

Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee

MINUTES

Date	21 st May 2025	Time	15:00-17:00
Venue	Virtual Meeting		
Chair	Ann Potterton		

Membership: Ann Potterton (Committee Chair), Priscilla Kendall (Committee Vice Chair), Rebecca Conroy (CEO & Principal), Kim Byford, Kerrith Etkin Bell, Ian Mehrtens, Amanda Odhesa, Kirsty Reid, Jack Woodgate

In Attendance: Nick Backstrom (Deputy Principal), Donna Harfield (Vice Principal – Business Development), Fenella Potterton (Assistant Principal – Student Experience), Lucy Mitchell (Assistant Principal – Hastings & HE), Belle Howard (Director of Governance), Claire Alexander (Governance Assistant – *Minutes*)

Quorum: The meeting was quorate throughout.

Apologies: Kim Byford, Kerrith Etkin Bell

#	Item	Action
Standing Items		
1)	WELCOME, APOLOGIES & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 1.1 The Curriculum, Skills & Quality (CS&Q) Committee Chair opened the meeting at 15:02 with a warm welcome to colleagues. 1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Kim Byford & Kerrith Etkin Bell. 1.3 There were no new declarations of interest received.	15:02
2)	MINUTES OF LAST MEETING 2.1 Approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors considered the minutes from the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee meeting on 5th March 2025. Governors agreed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. 2.2 Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors noted that all actions from the last meeting had been successfully completed. Jack Woodgate joined the meeting at 15:04.	15:03
3)	CURRICULUM, SKILLS & QUALITY REPORT 3.1 The Deputy Principal shared an update on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention – overall data was positive, with the target exceeded for Apprenticeships. A-level retention remained a concern at 82% for the Eastbourne and Hastings campuses, which would be a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) focus area for 2025-26. 	15:04

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance – levels were broadly in line with that of other colleges. 16–18 attendance was currently trending at 85%, with levels notably lower for English & Maths (E&M). Free School Meal (FSM) attendance levels were 4.6% below the overall provision. FSM and E&M attendance would also be prioritised in the QIP for 2025-26. • Achievement – predicted grades were currently strong across most areas, with improvements particularly observed for 16-19 and 19+. High grades were expected to perform above the national average. • Areas for Monitoring – 14 of 17 monitored areas had shown good progress. A-levels in Eastbourne, Construction in Hastings, and Health & Social Care in Hastings remained red-RAG rated, but these were improving. • Apprenticeships – all metrics had seen a marked improvement. Timely achievement had risen from 36% to 55%. Similarly, the number of past planned end date learners had reduced significantly. • Higher Education (HE) – the overall provision was currently stable, with slight growth. Internal progression had been identified as a key area for development. A curriculum realignment exercise was currently underway to embed delivery of the HE provisions into existing Further Education (FE) departments. Work was underway to validate an Art Master's degree course with the University of East Anglia. • High Needs – efforts were ongoing to reduce the volume of tribunals arising as output of Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) approval processes, through earlier engagement with families. Consultation processes were led by the local authorities, though some instances had arisen where the college had been named on an EHCP when it was unable to meet more complex student needs, resulting in lengthy, administrative heavy tribunal processes. • Safeguarding & Prevent – existing structures and processes had been deemed effective, tested by the recent Ofsted inspection and Safeguarding Audit. 100% staff training compliance had also been reported. Year on year, there had been a 12.8% increase in referrals, attributed to rising student numbers and in line with national trends. Mental health referral services continued to be leveraged. The Safeguarding & Prevent Policy had been updated as output of the audit and a further update was expected in the Autumn Term. Robust transition support had been planned throughout the Summer Term and post enrolment. • Quality Improvement Plan Update – most actions had been completed or were progressing well. Key successes included the Progression Task Force Group, with good feedback received from employers and learners for Apprenticeships. The College continued to provide free meals for 750 students, with disadvantaged students making up 25% of the cohort. A “<i>Priority First</i>” approach had been introduced across all aspects of the learning provision to ensure targeted support for the most vulnerable students. • Strengths – these included safeguarding; curriculum intent; and inclusive learning. • Improvement Areas – these included E&M attendance and achievement; A level attendance and achievement at Eastbourne and Hastings; and achievement rates for FSM students. • Opportunities – these included new skills partnerships; teacher learning and development programmes; and leveraging new Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats – these included potential challenges related to post-devolution skills partnerships and funding landscapes; and the impact of demographic changes. <p>3.2 Governor discussion focused upon the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement – the key drivers for improvement in attainment rates were identified as enhancements to wellbeing and mentoring support, as well as student access to free breakfasts and lunches. • A Level Provision – the potential timeframe for achieving long term improvements were explored, with top grade outcomes estimated at approximately 3-4 years. This was challenging to achieve concurrently with an agenda of broader growth to the overall A Level provision and therefore represented a longer-term strategic priority for the College. • Priority First Approach – it was clarified that this methodology enabled specific focus on meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged and high needs students as a first priority, through the provision of targeted support and resolution of any barriers to learning. • Higher Education – concerns were raised regarding the plateauing of higher education recruitment. Strategies to improve internal progression were considered, along with targeted marketing and branding to more effectively highlight the unique selling points of the provision. • Action 3.2.1 – Include National Average data within the Achievement slide of subsequent Curriculum, Skills & Quality presentation reports. 	NB
4)	STUDENT GOVERNOR UPDATE <p>4.1 Home Learning & Support for Achieving High Grades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Governor presented an update, which focussed upon the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positives – coursework was generally assignment-based, with a natural flow and was generally manageable from home. Students also had regular access to practice papers, with effective academic and emotional support available. ○ Areas for Improvement – homework setting was inconsistent and rarely set for some courses. Expectations were often unclear, with some students not knowing what was due and when, so having to rely on self-direction. Similarly, both the quality and frequency of feedback was variable. ○ Recommendations – standardised homework deadlines, clearer communication on expectations, creating feedback timelines, and access to peer mentoring support from the year above. • The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governors reflected that the recommendations proposed were comparatively straightforward. It was also noted that some related issues may be subject specific. ○ Moving forward, a more standardised approach would be explored and may include the introduction of peer mentoring support. 	15:52

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CS&Q Committee commended the Student Governor for their presentation and requested that the feasibility of implementing the related recommendations be explored, with a further update to be shared at the next meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 4.1.1 – Consider the recommendations arising from the Student Governor’s presentation on ‘Home Learning Support for Achieving High Grades’, with a view to share an update on next steps at the next CS&Q Committee meeting. Action 4.1.2 – Share a copy of the Student Governor’s ‘Home Learning Support for Achieving High Grades’ presentation with CS&Q Committee Members. 	NB/FP BH
5)	CURRICULUM PLAN UPDATE – 2025-26 <p>5.1 The Deputy Principal shared an update on the current curriculum planning process, which included the following key developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Curriculum Plan had now been finalised and signed-off. The plan reflected several cross-campus strategic programme relocations, with the rationalisation of some courses that were no longer relevant. Similarly, the plan included new Level 1-3 programmes, as well as enhancements to the 14-16 provision. There had been robust planning for Adult Skills & Apprenticeships, with 6-7 new standards to be introduced, including a new Digital course. Similarly, some standards that were no longer adding value had now been discontinued. Emphasis had also been placed upon aligning the HE provision with local needs and internal progression pathways. <p>5.2 The following discussion then occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding – clarification was requested regarding the safeguarding measures in place for the College’s 14-16 provision. It was confirmed that measures were robust and effective. HE Provision – it was clarified that students were able to complete degree courses on a part-time basis, as part of the working week. Such courses were usually targeted at individuals already based in industry, who would typically attend the College 1-1.5 days per week. Programmes were therefore designed with the end user in mind. Marketing – Governors reflected on the need to more effectively promote part-time degree courses to individuals exploring potential career changes, as this provided a unique selling point compared to the university offer. It was suggested that a HE marketing specialist may be particularly helpful in supporting the College to promote its HE provision. 	16:01
6)	TARGET SETTING – KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS <p>6.1 Curriculum, Skills & Quality – 2025-26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Deputy Principal shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed KPI thresholds framework model had been directly aligned with Ofsted’s new ‘secure, strong and exemplary’ report card model. The new format incorporated 5 key thematic areas – Attendance, Retention, Achievement, Safety & Satisfaction. 	16:09

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governors reflected that the KPIs provided clarity on key priorities for the Board, as well as providing a targeted roadmap towards an exemplary Ofsted inspection outcome. Similarly, the new format would enable better oversight of trend data. ○ Governors requested the following amendments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A clearer distinction between Board specific KPIs and Committee level Performance Indicators (PIs). ▪ Develop a visual heatmap format to support Board reporting, with specific reference to the new Ofsted framework language. ▪ A summary of the CS&Q KPI metrics to be monitored by the Board. • Action 6.1.1 – Provide a summary of the CS&Q specific Board-level Key Performance Indicators and an overview of the proposed ‘heatmap reporting format’, with a view for this to be submitted to the Board for approval. • RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to approve the ‘Curriculum, Skills & Quality Key Performance Indicators Report – 2025-26’. • RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to recommend Board approval of the ‘Curriculum, Skills & Quality Key Performance Indicators for Board Reporting’, subject to the agreed amendments. 	NB
7)	STUDENT VOICE PLAN <p>7.1 The Assistant Principal – Student Experience, directed participants to the associated paper and shared the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving forward, specific Head of Curriculum meetings with Student Representatives and termly Student Representative meetings would be combined to minimise the volume of meetings requiring student attendance. • Whilst all students at the College were members of the National Union of Students, following a consultation process, students had agreed to retain use of the term ‘student reps’ (rather than Student Union Members). • Student surveys provided an important mechanism for gathering Student Voice data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action 7.1.1 – Rename the draft “Student Voice Master Plan” to “Student Voice Plan”. ○ Action 7.1.2 – Incorporate a Student Survey section into the ‘Student Voice Plan’. • RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to approve the ‘Student Voice Plan’, subject to the agreed amendments. 	16:19

#	Item	Action
8)	<p>GOVERNANCE MATTERS</p> <p>8.1 Draft CS&Q Committee Terms of Reference – 2025-26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Director of Governance outlined the recent updates to the CS&Q Committee Terms of Reference for 2025-26, noting the Board's desire to extend committee level delegations and reduced frequencies for policy reviews. RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to recommend Board approval of the 'CS&Q Committee Terms of Reference – 2025-26'. <p>8.2 Draft CS&Q Committee Cycle of Business – 2025-26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Director of Governance directed participants to the associated paper and outlined the key changes, i.e. additional committee delegations, the simplification and distribution of agenda items, and reduced frequency of policy reviews to ensure greater strategic focus. RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to recommend Board approval of the 'CS&Q Committee Cycle of Business – 2025-26'. <p>8.3 Draft Schedule of Meetings – 2025-26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Director of Governance directed participants to the associated paper and outlined the following approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in centrally located meetings for ease of Governor attendance, whilst ensuring Governor visibility at all campuses. Inclusion of meetings scheduled later in the term for the CS&Q Committee, to accommodate business need. The retention of one virtual meeting per year, per committee. Governors requested the following amendments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer Term CS&Q Committee meeting (13th May 2026) to be held virtually. Spring Term CS&Q meeting to be in person, preferably not at the Hastings campus. At least one more meeting for another committee to be held at the Hastings campus in 2025-26. Action 8.3.1 – Amend the draft Schedule of Meetings for 2025-26 to incorporate the requested changes, as detailed in Section 8.3 of the minutes. RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to recommend Board approval of the 'Draft Schedule of Meetings – 2025-26', subject to the agreed amendments. 	BH/CA
Annual Reports		
9)	<p>DRAFT ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT – 2025-26</p> <p>9.1 The Deputy Principal directed participants to the associated paper and provided a summary update.</p> <p>9.2 Governors requested that an executive summary be incorporated into the report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 9.2.1 – Include an Executive Summary at the front of the Accountability Statement. 	NB

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to approve the ‘Accountability Statement – 2025-26’, subject to the agreed amendment. This was with a view for the Board to subsequently ratify the report at its next meeting on 7th July 2025. 	
10)	ANNUAL LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN CONTRIBUTION REPORT <p>10.1 The Vice Principal – Business Development directed participants to the associated paper and shared the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Focus – the College had aligned its efforts with the Sussex-wide Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), targeting five priority sectors and addressing regional skills gaps. • Funding – over £4.5 million from the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) had supported projects including digital platforms, immersive teaching, and specialist training facilities. • Key Projects – these included the ‘<i>Landed App</i>’ for job matching, ‘<i>Bodyswaps VR</i>’ for employability training, and ‘<i>Immersive Classrooms</i>’ for VR/AR-based learning. • Performance – almost all KPIs had been exceeded, including 145% engagement, 550% of employer placement targets, and over 300% in staff Continuing Professional Development. • Industry Collaboration – high levels of employer engagement and training uptake had evidenced effective college-business partnerships. • Outlook – moving forward, key focus areas would include expansion of immersive learning, employer engagement, and commercial training in AI and Green Technologies. <p>10.2 Governors noted the report and commended the College’s achievement against the related LSIP KPIs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to recommend Board approval of the ‘Annual Local Skills Improvement Plan Contribution Report’. 	16:34
11)	ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT REPORT <p>11.1 The Assistant Principal – Student Experience directed participants to the associated paper and shared the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals – student safeguarding referrals had increased by 12.8% year-on-year, with mental health (833 cases) and home/family issues (331 cases) being the most common concerns across campuses. • Robust Safeguarding Framework – the College’s safeguarding structure, training, and Single Central Record were praised by both Ofsted and recognised during the recent internal audit. • Targeted Student Support – the College had expanded access to external services such as the Anna Freud Centre and Togetherall, delivering over 480 counselling sessions and supporting students with complex needs. • Proactive Prevent Strategy – Prevent Risk Assessments were regularly reviewed, with no Channel referrals made. Awareness activities addressed extremism, hate crime, and digital resilience. • Outlook – for 2025–26, the College would enhance its tutorial content, introduce a new wellbeing assessment tool, and contract external providers for consent education and themed safeguarding updates. <p>11.2 Governors noted the report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to recommend Board approval of the ‘Annual Safeguarding & Prevent Report’. 	16:36

#	Item	Action
12)	<p>SUBCONTRACTING & PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS – 2025-26</p> <p>12.1 The Vice Principal – Business Development directed participants to the associated paper and shared the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlined Subcontracting – the College had significantly reduced subcontracting levels, now working with only two partners: one for apprenticeships (GFTS) and one for adult provision (Creative Process), aligning with DfE expectations and strategic goals. • Assurance & Compliance – the College had successfully passed a DfE subcontracting assurance review in 2024, confirming compliance and quality. • Apprenticeship Provision – GFTS remained the sole apprenticeship subcontractor for 2025-26, focusing on retrofit and net-zero skills. The subcontracted provision was projected at circa 15% of total apprenticeship funding, well below the 25% DfE threshold. • Adult Skills Fund (ASF) – Creative Process was reintroduced in 2024-25 to address niche digital skills. For 2025-26, approximately 5% of ASF funding had been allocated to strategic partnerships in preparation for devolution under the Mayoral Combined Authority. • Higher Education Partnership – the partnership with SIRM continued to deliver Higher National Diploma Business programmes to 656 students, generating significant income (with £2.98m forecast for 2025-26), supporting the College’s strategic and financial objectives. <p>12.2 Governors reflected that the sub-contracting values detailed in Appendix B of the report should be highlighted to the Board for approval at its next meeting. Governors also noted there had been a £20K increase in the current year’s subcontracting with Creative Process, though this remained within approved limits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 12.2.1 – Ensure that in submitting the ‘Subcontracting & Partnership Arrangements Report’ for Board approval, that explicit approval of Appendix B also be requested. • RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to recommend Board approval of the ‘Subcontracting & Partnership Arrangements – 2025-26’. 	
Policies & Key Documents		
13)	<p>POLICIES</p> <p>13.1 Safeguarding & Prevent Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assistant Principal – Student Experience outlined the key changes to the policy, as detailed in the Policy Change Summary Sheet. A further update to the policy was expected in September 2025, when new KCSIE guidance was due to be published by the DfE. • RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to recommend Board approval of the ‘Safeguarding & Prevent Policy’. 	16:45
Close		
14)	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	16:47
	14.1 The were no new items raised for discussion.	
15)	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	16:48
	15.1 Governors noted that the next meeting had been <u>tentatively</u> scheduled for 25th November 2025 (15:00-17:00) , which would be based at the Eastbourne campus.	

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16)	LIVE COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT <p>16.1 Five survey responses were received from Governors, as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>#</th><th>ASSESSMENT QUESTION</th><th>RESULT</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.</td><td>Was the agenda sufficiently balanced between core governance business and strategic priorities?</td><td>100%</td></tr> <tr> <td>2.</td><td>Where the papers succinct, with clarity in the information being communicated and the action required by Governors?</td><td>100%</td></tr> <tr> <td>3.</td><td>Did you have all the information you needed to fully participate in discussion and decisions?</td><td>100%</td></tr> <tr> <td>4.</td><td>Was there sufficient time to debate priority items in depth?</td><td>100%</td></tr> <tr> <td>5.</td><td>Were you satisfied that decisions were arrived at in a proper manner?</td><td>100%</td></tr> <tr> <td>6.</td><td>Was the student experience at the heart of decision making?</td><td>100%</td></tr> <tr> <td>7.</td><td>Did the Chair facilitate the meeting effectively, enabling adequate focus on strategic priorities and creating an environment where a range of perspectives were considered?</td><td>100%</td></tr> <tr> <td>8.</td><td>Were opportunities created to invite input from Student and Staff Governors?</td><td>100%</td></tr> <tr> <td>9.</td><td>Any comments or suggestions?</td><td>See below*</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Excellently chaired meeting. I find it difficult to contribute during virtual meetings, due to eye strain – I will discuss with the Chair how I may contribute in alternative ways.</i> 	#	ASSESSMENT QUESTION	RESULT	1.	Was the agenda sufficiently balanced between core governance business and strategic priorities?	100%	2.	Where the papers succinct, with clarity in the information being communicated and the action required by Governors?	100%	3.	Did you have all the information you needed to fully participate in discussion and decisions?	100%	4.	Was there sufficient time to debate priority items in depth?	100%	5.	Were you satisfied that decisions were arrived at in a proper manner?	100%	6.	Was the student experience at the heart of decision making?	100%	7.	Did the Chair facilitate the meeting effectively, enabling adequate focus on strategic priorities and creating an environment where a range of perspectives were considered?	100%	8.	Were opportunities created to invite input from Student and Staff Governors?	100%	9.	Any comments or suggestions?	See below*	16:49
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17)	CLOSE <p>17.1 The meeting closed at 16:50.</p>	16:50																														

Action Summary

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
3.2.1	NB	Include National Average data within the Achievement slide of subsequent Curriculum, Skills & Quality presentation reports.	25 th November 2025
4.1.1	NB/FP	Consider the recommendations arising from the Student Governor presentation on 'Home Learning Support for Achieving High Grades', with a view to share an update on next steps at the next CS&Q Committee meeting.	25 th November 2025
4.1.2	BH	Share a copy of the Student Governor's 'Home Learning Support for Achieving High Grades' presentation with CS&Q Committee Members.	Complete
6.1.1	NB	Provide a summary of the CS&Q specific Board-level Key Performance Indicators and an overview of the proposed 'heatmap reporting format', with a view for this to be submitted to the Board for approval.	27 th June 2025
7.1.1	FP	Rename the draft "Student Voice Master Plan" to "Student Voice Plan".	25 th November 2025
7.1.2	FP	Incorporate a Student Survey section into the 'Student Voice Plan'.	25 th November 2025
8.3.1	BH/CA	Amend the draft Schedule of Meetings for 2025-26 to incorporate the requested changes, as detailed in Section 8.3 of the minutes.	27 th June 2025
9.2.1	NB	Include an Executive Summary at the front of the Accountability Statement.	27 th June 2025
12.2.1	BH	Ensure that in submitting the 'Subcontracting & Partnership Arrangements Report' for Board approval, that explicit approval of Appendix B also be requested.	27 th June 2025