

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION:
MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY
AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 19 JUNE 2025**



Present: Jackie Rossa (Chair)
Nicky Randall
Lesley Giles
Shabir Ismail (Acting Principal)
Susan Hopewell

In Attendance:	Louise Hazel	Director of Governance and Policy
	Debi Donnarumma	Vice Principal, Study Programmes and Apprenticeships
	Fran Monk	Director of Quality Improvement
	Neil McDougall	Governor (Observer)
	Matt Widdowson (Minutes)	Governance and Policy Officer

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from Kully Sandhu.

2.2 Neil McDougall was present as an observer.

2.3 Sue Hopewell was welcomed to the committee as the new co-opted member.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2025

3.1 The minutes of the meeting on 27 March 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and approved.

3.2 MATTERS ARISING

3.2.1 All matters arising were covered by the agenda.

4 QIP UPDATE

4.1 The Director of Quality Improvement provided an update on the QIP. The following points were highlighted.

- 4.1.1 Overall attendance remained below the College's target, particularly for EPYP (down to 81.9%), T Levels (85.7%) and adult (82.2%).
- 4.1.2 Overall retention was still high but had a slight decline of 2.4% (from 97% to 94.6%)
- 4.1.3 Predicted achievement had fallen and, in some areas such as Engineering and APCO, were significantly lower than the target. Predicted achievement for EPYP had dropped to 76.2%. However, adult remained strong at 90%.
- 4.1.4 There was inconsistency across areas when it came to attendance with some areas achieving high levels of attendance.
- 4.1.5 High levels of participation and professional behaviours had been observed in those areas which were tailored towards going into industry, and there had been a high level of engagement in practical areas including Construction and CHHS.
- 4.1.6 Areas for improvement:
 - 4.1.6.1. There were inconsistencies around monitoring student progress.
 - 4.1.6.2. There were still some areas of poor engagement which might impact on attendance.
 - 4.1.6.3. There was ongoing work around feedback and feedforward. Consistency was still an issue despite the training that had been provided. The framework had been updated for the next academic year to improve this.
- 4.1.7 The Quality Team had been supporting Engineering since January 2025. Many of the issues had been a result of having new provision and new staff with no previous experience of teaching. Predicted grades had improved and were now predicted at NARs.
- 4.1.8 Apprenticeships had been impacted by a booking issue for EPAs particularly for electrical apprenticeships.
- 4.1.9 There were areas around the College where it was known that achievement would be low including computing, plumbing and ESOL.

4.2 **Governors made the following comments.**

- 4.2.1 **Did the areas where low achievement had been predicted align with low attendance?** Yes. There was a direct link between low predicted achievement and low attendance.
- 4.2.2 **Did the areas with low achievement correlate with teaching and learning issues?** In some of the areas but not all. In some areas there were issues around tracking students and formative assessments. For example, in Computing there had not been enough early intervention and parent/carers engagement.
- 4.2.3 **It appeared that there were two issues: staff not utilising the tools that they had available to them; and the more challenging nature of some groups of students.** There was some degree of this, although, as an example, Child Care had performed well as a result of the area creating a sense of belonging for students and being able to provide quick interventions. Culture was important, and it was about having buy-in from students and providing the right interventions.

- 4.2.4 **This report was much clearer than previous reports and it was possible to understand what quality was like.** Noted.
- 4.2.5 **Were staff equipped with strategies to support areas?** There was a training issue at PAM level. In some areas they were not meeting with their programme leads to drill down into what was actually happening. PAM Forums would be re-started to share best practice.
- 4.2.6 **It was important that the Quality Team were not seen as the ‘fire brigade.’ Instead, the right people should own the problem, and the role of the Quality Team was to provide them with the correct tools.** The Quality Team had been supporting curriculum areas to identify problems and to think about their strategy for addressing issues. When issues had been noticed, they had been added to the QIP for DoCs and PAMs to lead on. This would then be covered by the performance review process.
- 4.2.7 **Why was this happening now?** There was now much more transparent data which curriculum had appreciated. There was a clear plan for 2025/26. However, the Quality Team was quite small, and it had not been possible to carry out deep dives across the College meaning that some areas were still a bit of a ‘blind spot.’
- 4.2.8 **Were curriculum areas checking themselves?** The Quality Team had agreed to work with Engineering on habits, norms, and routines. When a deep dive was carried out it transpired that this was not actually being done. Some managers had felt that they could not carry out a walk through to observe what was happening on the ground. This had been strengthened in the framework to ensure that managers would be going out to walk the floor.
- 4.2.9 **It was important to remember that what was essentially an ‘audit function’ would not change the culture in curriculum areas.** Noted.
- 4.2.10 **It should be for the senior leadership to support and challenge PAMs.** Noted.
- 4.2.11 **What was the relationship between this and staff appraisals?** Staff appraisals did not follow a competency-based framework at the moment. This was something that the Director of HR was looking at.
- 4.2.12 **It was important to make staff accountable. This included programme leads using the quality dashboard and checking their data.** Noted.
- 4.2.13 **It was also about having a team approach and ensuring that students received a consistent message.** CLT had begun work on taking a collective approach to solving problems.
- 4.2.14 **Programme leads should be aware of how far the data could be drilled down into.** Noted.
- 4.2.15 **There needed to be some early milestones as it felt that problems had been left too long and not addressed. A lot of work had been done looking at root causes and intervention but there needed to be something in place to spot the early signs.** Next year there would be live QIPs which could be viewed during meetings with curriculum areas. Milestones would be flagged if they passed their due date.
- 4.2.16 **Did staff fully appreciate that this was all being done because every student mattered to the College? An appeal to the emotional aspect of this was important – “We are failing one in four of our students” was a powerful message. There could be an opportunity for the Principal to make a clear statement that all students matter.**

Noted. There had already been some work around this with open conversations around attendance.

- 4.2.17 **Why were staff not taking responsibility for their own areas?** The College did not previously have such clear data and processes.
- 4.2.18 **Staff should know if their students are not attending.** Agreed. This was a cultural issue.
- 4.2.19 **The Quality Team had done great work which enabled the committee to have a much better conversation.** The Quality Team had been phenomenal this year. The recognition that a much more critical approach was starting to feed through leading to difficult conversations about what the College was not doing well. It had been the first time there had been a clear picture of what needed to be improved, and staff were also starting to understand what was acceptable and what was not. Some of this was already coming together and some of it would become apparent at the end of the academic year or later on.

4.3 **Governors noted the QIP Update.**

5 **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

5.1 The Vice Principal, Study Programmes and Apprenticeships presented an update on personal development. The following points were highlighted.

- 5.1.1 This piece of work had come about following a conversation around how personal development and enrichment (PDE) could be made more relevant to different types of students, not just EPYP.
- 5.1.2 A more comprehensive overview of the College's PDE offering could be presented to the committee next year which would provide a more holistic picture.
- 5.1.3 Plans for 2025/26:
 - 5.1.3.1. *The Day* was a widely used resource and would be made available to all students. News would be provided at different language levels and would be used as a teaching resource.
 - 5.1.3.2. There would be significant changes to induction to ensure that everyone received the right messages from the beginning.
 - 5.1.3.3. A passport style system would be introduced to enable all students to track and monitor their PDE.
 - 5.1.3.4. Taught personal development sessions would be considered for adults.
 - 5.1.3.5. Personal development and enrichment would be combined into blocks of subjects to enable learning coaches to 'pick and mix.' This would make it more responsive to what was going on in College, local and globally. There would also be themes around behavioural issues.
 - 5.1.3.6. There would be further consideration of how to measure engagement including through the student feedback mechanisms.

5.2 **Governors made the following comments.**

- 5.2.1 **The Day** sounded fantastic. Agreed.
- 5.2.2 **How much responsibility would teaching staff have?** This would be launched with all staff, not just learning coaches. PD would not be treated as separate. There would be some block weeks next year for English and maths and PD might be included as well. Going forward, Wednesday afternoons would be available for cross-College enrichment.
- 5.2.3 **Would soft skills and issues such as mental health and resilience be embedded as well?** Yes. PD would even include topics like preparing for exams.
- 5.2.4 **Were there clear outcomes for PDE?** There would be a learner survey running for the first five weeks of induction, and the expectation would be that effective induction would mean that early dropouts would reduce.
- 5.2.5 **What would be the objectives for the students? If it was not clear what the College wanted to achieve for students, then this would be a lot of work for no reason.** There would be further meetings to consider this.
- 5.2.6 **Inductions should include a message that the College wanted students to achieve and provide information on what the expected outcomes would be. There should also be the message that students were valued and communication on what was expected of them and what they could expect from the College.** This would all be covered in induction.
- 5.2.7 **Nobody tracked passports on an app. Students got bored of apps because they preferred TikTok.** The College had to think carefully about what platforms were used.
- 5.2.8 **Social and emotional outcomes should be considered. It would be important to be clear about the outcomes. It would be reasonable to expect to discuss the outcomes at the next meeting.** This had already been considered.
- 5.2.9 **What was the incentive for students? If PDE was entirely voluntary some students could disengage.** It would be important to maintain an open dialogue with students to monitor this. Students had previously reported information overload so the delivery had been altered. Some of the PDE would be mandatory.
- 5.2.10 **Was tutorial attendance monitored?** Yes, and it was not that much of a problem, partly due to timetabling.
- 5.2.11 **It was often difficult for adults who often only wanted to learn their subject. Sometimes it was a case of weaving PD into the curriculum.**
- 5.2.12 **Adults would also benefit from PD as they could also benefit from being aware of issues like domestic or financial abuse. There needed to be acknowledgement that adult learners could be in a transitional phase in their life and may need support.**

5.3 **Governors noted the Personal Development Update.**

6 DRAFT CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

6.1 The Acting Principal and Vice Principal, Study Programmes and

Apprenticeships provided the Draft Curriculum Development Plan. The following points were highlighted.

- 6.1.1 Some of the assumptions underpinning the plan had been included as well as some of the DfE's policy intent.
- 6.1.2 Overall recruitment levels would be slightly higher for 16-19.
- 6.1.3 A key point was that there would be no tolerance for T Levels meaning that, as one of the larger providers, the College would be more vulnerable to clawback. The T Level allocation was 789 which was up from the present 630; a clawback had been factored in.
- 6.1.4 With regards to the policy context, the Adult Skills Fund was a higher risk area as 68% of the ASF would go to devolved areas and the College was in a non-devolved area. There would also be an impact from the change to the basic rate (from £7.40 per hour down to £6.00 per hour).

6.2 Governors made the following comments.

- 6.2.1 **Would marketing be affected by the move towards sector-based planning as it would make it easier for prospective students to see career pathways?** Yes. The College would want to show people potential career pathways.
- 6.2.2 **This plan was clear and well thought out. Some of the governors' previous strategic discussions were reflected in this plan.**
- 6.2.3 **There were some areas that did not fall into sectors, like ESOL and others which were cross-cutting, like digital. This should be considered in the marketing.**
- 6.2.4 **It was still unknown which qualifications would be defunded.** It was an interesting time. The College needed to move towards the sector-based approach and the local priority areas while awaiting the outcome of the curriculum review. There would be a lot of development to come.
- 6.2.5 **Was the College's ESOL provision linked in with curriculum areas or sectors? A lot of colleges did not deliver standalone ESOL but instead delivered things like ESOL into the care sector" etc. If the College was teaching students English it might as well be in a sector to increase their employability.** Noted.
- 6.2.6 **What was the perspective on the implementation of the clawback?** The College was planning for 740, but the budget had factored in a clawback.
- 6.2.7 **Should the translation into marketing be included in the Curriculum Delivery Plan?** The College was mandated to produce the Curriculum Plan in this way. A lot of planning underpinned this document. The plan would look very different next year.
- 6.2.8 **There had been previous discussions around forming a strategic partnership with the University of Leicester. Was this still part of the College's thinking?** It was important to take a longer-term view of the HE. The College continued to work with De Montfort University, but it was acknowledged that the university was going through a difficult period. The initial conversations with the University of Leicester had been positive.

6.3 **Governors approved the Curriculum Development Plan.**

7 TERMS OF REFERENCE

7.1 The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Committee Terms of Reference. The following points were highlighted.

7.1.1 One amendment had been made. The Audit Committee had wanted committees to take ownership of their own strategic risks. Consideration needed to be given to how committees could be enabled to spend time looking at the risk register.

7.2 **Governors agreed to recommend the Terms of Reference to Corporation for approval.**

8 WORKPLAN 2025/26 INCLUDING ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

8.1 The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Workplan for 2025/26. The following points were highlighted.

8.1.1 As it would be a Strategic Plan year, it may be necessary to add in extra meetings.

8.2 **Governors made the following comments.**

8.2.1 **It was usual to add in 'Other items as agreed' to accommodate issues that were raised during meetings.**

8.2.2 **Was it just underperforming areas that were looked at in detail?**
No.

8.2.3 **Did the Student Satisfaction report come to this meeting?** The report went before the Corporation at the October meeting. It could come before the CSQI Committee as well.

8.2.4 **The next meeting's agenda was full enough.** Engineering could be looked at during the November meeting.

8.3 **Governors approved the Workplan for 2025/26 and approved the suggestions for the items for the next meeting.**

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 MATHS AND ENGLISH ATTENDANCE

9.1.1 The Chair had requested that maths and English exams attendance was added to the agenda.

9.1.2 **Governors made the following comments.**

9.1.2.1 **Maths and English attendance had been challenging everywhere. The purpose of this agenda item was to consider whether there were any high or low spots, and what a three-year trend would look like.** This paper included a tab showing the most recent results and the

November resits. Overall, 16-18, and 19+ were attending exams.

9.1.2.2. Although there had been a gap in attendance throughout the year, students still attended for their exams. The Quality Team would be looking into this.

9.1.2.3. A block week approach would be used. This had been successful at other colleges.

9.1.2.4. **It would be important to consider students who were retaking English or maths for a second time. It would be a case of making it more exciting and not teaching them what they already know.** REEM were also looking at different awarding bodies to find out if it would make a difference.

9.1.2.5. **Was there a possibility that students might disengage during longer sessions in the block weeks?**

9.2 DESTINATIONS AND PROGRESSION

9.2.1 **Governors made the following comments.**

9.2.1.1. **How was this information used as part of the quality improvement process?** The Quality Team discussed this data with Curriculum Areas. However, there had been long conversations about this data and it was still not clear that it provided the information that was needed. There needed to be more work around capturing intended destinations and how this work could be brought in-house.

9.2.2 **Governors noted the report on Destinations and Progression.**

9.3 ACHIEVEMENT RATES AGAINST NARS

9.3.1 **Governors made the following comments.**

9.3.1.1. **Regarding L1 and L2, how were they predicted to outturn this year?** L1 would outturn around the same as predicted.

9.3.1.2. **Early intervention was key in L1. A lot of students did not know what they wanted to do as they were often late enrollers who selected their course at the last minute.**

9.3.1.3. **T Level retention was low.** A lot of courses had been new last year. Retention was looking healthier this year.

9.3.1.4. **There had been previous conversations about how T Level students getting job had affected retention. There had also been another issue around obtaining placements.** All second-year students had placements.

9.3.2 **Governors noted the Achievement Rates Against NARS**

10 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 25 September 2025

- 27 November 2025
- 26 February 2026
- 26 March 2026
- 18 June 2026