

Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday 2nd December 2025 at 4.30pm in Conference Room 1, Broadway

Members Present: Julius Adams
Kaynat Ahmad
Matthew Collins
Sally Cornfield
Nirmal Gupta (via Teams)
Paul Hartridge
Diana Martin (Chief Executive and Principal) (CEP)
Paul Noon (Chair)

In attendance: Dan Clarke (Assistant Principal Curriculum and Standards)
Rachel Corns (Vice Principal Curriculum and Performance) (VPCP)
Gill Darwood (Director of Corporate Governance) (DCG)
Susanne Davies (Director of IoT & Partnerships)
Lynn Glazzard (Assistant Principal Curriculum and Standards)
Samantha Jocelyn-Sears (Assistant Principal Curriculum and Standards)
Kathryn Jones (Director of Human Resources)
Claire Millard (Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality) (VPCQ)
Neil Sambrook (Assistant Principal Curriculum and Standards)
Adrian Walker (Assistant Principal Quality and Standards)

Committee administrative matters

1 Confirmation of quorum

1.1 The Director of Corporate Governance (DCG) confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2 Apologies for absence

2.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2.2 Matthew Collins was welcomed as a member of the committee, noting that he was the Corporation's designated lead governor for Safeguarding.

3 Declarations of interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Approve minutes of previous meeting held on 6th May 2025

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6th May 2025 were agreed as a true record.

5 Matters arising

5.1 P Hartridge requested clarification in relation to minute 13.2, in relation to future planning - *“Increases in applications were considered to be the result of a demographic increase which would continue for the next two years, and in respect of the CAT Centre, the excellent reputation of the centre, limited local competition in this area of provision and high levels of demand for programmes linked to green skills such as electrical.”*

The VPCQ advised that the College was looking at growth areas for next year to ensure improved class size management moving forwards. The CEP explained

that the College was working through its designation as CTEC to improve capacity of other local colleges to alleviate pressures on DCT provision.

- 5.2 The action relating to the Chair sharing Coventry University's draft AI policy had now been actioned. The Chair further confirmed the willingness of the University's AI specialists to support the College in these developments.
- 5.3 There were no further matters arising from the previous meeting.

6 Terms of Reference 2025/26

- 6.1 The DCG presented the terms of reference for the Standards Committee which were reviewed annually to ensure that the committee was fulfilling its role in line with latest guidance and best practice. Minor changes to the Terms of Reference had been made to ensure that they accurately reflected the work of the committee.
- 6.2 **It was resolved** to recommend the Standards committee's terms of reference 2025/26 to the Corporation.

7 Standards Committee's Annual Report 2024/25

- 7.1 The DCG presented the report which summarised the work undertaken by the Standards Committee in 2024/25. Once approved by members the report would be placed in the document library of Convène for access by all Corporation members.
- 7.2 **It was resolved** to approve the Standards committee's annual report 2024/25.

Standards and Performance Matters

- 8 **Growth and Skills Strategy/employer engagement update**
S Davies, Director of IoT and Partnerships presented an update on the development of the Employer Engagement Strategy, referred to as the Growth and Skills Strategy to align with sector terminology. The presentation outlined the scope of the strategy, including:
 - Strategic rationale and priority areas
 - Employer engagement model
 - Curriculum and skills pipeline
 - Implementation plan
 - Governance and accountability
 - Measures of success
 - Refresh and review cycle
- 8.2 Progress to date included consultation with curriculum teams, review of labour market intelligence, consideration of key sector policies, identification of the College's priority areas, and development of the initial draft plan. The strategy would set out priority areas for skills development, identify cross-cutting themes, and define employer engagement priorities.
- 8.3 Future actions would involve further engagement with internal stakeholders, followed by consultation with external stakeholders prior to finalising the plan.

8.4 The CEP emphasised the need to strengthen employer engagement approaches beyond apprenticeships, with greater focus on work placements and work experience opportunities. Members welcomed this emphasis.

8.5 **It was resolved** to note the update on the development of the Growth and Skills Strategy.

Standards and Performance Matters

9 Data dashboard review

9.1 The CEP presented an update on learner enrolments and attendance data for the year to date. Key points included:

- Full-time learners: Numbers increased by 2% compared to the previous year, with attendance at 90%, consistent with previous years.
- A level learners: Enrolments decreased by 11% due to learners opting for T Levels instead of A Levels; attendance remained strong at 96%.
- Adult learners: Enrolments rose by 8%, despite reduced footfall at the Skills Shop caused by building works. Attendance was slightly lower than last year but remained above 90%.
- Apprentices: Numbers fell by 20% compared to the previous year, reflecting a planned strategy to delay start dates until October and a regional downturn in vacancies. Attendance was strong at 88%, though slightly down on last year.
- Higher skills learners: Recruitment was slightly up on the previous year. Work was ongoing to refine dashboard reporting to better reflect the mix of HE provision. Attendance remained at 91%.
- High Needs learners: Numbers increased to 240, which were all now funded by the local authority, with attendance at 90%, comparable to the previous year.

9.2 **It was resolved** to note the data dashboard update.

10 Operational Development Plan update

10.1 The CEP presented the College Operational Development Plan, which outlined key actions from the Strategic Plan and Annual Strategic Impact Assessment (ASIA) to provide clear milestones for the current year. The plan was regularly updated by colleagues to track progress and address any delays.

10.2 A number of milestones were complete, with most others on track. One action was delayed, relating to reporting apprenticeship progress to employers. Preparatory work on Smart Assessor had been completed, which would enable this target to be achieved.

10.3 The current plan would remain in place until December 2025. As part of the quality cycle, a new plan would be developed in January to incorporate actions from the Strategic Plan for 2025 and areas for development identified through the ASIA process. This new plan would be presented to the Standards Committee for discussion before submission to Corporation for approval.

10.4 The CEP answered questions from members on points of detail. In relation to progress on T Level recruitment where numbers stood at 511 rather than the target of 600, she confirmed that this target was not achieved due to low demand in two subject areas resulting in those programmes not running.

10.5 In relation to the action to develop a parent portal solution, the CEP explained that there was no off-the-shelf package for colleges, and the in-house pilot developed last year had proved unfit for purpose. A second version was in development but would not be launched until tested and proven, with an app-based solution being the preferred approach.

10.6 **It was resolved** to note the operational development plan update.

11 **Annual Strategic Impact Assessment 2024/25**

11.1 The Vice Principals presented the performance headlines which would be incorporated into the draft Annual Strategic Impact Assessment 2024/25:

11.2 **16–18 Provision**

- Achievement rate at 86.3%
- Destinations predominantly positive
- 50/50 gender split
- 25% of learners with a learning difficulty
- Ethnicity above general demographic

Strengths:

- Strong participation and financial contribution
- Year-on-year improvement in vocational and technical achievements
- GCSE English and maths grade improvements
- Positive destinations

Areas for improvement:

- Achievement at Levels 1 and 2
- Supporting more young people on technical training to achieve high grades
- English and maths attendance (currently 70%, a significant improvement on previous years)
- GCSE maths resit performance at grade 4 or above

Overall assessment for this key client group: exceeds expectations.

11.3 Members queried why volunteering was not counted as a positive destination. It was noted that this was due to ILR field definitions rather than College choice, and members agreed this was an anomaly. Members also highlighted the value of benchmark comparisons for destinations data.

11.4 **A Levels**

- Improving grades at A–C
- Slightly fewer learners due to T Level uptake
- Diverse community
- Smaller numbers declaring a disability
- Vastly positive destinations

Strengths:

- Achievement rates above national averages
- Extremely high learner satisfaction
- Positive destinations

Areas for improvement:

- Progression to higher apprenticeships
- Reducing achievement gaps for learners with disabilities or learning difficulties
- Mixed heritage achievement rates

Overall assessment for this key client group: exceeds expectations

11.5 Adults and Higher Education

- Combined reporting for these key client groups this year

Strengths:

- Overall achievement rates above national averages
- Strong participation
- Consistently high achievement
- Very strong student satisfaction, particularly among Skills Shop learners re-engaging with training

Areas for improvement:

- Retention and achievement at Level 1
- Achievement at Level 3
- Entry-level and Level 1 destinations
- English and maths achievement at Levels 1 and 2

Overall assessment for this key client group: meets expectations

11.6 Members discussed what would lead to an above-expectations rating and suggested clearer definitions of positive destinations from the College's perspective. It was noted that WMCA was developing its own destination analysis, and members welcomed the consideration of reporting categories which were better aligned to recognise the differing nature of adult learner achievements.

11.7 Apprenticeships

- Overall achievement rate down by 0.6% compared to the previous year
- Higher proportion of white males than other areas
- Ethnicity less diverse
- Slight increase in learners with learning difficulties or disabilities

Strengths:

- Retained achievement rate
- 97.5% pass rate
- Excluding factors outside College control would increase achievement by 11%
- Strong apprentice satisfaction

- 60% of apprentices following STEM programmes

Areas for improvement:

- Retention and achievement rates for advanced and higher apprenticeships and 19+ learners
- Narrowing achievement gaps for black and mixed heritage learners
- Improving communication and reporting to employers
- Enhancing communication between tutors and assessors

Overall assessment for this key client group: meets expectations

11.8 Members acknowledged national challenges and complexity in aligning with funding rules. Discussion focused on whether all opportunities for improvement had been exhausted and noted that performance remained stronger than many providers.

11.9 Members queried whether ethnicity data was determined by employers or by College recruitment processes. It was noted that apprenticeship vacancies were generally not widely advertised but recruited by employers through their own networks, which presented a challenge in improving diversity.

11.10 Members further noted that it would be helpful to identify if non-achievement was concentrated in specific demographics or across the board.

11.11 The CEP noted that this key client group should be an area of focus for standards committee for the coming year.

11.12 High Needs Learners

- Slight increase in numbers
- Achievement rates at national benchmarks
- Gender and diversity unchanged
- Destinations positive, though volunteering not counted as a positive destination in national data as previously noted.

Strengths:

- Increase in learners at Levels 2 and 3
- Achievement rates comparable to learners without high needs
- Positive destinations

Areas for improvement:

- Achievement in English and maths
- Improving transition information from schools and initial assessment to ensure appropriate programme identification.

Overall assessment for this key client group: meets expectations

11.13 It was noted that the full draft Annual Strategic Impact Assessment would be considered and approved at the Corporation Meeting on 9th December.

11.14 **It was resolved** to endorse the assessment of performance for inclusion in the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment 2024/25.

12 **Risk register monitoring**

12.1 The CEP reported that the new risk register for 2025/26 had been agreed at the November Corporation meeting, detailing 12 risks underpinning delivery of the Strategic Plan. Six of these risks fell within the remit of this Committee, with four identified as higher priority due to low assurance levels and higher residual risk scores. Senior leaders continued to review and update all risks, with focused attention on mitigating these priority areas. As a result, one risk relating to the new inspection framework had seen improved assurance and a reduced residual score.

12.2 Updates on priority risks were noted as follows:

- *Employer Engagement* – Development of the Growth and Skills Strategy was progressing well, with consultation underway with curriculum staff, employers and wider stakeholders. The strategy would strengthen employer relationships and better align curriculum to regional skills needs, with publication expected early in the new year.
- *Artificial Intelligence* – Significant work was underway to strengthen the College's digital posture, including engagement with JISC's digital elevation tool and rollout of the Government's AI skills toolkit. The Committee noted the breadth of actions progressing under this risk.
- *Work Experience* – Mitigating actions remained on track, with confidence that students were accessing high-quality work exposure opportunities. Work continued to refine expectations and improve the accuracy and timeliness of reporting.
- *Ofsted Inspection* – The release of the new framework and toolkit had provided clarity, enabling senior leaders to participate in sector training and deliver staff development across the College. Assurance levels had increased, and the residual score for this risk had reduced, though further preparation remained in progress. Further preparatory work would be undertaken with Corporation members in the new year.

12.3 Members queried the role of AI champions and whether a clear plan was in place to ensure their effectiveness. A Walker explained that these were voluntary roles acting as early adopters, with separate groups for professional services and teaching staff. Tutorial sessions also included AI content, and early adopters would promote usage across teams

12.4 Most other risks were progressing to plan, with several actions completed. Mitigation activity would continue, and an updated assessment would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

12.5 **It was resolved** to note the risk register update.

Teaching and Learning Matters

13 Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment update

13.1 A Walker, Assistant Principal Quality and Performance provided a presentation on quality and teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) developments. Key points included:

13.2 *Quality improvements:*

- Supported 20 courses on continuous improvement during 2024/25 and identified areas for 2025/26.
- Introduced direct data performance reporting to staff inboxes.
- Conducted student experience reviews in Health & Social Care and Construction.

13.3 *Teaching, Learning & Assessment activity:*

- Modified TLA model and delivered extensive support: 494 one-to-one sessions and 145 curriculum CPD sessions.
- Implemented SharePoint CPD resources, cross-college learning walks, and updated tutorial schemes of work to include AI skills development.
- Established digital and AI groups and enhanced new staff induction processes.

13.4 *Findings:*

- Positive external quality assurance reports, though some curriculum areas required greater consistency.
- Further support needed for monitoring learner performance and strengthening apprenticeship provision.
- Strong vocational sessions in Health & Social Care; need to improve tutorial practices and clarity on target grades.
- TLA generally good, with strengths in student-centred approaches and structured learning environments; areas for development included questioning techniques, digital resources, and focus on high grades.

13.5 *Highlights:*

- Strong practice observed in Early Years, Hair & Beauty, English and Maths GCSE, Animal Science, Sport, and Sixth Form.
- Improvement work across Advance 1 showing positive impact on TLA quality.

13.6 *Next steps:*

- Continue student experience reviews and focused activity in apprenticeships.
- Maintain monitoring of KPIs and strengthen early intervention through effective reporting.
- Deliver ongoing CPD, learning visits, and mentoring for new staff.
- Support Ofsted preparations and raise standards through collaborative work between TLA coaches and quality leads.

13.7 Members suggested introducing a governor link activity to see the improvements reported in Advance 1.

13.8 **It was resolved** to note the Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment update.

14 **Confidential - Compliments and complaints analysis**
This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

15 **Ofsted update**

15.1 C Millard, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, provided a presentation following the introduction of the new Ofsted framework. The presentation noted that:

15.2 *Framework changes:*

- No single grade for Quality of Education.
- Introduction of a report card with grading descriptors ranging from *Exemplary* to *Urgent Improvement*.
- Up to 16 graded areas, including leadership and governance, inclusion, safeguarding, skills, and four provision types assessed for curriculum, teaching and training, achievement, participation, and development.
- Grades could change at monitoring visits.
- Greater focus on inclusion and use of a new toolkit.
- Adoption of a “secure fit” model rather than “best fit.”
- Case sampling approach introduced.

15.3 *Inclusion:*

- Strong focus on inclusion within the framework.
- Inclusion grading covered a wide range of categories, including learners with SEND, those known to youth justice or social care, care leavers, learners receiving free college meals, those without Level 2 English and maths, and those with temporary barriers to learning (e.g. bereavement, menopause), as well as learners from low socio-economic backgrounds.
- Individuals being sampled would not be aware they were being sampled, but staff would need to provide the necessary data. Two learners would be sampled from each selected focus area.

15.4 *Inspection readiness:*

- Timing of inspections was linked to risk factors such as drop in achievement rates, financial health concerns, safeguarding issues, significant leadership changes.
- Pre-inspection actions included ensuring staff understood the College’s approach to inclusion, preparing for learning walks, developing confident provision leads, clarifying roles, updating SAIA and QIP, preparing data, and writing position statements for curriculum areas, provision types, and whole-college themes.
- A seven-day plan and stakeholder briefing would be developed.

15.5 The CEP emphasised the importance of systems and processes to enable students to feel they belong and thrive, noting the approach that getting it right for disadvantaged learners benefited all learners.

15.6 **It was resolved** to note the update on the Ofsted inspection framework.

Safeguarding and Student Conduct Matters

16 Confidential - Safeguarding and learner conduct report

This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

17 Safeguarding Policy and procedure

17.1 The Safeguarding Policy had been updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 and had also included the following updates:

- Merged policy and procedure into one document for ease of reference for staff.
- Merged Staff Associate and Governor Safeguarding-Prevent Training Policy into document, to ensure all information was in one document for easier access.
- Merged flow charts for Safeguarding Disclosure and Prevent concerns/referrals into document, to ensure all in one document for easier access.

17.2 **It was resolved** to recommend the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure to Corporation.

Higher Education and Partnerships matters

18 Higher Education/OfS update

18.1 S Davies, Director of IoT and Partnerships presented the update on higher education provision, policy developments, compliance activities, and partnerships.

18.2 Key points included:

- *Learner numbers:*
 - 555 students enrolled on Level 4+ programmes across a range of subject areas, with Engineering (135) and Teaching (79) being the largest cohorts. Reported enrolments included modular short courses.
- *Policy changes:*
 - Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) was scheduled to be launched in September 2026, enabling modular, flexible HE study funded via loans.
 - Freedom of Speech Act had become effective from August 2025 and had required development of a code of practice, awareness raising, and compliance with OfS complaints scheme.
 - Anti-Harassment Condition: Strengthened OfS requirements required implementation of a single online information source and evidencing awareness.
- *HE Fees:*
 - 2025/26 fee caps set at £6,185 (full-time) and £4,635 (part-time). College charges remained below maximum to support widening participation.
- *Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF):*
 - Consultation proposed mandatory inclusion of all OfS-registered providers, rolling assessments, and greater emphasis on student voice.
- *Compliance:*

- HE compliance calendar implemented; key deadlines monitored via SharePoint alerts.

18.3 It was noted that OfS had today launched a consultation on exemptions from certain registration conditions for colleges. Implications of these changes would be considered by SLG.

18.4 **It was resolved** to note the HE update.

19 **Commercially sensitive - Quality assurance report – partnerships and subcontracted provision**
This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

20 **HE Access and Participation Statement**
20.1 The Director of IoT and Partnerships advised that as an Office for Students (OfS) registered Higher Education (HE) institution, the College was required to update and publish its Access and Participation Statement on an annual basis (Condition A2 of the Conditions of Registration). The statement set out the College's commitment to supporting access and participation in Higher Education by students from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups.

20.2 The updated statement highlighted that 50% of HE learners were from the lowest participation quintiles, evidencing strong engagement with non-traditional HE learners. However, the report noted under-representation of Asian, Black, and mixed ethnicity learners. Priorities were identified for increasing participation among under-represented groups and extending outreach in low-participation wards.

20.3 It was noted that growth and skills levy flexibilities could enable provision to be delivered in new ways, such as bite-sized programmes. The Chair noted that this was worthy of further consideration, and the Director of IoT and Partnerships confirmed that further detail on these flexibilities was awaited.

20.4 **It was resolved** to recommend the HE Access and Participation Statement to the Corporation.

21 **Any Other Business**
21.1 There were no further matters of any other business.

22 **Date of next meeting**
22.1 2nd February 2026

The meeting closed at 18.50 hours.

Approved by committee members at the meeting held 2nd February 2026.