

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee held on Thursday 12 February 2026 at 5pm on Teams

PRESENT

Mrs Jane Carter - Chair	Mrs Wendy Harris
Ms Abi Chesterton	Ms Doina Surchicin

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Rachael Aston	Assistant Principal – Quality and Engagement
Mrs Alison Buick	Head of Governance
Mr Mike Dixon	Assistant Principal – Curriculum and Innovation
Mr Richard Hewitt	Assistant Principal – Business and Growth

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked the management team for the papers provided. Governors were reminded of their responsibilities, which were clearly outlined in the new Ofsted Inspection Toolkit. Questions in advance of meetings were welcomed, ideally at least 48 hours beforehand to allow management time to prepare responses.

17/26 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM 1)

Apologies were received and accepted from Darren Shaw.

There were no declarations of interest.

18/26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (20 NOVEMBER 2025) AND MATTERS ARISING)

Resolved - that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

There were two previously agreed actions, both relating to the college SAR. It was confirmed that both actions had been completed.

19/26 CHAIR'S ACTIONS (ITEM 3)

None.

20/26 BUSINESS AND GROWTH (ITEM 4)

The Assistant Principal Business and Growth referred to his written report, which covered apprenticeship achievement and curriculum planning. Governor questions received ahead of the meeting were noted and would be covered. The report was shared on screen and the following were highlighted for Governors to note:

Apprenticeship Achievement

- There had been a 10% increase in apprenticeship achievement compared to the previous year and a significant improvement since the last Ofsted inspection in 2023.

- Data at the R05 return had been validated and showed all apprentices due to complete by 1 April 2026. End Point Assessment (EPA) dates varied between courses. The EPA process was explained. The majority of apprentices due to complete their EPA were expected to be successful. Eight were RAG rated as red so were being closely monitored.
- There were 159 apprentices on the list, and they had been validated by the Head of Apprenticeships and his team.

A Governor commented that it would be helpful to see how predicted achievement changed month on month. The Assistant Principal Business and Growth noted that the current R06 achievement rate was 43.9%, which was 3% higher than last year's R06 return.

- The budget for 2025/26 was £2.5m and it was expected that this would be met. The headcount target was 250 and current projections indicated that the final outturn was likely to be close to this.
- There was a specific focus on electrical and plumbing, where 10% of the cohorts were out of funding. The Head of Apprenticeships was monitoring this.

A Governor commented that it was reassuring to see the level of forensic analysis of apprentices by management and that there were meetings with assessors to review progress. Progress being made appeared to be good and on track.

Curriculum Planning

- 260 apprentices had been agreed in the 2026/27 curriculum plan. This was an increase of 10 from 2025/26. 36 were planned for Business Admin as this was very popular and 25 for Lean Manufacturing, which was an area of growth.
- 19 apprenticeship standards were to be offered, with six additional standards proposed as interim depending on employer interest.
- It seemed that apprenticeship recruitment nationally was challenging due to a variety of external factors affecting businesses. Marketing to employers was key to generating interest.
- New apprenticeship units included CAD and welding.
- Foundation apprenticeships were new. There was an agreed focus at Wolverhampton on construction trades.
- The pre apprenticeships offer included construction and business, as there was much interest in these areas.
- Co-pilot training was being offered to the council, local NHS organisations and EON.

The Chair asked about capacity to deliver AI training. The Assistant Principal was confident that there was capacity and expertise through working with the college's Business Learning Technologies team.

Teaching and Training

- This was being reviewed in line with the Ofsted Inspection toolkit expectations.
- Positive results had been received from the welcome survey, with a 61% response rate to date. This showed that onboarding of apprentices had gone well.
- Survey results would continue to be reviewed.
- Quality continued to be reviewed through learning walks and observations. There was a high level of confidence that staff were meeting expectations.

Where some shortcomings had been identified for two staff, they were being supported via Learning Innovators.

21/26 CURRICULUM INNOVATION (ITEM 5)

The Assistant Principal Curriculum Innovation referred to his written report and highlighted the following key aspects:

- As Governors were aware, there was a sharp focus on Ofsted readiness. Ofsted focus would be on how well a provider designed and delivered a curriculum that was coherent, inclusive and ambitious for all learners.
- Overall retention was 97.8%
- There was confidence in the quality of teaching and learning through the learning walks and CPD that had taken place in the year to date.
- Priority areas were Futures and A Levels. Improvements were being made in Futures but this area was impacted by staff sickness levels and too much variability in teaching quality. HR were supporting the Curriculum Manager with this. A Level mock results had prompted immediate interventions as there was a need to improve achievement and high-grade outcomes. The college regularly reflected on its A Level offer. As a community college it was felt important to offer a range of A Levels to meet demand, despite cohort challenges and competition from school sixth forms.
- Some changes had been made to teaching staff in Engineering to ensure that staff were used at the right level to support students effectively.
- Pastoral support remained a key strength.
- Retention at 97.8% was strong across all areas.
- Attendance had dropped in term 2, which was in line with historical trends. Reasons for this were being reviewed. The four Progress Coaches were each supporting around 65 learners in a variety of ways to encourage attendance, progress and achievement.
- The new curriculum plan was progressing well and being validated. A meeting was scheduled with WMCA to review the adult plan later in February. The intent element of the plan had been completed with Curriculum Managers in term 1. An example of an intent document was shown on screen and explained. Each intent document had been subject to robust scrutiny. It was expected that the plan would be fully costed and completed by Easter, after which a high-level summary would be presented to the Board.

Governors were reassured to see that the curriculum planning process was thorough.

There was a short discussion about the A Level offer and the clear demand for this in the city. The wrap around services were key to being able to support students and were felt to be a strength. A Level destinations were also positive as the majority of last year's cohort had moved on to their university of choice. It was important to celebrate the distance travelled by learners and there would be more work to analyse this during this year. Governors agreed that the college had a role to offer students opportunities that schools overlooked.

- Additionalities were explained and discussed. There were different offers for different levels of study from entry to level 3. Curriculum Managers were expected to ensure that these were delivered over the course of the academic year. Several aspects were pastoral, but some were related to individual goals and targets. Additionalities were generally short courses, some of which had certificates at the end. Some were internally assessed and others externally assessed. Links were made to the college's CORE values.

22/26 **QUALITY AND ENGAGEMENT (ITEM 6)**

The Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement referred to her written report, which covered attendance, behaviour and participation. Reporting on these areas was linked to Ofsted areas, including inclusion groups and categories.

Attendance

- Attendance was currently 87%, below the target of 90% but in line with sector trends. Interventions had started with students before Christmas.
- Attendance was recorded for core programmes, Maths and English, tutorial and additionalities. Maths and English tended to be lower than for core programmes.
- Inclusion group attendance was also monitored closely. A specific issue identified was lower attendance for students from lower income families. Access to bursaries and other support for these students was being reviewed.
- Strategies to improve attendance were regularly discussed at QER meetings and other activities led by Heads of Curriculum with their areas. Progress Coaches and Attendance Officers also picked up students with attendance concerns. A new dashboard was available to enable data to be reviewed.

Behaviour and Participation

- 280 students had been in disciplinary processes in the year to date. A large proportion of these were in Construction and the most common reason was for poor attendance.
- There had been increased investment in Progress Coaches this year to support attendance interventions.
- The majority of students showed good conduct and behaviour, and this was recognised.

There was a short discussion about the root causes of poor behaviour. Part of the role of Progress Coaches was to identify these and help students to positively re-engage. Triage processes enabled issues to be referred for counselling or other appropriate support as needed.

A Governor asked if there was a fitness to study policy. The Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement confirmed not, although the safeguarding aspects of this had been reviewed. There was much work done individually with students to provide support in different ways.

The Chair commented on discussions at a recent QEB meeting where it had been noted that it may be helpful to have Year 11 attendance data for students as part of the admissions process. This could enable early monitoring and intervention for known issues. It was agreed that this would be helpful and would be considered.

- Data for December 2025 showed that 1600 students had been involved in a variety of enrichment activities. A further enrichment week was planned during this term. Student feedback and topical areas were considered when planning content. The work of the SU in supporting this was recognised.
- Three Turing trips were planned this year. 55 students were participating, including some from inclusion groups.
- Quality Managers were leading the personal development and tutorial programme to ensure that the content and pitch were appropriate. British Values and other key topics, such as gambling awareness and staying safe, were being re-visited.

- Analysis of the welcome survey results had been included in the report for information. All responses were 90% or higher but with some variances between cohorts year on year.
- Ofsted readiness was a regular part of weekly SMT meetings. Recently, members of SMT had been out to speak to students in communal areas to take views on their experiences in college. Some details of themes and specific comments from this were in the written report.

Governors expressed interest in having similar opportunities to talk to students. The Principal commented that it had been very helpful to have instant feedback, the majority of which was extremely positive. Managers would continue to offer Governors opportunities to attend learning walks.

23/26 CONFIDENTIALITY (ITEM 7)

No items were agreed as needing to remain confidential.

24/26 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING (ITEM 7)

Thursday 11 June 2026, 5pm on Teams.

The meeting ended at 6.20pm.