

Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee MINUTES

Date	5 th March 2025	Time	14:00-17:00
Venue	Room EC205, ECAT House, Eastbourne Campus		
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: Kerrith Etkin Bell, Kim Byford, Kirsty Reid, Jack Woodgate, Lucy Mitchell

#	Item	Action
Pre-Meeting		
-	<p>LEARNING WALK 13:00</p> <p>0.1 Level 2 & Level 3 Provision – Eastbourne Campus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors participated in a learning walk, which included observations of a Level 2 Health & Social Care & Childcare classroom and a Level 3 Business Studies A Level classroom. The following key themes and insights arose as output of the visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons – these were well structured, of a high quality and impactful. There were clear linkages between previous, current and future learning objectives. Engagement – students were clearly engaged, and overall participation levels were high. Attendance – good levels of attendance were observed, though it was noted that there had been student withdrawals from some programmes at a relatively late stage in the academic year. Work Experience – a strong provision was in place to support programme delivery. Tutor Allocation – current timetabling had not enabled all A Level Students to be assigned to a tutor group with a teacher that they were otherwise taught by. Feedback – the need to ensure that this was consistent, linked to learning outcomes and supported retention. Tracking – this should focus on student progress against long term objectives, particularly in terms of start and end points. Homework – there should ideally be clear linkages with the content covered during lessons to embed learning. Mock Exams – these were well timed to ensure that exams did not fall directly after the Christmas break or directly before the Easter break, supporting student and staff wellbeing. 	

#	Item	Action
Standing Items		
1)	<p>WELCOME, APOLOGIES & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 14:07</p> <p>1.1 The Curriculum, Skills & Quality (CS&Q) Committee Chair opened the meeting at 14:07 with a warm welcome to colleagues.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Kerrith Etkin Bell, Kim Byford, Kirsty Reid, Jack Woodgate and Lucy Mitchell.</p> <p>1.3 There were no new declarations of interest received.</p>	
2)	<p>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 14:08</p> <p>2.1 Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors considered the minutes from the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee meeting on 26th November 2024. Governors agreed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of what was discussed. <p>2.2 Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors noted that all actions from the last meeting had either been successfully completed or had since been superseded. 	
3)	<p>INTER-COMMITTEE REFERRAL 14:09</p> <p>3.1 The Implications of Local Government Devolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair of the Board shared the following context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government had recently approved a proposal to proceed with local government devolution across the Sussex region. This would enable key funding and decision-making powers to be managed at a local, rather than national level. A new mayor for the Sussex area would be elected in 2026, along with representatives from East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, thereby forming a mayoral combined county authority for Sussex. Moving forward, the College would need to proactively consider any resultant implications, as well as engage with the consultation process currently underway. The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills Agenda – a priority next step would be for the College to capitalise on its recent ‘Strong’ Skills Ofsted inspection judgment, as it was anticipated that a range of growth opportunities would subsequently arise from the devolution process. This would be particularly key for the Adult Skills provision. Similarly, it would be necessary to clarify broader any implications for the Local Skills Improvement Plan moving forward. Partnerships & Relationship Management – an important priority would be to quickly establish and extend key relationships with new local authority partners, existing local Members of Parliament and other stakeholders. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Delivery – the potential risks associated with increased levels of competition with other providers across East and West Sussex for skills provision delivery would need to be explored, and to determine whether local delivery would be prioritised. As such, it would be important to demonstrate a collaborative and strategic outlook in response to the devolution agenda. ○ Proactive Approach – local authority attention would likely be diverted from other key priorities as the devolution process progresses. As a trusted partner, the College would benefit from adopting a leading role in designing the Skills Provision Model for the East Sussex area, by leveraging a solution-based approach in response to any associated issues. ○ ESCG Strategic Plan – this would act as an important positioning document for the College, evidencing its key priorities and approach with regards to a range of related issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Governors agreed that it would be important to continue to revisit this item, with a view to more deeply assess the related implications for the CS&Q Committee’s monitoring and oversight responsibilities. 	
4)	<p>CURRICULUM, SKILLS & QUALITY REPORT</p> <p>14:27</p> <p>4.1 Key Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Deputy Principal directed participants to the associated paper and presented a summary update as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ofsted Inspection – the final report had now been issued, with an Overall Effectiveness grading of ‘Good’, and a ‘Strong’ judgement for the College’s Skills provision. ○ Key Performance Indicators – an illustration of the ‘Attendance’ metric had been provided to exclude English & Maths (which remained an area of concern), as well as provide a breakdown for Level 1-3 provisions. The dashboard had also been updated to include predicted ‘Achievement’ data. Levels of work experience being undertaken by students remained an area of concern. ○ Apprenticeships – achievement levels continued to improve and were currently on track. Cognassist, a new neurodiversity platform, had recently been implemented and supported the assessment of SEND apprenticeship students. ○ Higher Education – retention levels were currently trending at 95.6%, with 299 students expected to complete their programmes. A new Computing & Software Development degree had also been successfully validated. ○ High Needs Update – funding had been confirmed in 2024-25 for 150 places (at £6000 each). However, 213 high needs students were currently on roll at the College. Negotiation was therefore ongoing with the local authority, with a view to secure funding for the additional students. Nevertheless, funding had now been confirmed for 200 high needs students in 2025-26, with tentative plans for East Sussex County Council to provide top up funding from the start of the academic year, thereby enabling early resource planning. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion focussed on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills – a sector-based approach was being adopted to deepen and extend links with key partners, through the use of spotlight talks. This was already having a meaningful impact in strengthening the provision. Apprenticeships – it was not anticipated that the QIP success criteria of 60% timely completion was likely to be met this academic year, due to an excessively high number of overstayers who had failed to complete their functional skills. Consequently, a validation exercise was currently underway. Functional Skills – moving forward it would be important to ensure effective categorisation of those students who had exceeded their programme end dates, assess the impact of any actions taken and thereby enable effective monitoring and oversight. Similarly, where students had opted out of the functional skills provision, it would be important to evidence their access to Maths & English content as part of their End Point Assessment, i.e. that this had been otherwise effectively embedded into their learning programmes. English & Maths – attendance data remained of particular concern and was therefore a priority focus area for the College. A collaborative framework had recently been implemented, with early indications of improved attendance levels. Furthermore, an English & Maths Strategy was currently being finalised, which would include a range of innovative interventions, such as changes to timetabling, enhanced staff development and training, and effective resourcing measures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 5.1.1 – Ensure that the next QIP Summary Update Report includes appropriate progress data. Free School Meals & Disadvantaged Learners – attendance levels were typically higher at the College, as compared to schools. Achievement gaps had reduced between 2-3% for 16-18 students. Personal Development – tutorial sessions had received highly positive learner feedback and had particularly high levels of engagement for vocational courses. A structural programming issue had been identified as the key driver for lower tutorial session attendance levels in A Level students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 5.1.2 – Share a copy of ‘The Six Dimensions Report’, with a view for the Director of Governance to cascade this to Governors. Leadership & Management – effective tracking systems had been established to enable the early identification of risks, leading to timely interventions and improved monitoring. Monitoring visits in Grade 3 & 4 areas had identified key managerial needs, which had led to improvements in attendance in course management. The Deputy Principal then provided a summary overview of the new Ofsted Report Card Methodology. It was anticipated that this would enable more targeted focus on key areas of need. Consideration was currently being given to the “Priority First” approach, which prioritised interventions and provision delivery for students where the need was highest. 	<p>NB</p> <p>NB/BH</p>

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6)	<p>STUDENT GOVERNOR UPDATE 15:33</p> <p>6.1 Update on Head of Curriculum Meetings with Student Representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student Governor shared the following verbal update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Course Representatives were actively encouraged to share their feedback through a range of mechanisms. One improvement area related to the need for greater clarity on the key points of contacts responsible for supporting students with general issues and concerns. One option could be an email inbox for students to centrally submit any enquiries to. There continued to be high levels of engagement at Course Rep meetings, where there was a shared understanding of key improvement areas and next steps. The Head of Curriculum meetings had also provided a useful forum for ensuring a shared understanding of priority focus areas. Overall, students were well supported – further check-ins may also be helpful in the run up to and during mock exams, as mental health issues tended to escalate during these periods. There may be a need for increased focus on long term progress tracking, to better support students in understanding how they were performing against their overall learning targets/objectives. The Student Governor also reflected on the key strengths and improvement areas arising from their time at the College to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strength – students were actively encouraged and given the freedom to manage their time independently. Improvement Area – there may be a need for additional (optional) homework assignments that were directly linked to recent lesson content. The Deputy Principal advised that further to a recent deep dive exercise, work was currently underway at the Eastbourne campus to replicate the approach already in place at Lewes and Hastings, where homework assignments were more directly linked to lesson content and better supported students in embedding their learning. 	
7)	<p>ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT & LOCAL NEEDS DUTY 15:39</p> <p>7.1 Delegated Approval – CS&Q Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Director of Governance explained that due to the timing of the Accountability Agreement submission deadline, the CS&Q Committee would again need to request delegated approval powers from the Board. This would enable the CS&Q Committee to review/approve the proposed submission for 2025 at the next meeting on 21st May 2025. RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to request delegated approval from the Board, with a view to review/approve the ‘Accountability Agreement & Local Needs Duty’ at its next meeting in the Summer Term. 	

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8)	<p>STRATEGY 15:40</p> <p>8.1 SEND Master Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Assistant Principal – Student Experience explained that a range of related guidance documents and resources had been considered in the development of the SEND Master Plan. Feedback had also been invited from the Head of Curriculum for Inclusive Learning, a SEND consultant and other key stakeholders. Governors considered the associated paper, and the following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the SEND Master Plan was well structured, concise, and had been aligned with the previously agreed approach and format for the College’s Master Plans. Governors noted that emphasis had been placed upon developing an inclusive curriculum that supported students in transitioning onto their next steps, which may include various stages of the curriculum pathway or into employment. Governors also noted that the SEND Master Plan encouraged the use of Artificial Intelligence to reduce staff workload in lesson planning. Governors requested the following amendment to the first bullet within the Impact section (Page 5) – ‘Ensure students with SEND make sustained progress and transition into <u>their next steps in</u> education, employment, or independent living, with clear progression pathways embedded into the curriculum’. <u>Action 8.1.1</u> – Amend the SEND Master Plan to incorporate the requested amendment, as detailed in Section 8.1 of the minutes. RESOLUTION – The CS&Q Committee agreed to recommend Board approval of the SEND Master Plan, subject to the agreed amendment. 	FP
Policies & Key Documents		
9)	<p>POLICIES 15:47</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors noted that there were no policies currently due for review. 	
Close		
10)	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS 15:48</p> <p>10.1 The Deputy Principal advised that the Curriculum & Planning Audit had recently been successfully completed with a ‘Reasonable Assurance’ rating. The final report would be considered at the forthcoming Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee meeting. Management actions arising from the audit were currently being addressed.</p>	
11)	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING 15:49</p> <p>11.1 Governors noted that the next meeting of the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee had been scheduled for 21st May 2025, 15:00-17:00, which would be a virtual meeting.</p>	

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12)	<p>LIVE COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT 15:50</p> <p>12.1 Three 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>67% – Yes 33% – Partially</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>67% – Yes 33% – Partially</td></tr> <tr> <td>9.</td><td>Any comments or suggestions?</td><td>Yes</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I liked the PowerPoint presentation format for the CS&Q and QIP updates. 	#	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?	67% – Yes 33% – Partially	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?	67% – Yes 33% – Partially	9.	Any comments or suggestions?	Yes	
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13)	<p>CLOSE 15:51</p> <p>13.1 The meeting closed at 15:51.</p>																															

Action Summary

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
4.1.1	BH	Cascade a copy of the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Update Presentation to CS&Q Committee Members.	Complete
4.1.2	NB	Adopt a presentation style format for Curriculum, Skills & Quality Reports moving forward, with appropriate appendices as needed.	21 st May 2025
5.1.1	NB	Ensure that the next QIP Summary Update Report includes appropriate progress data.	21 st May 2025
5.1.2	NB/BH	Share a copy of 'The Six Dimensions Report', with a view for the Director of Governance to cascade this to Governors.	Complete
8.1.1	FP	Amend the SEND Master Plan to incorporate the requested amendment, as detailed in Section 8.1 of the minutes.	Complete