

East Coast College Corporation

MINUTES of the meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee held at 9am on Tuesday 18th June 2024 Lowestoft Sixth Form College Board Room

Present:	Kirk Lower (Chair KL) Tina Ellis (TE) Rachel Kirk (RK) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO PP) Graham Evans (GE) Vicki Paterson (VP) Amy Rust (Associate Governor AR)
In attendance:	Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance WS) Paula Ottaway (Assistant Principal Student Services and SEND PO) Ruth Harrison (Interim Deputy Principal RH) and Kerry Payne (Principal Lowestoft Sixth Form/Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access))
S/24/6/1	Apologies and Membership
No apologies were received	
S/24/6/2	Declarations of Interest
Declarations of interest were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kirk Lower re BPP University (consultancy). <p>The Committee agreed that this didn't preclude full participation in the meeting.</p>	
S/24/6/3	Student discussion – Unloc Leadership Academy
<p>The Committee were joined by a College Apprentice who had taken part in the Unloc Leadership Academy and a discussion was held with them about the Academy and its benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We worked as a team and activities were designed to enhance this. We supported each other to succeed and there was a positive energy throughout Interesting speakers who talked about their leadership journeys Helped develop resilience and tackle anxiety Unloc's facilitation and support was excellent Skills learnt have been of benefit to my role and in my apprenticeship All produced and presented a project to an audience which included the FE Commissioner <p>The Committee commented that the Leadership Academy was a great scheme and it was hoped take up would grow in 2024/25. The Director of Governance advised on actions being taken to recruit and develop the Leadership Academy.</p>	
S/24/6/4	To approve the minutes of the last meeting 19 3 24 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda
The minutes of the meeting of 19 3 24 were approved as a true record	
S/24/6/5	Rolling Action Log
The Action Log was reviewed and it was noted where the actions were addressed on the agenda.	
S/24/6/6	Quality Update
<p>The Interim Deputy Principal presented the update which covered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key performance indicators to date in relation to attendance, retention and predicted achievement. Update on apprenticeships. Deep dives conducted since last report. Update on work and progress made by the central quality team. Review of the Quality Improvement Plan. 	

Attendance and retention remain key challenges for the College, where students are retained they are usually very successful. Research is taking place regarding retention and the Unloc learner voice work has considered attendance and retention. Additionally, the focus of our RED experiment will be a cross college initiative, based on improving the learner experience during the induction period focused on the ECC Induction Standards. It is hoped that this will help students develop as a team, enable them to celebrate their early successes through joint project work and understand the behaviour and attitudes required of them. This will be across all the campuses.

Governors commented that this was a positive approach but challenged how those students that changed course or level at an early stage would be incorporated into their new team. The Interim Deputy Principal advised that there would be some similarities in the induction period between courses and the College's Success Coaches would support students who moved courses.

The Principal commented that the College was also looking to develop a sense of team within the staff. For instance, the College's appraisal system was being changed with team and individual objectives to support the team ones.

Governors discussed how student's attitude to attendance could be changed. The Interim Deputy Principal advised that the College needed to make lessons unmissable and set attendance expectation at an early stage. Teachers needed to be prepared and on time with a cross college culture that students come first. The quality would be reviewed through additional walkthroughs and a visible management presence. The start of the year was critical to set the expected behaviour and attitudes. The Principal and CEO advised that the College was reviewing its working at home policy as it was important that staff were visible and available to students.

The Assistant Principal Student Services and SEND commented that it was important that Student's resilience was developed as this would help improve attendance and retention. Support would be provided through the Success Coaches and the Wellbeing Team and covered in tutorials. The team were looking at changing roles and learning from other colleges to develop the support offered including the development of a Wellbeing Hub.

Governors discussed the apprenticeship update and the work that was ongoing to improve the provision. It was good to see progress but further improvement was needed to improve the quality and recruitment.

The Interim Deputy Principal advised that the College's apprenticeship provision was mainly long apprentices so took longer to recover and the College was still seeing the impact of Covid and the previous issues with staff recruitment. Quality improvement work was ongoing through the monthly Progress Boards which considered every apprentice. Progress had been made in clearing the backlog of out of time apprentices and in improving the timely achievement rate. It should be noted that because the number of apprentices is relatively small, 2-3 apprentices count as 1% of the reportable cohort. This means that a small number of apprentices who do not achieve as expected, can have a big impact on results.

The Principal and CEO advised that staff recruitment had been improved through the remuneration changes approved by the Board. When the College got it right, apprentices achieved and progressed to high quality jobs. The College needed to continue to improve in order to build employers confidence in our offer.

Governors discussed the need to increase the number of females in male dominated apprenticeships and how the College could support this through its work with schools and in its marketing.

	<p>Governors discussed the College's deep dive approach and noted that it was not yet embedded across the College and that progress on implementing the recommendations needed to be quicker. The Interim Deputy Principal advised that the deep dives have been completed internally and, in some cases, have been supported by specialists. To further embed the approach Assistant Principals will have a target in their appraisals, to ensure that Curriculum Managers all complete the required quality processes and procedures and the improvement actions covered in team objectives.</p> <p>Governors discussed the importance of supporting teachers including those at the start of their teaching journey. There was a need to develop the craft of teaching as well as the skills required to manage a classroom. The Interim Deputy Principal advised that the teacher training was strong and staff were supported by the ATPs and a comprehensive CPD offer.</p>	
<p>S/24/6/7</p>	<p>HE Strategy Review</p>	
	<p>The Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access presented the HE Strategy Review. The strategy has been reviewed and updated to ensure the direction of HE quality and development in 2025-2030. The intent described within the strategy remains unchanged, including the core aims and objectives and is aligned with the University of Suffolk's vision. As requested by governors an additional section on the market has been added along with an enhanced focus on marketing.</p> <p>Governors commented that the sense of direction of the offer could be clearer. The Assistant Principal advised that the College's HE market was mainly the adult one with small inclusive supportive provision with bespoke timetabling. There was a need to ensure that the Community was aware of our offer and this would be helped by the opening of The Place, the publicity about its opening and its town centre position.</p> <p>Governors challenged that the student numbers were small and how this could be improved. The Assistant Principal advised that the numbers were small and advised on the numbers needed for the courses to run and how standard modules across courses were being considered. The Principal and CEO commented that the College's Adult Strategy aligned with the HE Strategy and was looking at building a pipeline of HE students. The FdSc Conservation Science and Animal Management was a positive example of internal progression.</p> <p>Governors commented that there was a need to further develop the College's HE offer and its partnership with University of Suffolk. This could include looking at alternatives such as Degree Apprenticeships. The Principal and CEO commented that there was a need for clear progression mapping and business planning to drive growth.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to recommend the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Education Strategy 2025 – 2030 to the Corporation for approval. 	
<p>S/24/6/8</p>	<p>Termly Safeguarding and Wellbeing Update</p>	
<p>S/24/6/8.1</p>	<p>Safeguarding Link Governor Reports</p>	
	<p>The Assistant Principal Student Services and SEND presented the update and the Safeguarding Link Governor updated on her visits and reviews of the Single Central Register.</p> <p>Governors discussed the report and challenged the changes in referral rates. The Assistant Principal advised that the Success Coaches at the Sixth Form had resulted in a reduction of referrals as they were able to support the students with lower level support needs. The Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team know the students very well, especially where repeat referrals. The Team are looking at how students can be supported to build their own resilience and independence as this will help them at College and in their future careers. Other College's approaches are being considered as well as building on the work of the Success Coaches. The College ran a successful Mental Health Week and lunch time clubs continue to be developed.</p>	

<p>Governors commented that the College needed to review areas both where there were high referrals and where there were low ones to ensure that all students were aware of the services and support that the College offered and how to access them.</p> <p>Governors queried the support available for those with suicidal ideation and intent. The Assistant Principal advised that the College is now seeing a more consistent and collaborative use of the Fitness to study policy which provides a wraparound cross college model of student support. The College risk assessed students and reviewed if College was the right place for them.</p> <p>Governors challenged the Colleges approach to outside support. The Assistant Principal advised that the College signposted to support and had a good working relationship with outside agencies and made referrals for support; unfortunately, in some areas there was a long wait for the required support. The College used a multi-agency approach to issues such as housing and also had some charitable funds that could be used to help support students as well as that available through student finance. It should be remembered that for a lot of students College was their safe space.</p>		
S/24/6/9	Careers Update	
<p>The Assistant Principal Student Services and SEND presented the Careers update and advised of Career staff recruitment issues and work with Beacon East. NEACO funding has been reduced for 2024/25 and this will see a reduction in activities including the trips and opportunities funded. The position paper set out on an update on strengths, impacts and areas for development.</p> <p>Governors challenged how it was ensured that Careers staff's knowledge was current. The Assistant Principal advised that this was through CPD and access to various software.</p>		
S/24/6/10	Learner Voice with Unloc	
S/24/6/10.1	Unloc Leadership Academy	
S/24/6/10.2	Unloc ECC Learner Voice Activities - Curriculum	
S/24/6/10.3	Unloc ECC Learner Voice Activities - Attendance	
<p>The Director of Governance presented the report on the Leadership Academy and the learner voice activities carried out with Unloc and provided an update on the recruitment for the Student Union President and students for the Leadership Academy in 2024/25.</p> <p>Governors discussed the findings and the reasons for the differences in attitude and engagement between campuses and whether the buildings affected student's attitudes. The Interim Deputy Principal commented that students tended to identify with their curriculum area rather than the College. The induction was to be further developed along with a Freshers Fayre to help ensure that students felt welcomed to the College and understood what was expected of them. The Leadership Academy would be advertised during the Freshers Fayre.</p>		
S/24/6/11	Accountability Statement	
<p>The Principal and CEO presented the Accountability Statement and advised that this was an early draft. Marketing were currently designing and editing the document. The front section was setting the College context and was based on the College's Strategic Curriculum Review. This was being considered by all the main committees and then would be subject to a written resolution so that it could be submitted by 30 June. The Accountability Statement linked to the Annual Review and the Strategy 20230 Review and all would have a similar design.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the draft statement for 2024/25 and approved subject to the final review its objective sections of the statement.</p>		
S/24/6/12	Governor Engagement	
S/24/6/12.1	SEND Link Meeting	
<p>The Director of Governance presented the Governor engagement and reports that had happened since the last meeting including the SEND Link Governor meeting.</p>		

The Assistant Principal Student Services and SEND commented that it was positive to have a SEND Link Governor. At the initial meeting there had been a discussion around embedding EHCPs to ensure suitable support for all learners and training and support for staff on their completion.		
S/24/6/13	Risk Register	
1. Has the risk register been reviewed Yes, 29 May 2024 2. Is the Committee content that the risks are relevant and are being updated Yes, and discussed as part of the agenda items. 3. Is the Committee content that the risks are being mitigated? Yes, and discussed as part of the agenda items. It noted that the timely achievement risk for apprentices had reduced as performance had improved. 4. Where a red risk, is the Committee assured that appropriate action is being taken There are no red risks 5. Where does the Committee have significant concerns. The College needed to ensure it was prepared for Ofsted.		
S/24/6/14	Agenda planning	
None		
S/24/6/15	Review of Meeting	
1. Confidential Items: None 2. Were Learners prominent in discussions: a focus of the Committee Yes throughout the agenda. 3. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment None 4. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None 5. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None 6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – None, included in Accountability Statement 7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media – Annual Review 8. How did the meeting go: Good meeting.		