

East Coast College Corporation

MINUTES of the Quality and Curriculum Committee held at 9am on Tuesday 17 June Lowestoft Sixth Form College Board Room

Present:	Peter Lavender (Chair PL) Tina Ellis (TE) Robin Jackson (RJ) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO PP) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Rachel Kirk (Vice Chair RK) Kirk Lower (KL) and on Teams Mark Buckton (MB)
In attendance:	Gary Jefferson (Deputy Principal) 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) Holly Chase (Assistant Principal) Lee Nevill (Teaching and Learning Manager) Bridget Fletcher-Wells (Principalship Office Manager)
QC/25/06/1	Apologies and Membership
<p>Apologies Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance WS) Vicki Paterson (VP) and Amy Rust (Associate Governor AR).</p> <p>Thank you to Bridget Fletcher-Wells (Principalship Office Manager) for covering the meeting. It was noted that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes only and that this recording would be deleted after the draft minutes had been approved by the Chair.</p> <p>Membership - Amy Rust will be standing down as an Associate Governor as at 31/7/25 due to work commitments and this would have been her last meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the meeting would be jointly chaired by the Committee's Chair and Vice Chair.</p>	
QC/25/06/2	Declarations of Interest
<p>Kirk Lower declared an interest as he is the Chair of the Health and Science Route Panel for Skills England.</p>	
QC/25/06/3	Student discussion – Construction
<p>The Committee welcomed construction students (carpentry, plumbing and electrical) to the meeting and discussed with them the College and their course.</p> <p>The students commented on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons for Choosing the College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity and convenience were major factors - highlighting the importance of location and transport. Course availability (e.g., Level 2 Electrical not offered elsewhere) Some students commented that they did have long commutes (e.g. from near Ipswich) Teaching and Learning Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive feedback on support for learning difficulties (e.g. Dyslexia). Concerns raised about class sizes and that students often wait for long periods for feedback or support in the room, due to limited teacher availability. Peer support is common and valued, especially in practical sessions. Desire for more structured support - Suggestions included more Learning Support Assistants with trade experience, better workshop scheduling and the staffing gaps in practical sessions being addressed. 	

3. Transport and Campus Location Issues

- A major concern was the lack of clarity and support for students needing to travel between the Lowestoft to Great Yarmouth campuses from this September, following the relocation of courses. As a result, students requested early notice of campus changes, and transport availability to enable them to continue their course. They suggested shuttle buses between campuses, flexible start times, and coordination with public transport timetables. This is an urgent issue which needs addressing because of upcoming course relocations. Students asked to be involved in the feedback loops to improve planning and delivery. They were given this assurance

4. Enrichment and Work Experience

- Limited exposure to guest speakers, site visits, or real-world experiences and there was a need for this to be improved.
- Students expressed interest in short courses being offered e.g. basic plumbing, multi-trade skills) and Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card training.
- Missed opportunities for follow-up on projects, such as not being taken to see completed work, left students feeling undervalued. Student projects and experiences needed to be followed through.

5. English and Maths Provision

- Mixed experiences: some students struggle and therefore avoid attending.
- Lack of contextualisation: students don't always see the relevance to their vocational goals.
- Suggestions included more integration with vocational subjects, employer involvement to emphasise the importance of these skills, and better ownership from vocational staff in promoting English and maths.

The students were thanked, and they left the meeting.

Governors commented that there was a need when changing courses or campus, to ensure that transport arrangements were communicated at an early stage with the students affected. In addition, when students were involved in developing projects as part of their course, then it was made possible for students to see the finished project.

The Principal advised that the College had to take a cautious approach to consolidation, consider its competition, and where the students were recruited from. With transport, the College is looking to fund a shuttle bus and to look at its overall transport strategy. Governors agreed that transport was a key area to address as it was raised in all meetings with students. Governors reiterated the importance of the College confirming any transport arrangements to students as early as possible, especially for students in year two where the location of the course had changed.

The Deputy Principal commented that there was, in some vocational areas, a lack of ownership of English and maths, and this needs to be embedded in all areas, and the need supported by employers. Governors commented that we need all our vocational areas to embed maths and English in their provision so that the students can see the value of it to their vocation and that the College should learn from areas of best practise.

QC/25/05/4	To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Curriculum 1 4 2025, and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda.	
<p>The minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Curriculum 1 4 2025 were agreed as a true record.</p> <p>Governors raised that transport issues remains an ongoing concern.</p>		
QC/25/05/5	Rolling Action Log	
<p>The Action Log was reviewed, and it was noted where the actions were in progress or not yet due.</p> <p>Action: VCE Consortium was proposed but has not currently been taken forward. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal would discuss with the Skills and Innovation Director to see if the action needed to be progressed.</p> <p>Action: Senior Management Group to explore Community Interest Company (CIC) status to increase funding opportunities, was discussed, and whether this would be beneficial to the College and its offer. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal would discuss with the Skills and Innovation Director to see if the action needed to be progressed.</p> <p>Action: Category of weapons to be further broken down to provide clarification in the safeguarding reports. The Assistant Principal Student Services and SEND, advised that there had been an issue with safeguarding data due to a reporting error in the “My Link” system. The reports had been incorrectly categorised, leading to inaccurate data on weapon-related incidents. The data correction is underway, and future reports will reflect accurate figures and this will include reviewing whether past figures can be corrected. It should be noted that the incidents were mainly external to the College.</p>		
QC/25/05/6	Quality Update	
<p>The Deputy Principal presented the update and advised on areas that had progressed and areas that still needed development. The forecasts suggest a strong year for achievement, and there continued to be a focus on embedding good practice, improving employer links, and refining internal systems. Retention was strong across most areas, but attendance was still a concern. He updated the Committee on the planned actions and initiatives to continue the College’s development including the August Reset Day to set out the expectations for the year, themed areas for development including the use of Mark book and forecasting and the embedding of Success Coaches into the full time study programmes.</p> <p>Governors commented that the quality report was an excellent one with a sharpness of reporting.</p> <p>Governors discussed adult skills and increasingly providing education for adults into the community, which all agreed was a positive development. It was noted that it takes a while to build community provision. The Deputy Principal advised on the devolution work with Suffolk and Norfolk.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access) updated on progress with the new maritime partnership which would secure and help develop the provision. Governors commented that this was really positive news and thanked those who had seen this through.</p> <p>Governors discussed the role of the Success Coaches and how they would support students, including student attendance which was a key area for improvement.</p>		

	<p>Governors raised that work experience had been noted as an issue by the student group and challenged how this was to be developed. There was a need for work and industry experience to develop the students' knowledge and experience and governors agreed that they needed to review this area as part of the governor/link visits. The Deputy Principal advised that employer engagement was inconsistent and was an area for development to help ensure that students received relevant and engaging experiences.</p> <p>Governors challenged the comment in the report about students reaching their 'academic ceiling', and what this meant. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that in Foundation there had been students who had completed the Foundation area and there were no suitable provision at the College for them to progress to. This meant that difficult conversations had to be had with parents and students, explaining that the Local Authority would not always fund additional adult provision. It was important that staff considered the learner journey and had these conversations early. The provision was looking at introducing a 'Moving On' event for learners and carers so that they are introduced to these next steps early. Governors commented that the College needed to be about progression and educational validity for all individuals. In Foundation there was additional parental concern that had to be managed and messaging at an early stage was key.</p> <p>Governors discussed the opportunities of Sizewell and how future skills could be developed and issues addressed.</p>	
QC/25/05/6.1	Governor Link and Visit Reports	
	<p>The Governor's reports were noted and the main themes identified were discussed. These visits provided valuable opportunities for Governors to triangulate the information presented at meetings and to identify areas for development. To enhance the impact of these visits, it was suggested that follow-up meetings be arranged to explore identified issues in greater depth. This would support Governors in gaining a more comprehensive understanding and in making more informed contributions to strategic development.</p> <p>The Communities of Practice was discussed and how this could be shared with the College. The Principal Lowestoft Sixth Form advised how this was to be developed and the Teaching and Learning Manager advised how best practise was shared across the College with resources shared through SharePoint with those that could not attend an internal or external event.</p> <p>Governors commented that it was important that practise was shared and that the College continued to take part in events such as the research network at the College of West Anglia and the College's Voices from the East Event as this enabled staff to share research and practise across the sector.</p>	
QC/25/05/7	Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)	
	<p>The Teaching and Learning Manager presented the update QIP.</p> <p>Governors noted that there had been good development in year and that the areas that required further development and were RAG rated as red were those already discussed, i.e. attendance and the inconsistent use of Mark Book. The Teaching and Learning Manager commented that it had been a heavy year with a lot of development, including more focus on KPIs. This would be further developed at the reset day in August. The Success Coaches were to be further developed with a clear focus on attendance. Success coaches and the RED induction events had been ideas developed following the research project on Attrition and it was felt had helped to improve retention.</p> <p>Governors challenged if there was a correlation between attendance and the quality of teaching and learning. The College needed to have unmissable lessons so that students want to attend. The Teaching and Learning Manager advised that the Self-Assessment Review</p>	

	<p>meetings had identified that those that attended throughout the year had a better success rate. There are various reasons that students don't attend, including the quality of the lesson, and actions have been taken to improve and develop lessons. There are still too many didactic approaches to teaching and too much 'chalk and talk' which is being addressed through performance management.</p> <p>The Principal commented that some areas had really high attendance and this was because high expectations were set, staff's motivation was high, and the quality of teaching was maintained. Those identified as needing to improve would be supported through Course MOTs and Support to Improve. Heads of Department were to be measured and developed against KPIs and through a performance matrix.</p> <p>Governors discussed performance reporting on attendance and how this could be more dynamic between departments, compared with similar colleges and the learning shared. All need to be responsible for attendance and look to improve attendance in their area and it not be seen as the responsibility of the Success coaches only. Performance needed to be managed where performance and compliance was not good enough.</p> <p>The Principal commented that attendance was an area that needed improvement at local schools too and it was discussed work that local schools were carrying out to address attendance. Governors noted that Covid had changed people's attitude to attendance and this needed to continue to be challenged.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal commented that we needed to be mindful of our context. Governors agreed it was a complex area and that Governors were looking to strengthen the College's approach to attendance to help move the College to outstanding.</p> <p>Governors challenged if there were still an issue in recording of apprenticeship data. The Assistant Principal responsible for apprenticeships advised that the systems were now robust and monitored regularly, but there were still historical issues that were being addressed and had targets to complete. The Teaching and Learning Manager advised that there was an action plan in place and that this was monitored through the Quality Improvement Group.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship Funding Rules compliance, including changes in the rules, to be added to the QIP <p>MB left the meeting</p>	GJ
QC/25/05/8	Learner Journey Advisory Audit - Actions and Progress Update	
	<p>The Chair advised that the Audit Report had been referred from the Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal presented the report and updated the Committee on progress against the actions, including the development of the online enrolment system.</p> <p>Governors suggested that the term 'learner journey' was the incorrect one to use for the Audit Report because it considered enrolment only.</p>	
QC/25/05/9	Termly Safeguarding and Prevent Update	
	<p>The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND presented the report and advised that a quality service for students has been maintained even when the team was struggling with staff absences. There had been data issues but these have now been resolved and a data review had been completed by the Student Services Manager to ensure that the data is accurate.</p> <p>Governors queried if the issues with the slow responses to referrals from the College to the Norfolk and Suffolk Mental Health Trust had been addressed. Governors had previously</p>	

	<p>recommended writing to the Trust to raise concerns but this had not been carried out. The Principal advised that the College leadership initially held off due to NHS Trust restructuring and leadership changes. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that referrals are made and accepted onto a waiting list but it is the slowness of the response after that that is a cause for concern. The Principal confirmed that he would ask other principals whether they had evidence of similar problems with the Trust.</p> <p>Governors discussed the EHCPs and Local Authority engagements with it. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that there had been another increase with EHCPs for 2025/26 and that the annual reviews were rarely attended by the Local Authorities. The College though did have close contact with the Local Authority where discussions on a case were required. Feedback is that there is a vast increase in tribunals regarding special school attendance and this could have a knock on effect on when learners progress to college.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised on actions taken to improve following the Ofsted inspection in relation to case management and case auditing. The Safeguarding Link Governor advised that she had attended team meetings and had seen this work in practise.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that following the Committees suggestion the College had looked at the CPOMs system and it is something we are exploring taking forward in the Summer. This is used by schools and would help with file transfer and reporting.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised on the impact of the Inclusion Mentor's change of role. This work has had a really positive impact in re engaging students with low attendance.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The previously agreed action to write a letter to the MP cc to the local councils, regarding the Mental Health Trust's poor service and the detrimental effect this had on the College Students and Staff to be completed and strengthened through the involvement of other colleges. 	PP/GJ
QC/25/05/10	Careers Update	
	<p>The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND presented the report and advised on the impact of the new Careers Co-ordinator in revitalising the careers function. A Careers Board Padlet which is an online platform showcasing opportunities, including job adverts and apprenticeships had been developed. Subject-Specific Career Boards had been installed in key student areas to help increase visibility of career pathways and job opportunities. The College is working through the new Gatsby Benchmarks and how these can be addressed at the College including benchmark 8 which requires a one-to-one careers meeting for all students with a Level 6 qualified careers advisor.</p> <p>Governors noted that the Gatsby Benchmarks were a challenge and asked how the College was looking to address these. The Assistant Principal said she was looking at exploring alternative strategies, seeking clarification from the Matrix assessor and asking how other colleges were addressing this issue. Governors commented that there could be wider opportunities for the College, but to take advantage of these some staff resources would be needed.</p>	
QC/25/05/10.1	QD038 Careers Strategy	
	<p>The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND, presented the report and the revised Careers Strategy. The focus of the changes was the Gatsby benchmarks.</p>	

	<p>Governors asked that the audit trail on the policy date and names of the governance committees be corrected.</p> <p>The Committee resolved, subject to the minor edits to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve QD038 Careers Strategy 	
<p>QC/25/05/11</p>	<p>Learner Voice</p>	
	<p>The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND, presented the report and advised that there had been an improvement in engagement with the survey which provided a more representative and balanced view of the student and apprenticeships experience. Some of the comments and responses in the apprenticeship survey will be due to some of the legacy issues.</p> <p>Governors commented that this was a strong message from students and valuable data for the reset for 2025/26. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that the results were shared with the Heads at department level for them to address issues raised.</p> <p>Governors also discussed whether the questions were understandable to all and whether the responses and perceptions were affected by this. Governors expressed concern over the low level of apprentices who would recommend the College. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that it was hoped that this would improve now the legacy issues with apprentices had been addressed.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the “You Said, We Did” reporting was a positive approach to reporting.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that the Student Union and President role was not working and it was to be proposed that changes were made. This would include embedding student voice into the Personal and Social Development (PSD) sessions with Questions of the Week and Course Representatives. This would not affect the Student Governor role. Governors agreed that this sounded a positive change.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the student voice proposals to be taken to the July Board. 	<p>PO</p>
<p>QC/25/05/12</p>	<p>Risk Register</p>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the risk register been reviewed. Yes, 1st June 2025. 2. Is the Committee content that the risks are relevant and are being updated. Yes, no major changes made at this review as the College needs to see how the mitigations that have been put in place develop. A full review will be carried out for the next meeting. <p>There was a need to review the risk register to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gatsby Benchmark and Compliance, as this was a reputational and compliance risk • Apprenticeship Reforms, as the potential impact of these on the College, were now important considerations. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Is the Committee content that the risks are being mitigated? Yes 4. Where a red risk, is the Committee assured that appropriate action is being taken. The red risks needed to be considered once the year’s outturn was known. 5. Where does the Committee have significant concerns 	

The main concerns had been addressed in the meeting around attendance and staff compliance.		
QC/25/05/13	Agenda planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorial System • Maths and English • Foundation Students and their progression. 		
QC/25/05/13	Review of Meeting	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confidential Items: None 2. Were Learners prominent in discussions: A focus always of the Committee. 3. Risk Management: Risk register to be reviewed after outturn known. 4. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Foundation learners – progression 5. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Safeguarding and issues with referrals 6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – None 7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media – Discussion on job advertising and the importance of language used to attract socially minded candidates 8. How did the meeting go? Long meeting but worth it. 		