

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee held on Thursday 20 November 2025 at 5pm on Teams

PRESENT

Mrs Jane Carter - Chair	Mr Darren Shaw – from 5.25pm
Ms Abi Chesterton	Ms Doina Surchicin
Mrs Wendy Harris	

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Rachael Aston	Assistant Principal – Quality and Engagement
Mrs Alison Buick	Head of Governance
Mr Mike Dixon – from 5.10pm	Assistant Principal – Curriculum and Innovation
Mr Richard Hewitt	Assistant Principal – Business and Growth
Ms Leanne McBean	Quality Manager (Observer)

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked the management team for the papers provided.

Governors were introduced to Leanne McBean, Quality Manager, who was attending as an observer from the management team.

10/26 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM 1)

No apologies were received as all Governors were present.

There were no declarations of interest.

11/26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (23 OCTOBER 2025) AND MATTERS ARISING

Resolved - that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2025 be approved as a correct record.

The previously agreed actions were reviewed and the following noted:

- Additional data and trend analysis would be added to future reports.
- Referrals to counselling were generally made the following day for internal appointments but took longer where the referral was to an external agency. Exact timescales depended on which organisation the referral was to. The college staff would usually triage the request and decided where best to re-direct the student.

There was a short discussion about external referrals. It was noted that student feedback about the other agencies was generally very good.

12/26 CHAIR'S ACTIONS (ITEM 3)

None.

13/26 2024/25 COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR) (ITEM 4)

The Chair noted the two documents that had been provided. The Committee had the opportunity to review them in detail before deciding to recommend them for Board approval in December.

(Mike Dixon arrived at 5.10pm)

The Chair added that she had provided some feedback on the first draft documents, following which the Principal had circulated updates.

The Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement explained the self-assessment (SAR) process, which had started with a bottom up approach with information provided by Curriculum Managers. This information had been reviewed at validation meetings with the Assistant Principals. Governors had also attended some of these meetings.

The individual SARs and Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) had then been used to prepare the overall college documents. The Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement had led the SAR and QIP preparation and meetings, but as this was her first year, the Principal had produced the college wide documents for this year. In future years the Assistant Principal would have full oversight and responsibility for the entire process.

The Ofsted Education Inspection framework had been used as the basis for the SAR and QIP, however in future the new inspection toolkit would be used instead.

The Chair commented that there was much benefit in having a bottom up approach that involved many staff from across the college.

Governor comments and questions were invited and the following were discussed:

- That the provision for High Needs needed to improve. Inclusion was a sharp focus for Ofsted in their new toolkit so this would be an area of focus.
- It would be helpful to provide some comparator QAR data with other colleges and deprivation data for Wolverhampton.
- Adding the survey question and results about whether students felt safe in college would be helpful additional information for the detailed college SAR document. It was good to see that students were well informed and knew how to stay safe online and what to do if they had an issue.
- Some clarification on page 28 of the SAR would be beneficial. This covered underperformance, and appeared to contradict comments earlier in the document. This would be reviewed. Action: Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement.
- The wording on page 37 about apprentices receiving regular progress reviews needed to be checked. Given that the issues related to one assessor needing support, the wording needed to better reflect this as a relatively minor issue that was being addressed. Action: Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement.
- The apprenticeship achievement rate of 61% was much improved and in line with national data. It was suggested that this be further emphasised as a success.
- There was recognition of the significant amount of work done to complete the SARs and validation meetings.
- Whether the use of some language was too loose and words such as 'majority', 'most' or 'some' should be changed to more specific numbers or

percentages. It was confirmed that language used did mirror that of Ofsted in the Education Inspection Framework.

- Work was planned in the next term to map the SAR and QIP to the new inspection toolkit. A re-assessment would be done at this time in line with the new gradings. In broad terms, 'expected standard' would be that the college was in line with national data, with 'strong standard' being at least 2% higher than national and 'exceptional' being at least 5% above national.

(Darren Shaw arrived at 5.25pm)

The Chair invited the Assistant Principal Business and Growth to comment on apprenticeships and other areas of his responsibility.

The Assistant Principal Business and Growth reflected on the work that had been done over the last three years to make sustainable improvements to apprenticeships. The achievement rate had significantly increased and was at national level. Most aspects of the apprenticeships accountability framework were RAG rated as green. Work continued on reducing the number of out of funded learners and also to reduce withdrawals.

The employer engagement and apprenticeship delivery teams had been involved in targeted CPD and this was a factor in the improved outcomes. Business Admin was highlighted as an area that had significantly improved. There was still much work to do in Electrical, for various reasons. Ability to recruit staff to deliver Electrical courses was a national concern.

The Chair asked whether there was capacity to expand the Business Admin work further. The Assistant Principal Business and Growth commented that assessor workloads were a factor in expansion but that there was work with WMCA for aspiring leadership courses. The team would continue to work to ensure that the Business Admin offer was right and focused on the key areas for growth.

The Chair invited the Assistant Principal Curriculum and Innovation to comment on Engineering, which had a main aim achievement rate of 71.84% and was therefore below national average.

The Assistant Principal Curriculum and Innovation had provided information on both Engineering and Digital in his report. The highlights in respect of Engineering were:

- Too much of the curriculum delivery was end loaded, leaving less capacity for re-sits if needed.
- Staff challenges, including no Head of Faculty for several months. A replacement had been recruited and would start later in November, so this would add capacity.
- Lots of staff with broad knowledge and experience teaching across all levels.
- The need to have staff that had a good rapport with learners, some of whom could be challenging.
- Engineering and Digital were now managed by the same Curriculum Manager since September 2025. It was hoped that this would enable good practice from Digital to be shared.

In more general terms, there were too many courses across the college with results just at national average. Aspirations needed to be higher. Adult results had reached a plateau. Partner adult results had dipped compared to the previous year and were at 89%

The overall college achievement rate for the year was 89.1%

The Chair asked about the tutorial programme and what support was available for staff delivering this. The Assistant Principal Curriculum and Innovation responded that a new model of tutorials had been implemented for Construction this year. A specific pastoral tutor was delivering the training and the benefits of this were explained, including giving subject tutors more teaching capacity. Roll out of this to Engineering was being considered.

Governors noted the information provided on Digital, which had a main aim achievement rate of 89%. This was an excellent outcome. Governors were pleased to see the comparative information provided and the overall level of detail in the report.

The Assistant Principal Curriculum and Innovation commented on the QIPs, which had been RAG rated. Courses that had performed below expectations were in an 'intensive care' process, had an agreed action plan and would have their QIPs monitored every half term. Governors would be invited to attend the intensive care and Quality of Education Board meetings.

There was a discussion about the tutorial programme. The college QIP recognised that this needed strengthening for all learners, to improve real world knowledge and understanding, but also to be more bespoke to specific areas.

The college had introduced CORE assessments, which would be done three times per year. CORE related to communications, ownership, resilience and entrepreneurship. Students were required to complete self-assessments and then create their targets from this. Tutorial activities were a key element of developing this. A Governor asked how students were challenged to set robust targets. The Assistant Principal Curriculum and Innovation noted that personal tutors did this. The Student Governor commented on her experience of this, which had been good so far. Her group had been working on presentation skills.

The Assistant Principal Business and Growth commented on quality assurance in his areas. There was a dedicated Quality Manager. The main focus for improvement was Electrical. Last year there had been 30 out of funded learners and this year to date there were only five, so improvements were being seen. CORE had also been implemented for apprentices this year. Entrepreneurship was a key theme as many aspired to be self-employed.

There was a discussion about the complexities of Electrical apprenticeships and the importance of robust tracking. It was noted that there had been some changes to the curriculum management of construction areas and that there were currently two staff vacancies in Electrical. Difficulties in recruiting both full time and agency staff were explained. Alternative approaches to recruitment and increased salaries for trade areas were considered. It was suggested that a wider Board discussion on this may be needed, to ensure that the college remained competitive and an attractive employer. The Assistant Principal Business and Growth commented on opportunities for the college to work with EON's trainers.

14/26 2025/26 COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) (ITEM 5)

The Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement shared her screen and outlined the seven key areas identified for development and which would improve overall student experience. These were:

1. Assess and further develop the College's contribution to meeting skills needs.

Governors noted the need to develop further relationships with stakeholders as this was critical to all aspects of the learner journey.

2. Improve target setting and capturing starting points for all students, so this informs teaching and learning.

More consistency was needed in these areas. This would allow better quality feedback to learners as well.

3. Continue to improve the apprenticeships achievement rate and further enhance the apprentice journey.
4. Improve the attendance levels and achievement for all students studying within the Math and English provision.
5. Strengthen participation and development for all students, through a comprehensive and responsive tutorial programme which effectively considers geographical context, trends and sector specifics for all learners.
6. Improve qualification achievement rates for courses currently performing below the national average.
7. Develop the tracking of skills and behaviours of students with high needs and reduce the achievement gap for those students.

There was a spike in the results for this year so this was being reviewed.

The areas were discussed. The responsibility for overseeing the agreed actions was being split with the three Assistant Principals having been allocated two or three each. Each area had a key measures table and action plan.

A Governor commented that the QIP was very clear. Questions were asked about how teachers knew which students in their classes had needs, what information they received and how effective the one to one support was in developing their independent learning.

The Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement responded that she was reviewing the effectiveness of one to one support to identify whether the root causes were due to any particular department. For Futures students, Maths and English had been identified as an area for improvement. The Curriculum Manager was being supported with capacity to deal with this.

There was a discussion about the Futures provision. Governors wished to see that the college had high aspirations for the Futures learners.

The Chair asked about success measures for the QIP. The Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement shared her screen and explained the measures that had been agreed. There were several for each of the identified priorities. Progress would be reviewed and RAG rated during the year. Formal reviews would take place in December, March and June. Governors agreed the proposed approach to this.

The Chair asked who would be involved in the moderation of data and quality when assessing the progress. The Assistant Principal Quality and Engagement confirmed it would be the Quality Managers and Curriculum Managers. Quality Managers would provide an independent overview and would support Curriculum Managers with further training. Case sampling would be done, in line with the new Ofsted inspection toolkit. There would be a final review of overall impact in term 3.

Governors discussed next steps in the SAR and QIP process. It was explained that the summary documents would go to the December Board meeting for approval, if the Committee was happy to recommend them.

Resolved – that the SAR and QIP documents were recommended for Board approval.

15/26 CONFIDENTIALITY (ITEM 6)

No items were agreed as needing to remain confidential.

16/26 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING (ITEM 7)

Thursday 12 February 2026, 5pm on Teams.

The meeting ended at 6.30pm.