

**MINUTES OF THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING (no.72)
HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 6.00 PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Present: A. Jones (Chair), J. Booker, M. Bagley (part of time), A. Massey, K. Townsley and W. Johnson (Principal and Chief Executive)

In Attendance: D. Stewart (Deputy Principal, Education)
J. Sherrington (Vice Principal and Deputy Chief Executive)
H. Eaton (Executive Director / Assistant Principal Centre and Adult Education)
P. McGrail (Executive Director / Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, Skills and Employer Engagement)
A. Gadsdon (Executive Director of Quality)
M. Moren (Director of Curriculum - Sport)
L. Fletcher (Director of Curriculum – Land Based)
C. Thompson (Director of Inclusion)
T. Landon (Head of Apprenticeships and Skills)
Anne-Marie Nixon (Interim Director of Governance)

39. Appointment of Chair

39.1 Ms. Nixon reported that there had been one expression of interest from the current Chair and Dr. Jones confirmed her willingness to stand again.

Dr. Jones left the meeting at 6.01 p.m.

39.2 On being put to a vote, the Committee unanimously supported the re-appointment of Dr. Jones as Chair of the Committee for 2025-26.

Resolved – that Dr. Jones be appointed as Chair of the Committee for 2025-26.

Dr. Jones returned to the meeting at 6.02 p.m. and was advised that she had been reappointed as Chair for 2025-26.

Dr. Jones took the chair.

40. Appointment of Vice Chair

- 40.1 Ms. Nixon reported that there had been one nomination and Ms. Townsley confirmed her willingness to stand as Vice Chair of the Committee.

Ms. Townsley left the meeting at 6.02 p.m.

- 40.2 On being put to a vote, the Committee unanimously supported the appointment of Ms. Townsley as Vice Chair of the Committee for 2025-26.

Resolved – that Ms. Townsley be appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee for 2025-26.

Ms. Townsley returned to the meeting at 6.03 p.m. and was advised that she had been appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee for 2025-26.

41. Attendance of College Management

Submitted: Extract from Section 8.2 of the current Constitution and Terms of Reference for the Quality and Standards Committee (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

- 41.1 The Committee noted the contents of the extract, and it was:

Resolved – that: the College Management Staff be invited to attend the meeting.

42. Apologies for Absence

42.1 Apologies for late arrival were received and accepted from Mr. Bagley.

42.2 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr. Gerrard and Ms. Parry.

43. Declarations of Interest

43.1 All members and officers present declared that they had no interests, personal, fiduciary or otherwise in any of the business on the agenda for the public meeting.

44. Minutes of the Committee Meeting (no. 71) held on 17 June 2025

Submitted: Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 17 June 2025 (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2025 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

45. Curriculum Reporting Priorities

- 45.1 Ms. Nixon advised the Committee that this item had been included on the agenda to enable members to suggest any amendments to the schedule of business (previously agreed in June 2025) and discuss any emerging priorities.
- 45.2 During discussion members acknowledged the benefit of retaining flexibility, whilst agreeing the schedule for the year in advance. There were no suggested amendments or additions for this meeting.

46. Curriculum Strategy Update

Submitted: Report of the Deputy Principal, Education (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

- 46.1 Mr. Stewart presented the report, reminding members that this had been approved by the Corporation on 7 October 2025 and that it would be a constant source of reference throughout the meeting. The KPIs arising from the strategy would be submitted to the March meeting.
- 46.2 Mr. Stewart advised the Committee that he had a detailed update on the White Paper (which would be made available to all members after the meeting, with a copy attached to the Official Minutes). With the agreement of the Chair. Mr. Stewart guided the Committee through the Curriculum Assessment Review “Building a World Class Curriculum For All” Final Report published in November 2025.
- 46.3 Members noted that the report set out the current key challenges in relation to qualification complexity, Maths and English resits, SEND and disadvantage and assessment burden and made several recommendations for Post-16 Education.

Mr. Bagley entered the meeting at 6.14 p.m.

- 46.4 Mr. Stewart guided members through the recommendations, drawing attention to the following key headlines: Simplified Qualification Landscape, Reform of level 2 Pathways, Maths and English, Non-Qualification Activity and Assessment Reform and the potential impact on the College. Members noted that the Review Final Report had been described as the biggest change in FE in 15 years. Mr. Stewart assured members that the College was working through the potential

implications and highlighted that the implementation time limit spanned the College's 2025-2030 Vision period.

- 46.5 During discussion, members recalled that the College had not offered the T Level Foundation Year. With reference to V Levels, a member questioned the impact of the reforms on the practical aspects of current programmes and practical resources. Mr. Stewart highlighted that the consultation on V Level Design Principles would remain open until January 2026 and the College was considering its response. The emphasis was on V Levels being designed to focus on practical elements to ensure clear differentiation between the 3 Level routes: Vocational, Advanced and Technical. Mr. Stewart undertook to keep the Committee informed of progress as the College worked through the reforms.

Resolved – that:

- a) **the application of the new Curriculum Strategy remain a key area of focus for the Committee, with regular updates on the implications of the curriculum reforms being submitted to this Committee for review;**
- b) **a copy of the key point summary of the Curriculum Assessment Review Final Report be made available to all governors and be included in the agenda pack for the Corporation meeting on 9 December 2025.**

47. In-Year Performance Data FE 2025-26 (Including Sub-Contracting)

Submitted: Joint Report from the Directors of Curriculum (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

- 47.1 Mr. Moren and Ms. Fletcher guided members through the detailed report, drawing members' attention to the following key headlines:
- Outcomes for Education Programmes for Young People (EYPY) 24/25 were the best in Myerscough College history – first full year data under new management structure
 - Final attendance for 24/25 was 6.3pp increase on previous year
 - Achievement (+5.1 pp) and pass rates (+3.9 pp)
 - Level 3 showed the largest gains, particularly in achievement (+7.9 pp) and pass rates (+6.4 pp).
 - New Participation and Development restructure was having a positive impact.

- Analysis of final grades vs target grades for the previous year showed 70.6% of learners achieved at or above their target grade
- All learners had completed a Starting Point Assessment along with Checkpoint 1 assessment. The new Checkpoint report allowed managers and teaching staff to track learner progress and implement timely intervention and monitor progress of that intervention. Key focus this year was on using the process to support learners to improve their high-grade achievement.
- The EPYP Quality Risk Assessment (QRA) was driving a focus on embedding consistency of high-quality teaching practice, focus on developing learners' high grades through appropriate progress monitoring, consistent intervention stretch and challenge, and improving first time exam results. Along with this the QRA focused on staffing challenges and developing employer engagement.
- EPYP Enhance and Enrich outlined the desire for continual improvement on the successes achieved in the previous year. Improved achievement rates for learners supported by strengthened implementation of quality practices was identified as a key achievement along with a consistent leadership team with a clear trajectory for improvement. It also highlighted the skilled industry relevant staff and the unique enrichment provided to the learners. Whilst celebrating the improvements it also outlined the desire to further improve and develop on this linking with the College's QRA.

47.2 With reference to the roll out of target grades for this year, Ms. Fletcher reported that this work was underway and the latest position was:

- 23% below;
- 34% at and
- 23% above

Members noted that Curriculum Area Managers were using a targeted approach and specific interventions to address all students currently showing as below target.

47.3 Members welcomes the improvements on last year and questioned staffing challenges, particularly seeking assurance that new and temporary staff fully understood the expectations relating to achievement of target grades. Ms. Fletcher stated that all staff were inducted and trained in the standardisation report, which clearly set out the College's expectations and staff performance was being closely monitored. Mr. Gadsdon added that a short qualification "preparing to

Teach in the Land-Based Sector” had been written for all new staff and the College’s expectations were reinforced in this.

47.4 At this stage in the discussion Mr. Moren referred to the latest MiDES Report, highlighting the College’s overall position as:

- Myerscough continues to operate with lower prior attainment than national and sector benchmarks (both English and Maths Grade 9–4 on entry remain in Quartiles 3–4).
- Despite challenging starting points, performance shows mixed but improving trends, particularly in Maths progress.

47.5 Mr. Moren guided members through the remainder of the report, assuring members that managers were addressing the areas for further improvement and confirming the actions for the Quality Risk Assessment (QRA) as follows:

- Targeted intervention for English Grade 2–3 learners, particularly in land-based subject areas.
- Strengthen teaching and learning focus on exam skills to convert progress into Grade 9–4 outcomes.
- Scale Maths best practice (e.g. from Engineering) across the wider curriculum.

47.6 During discussion a member questioned whether there was anything further to do in relation to help relating Maths and English to vocational courses. Mr. Moren stated that link tutors in vocational areas were in place now and this was expected to provide significant help in contextualising Maths and English for vocational learners.

47.7 A member questioned staffing challenges in English and Maths and was advised that recruitment of qualified staff was a sector-wide challenge, and managers were working closely with the People Team to highlight the benefits of working at Myerscough.

Resolved – that the report be approved, subject to continuous close monitoring of all areas for further improvement.

48. **In-Year Performance Data HE 2025-26 (including HE Access and Participation Update)**

Submitted: Report from the Executive Director of Quality and Performance (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

48.1 Mr. Gadsdon presented the detailed report, drawing attention to the key recommendations, namely that the Committee reviewed the outcomes

for 2024-25 for HE; reviewed the progress against the Access and Participation Plan (APP) and determined the need for re-drafting this key document in readiness for its renewal in 2027 and recognised the benefit of developing further reporting mechanisms to ensure a clearer understanding of in-year HE performance.

- 48.2 With reference to the outcomes and the increase in interruptions during 2024-25, Mr. Gadsdon assured the Committee that action had been taken to increase scrutiny and challenge of all applications, with a view to providing earlier support and intervention to reduce the number during this academic year.
- 48.3 During detailed discussion of the APP, Mr. Gadsdon reported that he was discussing the Plan with partner universities to ensure focus on learner and business need and that actions that were realistic and achievable and undertook to provide regular updates to the Committee.
- 48.4 Whilst discussing the data development activity, Mr. McGrail questioned the best place to include Higher Degree Apprenticeships data. In response, Mr. Johnson advised members of the benefit of cross referencing in both Apprenticeships and Skills and HE reports to ensure that governors had oversight and were able to scrutinise and challenge HE and the full range of FE. In response to a member's question, Ms. Sherrington confirmed that the income for Higher Degree Apprenticeships sat in Apprenticeships and Skills.

Resolved – that the report be approved, subject to continuous close monitoring of the progress of the performance improvement actions identified in the report.

49. In-Year Performance Data Apprenticeships and Skills, Including Sub-Contracting

Submitted: Report from the Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, Skills, and Employer Engagement (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

- 49.1 Mr. McGrail presented the detailed update, highlighting the 2024-25 outcome headlines as follows:
- Positive three-year trend in achievement with headline 24/25 achievement 12.9% above national benchmark.
 - Positive three-year trend in exceeding financial targets.
 - Best performing land-based college for apprenticeships (Published 23/24 data).

- Best performing college for apprenticeships in the Northwest (Published 23/24 data).
- A number of industry-recognised learner awards Inc. Toro Greenkeeper of the year, Rail Staff Awards 2025

- 49.2 Mr. McGrail confirmed that the headline data was ahead of the previous year on all metrics and paid tribute to the work of all members of the team in achieving this. Members noted that, to date, current year recruitment was strong (up 16.5% from the same point last year) and that the apprenticeship accountability framework dashboard at R02 (Oct 2025) was showing all metrics as 'green' and on track. Members congratulated the Apprenticeships and Skills Team on their achievements last year and the strong start to this year.
- 49.3 During discussion of the recording of the 20% off-the-job training, Mr. McGrail clarified that the area for further development related to the way in which this was being recorded, not that this was not being recorded. Mr. McGrail advised members that work had already begun to enable better "real time" recording of off-the-job training.
- 49.4 Mr. McGrail drew members' attention to the proposed improvements in the apprentice onboarding process to better meet audit requirements, support growth, and strengthen employer engagement. In response to members' questions, Mr. McGrail reported that he was currently collaborating with the new Executive Director of MIS and Business Innovation on this and Ms. Sherrington referred to the CRM system within ProSolution which was being reviewed as this would be of benefit to all curriculum areas.
- 49.5 Members noted that the College had implemented ProSolution to replace the old CRM system, which was no longer fit for purpose. In response to further questions from members relating to any short-term solutions, Ms. Sherrington reported that she was about to conduct walkthroughs of all areas to identify any information system needs and compliance issues to inform priorities for systems development and staff training, commencing with tracing the student journey from registering an interest to induction. Ms. Sherrington advised members that as part of curriculum planning, senior managers would be looking at each area and developing a marketing plan highlighting the College's unique selling points and this activity was expected to finish in February to have everything in place ready for the start of the new academic year.
- 49.6 With reference to areas to improve in relation to work experience, members challenged the progress to date and the Chair requested that a detailed progress update be brought back to the next meeting for

assurance that timely action had been taken to address those areas currently behind schedule.

Resolved – that:

- a) **the Committee’s appreciation of the headline outcomes for 2024-25 and the strong recruitment start to 2025-26 be formally recorded;**
- b) **the report be approved, subject to close monitoring, scrutiny and challenge of all areas currently identified as needing further development;**
- c) **a detailed progress update on work experience be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.**

50. In-Year Performance Data Adults

Submitted: Report from the Executive Director / Assistant Principal Centre and Adult Education (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

- 50.1 Ms. Eaton guided members through the detailed report, drawing attention to the 3-year improvement in overall achievement trend. Members noted that there was strong achievement (92.2%) for Practical Horticulture Skills delivered in the community (with 234 starts). Ms. Heaton confirmed that 19+ 19+ learners wishing to follow a full Study Programme were able to infill into classes.
- 50.2 During discussion of the areas for further development, Ms. Heaton explained the quality improvement actions designed to help improve retention and achievement at Level 3; achievement in English and Maths and exam achievement on L3 Technical Qualifications in Animal Studies in Liverpool. Ms. Heaton explained that one of the challenges with Adult provision was that it encompassed everything from one day courses to full programmes and drew attention to the benefit of analysing the data charts (Appendix 1) showing each of starts, retention, pass and achievement by level, academic area and centre. In response to members@ questions relating to attendance, Ms. Eaton explained that electronic enrolment did not take place in the community and that she was working with the Executive Director of MIS and Business Innovation to introduce ProSolution software for community programmes.
- 50.3 In response to a further question relating to a dip in Entry Level and Level 1 pass rates and any reasons for this, Ms. Eaton stated that in 2024-25 there had been less Adult starts at these levels, which meant that the failure of a smaller number of students had greater impact on

the overall percentage pass rate. Members noted that Adults had been placed on the Multiply Programme instead.

Resolved – that the report be approved, subject to continuous close monitoring of the performance improvement actions for all areas currently below target.

51. In-Year Performance Data - Inclusion

Submitted: Report of the Director of Inclusion (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

- 51.1 Ms. Thompson presented this new report for the Committee, advising members that this represented a whole level observation of inclusion. Ms. Thompson reported that she was collaborating with the Executive Director of MIS and Business Innovation to develop the Inclusion data set. The current focus had been on ensuring a robust set of data for FE, and they were continuing to work on this to expand this level of detail into Apprentices and HE.
- 51.2 Members noted that the retention gap between learners with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) and those without had narrowed from 4.7% in 2022/23 to 2% in 2024/25. Likewise, for those with High Needs this gap had narrowed from 5.3% in 2022/23 to 3% in 2024/25. The Committee agreed that this improvement reflected the effectiveness of college-wide retention strategies and the strengthened focus by staff on supporting learners beyond the 42-day period.
- 51.3 Ms. Thompson reported that enhanced interventions and robust checkpoint tracking had enabled early identification of learners at risk of falling behind. This proactive approach had contributed to consistently high pass rates and a reduction in the gap between EHCP and non-EHCP learners to 3.7% in 2024/25, compared to 7.7% in 2023/24. This was similar for learners with High Needs as the gap had reduced from 6.7% in 2023/24 to 4.2% in 2024/25.
- 51.4 With reference to learners in receipt of free school meals, Ms. Thompson highlighted that the focus remained on improving retention, and performance and managers were putting in extra support to narrow the gap further. In relation to the achievement of these learners, further analysis of the data was underway to identify any trends to help shape the support package for this academic year.
- 51.5 During discussion members welcomed the presentation of such detailed inclusion data and Mr. Stewart attributed this to the way in which the new Executive Director of MIS and Business Innovation had

supported Ms. Thompson in producing the report and confirmed that this report would continue as a regular agenda item for this Committee.

- 51.6 In concluding the discussion of the In-Year Performance reports, Mr. Stewart advised members that the Quality of Education Survey had been issued and, to date, the College had received over 620 student responses. Members noted that most responses were significantly above the ratings given at the same point last year and that so far 93% of students had stated that they would recommend the College to family and friends. Mr. Gadsdon confirmed that the survey closed on 2 December 2025 and undertook to provide an update for the Committee after this date.

Resolved – that the report be approved, subject to close monitoring of all areas identified for further development and / or improvement.

52. Safeguarding Update

Submitted: Report of the Director of Student Support and Welfare (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

- 52.1 Mr. Johnson presented the detailed report on behalf of Ms. Parry, highlighting that the number of referrals was continuing to increase when compared with last year. Mr. Johnson advised members that Ms. Parry's weekly updates to all staff were being well received and highlighted the benefit of strong links between safeguarding, curriculum, and inclusion teams. Members noted that there were also strong links with external agencies.

- 52.2 During discussion the Safeguarding Link Governor referred to the clear and demonstrable improvements made to safeguarding in terms of communication and policy and practice development, resulting in safeguarding being fully embedded. Members noted that additional staff had been recruited to the team in recognition of the increased workload and highlighted the importance of continuing to monitor the work / life balance of the Safeguarding Team.

Resolved – that the report be approved.

53. Quality of Education Report – Draft SAR and QRA

Submitted: Draft Report from the Executive Director of Quality and Performance (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

- 53.1 Before inviting Mr. Gadsdon to present the report, all members confirmed that they had read the detailed report in advance of the meeting. Mr. Gadsdon commenced his presentation, by advising members that this draft document needed a final data check before it was submitted to the Corporation in December for approval and authority to be uploaded onto the Ofsted portal. Members noted that the finalised document would be used to inform and drive the College's inspection, provide other key stakeholders with an appraisal of the performance of the College during the last academic year and a focused risk assessment of the main performance improvement priorities for this academic year.
- 53.2 Mr. Gadsdon explained that whilst the College had made some significant improvements since the last full inspection, the proposed assessment was that the College was currently operating at the Expected Standards overall, with a decreasing number of pockets of inconsistency. Members noted that this was intended to be a cautious approach and as the year progressed, Mr. Gadsdon anticipated that this grading might increase for some aspects of the College's provision. During discussion, particular reference was made to the high achievement rates for Apprenticeships and the need to review the grading for this area before the document was finalised.
- 53.3 Following an overview of the executive summary, Mr. Gadsdon advised members that the Quality Risk Assessment had been based on a "no surprises" approach and members noted that the invitation for them to observe the Quality Performance Management Meetings was testimony to the culture of openness and transparency with the Board.
- 53.4 During discussion the Committee expressed support for the candid explanation of the distance travelled since the last inspection and concurred that there was a sense of renewed purpose and vision. Members noted the improvements in reporting which enabled them to scrutinise and challenge more effectively. Members thanked all staff involved in the improvements made.

Resolved – that the draft report be submitted to the Corporation on 9 December 2025 for approval, subject to any necessary amendments needed to data between the date of this meeting and submission to the Corporation.

54. Leadership and Governance – Whole Provider Level

In accordance with notice given on the agenda and, with the permission of the Chair, Mr. Gadsdon provided the following verbal update.

- 54.1 Mr. Gadsdon referred to the Leadership and Governance Questionnaire he had devised and circulated to all members of the Corporation in October. Members noted that 8 governors had submitted responses and, overall, these were positive, with some members reflecting on their own training and development needs and requesting some additional development opportunities. Mr. Gadsdon reported the intention to host an Away Day to help all governors consolidate their knowledge and prepare for inspection. Mr. Gadsdon stated that he would follow up requests for additional training with individual governors.
- 54.2 During discussion members noted that there had been a separate, overarching Governance Self-Assessment Survey conducted by the Interim Director of Governance, the outcomes of which had been reported to Audit and Governance Committee and these would be presented to the Corporation on 9 December 2025. Members acknowledged the benefit of using both sets of outcomes to inform the proposed Away Day.

Resolved – that:

- a) the verbal report be approved and be used to inform the grading of Leadership and Governance;**
- b) a Governor Away Day be arranged to focus on the outcomes of the questionnaire and Governance Survey and address any identified training needs.**

55. Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs Report

Submitted: Report of the Assistant Principal Apprenticeships, Skills & Employer Engagement (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

- 55.1 Mr. McGrail presented the report, highlighting that a new rubric had been designed to self-assess how Myerscough College was meeting skills needs against the new Ofsted toolkit. Whilst recognising that there were several strong to exceptional examples in some curriculum areas, further development was needed for others. Mr. Stewart highlighted that managers were aware of the areas requiring further development and detailed improvement actions had commenced.
- 55.2 During discussion Mr. Johnson referred to the new Farm Strategy Group where the emphasis was on communication and involving employers. Ms. Fletcher confirmed that the grading for Agriculture was expected to improve before the end of December.

Resolved – that the report be approved, subject to performance improvement measures being implemented successfully and at pace to address the pockets of inconsistency.

56. Annual Review of the Committee Terms of Reference

Submitted: report of the Interim Director of Governance (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

- 56.1 Ms. Nixon introduced the report, inviting members to consider whether any amendments and / or additions needed to be made before submitting the report for Corporation approval. All members concurred that they had read the report in advance of the meeting and had no amendments to propose.

Resolved – that the report be submitted to the Corporation for approval on 9 December 2025.

57. Student Council and Student Voice Update

In accordance with notice given in the agenda pack, the Chair invited Mr. Gadsdon to provide a verbal update on the development of the Student Council.

- 57.1 Mr. Gadsdon reported that following Corporation approval of the establishment of a Student Council (and for this to be the route for the nomination and election process for student governors), he had sought volunteers for membership of the Student Council, but only four students had come forward. Whilst an election had been held, it had not followed the necessary process and therefore the nomination of Student Council members and student governors was recommencing. Mr. Gadsdon confirmed that staff were working on the marketing of the Student Council and the role of student governor to ensure that there was more awareness and interest in the Student Council and undertook to keep the Committee informed of progress. Members noted that all election results required the approval of the Corporation.

- 57.2 During discussion and in response to members' questions, Mr. Gadsdon highlighted the amount of work continuing to gather student opinions and feedback and drew attention to the opportunity for all governors to accompany him on learning walks.

Resolved – that the Committee be kept informed of the progress of the Student Council and student governor election results.

At 8.12 p.m. the Committee moved to the Confidential Agenda and Mr. Massey, Mr. Gadsdon, Mr. Moren, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Landon, Ms. Fletcher, Ms. Eaton, and Mr. McGrail left the meeting.

Anne-Marie Nixon

Interim Director of Governance

28 November 2025