

CORPORATION BOARD CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STUDENTS COMMITTEE



Minutes of a meeting held online on Tuesday 17th March 2026 at 7pm

Present

Jacqui Canton (Principal);
Helen Brown;
Clare Forder;
Neil Edwards;
Amelia Badger

In attendance

Joanne Milsom, Deputy Principal;
Scott Gray, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality;
Paul Starkey, Vice Principal
Jude Brown, Clerk & Governance Advisor

Governor questions are represented with bullet points and bold italics, and management responses follow.

1. Opening comments

1.1 Apologies and Matters to be raised under AOB

As the Chair of CQS was unable to attend, the Clerk explained that the members could elect a chair for the meeting from amongst themselves. The members agreed that Clare Forder would chair the meeting. She is referred to as the Chair for the purpose of these minutes.

The Chair welcomed the new member of SMT, Paul Starkey, and new external governor, Neil Edwards, to the meeting. There were apologies from Astrid Schloerscheidt and Sam Wolfe. The Committee was quorate.

There were no matters to be raised under AOB.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2025

2.1 Public Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2025 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising, Written Resolutions & Action Points

There had been no written resolutions reported since the last meeting and actions had all been completed.

The Committee noted the report.

4. Curriculum Area Presentation – Motor Vehicle

The presentation was moved to the next meeting.

5. Curriculum

5.1 Curriculum Report

The Vice Principal, Curriculum, Adults and Apprenticeships, gave an overview of the Curriculum Report highlighting apprenticeship policy with Level 7 funding now restricted to

Curriculum, Quality & Students Committee 2025-26

Page 1

younger learners to encourage more entry level positions. Since the report had been written it had been confirmed that L6 CMDA and team leading apprenticeship were being defunded which would have an impact on the College. CMDA has a lifespan value of approximately £450k. The team are reviewing what options there are to replace it and to understand impact. Reforms for apprenticeship level funding moving to apprenticeship units were also being explored to see what the College could offer.

National skills and qualification reform was also covered with the government launching an AI fundamental skills programme, V levels and broader qualification reform including change to English and Maths.

Internally, curriculum planning for 2026-27 has concluded with a range of new programmes to be offered, for example Level 1 in music, and a female football pathway amongst other new offerings. With respect to the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) within HE, the team have four programmes planned to include for example CIPD and counselling level 5 which are in the validation and set up stage. The Vice Principal also flagged that the College has devolved funding to be prepared for as well as new apprenticeship rules and assessment models.

- ***It is great we have new qualifications being offered, in terms of the removal of leadership and management funding, will this have an effect on staffing? Can staff be redeployed?*** The Vice Principal explained that it is likely they can be, but the team need to review impact. The £450k is the full 4-year programme cost so the effect is gradual impact not big bang, and the team are looking at other potential options to deliver, for example through LLE or other standards like project management. The team are already in touch with Oxford Brookes about this as well as key employers.
- ***What is the thinking of team regarding V levels and is this something you think will only be offered within colleges or do you think schools might want to offer?*** It is still early days with V levels, and they are only being offered in very specific areas currently. The team acknowledged that the current formulation of V levels does seem more likely to be relevant to schools or providers with an A level offer, perhaps with them being offered alongside A levels. V levels in their current guise do not seem well set up for FE where learners tend to focus on one key pathway. It is more likely to be viable for FE when the full range of V levels are available and could be grouped. There could be interesting options around Level 2 pathways.
- ***Regarding health and social care at Witney and new education pathway, what size of new pathway and what do they entail?*** The new pathway has a similar set up to current combined pathway, with similar class sizes and cohorts. It has more of a specialist focus but there is no appetite to change current cohorts. This will be more choice for new learners joining provision.
- ***Where you talk about adult modular programme delivery do you mean modular as in mix of face to face or online delivery?*** The Vice Principal clarified that modular meant shorter elements of a larger programme that can be delivered standalone, for example a specific part of university course rather than whole course necessarily. The mode of delivery could then be online, face to face or hybrid.

The Committee noted the report.

6.1 Quality

6.1 Mid-year Update on QIP

The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality, gave an overview of the Quality Improvement Plan highlighting that Teaching and Learning remains consistently at least effective with at least 20% highly effective. This has been a focus during last term with a great deal of work being done through the Teaching Skills Academy (TSA).

English and Maths grade 4 achievement remains under the national average, and the team will review against last year's average which will be published in March. A range of actions are in place to try to support students to get these grades. 16-18 achievement indicates improvements towards national averages, in particular there have been positive changes in carpentry. In music the curriculum has been updated to a new standard with RSL which is more focussed on music industry, and this has been welcomed by staff and learners.

Adult achievement at Level 2 and 3 have been a focus for past couple of years. Teaching is effective in these areas, but the TSA team continue support. The biggest challenge is involving employers in curriculum design building on successes within Construction.

Work started last year to encourage student participation in external competitions which usually take place towards the summer term. The College expects to have entrants in engineering and hair and beauty competitions. This is seen as raising the bar on learner experience.

The Committee noted the report.

6.2 Quality Report

The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality, gave an overview of the Quality Report highlighting quality health checks that happen in the curriculum areas, and which show improvement. The Vice Principal acknowledged that the Committee has spoken about inconsistent performance in some areas in the past, but the data shows some of these areas have gone on a journey and are showing evidence of improvement.

The new Ofsted framework was also highlighted, and work is being done to prepare at the college as well as to understand other college's experiences with inspection under the new framework. There will be a presentation on this in summer term to governors. The annual Landex visit had taken place and highlighted strong provision at the farm.

The Committee noted the report.

7 Students

7.1 Student Report

The Deputy Principal gave an overview of this report highlighting positive student feedback and increasing participation in surveys. The St Lucia trip mentioned had a process for disadvantaged students to apply for support to go on the trip, with some funding ringfenced to provide financial support and the team managed to focus money on students who would benefit. Students on the trip have really engaged with the community and culture. The Deputy Principal anticipates that the College will apply for Turing funding next year too.

In terms of Safeguarding, the College will respond to the KCSiE consultation. The Deputy Principal had no concerns about the changes. The team are also examining the Schools White Paper, in particular about SEND reform. There is a lot in the paper, but the detail is

not sufficient yet to fully understand impact. The team will continue to keep engaged and respond to consultation.

- **Regarding the completion rate of 76% for the survey, which was better than the year before, how does compare to other FE providers and do you incentivize students?** The Deputy Principal explained that there is not really any benchmarking data for this. She felt that 76% was quite high. There are no incentives offered but the time to complete the survey is built into the timetabled week to help students do survey.
- **What feedback have you had from parents about the new Parent Hub?** This is quite new and was launched last year. The team do not get much feedback and need to consider how to better obtain feedback from parents. The Deputy Principal and Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality ran a webinar to welcome parents for this academic year and had 130 parents attend who were really engaged. The hub is a bit one way in that parents can just access information about their young person but, due to GDPR, the College needs the student to give parent the access, so it is a bit challenging. Once more fully established, the Deputy Principal felt that it would be a useful tool.
- **Regarding student experience, does college offer volunteering places to students to help them gain work experience?** The Deputy Principal explained that the College did not offer volunteering per se but has focussed on student action projects which could be volunteering but can also college projects or community-based projects. The team try to ensure each study group does a project each year together as a group and think about how they can contribute to community. The student governor explained that she does her course Monday through Thursday, works part-time on Friday, and then does volunteering on a Saturday so she has that experience as well as her course.
- **Is this unusual or do a lot of others do something similar?** The student governor felt that some other students are having problems finding work experience as places must be inspected but a lot can struggle due to where they live not having many opportunities.
- **Are we able to capture that for reporting, i.e. how many students engage in volunteering and how many hours?** The Deputy Principal agreed that this would be good to capture and could be built in as part of an ILP field next year.
- **Regarding enrichment, outside of specific areas at CL, have we been able to introduce enrichment at the farm and are there any trends as to which students engage? It would be interesting to know if clusters or where to target to increase engagement.** It was explained that the Witney enrichment offer does go up to the farm and the Student Voice Coordinator also attends. There had been a new person appointed this year after a short gap, who is re-establishing the offer. The Deputy Principal notes that groups of students are starting to come forward to offer new ideas and activities, for example recently some students proposed a newsletter as they were concerned about fake news. The team are putting a framework together for this. It was felt to help make enrichment more sustainable if students do this. Next term the Deputy Principal will bring more data about enrichment, and what the patterns and trends are, but it is anticipated that the Witney data will be patchy due to the change in personnel.

The Committee recorded their thanks to the staff who go on the trips to enable students to have such important experiences. There was appreciation and acknowledgement of the effort that goes into the arrangements for the trips.

The Committee noted the report.

7.2 Annual Safeguarding and Prevent Report

The Deputy Principal gave an overview of the report which was for last academic year and is brought to the Committee after being submitted to the LADO in December. In terms of themes, there were no real surprises as the report reflects national picture. In terms of student safety at college, the team follow up with everyone who mentioned a safety concern, and these are usually related to travel to college or the wider community. Rarely the concerns relate to college, and, in these cases, they are usually known issues, but they were small numbers.

- The absolute numbers are frightening to someone who is new, with big numbers on mental health. Do you feel you are not surprised as this is also seen across UK? Where is the peak or will it continue to rise and what impact does this have on the team to provide the level of support?*** The Deputy Principal agreed and felt that the College was still experiencing the tail end of pandemic. It is not clear if numbers have peaked so it is possible it could continue. Interventions can take a long time so it was considered likely that this area will be a challenge for a few years to come. It was observed that this challenge was not helped by local services being reduced over past 10-15 years though the Government is working to reestablish provision in some areas. In terms of staffing, there is a relatively high level of turnover in the safeguarding team as it is a difficult job. To support staff better, they have professional supervision and a safeguarding manager. When recruiting, the College does receive applications from high quality candidates when we advertise. It was agreed that it is a big challenge, but the College has a good team who make good judgments.
- In the student report, do you ask what more we could be doing to make them safe?*** This specific question is not asked, but the team do follow up if student has stated a concern. The College has a number of ways to potentially ask this question, for example through student engagement and student conferences so this will be considered.
- Regarding the number of LADO referrals, for size of staff body is that representative of FE?*** The Deputy Principal felt this was hard to know although she noted the number was higher this year. The team had been focussing on increasing awareness this year. From evidence from a local conference the DSL had recently attended, the College was in the middle across secondary provision in Oxfordshire. The Deputy Principal was certain that higher level concerns definitely come through but it was also good to see as more awareness of lower-level concerns. It was also clear that staff will have training needs as a lot of staff come from industry so will need support regarding professional boundaries and developing appropriate relationships.

The Committee agreed to recommend the Annual Safeguarding report to the Board.

7.3 Safeguarding

The Safeguarding governor had no concerns and was due to meet the DSL in the next few weeks.

The Committee noted the verbal update.

8 Policies for Approval

8.0 Policies Cover Paper

The Clerk gave a brief overview of the paper explaining the background to the policies presented.

- ***Regarding freedom of speech, have you seen evidence that students or parents are raising concerns or being 'cancelled' and is there anything in place if something was raised?*** There is no evidence that this is happening, recognising that FE is a different context to HE. The College has always had the Code of Practice and a process for managing concerns but there have been no concerns over the past six years at least. If anything were to occur, then this Code of Practice would protect the right to freedom of expression. The challenge at the last CQs meeting was balancing safeguarding and freedom of speech. A lot of work has been done to balance that, and the Deputy Principal is now clear at what point freedom of expression becomes a concern. The risk was felt to be low, however.

The Committee approved and/or recommended the policies presented in the table.

8 Any Other Business

There were no items raised under AOB.

9 Future Business

It was agreed to have the Motor Vehicle curriculum area presentation at the next meeting and then invite the new Head of English and Maths to the autumn meeting of CQS Committee.

The date of the next meeting is on Tuesday 16th June 2026 at 6pm online.

The meeting closed at 20:00.

A Schloerscheidt

Signature *A Schloerscheidt*
Chair of CQS

09/07/2026



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