement Plan**

The Principal for Northamptonshire responsible for this area summarised the report shared with the Committee and highlighted reflections on 2023-2024 as well as areas that need further development for 2024-25. The documents had been approved by the internal academic board. These areas to develop are included in the QIP. The progress against the QIP will be monitored in every Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting.

The Committee had the following questions regarding the report:

Does the Academic Board have an external member such as a governor or someone from an outside institution? No external member sits on the academic board and no provision for this is included in its ToR. However, consideration will be given as to whether to partner with an external institution.

Regarding HE Pedagogy – do we have learning coaches? Yes, TBCG has two coaches that have HE backgrounds.

Regarding the achievement data, how does it compare to our competitors? Anything that is with the University of Bedfordshire is franchised and whatever is not is validation. The Principal Northamptonshire confirmed that in due course TBCG will review the potential to move out from franchising allowing TBCG to write its own pedagogy.

**The Committee confirmed that the HE SED and QIP are recommended to the Board for approval**

### **CQ/35/24 Update on 6<sup>th</sup> Forms**

The Principal of Northamptonshire, responsible for sixth forms, summarised the report to the Committee and highlighted the following:

- Firming up the structure in the 6<sup>th</sup> forms is in progress but will be delayed another extra two weeks due to Ofsted visit.



- Although the Culture in Bedford Sixth Form is improving it is work in progress. Quality is improving but the base line was noted and the position is being carefully monitored.

The Committee further discussed ambition in terms of quality and destinations for 6<sup>th</sup> form students as well the link with TBCG's own higher skills provision. Integrity in recruitment, careers, advice and guidance was noted to be key in ensuring students have appropriate and ambitious options.

**The Committee approved that the report had provided assurance**

*(Governor Cathy Barr left the meeting at 18:15)*

**CQ/36/24 Update from the local Curriculum and Quality Groups**

The Group Director of Governance is still recruiting for these groups.

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that the groups had found the Principal reports very useful, to learn what is happening in the campuses, meetings happening, etc. The students' sessions had been a great addition to the agendas, as it is good to hear from them what they feel and think of the college.

The Bedford Local Group meeting is happening this Thursday, the CBC and the Northamptonshire ones have already happened and notes are on the portal.

A mid trial review has taken place and a full review of the local group function will take place at the end of the academic year when the agreed 2-year trial concludes.

**The Committee noted the update**

**CQ/37/24 SEND Strategy briefing – impact on strategy**

The Vice Principal responsible for SEND gave a presentation with an overview of provision, the needs catered for, 3-year trends, numbers planned for and relationships with local authorities.

Discussion focused on recruitment challenges for teaching assistants and planned actions (job centre boot camps, development of existing students) and the overarching SEND strategy.

**The Committee noted the update**

**BEHAVIOUR & ATTITUDES**

**CQ/38/24 Student Services update**

The Principal of CBC responsible for student services summarised the report and highlighted the work done with the learning mentors and improvement that had taken



place. The role of the security and behaviour team has impacted on the creation of a positive ethos.

The newly appointed Group Director of Student Services is working on the development of a holistic “learner” voice strategy (name to be agreed).

Comments from the Committee included positive feedback on appendix 2 showing the take up and impact of different student engagement activities. They also requested further explanation on the meaning of trauma informed when talking about curriculum which was explained by the CEO in terms of policies, curriculum creation and interaction with learners.

### **The Committee approved that the report had provided assurance**

#### **CQ/39/24 Safeguarding update**

The Safeguarding report was presented by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (“DSL”) and the team is working on the ‘distance travelled’ since the Ofsted visit to show progress.

Assurance was given that newly appointed specialist safeguarding staff are in post and resources in place to implement improvements. There is clearly articulated timelines, expectations and escalation on reporting through an alert system.

Implementation of CPOMS (Child protection online management system) is underway and will become the master system from September 2025 but with sufficient parallel running of the existing systems to ensure a smooth transition.

The Safeguarding quality improvement plan will be brought back to a future meeting.

### **The Committee approved that the report had provided assurance**

(Governor AH left the meeting at 18:37)

## **STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**

#### **CQ/40/24 Student Survey results**

The Executive Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment highlighted that the survey shows a positive start of the year.

The Committee questioned the result on the wellbeing and safety question. It was understood to relate to confidence in looking at future careers but will be looked at further.





**The Committee approved that the report had provided assurance**

## **REGULATORY AND COMPLIANCE**

### **CQ/41/24 Competitions & Markets Authority**

The Executive Director of Marketing & Student Recruitment introduced the report on compliance with consumer protection law required of higher education providers by the Competitions & Markets authority. No reportable breaches had occurred and one internal complaint was reported in the period reported on.

**The Committee approved that the report had provided assurance**

### **CQ/42/24 Access and Participation Plan**

The Principal of Northamptonshire, responsible for higher skills summarised the paper and highlighted that TBCG has drafted its Wave 2 Access & Participation Plan (“APP”) submission. The Office for Students feedback on the plan has been actioned and an amended version submitted. The new plan is in line with national policy, does allow for some fee increases if needed, potentially to drive strategic development and improve outcomes for students or to respond to changes in funding.

**The Committee approved the plan.**

### **CQ/43/24 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (22.05.24)**

The minutes of the meeting on 22.05.24 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **CQ/44/24 AOB**

The committee discussed the RAG report to go to the Board

Meeting ended at 19:30