



East Sussex College Group

Annual Board Self Review 2023-24

LEWES
NEWHAVEN
EASTBOURNE
HASTINGS

Scope & Approach

The 2023-24 Board Review process included the following activities:

- **Board & Committee Effectiveness Surveys** – Governors fed back on a range of areas including strategy, compliance, oversight, people and structures.
- **Skills Audit** – an assessment of Independent Governor skills, expertise and experience. Board Diversity data was also gathered.
- **Chair 360° Annual Review** – Governor survey led review of the Chair.
- **Annual Chair & Governor 1:1 Conversations**
- **Desktop Review of Effectiveness** – assessment of membership, attendance, live meeting assessments, coverage of the annual cycle of business and Governor engagement in training.

Board Survey Results



| Area | Movement |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <p>Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board effectively shapes and influences College strategy The Board makes evidence based and timely decisions The student voice and their experience is central to Board decision making | <p>↑ ↑ ↑</p> |
| <p>Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors understand and satisfy the Board’s legal, regulatory and financial requirements There are sufficient compliance checks and Board reporting on statutory and contractual requirements including Safeguarding, PREVENT, SEND and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion The Board has sufficient assurance about performance and delivery of its objectives | <p>↑ ↓ ↑</p> |
| <p>Oversight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has access to relevant, accurate and triangulated data and uses this to inform decision making The Board drives financial efficiency The Board implements best practice self-evaluation to drive improvement Risk management and internal control systems are robust Governance (Chair and the Board) and Leadership (CEO & Principal and the Executive Team) work well together | <p>↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↔</p> |

Key:

75-100% - Green, 51-75% - Amber, 0-50% - Red

Board Survey Results



| Area | Movement |
|---|--|
| <p>People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors understand their roles & responsibilities and exemplify College culture, values and ethos Governors add value, individually & collectively Governors provide supportive challenge and hold the Executive Team to account The Board has an appropriate range of expertise, skills and experience & succession plans are in place | <p>↓ ↑ ↑ ↑</p> |
| <p>Structures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agendas and supporting documents are clear, focused and prioritised according to the importance of the issue There is clear linkage in agendas between Board priorities and College goals The Board devotes sufficient time and thought to long-term strategic issues and their achievement Board induction is effective and Governors benefit from Board and personal development Information within the Board portal sufficiently supports Governors to effectively carry out their roles The Chair of the Board provides effective leadership The Director of Governance provides effective governance advice and clerking services The Governance Improvement Plan has been effective in driving improvements to Governance arrangements | <p>↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ NEW</p> |

Key:

75-100% - Green, 51-75% - Amber, 0-50% - Red

Board Survey Results – Insights



- **Response rate of 100%***, significantly up from 50% in 2022, with balanced representation from Independent, Staff and Student Governors.
- **18 of 23 questions rated 75%+.**
- **16 questions have seen improved results** (some areas markedly so), including timely decision making, self-evaluation, adding value collectively and individually, linkages in agendas between Board priorities and College goals.
- **5 questions have seen a drop** since the previous survey, related to access to appropriate data to inform decision making, driving financial efficiency, ensuring robust risk management controls and the range of skills and expertise in Board membership.
- Whilst this remains an improvement area, **student voice being central to decision making has seen a marked increase.**

**13 of 13 Governors, with 7 newly appointed Governors out of scope, as they are too new to role.*

Skills Audit Results Summary



| Strengths | Development Opportunities |
|---|---|
| Interrogating data and reporting information at a strategic level (4.3) | Legal Expertise (2.7) |
| Operational Management (4.2) | Accountancy and financial matters in a business/educational environment (2.8) |
| Strategic planning at Board Level (4.2) | Digital intelligence/expertise and cyber security (2.9) |
| Working with a Board or equivalent as a director/senior manager (4.2) | Knowledge & Understanding of Apprenticeships (3.0) |
| Change Management (4.2) | Working on estates and property matters at a strategic level (3.0) |
| Target Setting/Performance Monitoring (4.1) | Estates/Property (3.2) |
| Chairing a Board/Committee (4.0) | Remuneration Strategy (3.2) |
| A governance role in an organization (4.0) | Targeting improvements in educational standards across a community (3.2) |
| Stakeholder Engagement (4.0) | |
| Stakeholder Management (4.0) | |
| Appointment/Appraisal of Senior Staff (4.0) | |
| A governance role in an organization (4.0) | |
| | |

Progress



- New committee structure successfully implemented for 2023-24. Based upon the output of the annual review process, **no significant changes were recommended for the next academic year.**
- An extensive Governor recruitment campaign resulted in the appointment of 7 new Board members in 2024, ensuring that an appropriate balance of skills and expertise was maintained.
- 2 strategic planning days held, which focused on risk appetite, as well as growth, ambition and partnerships, ahead of the new ESCG Strategic Plan being developed.
- Board meeting agendas restructured to enable priority focus on key strategic discussion items earlier in meetings.
- Bespoke Chairs' Development Training session held to enable greater consistency in the chairing of meetings.
- New Staff Governor Reports to the Board introduced, with shared themes aligned with the existing Student Governor Report.
- A Governor Meeting Preference Survey was conducted, and output leveraged to inform meeting scheduling approach for 2024-25.

Key Recommendations

Decision Making

- Maximise opportunities to ensure that the Student and Staff Voice is central to decision making.
- Ensure that meeting papers leverage appropriately triangulated data, with sufficient clarity to enable effective decision making.

Monitoring & Oversight

- Drive robust risk management controls across all aspects of governance business.
- Ensure effective governance oversight of Digital (provision and infrastructure), Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Sustainability.

Governor Development

- Continue to strengthen induction, training and development opportunities for newly appointed Governors.
- Simplify the Governor mandatory training programme, leveraging in person sessions wherever possible.