Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee
MINUTES

Date	20th November 2023	Time	14:00-17:00

Venue	EC205 – ECAT House, Eastbourne Campus

Chair	Cathrine Manning

Membership: Catherine Manning (Committee Chair), Aly Colman (Committee Vice Chair), Rebecca Conroy (CEO & Principal), Andy Davy, Trista Jin, Priscilla Kendall, Ian Mehrtens, Kirsty Reid, Emel Yerlikaya, Jack Woodgate

In Attendance: Andy Fitt (Quality Consultant), Andrew Thompson (Quality Consultant), Emily Taylor (Quality Lead) Belle Howard (Director of Governance), Claire Alexander (*Minutes*)

Virtual Attendees: Aly Colman (Committee Vice Chair), Donna Harfield (Vice Principal – Business Development), Emel Yerlikaya

Quorum: The meeting was quorate throughout.

Apologies: Trista Jin

#	Item	Action
Pre-Meeting		
-	**COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT VALIDATION** **14:00** *0.1 Pre-Meeting Discussion* • The Curriculum, Skills & Quality (CS&Q) Committee Chair opened the SAR Validation pre-meeting discussion with a warm welcome to participants, particularly to Andy Fitt and Andrew Thompson, both of whom were Quality Consultants. Participants introduced themselves. • The CEO & Principal directed participants to the Self-Assessment Report and shared the following update: o **SAR Process:** ▪ Curriculum Teams and Heads of Curriculum had completed departmental self-assessments following intensive SAR validation discussion meetings. ▪ Improvement plans had been developed and fed into the overall College SAR, with a view to enable global assessment against the Education Inspection Framework. ▪ The intent was to identify those strengths and key areas of improvement which aligned directly with the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). o **SAR Report – Quality of Education:** ▪ **Intent:** – The SAR had been broken down into each of the key areas of the Ofsted framework.	

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- All courses had a clear intent, with a particular emphasis on contributing to local skills needs and linking directly with local employers to ensure that courses provided students with sustainable next steps.
- The adult offer had focussed on providing support to young adults in transitioning into employment.
- The College's 16-18 offer was broad, and directly aligned to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). There remained some areas of improvement, however the key strength areas for the College related to its collaborative partnerships and robust planning and sequencing.
- A priority improvement area, related to the need to increase the volume of students who were accessing external work placements. The College had been actively developing this provision since the Covid-19 pandemic and all students were expected to complete a work placement on an annual basis.
- Following the recent launch of the Employer Exchange, internal progression data would shortly be available, with a view for a further update to be shared at the forthcoming Full Board meeting on 14th December 2023.
- All leavers routinely completed a survey to enable the College to track summary details of their future plans.

- **Implementation**:
  - **Strengths** – the College continued to achieve strong student retention levels and teachers were effective in their use of planning tools. Extensive staff CPD training was planned and being delivered, including 'back to industry' days.
  - **Areas of Improvement** – ensuring more robust baseline assessments; creating more opportunities for the recall of learning in A Level subjects; providing higher quality feedback to support ongoing learning; ensuring clearer planning and objective setting.

- **Impact:**
  - There had been improvement in outcomes for adult learners.
  - T Level provision remained strong, whilst A Level progress was not currently strong enough. Pastoral support was robust and effective.
  - The College's English & Maths provision had improved, but further work was needed.
  - An emerging group of students who were eligible for free school meals had been identified as under achieving, which was a priority focus area for the College.
  - The apprenticeship provision required further improvement, with too few students attaining, being retained or completing their programs in a timely manner.

- **Consequently, Quality of Education had been self-assessed as 'Good' overall.**

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	Jack Woodgate joined the meeting at 14:08.	

- The following discussion then occurred:

  o An Independent Governor considered the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Report that was due for discussion later in the meeting and noted that each of the Education & Quality Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to achievement had received a 'red' RAG rating, having not met the target threshold in all instances.

  o **An Independent Governor asked – did this need to be reflected more fully in the SAR?** The CEO & Principal explained that the KPIs were aspirational and not directly linked to national benchmarks. That said, it may be useful to reference achievement specific KPIs within the context of the SAR, and further consideration would be given to determine how best to do this. A Quality Consultant advised that commentary related to performance against KPI targets would usually be referenced in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), rather than the SAR.

  o **An Independent Governor reflected that many students were also engaged in part-time employment and asked – could this existing employment be used for the purposes of a work placement?** The CEO & Principal advised that per existing funding guidance, it was not possible for the College to use existing student employment as work placement assignments. However, if a student also undertook a voluntary placement linked to their existing employment, this could be considered, as long as this was different to their primary employment.

  o The Chair of the Board noted the ongoing challenges in meeting annual work placement targets and suggested that it may be more realistic to adopt a staggered approach, with a view to build up to this over several years. The CEO & Principal agreed and suggested conducting further analysis to explore the number of applications for placements across a range of different industries.

  o The Chair of the Board suggested that the work that the College was currently leading regarding the Employer Exchange should also be included in the Quality of Education section, given the impact this would have on the Curriculum. Governors agreed.

  o **The CS&Q Committee Chair reflected that the College's CPD provision could be more fully detailed within the SAR and asked – were there ongoing activities that could also be highlighted?** The CEO & Principal acknowledged that there was extensive existing CPD activity across the College, which supported cross-team collaboration and engagement, and could be emphasised more fully in the SAR.

  o **An Independent Governor asked – was there a clearly defined CPD Plan in place at the College for all staff?** The CEO & Principal reflected that further work was needed to develop and enhance the existing CPD provision, noting that in some instances, this may be overly compliance focussed. As such, work was currently underway, led by the Director of Teacher Development & Digital Innovation, to drive a shift towards a more innovative and inspiring approach to staff development, moving forward.

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	o An Independent Governor noted the links between the existing MyReview Project and ongoing efforts to enhance the College's CPD provision. o **A Quality Consultant asked – does the SAR need to be more explicit in referencing the College's CPD provision, particularly related to high needs delivery?** The CEO & Principal reflected that it did. o **The Chair of the Board noted that there had been no specific mention of staff who were involved in research-based work, as well as other academia-based learning and development.** The CEO & Principal agreed and committed to look into this. o An Independent Governor considered the apprenticeship provision and expressed concern that the College may be overly reliant on its existing partnership with Southern Gas Network (SGN). The CEO & Principal advised that the Vice Principal – Business Development would share a fuller update on the College's apprenticeship provision later in the meeting, though noted that the College continued to benefit from a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship with SGN, which ensured a strong apprenticeship offer for young people. o A Quality Consultant advised that they would shortly be leading a staff development session, which would focus on apprenticeships, as well as tracking and monitoring student progress. o **A Staff Governor considered the need to understand and support student readiness to progress to the next stage of education, and asked – would this be provided at all stages of the learner journey, i.e. from Level 1 through to Higher Education?** The CEO & Principal advised that further work was needed to ensure clarity across the whole learner progression pathway. The Curriculum Plan would initially focus on ensuring that more students progressed through to Level 3. o **An Independent Governor asked – do we have meaningful leaver data for those students who were not successful in progressing at the College?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that leaver data was consolidated for the College by a third-party provider. o **An Independent Governor considered the College's free school meals (FSM) provision and asked – what support was in place for those students who had not claimed, but were eligible for the FSM provision?** The CEO & Principal advised that the College provided a free breakfast and lunch that was universally available for all 16-18 students, but noted the need to ensure effective tracking of FSM data moving forward. As such, work was underway with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to explore the feasibility of greater data sharing regarding FSM eligible students. o **An Independent Governor asked – does the College track the progress of its high achieving students, particularly in the context of the added value of the College?** The CEO & Principal reflected that this was complex to track, given the scale of the College and the number of learning pathways on offer, though noted that this could be explored in more depth, particularly in view of the unique selling point that this provided for the College. A Quality Consultant advised that this would be reviewed as part of a forthcoming deep dive exercise.	

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	• The CEO & Principal shared the following update: ○ **SAR Report – Behaviour & Attitudes:** ▪ Overall, the College had confidently been self-assessed as 'good' for this area. ▪ The majority of students were purposeful in their learning. ▪ However, attendance was problematic in Level 1 and 2 students. ▪ The College proactively supported students in developing skills to become more employable. ▪ Low levels of peer-on-peer abuse had been recorded. ▪ There was a sizable number of students that accessed wellbeing support, which was a significant contributor to strong retention levels at the College. ▪ **Consequently, Behaviour & Attitudes had been self-assessed as 'Good' overall.** ○ **SAR Report – Personal Development:** ▪ Extensive work had been undertaken over the last 18 months to enhance the College's Personal Development provision. ▪ As a result, a rich programme of trips, speaker events and wellbeing support was in place. ▪ The College had been Matrix accredited, due to its high-quality Career's Education Support. ▪ There also continued to be extensive investment in student support services. ▪ However, it had been noted that the percentage of students participating in work experience should be higher. ▪ The Curriculum enrichment offer was more consistent than it had been previously, though further focus was needed to maximise the number of students accessing this provision. ▪ The Tutor Toolkit needed to be more differentiated for students at the College year on year. ▪ The College also needed to create more opportunities for apprentices to develop their skills and access enrichment activities. As such, this was a priority focus area for the Apprenticeship Team. ▪ **Consequently, Personal Development had been self-assessed as 'Good' overall.** • The following discussion then occurred: ○ A Quality Consultant suggested that it may be prudent to combine some of the 'Key Areas of Development' within the Personal Development section of the SAR. The CEO & Principal agreed. ○ **A Staff Governor considered the need to support students in getting into industry and asked – was there a need to create further opportunities for students with key partners, particularly for industries that would normally lend itself to self-employment?** The CEO & Principal reflected that there may be opportunity to link the College with employment hubs, with a view to provide more freelance and creative working experiences.	

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  o **A Staff Governor asked – would it be possible to create remote working opportunities, e.g. through the use of studio spaces?** The CEO & Principal reflected that this may be possible, but it would be important for the College to work smartly in creating such spaces.

- The CEO & Principal shared the following update:

  o **SAR Report – Leadership & Management:**

    ▪ A committed, aspirational and effective Governing Board was in place, which had been evidenced by the recent External Review of Governance.
    ▪ The College benefited from a number of strong partnership relationships, which both directly and indirectly benefited students, e.g. via the Employer Exchange Programme.
    ▪ **Key development areas** – these primarily related to CPD planning and the College's appraisal programme, though work was already in flight to address this.
    ▪ The College's Safeguarding provision was effective.

- The following discussion then occurred:

  o A Quality Consultant expressed concern that the report indicated that not all staff had completed their Safeguarding Training. The CEO & Principal clarified that whilst not all staff had completed their online training in the Smartlog system, all staff members had completed face to face Safeguarding training at the start of the academic year.

  o A Quality Consultant suggested that the Safeguarding Section of the SAR did not need to include 'attendance tracking' as a key area for development, as this had already been referenced in the Behaviour & Attitudes section of the report. The CEO & Principal agreed.

  o **The CS&Q Committee Chair considered the Leadership & Management Key Areas for Development and asked – could this section include further detail on the evidence related to the 'observation process'?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that this could be included.

  o An Independent Governor reflected on a recent College visit and noted that many staff members valued the College's hybrid working policy. It was also noted that the relationship between Heads of Curriculum and HR Business Partners may not be clear and consistent across all areas. The CEO & Principal committed to look into this in collaboration with the Director of People.

  o An Independent Governor considered the linkages between safeguarding and leadership & management, particularly with regards to staff wellbeing and the increasing complexity of staff referrals.

  o An Independent Governor reflected that delivery of the College's educational provision was complex and noted the need for leaders to have access to a broad range of data to enable effective monitoring, oversight and planning. Governors agreed.

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	- The CEO & Principal shared the following update: - There had been significant investment in **wellbeing services** at the College, with a particular focus on ensuring that this was easily accessible by all students. Similarly, all staff had access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which provided a broad range of support services. Additionally, the People Services Team had access to a pool of support staff who had received appropriate wellbeing training. That said, more work was needed to ensure appropriate support for young people with complex or multiple needs. - A priority focus area for the College was support for **students with high needs**. Moving forward, it would be important to maintain high expectations for those with high needs and to continue to leverage support from the Inclusive Learning Team, as needed. At present, a strong 'Requires Improvement' rating had been determined in the SAR for the College's provision for students with high needs. Moving forward, key focus areas to enable progression towards a 'Good' rating, would include increasing the range of support programmes on offer and additional access to independent life skills for high needs students. - In terms of the contribution the College made to **meeting local skills needs**, a 'Reasonable' self-assessment had been given. Whilst there were some areas where the College was already strong, this was not yet consistent across all areas. - An overall grade for the College's SAR had been proposed as 'Good'. - The following discussion then occurred: **An Independent Governor considered the College's high needs provision and asked – does the College have access to the required information from previous schools/colleges?** The CEO & Principal advised that this information was not consistently made available to the College. However, the College had established strong relationships with local special schools and a robust transition programme was already in place. That said, the College's Special Education provision was not currently consistent in all areas, and a newly appointed Director of Additional Learning Support was now in place to lead this priority work moving forward. - A Quality Consultant reflected that based upon the existing Education Inspection Framework, the College may currently struggle to secure an overall assessment grading of 'Good'. As such, further work may be needed to justify and securely evidence this. - The CEO & Principal advised that the Quality Improvement Plan had robustly targeted key improvement priorities for the year ahead, with a particular focus on delivery against the apprenticeship provision. It had also been noted that the College's high needs offer related to a relatively small proportion of the student population. **The CS&Q Committee Chair thanked the CEO & Principal for sharing a comprehensive update and noted that there had been a thorough review and scrutiny of the Self-Assessment Report during the pre-meeting discussion.**	

#	Item	Action
	o **Action 0.1.1** – Consider and update the Self-Assessment Report, noting the following suggested amendments: ▪ **Reference the work the College was currently leading with the Employer Exchange and the associated impacts for the Curriculum provision.** ▪ **More fully outline the breadth of the College's CPD offer to staff, including linkages to high needs delivery, the MyReview Project and research-based learning and development activity.** ▪ **Consolidate the 'Key Areas for Development' detailed within the Personal Development section of the SAR.** ▪ **Note in the Executive Summary that the College's Safeguarding provision was effective.** ▪ **Remove attendance tracking as a key area for development in the Safeguarding section of the SAR.** ▪ **Include further details on the evidence related to the 'observation process' for the Leadership & Management – Key Areas for Development section.** **Emel Yerlikaya joined the meeting at 14:59. The meeting was briefly adjourned at 15:02. Donna Harfield joined the meeting at 15:10.**	**RC**

Standing Items		
1)	**WELCOME & APOLOGIES** **15:10** 1.1 The Curriculum, Skills & Quality (CS&Q) Committee Chair opened the meeting at 15:10 with a warm welcome to colleagues, particularly Quality Consultants Andrew Thompson and Andy Fitt. All participants introduced themselves. 1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Trista Jin. 1.3 The CS&Q Committee Chair noted the first meeting of the newly formed Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee. Governors were encouraged to share their input, support and challenge throughout the meeting.	
2)	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** **15:13** 2.1 There were no new declarations of interest received.	
3)	**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING** **15:14** *3.1 Approval* • Governors considered the minutes from the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee meeting on 19th June 2023. • **Governors agreed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of what was discussed.**	

#	Item				Action

3.2 Matters Arising

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
5.2.1	RC/DH	Consider existing employers and associated apprenticeship relationships, with a view to target key partners in joining the Stakeholder Engagement Panels, particularly within the healthcare sector.	**Complete** – per Item 7.1.
5.4.1	MW	Revisit the 'Quality & Compliance Lead' role title, potentially with a view to remove the word 'compliance' from the title.	**Complete**
5.8.1	RC	Confirm whether the college was a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions group.	**In Progress** – Stonewall is currently updating its educational membership offer and will be in touch with the College to progress this in November.
11.1.1	RC	Provide an update on the ongoing work to develop the college's Marketing Strategy at the next Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee meeting.	**Complete** – oversight of Reputation & Brand is managed by the GP&R Committee. A verbal update would be provided.

4) COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN   **15:13**

4.1 Self-Assessment Report – 2022-23

- The CEO & Principal summarised the earlier pre-meeting discussion:

  o The SAR had been reviewed in depth and some moderate amendments were identified.

  o The proposed grades had been broadly accepted and helpful feedback had been received from the Quality Consultants from an Ofsted inspection framework perspective.

  o Whilst an overall 'Good' rating had been proposed, it had been acknowledged that the rating was at the weaker end of the threshold at this stage.

  o The need to leverage the Quality Improvement Plan to drive and evidence progress against key targets and priorities had also been emphasised. Of particular focus would be rapid improvements to the High Needs and Apprenticeship provisions, with a view to transition these towards a 'Good' self-assessment rating moving forward.

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	o The Chair of the Board reflected that the overall grade assessment in the SAR may be overly prudent for some areas, given the progress that had been made over the last year. o **The Chair of the Board asked – could some areas be assessed as 'Outstanding', as the SAR currently suggested that the College may have regressed when compared to the prior year?** The CEO & Principal explained that the assessment framework had changed over the last few years, but provided assurance that the College had progressed in some areas year on year. A firm and fair assessment had been made against the current framework, and as such there were no areas at this time that could be assessed as 'Outstanding'. That said, a key opportunity for the College was driving further progress in the Personal Development area, and as such, this would be reflected in the QIP. o **The Chair of the Board asked the Staff Governors – do you agree with the proposed gradings within the SAR?** The Staff Governors confirmed that they did. o The CS&Q Committee Vice Chair considered the proposed grades in the SAR and reflected that it would likely take time to see the impact of all the priority activity currently being led at the College. Governors agreed. o The Vice Principal – Business Development noted that Apprenticeships had been self-identified as 'Requires Improvement', given that achievement rates were not where they needed to be. However, the College was in line with the national picture, where in excess of 50% of providers with apprenticeship achievement rates were below the national benchmark. o A Quality Consultant also reiterated this, confirming that the national apprenticeship rates were at 51%, so this remained a key area of concern at post 16. o The CS&Q Committee Chair considered the use of benchmarking in the SAR, noting that in some instances comparison had been made against the national picture, whilst in others, comparison had been made against the prior year. The CEO & Principal reflected that this could be revisited in the SAR to ensure a more consistent approach to reporting both the national picture and prior year data, where possible.	
	▪ <u>**Action 4.1.1**</u> – **Review the use of benchmarking data detailed in the SAR and where possible, include a comparison against both the national picture and the prior year.**	**RC**
	o **An Independent Governor asked – should there be clearer justification within the executive summary sections of the SAR on the proposed judgment?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that this could be reflected more clearly and noted the need to outline some of the broader challenges for the College, such as the rapid increase in the need for student wellbeing support and how the College had responded to this.	
	▪ <u>**Action 4.1.2**</u> – **Revisit the executive summaries in the SAR to ensure that clear justifications for the proposed ratings are incorporated.** **Additionally, outline some of the broader challenges for the College, in the Context section.**	**RC**

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  o A Quality Consultant reflected on the need to celebrate some of the successes of the College, and noted that the data tables from Page 33 of the SAR highlighted some of the existing outstanding practice at the College across different curriculum areas and campuses. Governors agreed.

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- **RESOLUTION: The Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee agreed to recommend the Self-Assessment Report (2022-23) to the Board for approval, subject to the suggested amendments.**

4.2 Quality Improvement Plan – 2023-24

- The following discussion occurred:

  o The CEO & Principal reiterated the need to see rapid improvement across the current academic year, particularly related to High Needs and Apprenticeships.

  o The CS&Q Committee Chair reflected that the QIP appeared robust, with a clear linkage to the priority focus areas identified in the SAR.

  o **The CS&Q Committee Chair considered the proposed success measures and asked – does this need to be clearer in terms of the anticipated impact?** The CEO & Principal advised that this would be reviewed.

  o **The Chair of the Board noted the colour coding used throughout the QIP and asked – can the colour 'blue' be used more consistently to indicate any items that had since been completed?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that this would be incorporated.

  o **The CS&Q Committee Vice Chair asked – could there be more explicit references to areas for improvement in quality of education, as referenced on the SAR, e.g. High Needs and Apprenticeships?** The CEO & Principal also noted that High Needs needed to be more clearly triangulated in the QIP and confirmed that this could be incorporated.

  o **An Independent Governor asked – had the College now closed the items detailed in the previous year's QIP?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that the previous QIP had been closed at the end of the last academic year, though committed to validate that any remaining actions had been appropriately tracked.

  o A Quality Consultant noted that during an inspection, Governors would be expected to articulate the key strengths and development areas of the College. As such, it was suggested that key weaknesses for the College should be captured within the QIP, with a view to ensure effective monitoring and oversight by the CS&Q Committee and Board moving forward. The Chair of the Board reflected that this would be particularly useful and insightful information for the Board. Governors agreed.

  o A Staff Governor noted that the Higher Education (HE) provision had not been referenced in the QIP. The CEO & Principal explained that the HE provision was managed under a different inspection framework and was therefore out of scope, as HE was inspected separately by QAA.

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	o **A Staff Governor asked – should the QIP reference the priority objective to improve internal progression through to the College's HE provision?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that it should. o **An Independent Governor asked – where was governance oversight of HE provision managed?** The CEO & Principal advised that the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee oversaw the HE provision, and received regular updates on this in the CS&Q Report. • <u>Action 4.2.1</u> – **Consider and update the Quality Improvement Plan, noting the following suggested amendments:** o **Revisit the proposed success measures and determine whether these can be more specific in terms of impact.** o **Consistently use colour coding to indicate any completed items, i.e. blue.** o **Ensure consistent reference to priority focus areas, as well as appropriate triangulation throughout, i.e. High Needs and Apprenticeships.** o **Validate that the 2023-24 QIP had been closed and ensure that any outstanding actions were incorporated into the new QIP, where appropriate.** o **Include summary strengths and weaknesses information in the QIP.** o **Include an objective related to internal progression to HE.** • **RESOLUTION: The Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee agreed to recommend the Quality Improvement Plan (2023-24) to the Board for approval, subject to the agreed amendments.**	**RC**
5)	**CURRICULUM, SKILLS & QUALITY REPORT** **15:35** *5.1 Key Performance Indicators Update* • The CEO & Principal shared the following update: o Whilst the KPIs indicated progress in the last period, a targeted focus was needed in several key areas. o Of particular note was apprenticeship delivery and achieving a target of 70% would be highly ambitious when the College was currently trending at 41%. • The following discussion occurred: o **The Chair of the Board asked – should 'HE Attendance' be removed from the QIP as a priority focus area?** The CEO & Principal advised that HE Attendance had been included on the report in error and would be removed. o **The Chair of the Board asked – were all the 'red' items a priority?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that these areas were also priorities and advised that this needed to be made clearer in the report.	

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	5.2 Student Recruitment	

- The CEO & Principal shared the following update:

  - There had been significant growth in student recruitment this year.

  - Additional groups had been created for areas where growth levels were significant, and staffing resources had been deployed to manage the increased numbers of students.

  - A key growth area had been English & Maths, where particular resourcing challenges had been identified as a result of the additional groups required.

  - Work was underway to review and address the current student attrition rate of 9%. Attrition was particularly high for the Level 1 provision and the Employability Services Team were assessing any additional transition support that may be provided, particularly where students had opted to undertake an apprenticeship course.

- The following discussion occurred:

  - **The Chair of the Board asked – what was the current student recruitment growth percentage?** The CEO & Principal advised that this was currently trending at 115%.

  - An Independent Governor reflected that it would be helpful for the report to indicate the percentage of student recruitment growth, as well as the number of additional students. Governors agreed.

    - **Action 5.2.1 – In the next CS&Q Report, detail the percentage of student recruitment growth, as well as the actual number of students.** **RC**

5.3 Student Voice Update

- The CEO & Principal shared the following update:

  - **Student Induction Survey**:

    - There had been a significant increase in the response rate, up 20% on the prior year.

    - The majority of areas surveyed had scored above 90%.

    - The areas which had scored below 90%, had all fallen outside of the teaching and learning provision and related to activities such as awareness of the co-curricular provision and how to access wellbeing support.

    - As such, priority focus would be upon supporting students to have a better understanding of the College's enrichment programme, well-being offer and broader College values.

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5.4 Curriculum Plan Update

- The CEO & Principal shared the following update:

  - There had been ongoing development of the Curriculum, with a key focus on the College's response to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) agenda.

  - There had been a series of deep dive discussions related to areas such as Adult Education and High Needs. A further update would be shared at the next meeting, at which time the reviewer would also be invited to attend.

5.5 Special Educational Needs

- The CEO & Principal advised that there had been a notable increase in demand for High Needs places at the College. As a result, there were ongoing discussions with ESCC regarding the resultant gap in funding.

- The following discussion then occurred:

  - The CS&Q Committee Chair considered the value of a pre-meeting deep dive discussion on High Needs at the next meeting, for which the reviewer would also be invited to attend.

  - The Chair of the Board reflected that it would be helpful to extend an invite to all Governors, to support their ongoing learning and development. Governors agreed.

    - **Action 5.5.1 – Add 'Pre-meeting Deep Dive Discussion – High Needs' to the agenda for the next CS&Q Committee meeting on 26th February 2024, with a view to extend an invitation to all Governors.** **BH**

5.6 Careers

- The CEO & Principal advised that following a comprehensive inspection process, the College had retained its Matrix accreditation for a further three years, which reflected the delivery of high-quality careers information, advice and guidance by the College.

- Positive feedback shared as output of the review had also focussed upon the high-quality advice and guidance provided to apprenticeship students.

5.7 Higher Education Update

- The CEO & Principal shared the following update:

  - **Teaching Excellence Framework**:
    - The College had received a 'Bronze' rating for the 2023-26 period, which was disappointing and had been as a result of insufficient progress having been demonstrated during the assessment process.
    - A key priority would be to place a spotlight on the College's HE provision, with a view to determine key investment priorities moving forward.
    - Key focus areas had included dedicated space for the HE provision and ensuring high quality support to all HE students.

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- Following the recent departure of the Vice Principal – Student Experience, the Assistant Principal – Hastings now had leadership oversight of the HE provision. As such, it may be prudent for her to attend CS&Q Committee meetings moving forward.

  – **Action 5.7.1 – Invite the Assistant Principal, Hastings to attend CS&Q Committee meetings moving forward.**   **BH**

  o Last year the college had been successfully validated with the University of East Anglia (UEA) for its HE programmes at Eastbourne and Lewes.

  o Longer term, it would be important for the College to maximise investment and more fully embed the HE provision into the College's broader curriculum offer.

- The following discussion occurred:

  o **An Independent Governor asked – how many HE students does the College currently have on roll?** The CEO & Principal advised that there were approximately 500 HE students at the College.

  o **The CS&Q Committee Chair asked – do we know how similar providers performed in their assessment against the Teaching Excellence Framework?** The CEO & Principal advised that a Brighton based competitor college had recently obtained a 'Silver' rating, though further investigation would be needed to compare the College more broadly against other, similar HE providers.

  o **The CS&Q Chair asked – how do we ensure that there is adequate focus on the College's HE provision?** The CEO & Principal suggested that the next meeting could be more HE focused.

5.8 Safeguarding & Prevent Update

- The CEO & Principal shared the following update:

  o There had been a significant increase in the number of referrals at the Eastbourne campus, which compared with a moderate increase at Hastings and a slight decline at the Lewes campus.

  o In response to this rise in referrals, there had been additional investment in the College's Personal Development & Wellbeing Teams. This resource had been relocated from the central hub and positioned closer to the Curriculum areas, to ensure ease of access and increase student awareness of key points of contact.

- The following discussion occurred:

  o **The Chair of the Board asked – was homelessness a key issue for the College?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that it was, particularly in ESOL students and asylum seekers. The College was working closely with local authorities to manage this.

  o **The Chair of the Board asked – had issues associated with homelessness impacted student attendance levels?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that this issue had undoubtedly impacted levels of student attendance.

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o **A Staff Governor noted the decision to extend the offer of a free breakfast and lunch to adult students who were at risk, and asked – why had this not been extended to all HE students?** The CEO & Principal advised that could be considered, however, offering this to all 10,000 adult students would be very costly to the College. For this reason, adults at risk had been prioritised for support. At present, the College received free school meals funding for all eligible 16-18 year olds, which had been utilised to provide a basic breakfast and lunch service for all 16-18 students.

o **The Chair of the Board asked – would it be possible to offer a 50% discount to adult students for a basic breakfast and lunch?** The Vice Principal – Business Development explained that the number of adult learner numbers was significant and as such, it would be difficult to offer this, without putting the college at financial risk.

o A Staff Governor reflected that it would be important to ensure clear communication of the 'adult at risk' eligibility criteria for free meals to HE students.

o **A Staff Governor considered those students currently on workplace assignment and asked – did their free school meal entitlement follow them?** The Vice Principal – Business Development advised that it should do and committed to validate this.

   ▪ **Action 5.8.1 – Validate whether students who were eligible for free school meals were able to access this provision whilst on work placement.**   **DH**

5.9 Apprenticeships, Adult & Subcontracting Update

• The Vice Principal – Business Development shared the following update:

o The current 70% achievement target for apprenticeships may be overly aspirational, given the current self-assessment of 'Requires Improvement'.

o **Highlights:**
   ▪ A higher-level apprenticeship opportunity may be on the horizon, pending approval by the Executive Team, which could extend the College's HE provision as an additional channel for growth, subject to a tendering process.
   ▪ Following a positive start to the year, the College was currently over its headcount intake, with 352 new learners enrolled since August 2023, against an end of November 2023 cumulative target of 281.
   ▪ Consequently, the year-end internal apprenticeships target of 383 new starts had nearly been achieved, positioning the College well from a financial forecasting perspective.
   ▪ That said, the current climate remained challenging and as a result of the ongoing cost of living crisis, some key apprenticeship employers had since closed down.

o **SGN Partnership:**
   ▪ The College continued to maintain a strong relationship with its primary apprenticeship partner, Southern Gas Network (SGN).
   ▪ 77 students were currently enrolled, with a further 54 due to join by the end of the year.

#	Item	Action

- The level 2 Gas Network Operative standard was now well established.
- The College had also launched the first group studying the level 3 Gas Network Craftsperson standard, with 11 new apprentices.
- Of this cohort, the first female student had been enrolled, which was an important diversity milestone for the College.

o **New Partnerships & Opportunities:**
- Several new partnerships that were currently being explored, included Haven, Stagecoach and Hastings Direct, with a view for the College to develop a larger and more bespoke niche provision.
- The College also continued to maintain relationships with a broad subject matter expertise base in lots of different sector areas within the region.

o **Customer Relationship Management:**
- The business development team continued to ensure that the College had an up-to-date customer relationship management tool.
- Due to current levels of apprenticeship achievement outcomes, the College had self-assessed its apprenticeship provision as 'Requires Improvement'.
- Development of an Apprenticeship Action Plan was currently underway, which included a range of priority actions for the College, with a particular focus on:
    - Building capacity within the development groups, with a view to maximise retention.
    - Reviewing learners who were out of funding, having passed their end date, following extended delays in completing their end point assessments.
    - Reviewing the apprenticeship model and how learners may best be served.

- The following discussion occurred:

    o **An Independent Governor asked – was there a legal requirement for the College to provide an apprenticeship provision? and does the existing provision generate income for the College?** The CEO & Principal advised that there was not a statutory obligation for the College to offer an apprenticeship provision, and noted that the income generated was somewhat limited when compared to the broader delivery model.

    o **An Independent Governor asked – did the scope and scale of the College's apprenticeship provision need to be revisited?** The CEO & Principal reflected that apprenticeship courses were generally delivered over several years, and as a result, the legacy of a challenging economic period, would be felt over an extended timeframe. Consequently, it would be important to focus upon delivering a high-quality and bespoke provision efficiently, whilst discontinuing any low value activity.

    o **The Director of Governance asked – was there an expectation from a reputational perspective for the College to continue to offer an apprenticeship provision?** The CEO & Principal confirmed that it would be very unusual for a College of this size not to offer apprenticeships. Given the local skills needs agenda, it was important for the apprenticeship offer to be both targeted and of high quality.

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	o The Vice Principal – Business Development reflected on the need to discontinue any high-risk activity, wherever possible, whilst honouring delivery of the provision for existing students who were part way through a programme. Similarly, the College had a duty to support local industry and communities through delivery of a high-quality apprenticeship offer. o **The Chair of the Board asked – were achievement rates typically greater for higher level apprenticeship courses?** The Vice Principal – Business Development confirmed that they were, though noted that the College currently had a very limited offer for high level apprenticeship courses at present. As such, this area presented a significant opportunity for the College, with higher levels of student retention being typical for such courses. Similarly, employers tended to offer a more rounded career opportunity for these programmes. o The Chair of the Board noted the College's ongoing success in continuing to reduce its subcontracting provision. • **The CS&Q Committee Chair thanked the CEO & Principal and Vice Principal – Business Development for sharing such a comprehensive update.**	
6)	**STUDENT GOVERNORS UPDATE** **16:15** 6.1 The CS&Q Committee Chair invited the Student Governor to share an update on their student experience at the College. 6.2 A Student Governor shared the following update: • Having not been able to attend the last Student Council meeting due to sickness absence, it quickly became apparent that limited information was subsequently shared as output of the session with the wider student body, once the meetings had taken place. • There was also a risk that the Student Council Representative election process may become a popularity contest, resulting in the right candidates not necessarily being appointed for the role. As a result, the students who were particularly interested in engaging with the Student Council, may not have the opportunity to do so. • Whilst the MyStudentLife system contained a wealth of useful information, including financial and wellbeing support, student engagement levels may not be sufficiently high enough. Whilst there were a number of posters across campus promoting the system, not all students may notice these. • Consequently, it may be helpful for the *"You Said, We Did"* content to be shared more widely via social media, such as Instagram, as this would likely achieve higher levels of student engagement. • Similarly, to combat a decline in Student Council attendance levels later in the year, it was suggested that the opportunity to attend the sessions be extended to any students who may be interested, even if they were not necessarily Student Council Representatives. • **Co-curricular Provision** – it had been noted that there was interest from students looking for more relaxing and calming activities beyond the existing provision of creative and sport-based clubs. Similarly, these could also be promoted via social media.	

#	Item	Action

- **Lanyards** – whilst there had been more consistent student use of lanyards at the Hastings campus following additional checks, several non-ESCG students from other colleges had been observed on site without permission.

6.3 The following discussion occurred:

- The CEO & Principal reflected that the suggestion to extend attendance for Student Council meetings to include any interested students was a good idea, as was the broader use of social media, and committed to explore the feasibility of this with the Head of Student Services.

- An Independent Governor considered the utility of access of the MyStudentLife. The CEO & Principal reflected that further work was needed to ensure greater visibility of this important resource. The Quality Lead explained that MyStudentLife was presented as the landing page when students accessed College systems.

- **A Staff Governor reflected that MyStudentLife was often used by students as a mechanism to access other resources and asked – could regular updates to students be included on the landing page to encourage them to use the resource more fully?** The CEO & Principal advise that the feasibility of this would be explored with the Marketing & Communications Team.

- An Independent Governor reflected that social media was a particularly important platform for students and provided a valuable channel for engaging with different types of students, including those who were hard to reach.

- The CEO & Principal reflected on the need to ensure that the Student Council was representative of the whole student population. As such, further consideration was needed on how best to facilitate this.

- A Staff Governor suggested that students may wish to use tutorial sessions to capture student feedback, possibly through the use of polls via social media. However, any social media platforms would need to be carefully managed to ensure that they were not overly marketing focused, in terms of the content shared.

- A Student Governor considered the Student Council Representative election process, and suggested that the associated promotional materials should not over emphasise that the role could be featured on student CVs, as this may not be particularly appealing to those who were not planning to attend university.

- <u>**Action 6.3.1**</u> **– Consider opportunities to maximise student engagement with Student Council meetings, whilst ensuring that it was representative of a broad range of different student groups.** — **RC**

- <u>**Action 6.3.2**</u> **– Explore the feasibility of enabling attendance at Student Council meetings by interested students who were not necessarily Student Council Representatives, and more broadly leveraging social media to communicate key updates.** — **RC**

6.4 The CS&Q Committee Chair thanked the Student Governor for sharing an insightful update.

#	Item	Action
7)	**EMPLOYER EXCHANGE STRATEGIC BOARDS** **16:26** *(Formerly referenced as Stakeholder Engagement Panels)* 7.1 Governors noted the update that had been detailed in the CS&Q Report on Employer Exchange Strategic Boards (EESB) and the following discussion then occurred: • The Chair of the Board noted that the associated paper had indicated that EESBs would *'support strategic decision making at campus level'* and reflected that the original purpose of these forums was not for decision making. The CEO & Principal agreed and clarified the purpose of these forums would be to consult, gather feedback and seek endorsement. • **The Chair of the Board asked – had there been good levels of interest from potential stakeholders in joining the EESB membership?** The Vice Principal – Business Development advised that a communication had been issued to former members of the Local College Boards and several had expressed interest in joining the new forums. Similarly, communications had also been issued to new potential stakeholders, such as Chamber of Commerce leaders. • The Vice Principal – Business Development advised that the EESBs would primarily focus on the College's contribution to the broader skills agenda.	
8)	**BOARD & COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT APPROACH** **16:29** 8.1 The CEO & Principal shared the following update, further to recent discussions at the Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee: • Further to recent Ofsted inspection planning activity, it had been identified that there was a need to ensure dedicated Governor oversight of Careers & Skills and Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND). • A dedicated Careers & Skills Governor would be able to align on the local agenda in collaboration with Careers & Skills Governors across FE Sussex, manage the relationship with the College's Careers & Skills nominee and meet with Ofsted as required. **Subject to Board appointment, Catherine Manning, CS&Q Committee Chair, had agreed to perform this role moving forward.** • Similarly, appointing a specific SEND Governor would further supplement existing oversight of the College's SEND provision. It was therefore proposed that the existing Safeguarding Link Governor's role be extended to include both Safeguarding & SEND, as per the previous incumbent. **Subject to Board appointment, Aly Colman, CS&Q Committee Vice Chair, had agreed to perform this role moving forward.** • Subject to Board approval and appointment, these roles would be known as: o Careers & Skills Ambassador o Safeguarding & SEND Ambassador	
9)	**CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD UPDATE** **16:32** 9.1 The Chair of the Board shared the following update: • The meeting had primarily included a progress update on each of the key capital development projects.	

#	Item	Action
	• Additionally, discussion had focused on addressing challenges related to some key leases and ongoing planning applications. • As such, there were no significant updates at this stage. 9.2 An Independent Governor noted the need to ensure that the current space modelling activity related to the Estate Transformation Programme, was reflective of the College's future needs, including taking higher education provision into consideration.	
Annual Reports		
10)	**ANNUAL DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION REPORT AND SINGLE EQUITY ACTION PLAN 16:33** 10.1 Governors noted the associated paper and the following discussion then occurred: • The Chair of the Board reflected that the report included high quality data, though noted the need to consider intersectionality in the way in which the data was presented. The CEO & Principal advised that this was currently being reviewed at a systemic level in the College. • **The Chair of the Board asked – did the College's systems facilitate certifications for those students who had transitioned and therefore changed their gender identity, i.e. to include their preferred name and gender?** The CEO & Principal committed to investigate this.	
	○ **Action 10.1.1 – Determine whether the College's existing systems enabled students who had transitioned to receive exam certifications that were reflective of their preferred gender and name.**	**RC**
	• The Director of Governance advised that the report included more comprehensive data in the Governor section, with additional information on the Board's DEI priorities moving forward. This information had also been mirrored in the Annual Report of the GP&R Committee. • **RESOLUTION – The Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee agreed to recommend the Annual Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Report & Single Equity Action Plan to the Board for approval.**	
Policies & Key Documents		
11)	**POLICIES** **16:37** *11.1 Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Staff & Students* • The Director of Governance shared the following update: ○ This procedure had been jointly considered by the Resources, Culture & Impact Committee. ○ At the request of the RC&I Committee, the list of mechanisms for engaging with staff had been amended. ○ Feedback from both staff and student representatives had also been sought, however, no further changes were suggested. • **RESOLUTION – The Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee agreed to recommend the Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Staff & Students to the Board for approval.**	

#	Item	Action
12)	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS** **16:59** 12.1 The following discussion occurred: • Governors reconfirmed that there would be a pre-meeting deep dive discussion on 'High Needs' at the next meeting. As such, the meeting would commence from 14:00. ○ **<u>Action 12.1.1</u> – Extend the duration of the next CS&Q meeting on 26th February 2024 to three hours.** • The CEO & Principal suggested that the format of the next meeting should be amended to enable greater focus on quality improvement actions for key areas, such as apprenticeships.	**BH**
13)	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING** **16:39** 14.1 Governors noted that the next meeting of the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee had been scheduled for **26th February 2024, 14:00-17:00, which would be in person, at the Eastbourne campus.**	
14)	**LIVE COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT** **16:40** 14.1 Five survey responses were received from Governors, as follows:	

#	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?	**80%**
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?	**60%**
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?	**None**

#	Item	Action
15)	**CLOSE** **16:41** **15.1 The meeting closed at 16:41.**	

Action Summary

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
0.1.1.	RC	0.1.1 – Consider and update the Self-Assessment Report, noting the following suggested amendments: • Reference the work the College was currently leading with the Employer Exchange and the associated impacts for the Curriculum provision.	14th December 2023

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
		• More fully outline the breadth of the College's CPD offer to staff, including linkages to high needs delivery, the MyReview Project and research-based learning and development activity. • Consolidate the 'Key Areas for Development' detailed within the Personal Development section of the SAR. • Note in the Executive Summary that the College's Safeguarding provision was effective. • Remove attendance tracking as a key area for development in the Safeguarding section of the SAR. • Include further details on the evidence related to the 'observation process' for the Leadership & Management – Key Areas for Development section.	
4.1.1	RC	Review the use of benchmarking data detailed in the SAR and where possible, include a comparison against both the national picture and the prior year.	14th December 2023
4.1.2	RC	Revisit the executive summaries in the SAR to ensure that clear justifications for the proposed ratings are incorporated. Additionally, outline some of the broader challenges for the College, in the Context section.	14th December 2023
4.2.1	RC	Consider and update the Quality Improvement Plan, noting the following suggested amendments: • Revisit the proposed success measures and determine whether these can be more specific in terms of impact. • Consistently use colour coding to indicate any completed items, i.e. blue. • Ensure consistent reference to priority focus areas, as well as appropriate triangulation throughout, i.e. High Needs and Apprenticeships. • Validate that the 2023-24 QIP had been closed and ensure that any outstanding actions were incorporated into the new QIP, where appropriate. • Include summary strengths and weaknesses information in the QIP. • Include an objective related to internal progression to HE.	14th December 2023
5.2.1	RC	In the next CS&Q Report, detail the percentage of student recruitment growth, as well as the actual number of students.	26th February 2024
5.5.1	BH	Add 'Pre-meeting Deep Dive Discussion – High Needs' to the agenda for the next CS&Q Committee meeting on 26th February 2024, with a view to extend an invitation to all Governors.	**Complete**
5.7.1	BH	Invite the Assistant Principal, Hastings to attend CS&Q Committee meetings moving forward.	**Complete**
5.8.1	DH	Validate whether students who were eligible for free school meals were able to access this provision whilst on work placement.	26th February 2024
6.3.1	RC	Consider opportunities to maximise student engagement with Student Council meetings, whilst ensuring that it was representative of a broad range of different student groups.	26th February 2024
6.3.2	RC	Explore the feasibility of enabling attendance at Student Council meetings by interested students who were not necessarily Student Council Representatives, and more broadly leveraging social media to communicate key updates.	26th February 2024
10.1.1	RC	Determine whether the College's existing systems enabled students who had transitioned to receive exam certifications that were reflective of their preferred gender and name.	26th February 2024
12.1.1	BH	Extend the duration of the next CS&Q meeting on 26th February 2024 to three hours.	**Complete**