

East Coast College Corporation

MINUTES of the Quality and Curriculum Committee held at 9.30am on Tuesday 2 December 2025 on Teams

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| Present: | Peter Lavender (Chair PL) Tina Ellis (TE) Kirk Lower (KL) Mark Buckton (MB) Robin Jackson (RJ) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO PP) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Vicki Paterson (VP) |
| In attendance: | Gary Jefferson (Deputy Principal GJ) Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance WS) Paula Ottaway (Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND PO) Tom Roberts (Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality TR) Holly Chase (Assistant Principal HC) Lee Nevill (Teaching and Learning Manager LN) and Kerry Payne (Principal Lowestoft Sixth Form/Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access KP) |
| QC/25/12/1 | Apologies and Membership |
| Apologies - Rachel Kirk (Vice Chair RK) | |
| QC/25/12/2 | Declarations of Interest |
| No declarations of interest were made in relation to the agenda. | |
| QC/25/12/3 | Feedback from Informal Students Session – Great Yarmouth College – postponed |
| The Chair explained that the meeting had been changed to Teams in response to several governors requesting virtual attendance. He also expressed regret that on this occasion we could not meet students. | |
| QC/25/12/4 | To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Curriculum 21 10 2025, and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda. |
| The minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Curriculum Committee 21 10 2025 were agreed as a true record. Thanks were given for the quality of the minutes. | |
| QC/25/12/5 | Rolling Action Log |
| The Action Log was reviewed and noted where actions were not yet due. | |
| Action 6 2 25 QC/25/02/6.3 - The Principal advised that the Senior Management Group had concluded that the cost-benefit case for creating a Community Interest Company (CIC) is not viable at present. This would be brought back as a proposal if the funding available through this route to support the College's mission warranted it. | |
| QC/25/12/6 | Quality Update |
| QC/25/12/6.1 | Quality Improvement Plan |
| QC/25/12/6.2 | Governor Walkthroughs and Link Visits |
| <p>The Assistant Principal (HC) reported the College's success in the World Skills competition, achieving Bronze in Welding, Silver in Media Make-Up, and Gold in Media Make-Up. With nine medal points, the College ranked joint fifth nationally and first regionally. It was hoped that the gold medal winner would go on to the global finals and that the College would enter a larger team at the next regional World Skills events.</p> <p>The Committee recorded its congratulations to the students and staff team on their achievement at World Skills and discussed how this achievement could be used to inspire other students and in the College's marketing. It was queried if the College had hosted World Skills events.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the College had previously hosted a regional event as well as other competitions such as the CITB SkillsBuild Regional Qualifier and a Welducation Open Day and Welding Competition.</p> | |

Governors noted that the Apollo Project had also won an award at the Great British Care Awards – Eastern Region, that the College had two finalists in the Good for Me, Good for FE awards for Student Volunteer of the Year and Outstanding Long Service Award for Volunteering, and that the Director of Governance had won Champion for Governance with the Chartered Governance Institute.

The Deputy Principal presented the quality update and highlighted the key areas across all provision. Attendance is showing improvement compared to the previous year, but was still below the target, and action was ongoing to address this. The majority of teachers had received a lesson visit, and the learning from this informed future professional learning days and any concerns addressed by Heads of Department. The '6 in 6' employer engagement programme, which challenged each student to experience interaction with 6 employers in the first 6 weeks of college, has been successfully implemented by most areas, providing learners with valuable insights into industry expectations and helping them to prepare effectively for future employment or further study.

Governors asked which areas identified during lesson visits required improvement. The Deputy Principal advised that this included formative questioning, teachers' expectations of students, and ensuring consistency and compliance, including at the start of lessons.

Governors commented that teachers' expectations of students had been a long term issue and queried what action was being taken to address this. The Deputy Principal advised that consistency was key, and the College was working with those teachers who had not yet embraced this. This included professional learning and targeted intervention. The College is also utilising ALPS, currently focused on the Sixth Form, but planned for expansion across the wider College's level 3 provision, to measure and demonstrate the value added by the College. The Sixth Form College Principal (KP) was invited to provide a summary of ALPS and what it represents.

Governors discussed retention and the reasons for student withdrawals. The Deputy Principal advised that confirmed data would not be available until completion of the R04 return; however, it is anticipated that the College will be close to allocation. All students who have withdrawn have been contacted. The primary reason cited was the need to work due to the cost of living.

Governors noted that the QIP suggested some students may not be on the right course, whereas the Learning Voice Survey results indicated otherwise. The Assistant Principal (HC) for Student Services & SEND advised that the College is reviewing its interview process to ensure clear communication of the balance between theory and practical elements within each course. This will help applicants fully understand the course structure and timetable expectations prior to enrolment, which is critical for supporting student retention. The Deputy Principal added that this approach should also reduce the number of internal transfers; however, this issue is compounded by the limited pre-advice students receive at school. Often, students only discover whether they enjoy a course after starting it. To address this, the College plans to further develop its open days and taster sessions.

The Assistant Principal (HC) commented that there was a need for a deeper understanding of each student at the point of entry. As part of the interview process, applicants will be asked to provide their latest school progress reports to better inform decision-making. Interviews also need more time to explore students' motivations and future career goals.

Governors challenged the reasons for the high number of extension requests and missed deadlines within the College's teacher training programme. The Teaching and Learning Manager explained that these were primarily due to workload pressures and personal circumstances. The Principal advised that, from the next academic year, the College is

considering changing delivery to twilight sessions, with trainees reimbursed for their time, as they currently use their allocated administrative time.

The Teaching and Learning Manager updated the Committee on progress with the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). It was reiterated that the start of lessons remains inconsistent, with identified areas for improvement including clear communication of learning objectives, a well-structured lesson format, and effective recap of prior learning. Behaviour was largely good in class but required improvement in the social spaces, and work was ongoing to address including consideration of the student's environment. The Senior Leadership Team has developed standardised slides for all teachers to deliver, reiterating college values and behaviour expectations and behaviour is also being addressed by the Success Coaches. Reporting had been improved so that the granular data could be reviewed to identify what was working well and what required development.

Governors challenged the proportion of teachers effectively engaging learners, noting that current levels were not satisfactory, and questioned what actions were being taken to address this. The Teaching and Learning Manager advised that this issue is being addressed through targeted CPD, support from Advanced Teaching Practitioners (ATPs), Communities of Practice, and, where necessary, Performance Improvement Plans. The College has revised its process and can now quantify the issue based on classroom visit findings. Teachers need further development to build confidence in trying new approaches and adapting to the needs of today's learners.

Governors queried the anticipated timeframe for improvements. The Teaching and Learning Manager advised that each teacher visited has been provided with feedback and an individual action plan. This was scheduled for review in the new year, with additional measures to be taken if necessary.

Governors discussed the 'Communities of Practice,' peer reviews, and the sharing of best practices. The Teaching and Learning Manager explained that these initiatives aim to share best practice and resources, with themes aligned to the College's priorities. Advanced Teaching Practitioners provide support to areas where issues have been identified, as well as to individual teachers. The College's RED system was based on peer review; however, staff feedback indicated that workload pressures meant reviews could not be carried out. All Trainee Teachers undertake a peer review as part of their training. Quality Improvement Meetings with Assistant Principals review data, including trends, and identify areas requiring improvement.

Governors raised concerns that staff absence or staff changes could present a reputational risk and asked whether this was currently an issue for the College. The Deputy Principal advised that some areas had experienced challenges due to long-term staff absence, which had been managed through internal cover or agency staff, with lesson cancellation considered only as a last resort. The Principal advised that, in certain cases, onboarding had taken significantly longer than usual due to delays in completing the required checks including the DBS which had postponed teachers' start dates.

Governors challenged whether the speed of the College's onboarding process was an issue. The Director of Governance advised that it was reported at the last People Committee meeting that onboarding times had improved. The Principal advised that delays can occur due to external factors such as DBS checks, citing one example that took approximately five months to be returned.

The Governor's visit reports were noted, and the Committee Chair advised how inspirational he had found the students' efforts in the Ethics Cup in the Sixth Form College.

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| QC/25/12/7 | Curriculum Review | |
| <p>The Deputy Principal presented the report and updated the committee on the proposed changes, including V Levels and the Level 3 and Level 2 pathways. The College will need to develop a clear understanding of the qualifications and associated delivery methods and it was hoped that the proposals would reduce confusion for students and employers.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the planned changes to English and maths, expressing the view that these would support student progression and enhance motivation to study. The Deputy Principal explained that the proposals are designed to provide a stepping stone towards GCSE, helping students to build confidence and improve attainment.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that the Senior Team were recommending to the Board that Curriculum Reform be a key focus of the forthcoming Board Away Day, and the Committee agreed that curriculum development needed to be seen as a whole Board issue.</p> | | |
| QC/25/12/8 | Annual 2024/25 and Termly Safeguarding, Prevent and Wellbeing Updates | |
| QC/25/12/8.1 | Link Governor Reports | |
| <p>The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND presented both the Annual Safeguarding Report and the termly reports. It was noted that the Annual Report had been influenced by changes in reporting processes during the year, as well as improvements implemented following the Ofsted inspection, particularly in relation to case management and case closures. The new Ofsted framework focused on inclusion, and the College needs to demonstrate the support and impact of this support.</p> <p>Governors queried the comparative referral levels. The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND advised that a number had been recategorised in the first term to better reflect the referral type.</p> <p>Governors reviewed the reasons for recent referrals, noting an increase in cases related to harassment and stalking. The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND reported that many incidents stemmed from students struggling to cope with or understand relationship break-ups, which in some cases led to inappropriate behaviours. This issue will be addressed through upcoming tutorial sessions.</p> <p>Governors queried the inconsistencies in how school names have been recorded within the College's EBS system. The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND advised that if the school name was not recorded correctly at enrolment, data would not be pulled across correctly. This was being addressed with the team to ensure consistency.</p> <p>Governors questioned whether the College was actively developing students' resilience. The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND confirmed that resilience is embedded within the tutorial programme, and students accessing the Wellbeing Service are offered a series of workshops specifically designed to build resilience.</p> <p>Governors questioned the governor's action set out in the report, noting that the Committee did not have sufficient information or knowledge to make a judgment on the overall quality of the safeguarding service. However, the report provided assurance that steps were being taken to address identified development needs and to mitigate risks.</p> <p>The Link Governor reports were noted, and the Link Governor provided an update on the work undertaken to support the Board in gaining assurance. Areas to further review are attendance, as a safeguarding issue, the role and impact of Success Coaches and NEETs.</p> | | |

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| QC/25/12/9 | Careers Update | |
| QC/25/12/9.1 | For information - Careers Governor Breakout Session Notes | |
| <p>The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND presented the report. Careers Advisors are now assigned to specific curriculum areas, enhancing their specialist knowledge and enabling more effective management of their caseloads. The Careers Festival will once again be held in March, and the College is collaborating with City College Norwich to conduct peer reviews of each other's provision.</p> <p>Governors discussed the Gatsby Benchmark 8 requirement for personal guidance and how the College is meeting this standard. The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND explained that this includes utilising Success Coaches and delivering group tutorials led by a Level 6 qualified Careers Advisor. The College is expected to be meeting or working towards the Gatsby Benchmarks, which will also be evaluated as part of Ofsted inspections.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND advised that the College would respond to the issues raised in the Board's breakout session on careers in a report to the February 2025 Committee meeting.</p> | | |
| QC/25/12/10 | Learner Voice | |
| <p>The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND presented the report and provided an update on the student survey and the 'Question of the Week' initiative. Questions have been gathered via whiteboards in general student areas and through group tutorials delivered by Success Coaches across all vocational areas. The survey, now managed internally, has seen an increase in student participation. Heads of Department are currently reviewing the data for their respective areas.</p> <p>Governors commented that the 'Question of the Week' initiative was providing valuable information, and challenged how it was to be used and addressed. The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND advised that group sessions were addressing issues raised.</p> <p>Governors commented that the survey results highlighted the importance of the quality of teaching and learning, and support for the student experience.</p> <p>Governors questioned how the College assesses whether there are areas on campus where students do not feel safe. The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND explained that the on-course survey asks questions about 'I feel safe,' which helps identify concerns. Governors observed that the question reported general personal feelings on safety rather than specific areas of the college environment.</p> <p>The Director of Governance provided an update on the applications and process for the appointment of student governors, which involved interviews managed by the Governance Remuneration and Search Committee.</p> | | |
| QC/25/12/11 | Employer Voice | |
| <p>The Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Quality (TR) provided an update on recent initiatives to strengthen employer engagement. Key changes included the introduction of the '6 in 6' student engagement programme and enhanced outreach and employer engagement by the apprenticeship team. Employer inductions for apprentices have been well received, with feedback confirming that employers can clearly see the improvements being made to the apprenticeship service overall.</p> <p>Governors asked whether all departments had achieved the '6 in 6' student engagement target. The Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Quality (TR) advised that not all departments had met this goal; some had started the initiative too late and had not fully utilised their existing employer contacts. However, there were several strong examples of positive engagement across the college, and this would be built on for future engagement.</p> | | |

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| | <p>Governors discussed work experience and placements, including those required for T Levels, and queried whether there were challenges in engaging employers. The Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Quality (TR) acknowledged that securing placements with SME employers can be difficult, as some are hesitant to take students due to limited capacity to provide support. The College is addressing these concerns by offering guidance and exploring how the levy share can be utilised to assist employers. Additionally, employers contribute through masterclasses and employer-led sessions at the College, as well as by setting projects and activities for students to complete on campus.</p> | |
| <p>QC/25/12/12</p> | <p>Complaints and Compliments Report: 2024/25 Annual and 2025/26 Termly</p> | |
| | <p>The Teaching and Learning Manager presented the report, noting that the majority of complaints were low-level and are now more evenly distributed across the provision. Complaints for the autumn term have decreased compared to the same period last year. All complaints were acknowledged within five working days; however, resolution times varied due to external dependencies and staffing gaps. A centralised system has also been introduced for recording compliments to try and ensure these are fully captured.</p> <p>Governors commented that it was positive to see the reduction in complaints.</p> | |
| <p>QC/25/12/13</p> | <p>Agenda planning</p> | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on the Careers breakout and how addressing – Feb 2025 • Personal Development to be included with Success Coaches report – Feb 2025 • Deep Dive Attendance – Feb 2025 • NEET – to be covered in curriculum planning report – Feb 2025 | |
| <p>QC/25/12/14</p> | <p>Review of Meeting</p> | |
| | <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: No additional changes needed. 4. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Foundation learners – 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 7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media – Awards 8. How did the meeting go? It was a constructive meeting, well chaired, with robust discussion and effective challenge throughout. | |