

East Coast College Corporation

MINUTES of the Self-Assessment meeting of the Quality and Curriculum Committee held at 9am on Tuesday 15th October 2024 Lowestoft Sixth Form College Board Room

Present:	Peter Lavender (Chair PL) Kirk Lower (KL) Tina Ellis (TE) Vicki Paterson (VP) Robin Jackson (RJ) Amy Rust (Associate Governor AR) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO PP) and on Teams Rachel Kirk (RK)
In attendance:	Gary Jefferson (Deputy Principal) Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance WS) Paula Ottaway (Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND PO) Kerry Payne (Principal Lowestoft Sixth Form/Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access) Tom Roberts (Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality)
QC/24/10/1	Apologies and Membership
Apologies from Madeleine Moretta	
The Chair welcomed all to the first meeting of the reconstituted Quality and Curriculum Committee and introductions were made. This meeting's focus was the Self-Assessment, the December meeting would focus on the annual reports and quality updates.	
QC/24/10/2	Declarations of Interest
Declarations of interest were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kirk Lower re BPP University (consultancy). 	
The Committee agreed that this didn't preclude full participation in the meeting.	
QC/24/10/3	Student discussion – Foundation Students
<p>The Committee was joined at the start of the meeting by a tutor and students from the College's foundation provision. They explained 'Project Co-Create,' which involved the students co-creating their curriculum and learning methods against the required framework and the unit's criteria. This considered independence, employability, and preparation for moving on to learn in the wider vocational areas. The students advised on the course that they were following, why they had chosen the College and the course, and what they enjoyed about 'Project Co-Create'. They also discussed trips and their funding and those on the Art course their Art.</p> <p>The tutor gave a short presentation on 'Project Co-Create.'</p> <p>The Committee discussed the project with the students and were shown examples of the work that they had created as part of it. The students advised that different mediums and resources had been used including AI and commented that it had been fun, and had given them the freedom to try new things and different ways of learning. The tutor advised that the project was a positive way of engaging students as they feel that they have ownership over their learning and it was hoped that it would improve participation and attendance.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the College's Pathway programme. The tutor advised that this course supported students moving into the community and adult life and helped them prepare for their next steps and transition. It included off-site trips and volunteering opportunities and also helped parents/carers prepare for this next step. Their course was accredited using RARPA: governors suggested that the course could be moderated using partners from other colleges, which would assist rigor in what was essentially self-assessment.</p> <p>The students commented that they enjoyed College and the different opportunities that they had especially the trips. Staff and students were thanked for their helpful contribution.</p>	

QC/24/10/4	Election of Committee Vice Chair	
<p>The Director of Governance advised that it had been agreed to appoint a Vice Chair to Committees to help manage the workload and assist with succession planning.</p> <p>The Committee had been asked who wanted to take on the Vice Chair role and Rachel Kirk had volunteered.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint Rachel Kirk as Vice Chair of Quality and Curriculum for 2024/25 		
QC/24/10/4	To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Standards 18 6 24 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda.	
QC/24/10/4	To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Curriculum Development 30 4 24 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda.	
<p>The minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Standards 18 6 24 and Curriculum Development 30 4 24 were agreed as a true record.</p>		
QC/24/10/5	Rolling Action Log	
<p>The Action Log was reviewed. This was an amalgamation of actions set by Quality and Standards and Curriculum Development.</p> <p>It was agreed that the following actions could be closed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative data, because a comparative data review had been included in June's Quality report and the Self-Assessment review. • Filming, because the Institution of Engineering and Technology was not available to progress at this stage. <p>The Deputy Principal advised that conversion rates data was now part of the data packs and would be included in the next Quality Report.</p>		
QC/24/10/7	Self-Assessment Review (SAR)	
<p>The Deputy Principal presented the report Self-Assessment Review (SAR). This had been developed, following an external consultant validating department SARs, reviewing the data, and following the guidelines of the OFSTED Education and Inspection Framework for Further Education. He thanked the governors for their support and challenge at the department validation meetings.</p> <p>The Principal commented the SAR needs to consider and reflect the volume of provision that was not assessed as good or above in the overall College conclusion. The achievement rates were similar to the previous year at just below the national average and improvement was also needed with attendance and retention which were also below benchmark. Results at the Sixth Form had not been as good as expected and the reason for this was being reviewed.</p> <p>Governors commented that it was good to see that action had been taken with progress already being made. This needed to be seen across all areas. Clear expectations need to be set out for all teachers and managers with performance closely monitored and enforced throughout the year and at all stages. The quality of the teaching and learning was key to all of the student metrics: inspiring lessons mean that Students want to attend and succeed.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal advised that changes already made included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An improved induction process with expectations set out and projects worked on as a group. 		

- Clear teaching and learning expectations set and reinforced with all staff.
- a student tracking matrix had been introduced to help ensure all areas were consistently tracking progress and intervention. This consisted of five metrics and was a holistic approach with all students RAG rated and identified those in need of intervention, utilised for forecasting, and was a visible tool for triangulating progress.
- Quality Improvement Group meetings are now themed by provision type, with a core membership and other staff invited where relevant to the provision type being discussed.
- The Apprenticeship Team have been restructured, with an advert for Head of Apprenticeships currently live.
- Heads of Department, the new title for Curriculum Managers, have been set tight targets.
- A new RAG-rated feedback form has been developed and approved by the Unions for observations. This is not a return to graded observations but will provide measurable data as well as developmental feedback, and identify areas for staff development and training.

Governors agreed that these were positive changes but challenged if the College's performance management was robust and quick enough. The Deputy Principal advised on the College's processes and the Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality advised on the use of Performance Improvement Plans. These set out clear targets that needed to be achieved and provided staff with the support needed to improve. The Principal commented that the College had a large number of new teachers and they needed support to develop in the role. The College had invested in the ATPs to help with this. It was agreed that the Quality Report to the next Committee would include an update on the ATP's role and impact.

Governors challenged if the College now had an accurate performance picture. The Principal advised when considering the performance that it needed to be remembered that teacher assessment had been used during Covid and these were not comparable to exam performance. The College had also moved away from non-regulated qualifications which had inflated the performance and the College's enrolment mix had changed.

Governors challenged what action was being taken to help improve attendance and the safeguarding issues of none attendance. The Deputy Principal advised that the College was making clear to staff that registers needed to be marked at the start of lessons and students contacted where not in attendance. If non-attendance continued there was a cascade system in place and the student record was to be updated throughout. All staff had been updated on the revised KCSIE and the role of the safeguarding team.

Governors queried the student survey and that it would appear that 7% do not feel safe in the College. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that the College reviewed the survey data in detail. The feeling of being unsafe is related mainly to outside influences and the areas around the College. The College was working with the Police on this and progress would be reviewed in the next survey.

Governors discussed the Sixth Form and suggested that there was a need to re-position this as a 'Sixth Form' as it seemed to have lost its identity. The Principal advised that the College was looking at the marketing and branding around the Sixth Form. There was a need to look at its offer and the mix of A levels and BTECs, being mindful of the level of attainment from feeder schools. The average GCSE grade of students at just below 5 was different from an average Sixth Form and it was important to consider progress and added value. The Principal of Lowestoft Sixth Form advised that changes had been made this year, with delivery hours returned to the higher previous ones, improved branding, and that staff were positive regarding

	<p>the changes. Retention had improved but pass rates were down which was a surprise and needs to be reviewed.</p> <p>Governors commented that if the College did not retain the Ofsted good grading this would have a negative effect on the College in terms of reputation, morale, and new initiatives and funding may be restricted. The Principal commented that on a day-to-day basis, the Ofsted grading would not have a significant impact with the most important issue being the student and ensuring that they achieve and progress.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Assessment to be updated and the document reviewed with a more succinct and sharper document developed and presented to the November Board. • Quality Reports to include an update on the work and impact of the ATPs. <p>The Committee noted that there would be a full review of the self-assessment at the November Board. The Director of Governance advised that this would be the focus of the meeting.</p>	GJ
QC/24/10/7.1	Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)	
	<p>The Deputy Principal presented the QIP. The QIP has been created in response to the College SAR, to ensure adequate focus and priority is maintained to drive improvement throughout the academic year. Underneath the College SAR are QIPs for each provision type which include additional details.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the QIP covered the areas for improvement but needed a final review to ensure consistency. Progress against the QIP would be reviewed at each meeting.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Improvement Plan to be reviewed for consistency and presented to the November Board. 	GJ
QC/24/10/8	Recruitment	
	<p>The Deputy Principal presented the recruitment report and advised on the current position by provision type and level. The College's 16-18 recruitment had been strong but the mix of levels was not as planned, with an increase in lower-level recruitment. The reasons for this would need to be reviewed and assessed in this year's curriculum and operational planning. Waiting lists were in place for some areas of the provision, such as in construction, because numbers here were restricted due to workshop space.</p> <p>Governors expressed their concern for young people who were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) and discussed lagged funding and the cost to the College of additional students at Level 1. The Deputy Principal advised that the College is now able to claim an increase of in-year funding if post-census the College had over 100 learners over allocation. For 100-200 learners this is funded at 100% and for any over 200 learners funded at 50%.</p> <p>Governors challenged why apprentice recruitment was behind the profile. The Deputy Principal advised that recruitment had reduced mainly in the construction trades due to a reduction in new house building and in Engineering, due to employers not having vacancies this year for new apprentices and strong local competition. The College was working to improve its employer engagement and reputation.</p> <p>Governors discussed the College's Access Provision and its recruitment. It was positive to see that new courses had recruited well and had a direct progression to degree courses, but disappointing that a course had been withdrawn due to under-recruitment. The Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access) assured the Committee that all 5 applicants had transferred to alternative courses following focused careers discussion and assessment (3 to degree courses at ECC and 2 to another Access programme).</p>	

	<p>Governors challenged the reasons for under-recruitment in Higher Education. The Deputy Principal advised that this was a national trend due to the cost of living and concerns about the loan cost. The College was focusing on ensuring that it had a joined-up approach to progression.</p> <p>Governors challenged what action the College was taking to address transport issues as this was noted as a reason for College choice by most students. The Principal advised that an analysis was being carried out of learner travel patterns based on recruitment and transport data, the Deputy Principal was considering the curriculum analytics and discussion was ongoing with the bus companies regarding routes.</p>	
QC/24/10/9	Learner Attrition - Research Project and Action Plan to address recommendations	
	<p>The Deputy Principal presented the action plan and the Committee Chair, who had supported the research and advised on the research project. Learner Attrition as a research subject had been requested by the previous Curriculum Development Committee.</p> <p>Governors commented that the research was useful and it was good to see that the College had started implementing the recommendations. The main thing was to ensure that the right student was on the right course and to reduce the early drop-out.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal advised that it would appear that the actions already taken had reduced attrition. All withdrawals had to be signed off by the Deputy Principal and reasons for withdrawal came under four themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employment – either need to support the household or just prefer to work; • provider change – the College was also recruiting students due to this; • transfer to an apprenticeship and • non-contactable – a worrying number of students were not contactable and could be at risk of being not in education, employment, or training (NEET). <p>Before agreeing to any withdrawal, the Deputy Principal needed to be assured that all appropriate interventions had been tried.</p> <p>Governors challenged if the number of students in the area that were NEET had increased and what the College was doing to help address this. The Deputy Principal advised that it was an issue nationally. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND informed the Committee that a new course for a small group of Level 1 students was due to start shortly. This would be bespoke provision two days a week to help young people transition into College. It would have low numbers with a teacher from a youth work background and additional support.</p> <p>Governors challenged whether career guidance at schools was robust enough. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that it appears that those applying for level 3 have support from schools and families/carers but those at the lower level do not have the same amount of support. For instance, in mid-August, the college received a large number of new construction applicants who had not applied to a college previously. Schools needed to focus on those at a lower level and provide suitable advice and guidance at an early stage. The Deputy Principal commented that it was important that the College provided taster events so that applicants and schools understood the College's offer. The College had used its subcontractors and managed its waiting lists to try and ensure places for these new applicants. If a student was withdrawn an offer was made to an applicant on the waiting list.</p>	
QC/24/10/10	QD105 Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Policy	
	<p>The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND presented the policy and the reasons for the change in approach.</p>	

<p>Governors commented that the policy did not seem to explicitly cover ‘belonging’, although it was implicit throughout. It was important that the policy was communicated well to staff and reflected in objectives.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that as the policy covered staff, it should be considered by the People Committee too.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to recommend for approval the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QD105 Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Policy 		
QC/24/10/11	Quality and Standards Annual Committee Report	
<p>The Director of Governance presented the annual report and advised that it covered the work of the Quality and Standards Committee. It was agreed to amend the conclusion to reflect the revised Quality and Curriculum committee.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the Annual Report and agreed to submit it to the Corporation.</p>		
QC/24/10/12	Risk Register	
<p>The Director of Governance reminded the Committee of the questions set by the Audit Committee for review of the risk register. Following the amalgamation of the Curriculum Development and Growth Committee and the Quality and Standards Committee, the existing risk registers for the two Committees have been amalgamated into a single risk register and this was the first iteration of that risk register.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the risk register been reviewed Yes, October 2024. 2. Is the Committee content that the risks are relevant and are being updated Yes, the main risks had been discussed as part of the agenda items and the risk register had been reviewed because of the amalgamation of the committees. The risks may need further updates following the finalised recruitment and SAR. The Principal advised that the majority of risks were amber which demonstrated that the College was not where it wanted to be. 3. Is the Committee content that the risks are being mitigated? Mitigation and actions were discussed in the meeting with the Quality Improvement Plan key to this. 4. Where a red risk, is the Committee assured that appropriate action is being taken The maritime provision risk has increased to red. There is a risk to recruitment and costs due to the uncertainty about visas. Alternative sources of CAS licences for overseas students were being investigated but this could take time to resolve, waiting on university sponsorship. The Deputy Principal advised that the College could consider an OFS application and its own Tier 4 licence but a successful application was not guaranteed. 5. Where does the Committee have significant concerns. Ofsted and the maritime and apprenticeship provision. <p>Governors discussed the oversight of apprenticeships and it was noted that the Committee considered the quality and curriculum planning for the offer whilst the Finance and General Purposes Committee considered the income and resources and this was reflected in the management accounts. The Deputy Principal advised that operationally each department had a target for apprentices and that, as the Committee was aware, the funding value for apprentices varied.</p>		
QC/24/10/13	Agenda planning	
<p>Quality updates to be included in the Governance Update between meetings.</p>		

QC/24/10/14	Review of Meeting	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confidential Items: Detail of the draft SAR - until approved 2. Were Learners prominent in discussions: a focus of the Committee Yes throughout the agenda. 3. Risk Management: any issues discussed that may require an additional Assessment None 4. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Policy and the need for better reporting 5. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Support for the College Team during Ofsted 6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – None 7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media – None 8. How did the meeting go: Good detailed meeting. 	