

MEETING OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Date	Wednesday 12 March 2025
Time	15:15 to 17:30
Location	Microsoft Teams
Present (Governors):	Jackie Pearson (Chair) Lee Chantry (Staff Governor) Mary Hughes Christine Ricketts (Principal and Chief Executive)
Observers	Hilary Omissi (Vice Chair of Corporation)
Officers and advisers in attendance	Sarah Clancey – Assistant Principal Education and Personal Development (EDE) Lorne Richardson – Assistant Principal Curriculum (EDC) Ian Carey – Director of Ashford Campus, Apprenticeships and Adults (pre-meeting briefing) Tammy Lane – Head of Marketing (item 8) Melissa Drayson - Director of Governance (DG)
Apologies for absence	Fiona Capstick Rebecca Page-Tickell
Quorum (3)	The meeting was quorate throughout

Item	Action lead
-------------	--------------------

Pre-meeting curriculum deep-dive: Apprenticeships
Presentation by Ian Carey. Slides made available after the meeting.

Key headlines were:

- Apprenticeship numbers currently stood at 251 including carry forwards and new starts. This was on target and reflected a three-year trend of increased enrolments. There was an even split between Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships in the 2024-25 cohort.
- The College had celebrated National Apprenticeship Week with a range of activities, and a specific focus on increasing recruitment from Spelthorne which was currently underrepresented.

- All electrical apprentices were within their end dates for this year.
- Two new apprenticeships were in development: A Level 5 Early Years Practitioner and Level 4 Construction Site Supervisor. It was hoped that Cala Homes and the construction company engaged on the estates redevelopment would engage in providing work placement opportunities.
- Monitoring of learner progress was now undertaken weekly using OneFile. This allowed for a more rounded, individualised approach. Monthly faculty progress panels were also held.
- Key priorities were to continue to strengthen employer links and managed growth, whilst maintaining quality.
- The college scored Green against all areas of the Apprenticeships Accountability Framework.

Governors asked how apprenticeships and T Levels linked. It would be possible for a student on the Level 3 Early Years T Level to progress to the L4 or L5 apprenticeship. Two learners on the Digital IT T Level were progressing to a L4 apprenticeship with their employers.

Governors were invited to meet an apprenticeship coach on a future site visit.

1. Preliminary items

1.1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Fiona Capstick and Rebecca Page-Tickell. Neither student governor was present

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations of interest relating to matters on the agenda. Previously declared interests were carried forward.

1.3 Urgent other business notified in advance

No urgent matters of other business had been notified in advance.

2. Minutes

2.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting of the on 6 November 2024 were APPROVED as a correct record.

2.2 Matters Arising

Supporting paper by the Director of Governance

It was confirmed that all previous actions had been completed or were covered on the agenda.

3. Quality of Education

Supporting paper presented by the AP EPD

The report mirrored many of the issues that had been explored as part of the Teaching and Learning Day that had taken place before the Committee meeting that day. Governors commented that the Day had provided an excellent insight into practice around the College, and had

elicited some robust discussion and rich feedback, including on how governors could receive assurance through data on the quality of teaching and learning.

Key headlines were:

- English and maths remained an area of key risk. A clearer idea of progress would be possible after the Term 2 checkpoint. A dedicated space is being set up in the Hub for learners to access and receive support on CenturyTech (a personalised learning programme). Some students had been reallocated to functional skills to provide a better chance of success. There would be a period of focus following the mock exams, with individual intervention for students who did not turn up, and positive recognition of those who did.
- The dip in learner attendance correlated with the position in feeder schools.
- There was an increase in teachers from industry, all of whom had different support and CPD needs depending on prior experience.
- Nine teachers had applied for the targeted incentive fund, which was aimed at retaining teachers in FE.
- Five curriculum areas were currently in intervention.

Governors then received a demonstration of the new live data dashboard. This was currently being tested with curriculum leads with the hope that it would go live in the summer term. In response to governors' questions, it was confirmed that it was possible to drill down from high-level data to individual student level.

4.

Student experience and culture

Supporting paper presented by the AP EPD

Governors noted the following key headlines:

- Changes had been made in January to enhance the student experience and respond to student feedback that more quiet areas were needed. The Hub was now a dedicated study space, and with laptop loan and library facilities. There was currently an increased staff presence here to facilitate the culture change.
- The canteen had been refreshed, resulting in a more pleasant, informal seating area. The Enrichment Co-ordinator was based here to engage students in enrichment activities.
- The appointment of a qualified careers adviser had enabled the college to achieve Gatsby Benchmark 8. Governors congratulated management on this achievement.
- There had been a dip in UCAS applications, and significant work had been put into strengthening Higher Education partnerships. Governors commented that it would be interesting to see if this reflected informed decisions by students to pursue alternatives such as higher-level apprenticeships.
- A student survey was currently underway and outcomes would be brought to the May meeting. There had been some challenges in encouraging engagement, partly due to the software that had been used.

- The College was now collecting comprehensive destinations data through the Purlos system. It was very encouraging that 94% of students had progressed to positive destinations.

Governors asked about the impact of the building works on providing sufficient study and social space. It was confirmed that this had been challenging especially over winter when outdoor space was limited.

6. Draft Curriculum and Skills Strategy

Supporting paper by the Executive Director Curriculum

An updated strategy was presented, which set out the rationale and context for the College's curriculum in terms of local skills needs and demographic factors including prior attainment at the College's feeder schools. (Much of this analysis was also provided in the marketing and recruitment report (item 7)).

Governors welcomed the comprehensive and coherent picture provided in the document of the College's uniqueness in terms of catering predominantly for lower-level students. The curriculum pathways chart was particularly commended.

The document would be developed further as part of the College's standalone case for the Structure and Prospects Appraisal.

7. Marketing and Recruitment Strategy 2025-26

Supporting paper and presentation by the Head of Marketing and Assistant Principal Curriculum

Tammy Lane was invited to introduce herself. She joined the College in June 2024 and started to implement the new marketing strategy in August. This was primarily focused on 16-18 recruitment to support the growth strategy.

As of 17 February, the number of applicants stood at 926, an increase of nearly 33% compared to previous years. Applications were up for 12 of the 14 programmes. More support was, however, needed to encourage applications for Art and Design and Education and Early Years. It was hoped that the opening of the new nursery facility in the Edge building would be held to boost applications. There was a discussion of whether there were particular challenges in recruiting to the T-Level Early Years. The marketing team had worked a lot on providing high quality T Level information on the website and via social media. Governors commended the quality of publicity provided during careers week.

Governors were interested to see the significant increase in applications for Catering and Health and Social Care. It was thought that this could, in part, be due to the closure of courses in neighbouring institutions.

An analysis of applicants from schools showed a mixed picture. Significant work had gone into building relationships, with a target to increase school visits by 20% and achieve a 15% increase in post-event satisfaction surveys.

New student experience evenings had been introduced as part of the keeping warm strategy for applicants and open event attendees.

Stronger analytics were now available to enable tracking of conversion from open evening attendance to application. A proposal was in train to implement CRM software which would streamline the application process further, with an online portal for applicants, automated workflows for admissions letters (emails) and the ability to track and target incomplete applications.

The Committee thanked the Head of Marketing for an exceptionally detailed report which demonstrated clearly the impact of the actions taken so far this year to boost student numbers.

The AP Curriculum presented data showing College enrolment against demographic trends. This demonstrated relatively flat growth in 16-18 numbers compared to numbers of school leavers. However, the strong targeted marketing approach coupled with the closure of provision in neighbouring institutions should help to drive up numbers. Governors were reminded that financial planning was based on modest growth of only 39 students next year.

The Committee noted that the College's biggest feeder schools had the lowest attendance (using persistent absence data) and poorest outcomes. This had been reflected in the draft Curriculum Strategy as part of the rationale behind the curriculum offer and the College's unique provision for lower-level students.

Governors welcomed the clear picture provided by the data and requested greater use of graphs in future.

8. Reflections on the Teaching and Learning Day and Committee Meeting

Governors reflected that, although it had been a long day, the classroom visits and the Committee meeting had provided a well-rounded and coherent view of teaching, learning and curriculum issues at the College. The Teaching and Learning Day was seen as a high point of the year and the AP Education and Head of Teaching and Learning were thanked for organising it. Improvements were also noted in the standard of Committee paperwork.

8. Date of Next Meeting

21 May 2025 at 4.00pm (changed to 2 July)

Approved as a correct record at the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting on 2 July 2025