

East Coast College Corporation

MINUTES of the Quality and Curriculum Committee held at 9.30am on Tuesday 21 April 2026 Energy Centre Lowestoft

Present:	Peter Lavender (Chair PL) Rachel Kirk (Vice Chair RK) Mark Buckton (MB) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Vicki Paterson (VP) Kirk Lower (KL) Robin Jackson (RJ) and Paul Padda (Principal and CEO PP)	
In attendance:	Gary Jefferson (Deputy Principal) Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance WS) Paula Ottaway (Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND PO) Tom Roberts (Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality) Holly Chase (Assistant Principal) Lee Nevill (Teaching and Learning Manager) Kerry Payne (Principal Lowestoft Sixth Form/Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access) and for items 1-7 David Hawkins-Weeks (SEND Manager)	
QC/26/04/1	Quality and Curriculum Governors - informal meeting with Students based in the Energy Centre	
Before the formal meeting commenced, Governors and the Senior Team spoke with engineering students based at the Energy Centre.		
QC/26/04/2	Apologies and Membership	
Apologies - Tina Ellis (TE) and Jacob Yates (JY)		
QC/26/04/3	Declaration of Interest	
There were no declarations of interest.		
QC/26/04/4	Feedback from Informal Students Session	
Governors visited two Year 1 engineering classes: one T Level and one Level 3 programme. The following key observations and feedback were noted:		
- Students were drawn from a wide geographical area. - Female learners reported that they enjoyed the course and did not feel out of place. Some of those spoken to had transferred from the Sixth Form. - Learners commented that the course was heavily focused on energy and would benefit from a broader engineering focus, for example including motorsports. - The majority of students expressed an intention to progress into apprenticeships. Governors noted that most apprenticeships are at a similar level to the current courses and could have been accessed without completing a T Level or Level 3. There was also limited local availability of degree apprenticeships. - Learners reported that enrichment trips had been discussed at induction, but these had not materialised. - Securing work placements for the T Level was identified as a significant concern, as the qualification cannot be fully completed without them. The Deputy Principal confirmed that the College has a Work Placement Officer responsible for supporting this process. It was noted that in previous cohorts, some learners had achieved late passes due to completing work placements during the summer period. - Some learners felt the course was overly theoretical, with limited opportunities for practical learning. The Assistant Principal (TR) explained that the T Level programme, particularly in Year 1, is theory heavy, but acknowledged that this theory could be delivered in a more practical learning environment. - Several learners spoke positively about the course and the College, highlighting the level of independence they were given. - Not all learners were aware of student surveys or knew where to raise issues or concerns. - One learner reported that they were not permitted to access facilities at the Sixth Form Centre and did not understand the reason for this.		

- Learners joining classes late appeared to be a common practice and was not challenged. - Views on challenge were mixed: some learners felt the course was not demanding enough, while others reported struggling, being unsure of expectations. - Some learners were unclear about who to approach for support when they encountered difficulties. - Workbook resources were of poor quality, being old photocopies with weak English, and were identified as requiring improvement. Students appeared to be left to complete the workbook with little support. - Not all learners understood what was coming next on the course or what their progression options were. - Communication around course structure, assessment, progression and expectations was inconsistent. The Deputy Principal commented that, as the Committee was aware, engineering has been, and remains, an area of concern, and that improvement work is ongoing. The Assistant Principal for Student Services and SEND advised that course structure, support arrangements, surveys and careers guidance should have been covered during induction and through personal development sessions, including three dedicated careers sessions. It was acknowledged that not all learners attended tutorials. The Assistant Principal (TR) advised that the absence of the Engineering Course Leader had had a negative impact on quality. The Principal advised that the College is exploring the introduction of a Student Guarantee/Charter, which would clearly outline what students can expect from the College and the standards to which the College can be held accountable. Governors suggested that induction should be repeated at the start of each term to ensure all learners are clear about course content, enrichment, expectations and available support.		
QC/26/04/5	To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Curriculum Committee on 3 2 2026, and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda.	
The minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Curriculum Committee 3/2/2026 were agreed as a true record.		
QC/26/04/6	Rolling Action Log	
The Action Log was reviewed, and it was noted where the actions were not yet due.		
The Deputy Principal advised that UKVI approval for the CAS visas has now been secured and that recruitment for the May maritime cohort commenced. Governors expressed their gratitude to staff who had enabled this to happen.		
QC/26/04/7	Area of Focus - Schools White Paper and SEND	
The Vice Chair opened the item and advised that she had met with the Assistant Principal for Student Services and SEND to discuss the proposed changes and their impact on the College and its teaching and learning.		
The SEND Manager presented the report and briefed the Committee on the proposed reforms, including the introduction of a three-tier support model: 1. Targeted Support – for learners with predictable needs, delivered through small-group support and universal adjustments; all pupils will have a digital Individual Support Plan (ISP).		

2. Targeted Plus – coordinated, multi-professional input involving Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and specialist teachers.
3. Specialist Support – for learners with complex needs, delivered through Specialist Provision Packages, which will form the basis of future Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

It was proposed that the current system would remain in place until September 2029, with transition to the new model taking place between 2029 and 2035. Under the reforms, eligibility for EHCPs would be reduced, largely to students at the Foundation level. During the transition period, there may therefore be a reduction in the number of EHCPs issued, which could result in an increase in tribunal cases.

The SEND reforms include additional funding; however, it is not yet clear what level of funding the College will be able to draw down. The digital Individual Support Plans (ISPs) will not be accompanied by funding, and those entitled to them will not have legal redress. These plans will follow learners throughout their education, and there is concern about the quality of these plans; they will require effective management, particularly at points of transfer. While it is positive that the College will have greater control over the plans, there is potential for approximately 1,000 of the College's students to be eligible to access them. The College is working closely with Norfolk County Council regarding the ISPs.

Governors queried who within the College would be responsible for Individual Support Plans (ISPs). The SEND Manager advised that all teachers would be able to create ISPs, with support from the SEND team, who would retain overall ownership of the plans.

Governors noted that the proposed changes would result in significant implications for teaching and learning, assessment, and learner support, including a greater emphasis on adaptive teaching. They also recognised that there would be a financial impact on the College and challenged whether all staff were sufficiently prepared for the changes. The Teaching and Learning Manager reported that the College was implementing the Norfolk Steps approach across all provision, a holistic framework for working with young people. The College had also undertaken deep dives into inclusive practice and staff training, with inclusion identified as a key professional learning priority with ongoing training and monitoring. The College's teacher training programmes embedded inclusive practice and adaptive teaching. There remained, however, a need to continue developing the College's inclusive culture, differentiated pedagogy, and the normalisation of difference.

The Principal commented that a College-wide Inclusion Group had been established to support the development and delivery of the College's inclusion action plan.

Governors commented that truly inclusive and effective teaching was fundamental to the College's ambitions and recognised that, if this were fully embedded, the College would then be operating at an outstanding level. To achieve this, staff would need support and development. The Deputy Principal emphasised that delivering high-quality teaching and learning was a fundamental expectation of all staff and required full professional commitment and an inclusive approach, beyond simply delivering a lesson.

QC/26/04/8

Quality Update

The Deputy Principal and the Assistant Principals presented the quality update. Overall, the College demonstrates strong and improving quality across most provision, with strengths in

teaching, employer engagement, enrichment, and professional development; however, attendance, punctuality, and behaviour for learning remain key cross-College risks. Governors expressed disappointment that attendance had not improved and challenged what actions had been taken to address this. While recognising the importance of understanding the College's context, Governors emphasised that this must not be used as an excuse.

The Principal, Lowestoft Sixth Form, advised that the College's timetable had been amended to better align with local transport arrangements. The Assistant Principal (HC) reported that the College had increased parental and carer engagement, celebrated learners with good attendance, produced attendance league tables, reviewed timetabling and applied disciplinary processes where appropriate. This monitoring was supported by the 'Course on a Page' dataset. All tutors needed to be clear about expectations and demonstrate consistent care and engagement with their learners. The Assistant Principal for Student Services and SEND advised that student feedback highlighted the importance of tutors knowing their students well and demonstrating care and commitment to them. The Deputy Principal reported that a flexible start had been trialled at the College's subcontractor, St Eds. While this had initially been effective, it had subsequently resulted in learners consistently arriving at the later start time.

The Director of Governance commented that the student engagement work with Unloc had identified that non-attendance was a cultural issue.

Governors commented that it was also important for lateness to be addressed and that all students were clear about expectations and the consequences of not meeting them. The Principal advised that the previously referenced Student Guarantee/Charter would set out what is expected of students.

Governors queried whether student behaviour had improved. The Deputy Principal advised that a minority of learners continued to struggle to meet behavioural expectations and that, as a result, some exclusions had unfortunately been necessary. The College is currently reviewing its behaviour model, which will be shared with the Committee.

Governors commented on the importance of ensuring that all students had access to a rich and meaningful experience, not solely those entered for awards, competitions, or participating in internal trips. The Assistant Principal (HC) commented that such activities also had a wider positive impact, as they helped to raise overall aspirations and demonstrated what students at the College can achieve. All students also took part in enrichment through employer engagement, guest speakers, master classes and visits.

Governors discussed the apprenticeship provision. The Assistant Principal (TR) advised that apprentice feedback, as measured through the DfE performance indicators, has improved to an overall rating of Good, up from Poor; complaints have reduced, and at a recent Engineering Employer Breakfast, employers praised the improvements the College has made, demonstrating that progress is being achieved. The College had also improved compliance, retention and endpoint assessments. However, Engineering quality and delivery remain a challenge due to the volume of apprentices on long-duration apprenticeships and apprenticeship recruitment has been below target. Following a recent EAL External Quality Assurance (EQA) visit, the College had been sanctioned as High Risk across all Engineering and Building Services (Electrical) qualifications. As a result, the College is currently unable to register or certificate any new students or apprentices in these areas. All affected employers and learners have been informed and provided with an explanation of the issues and the actions being taken to address them.

Governors discussed Sixth Form performance and were pleased to note ongoing improvement. The Principal, Lowestoft Sixth Form, advised that retention had improved and that ALPs outcomes were significantly stronger, with STEM provision aiming to be within the top 25%

	nationally. Progression outcomes were also positive, with UCAS applications on track to meet the 70% target. As previously discussed, attendance remains a challenge, particularly within PSD, and the curriculum for next year is being redesigned to support improved engagement. There have been a small number of late student withdrawals linked to mental health needs and some loss of engagement where universities have made unconditional offers. Governors discussed the Higher Education and community provision and noted the strong student satisfaction rates, low attrition, and good attendance within Higher Education, alongside the continued development of the community offer. Governors queried areas for further development. The Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access) advised that areas identified for development included strengthening progression pathways from FE to HE, greater standardisation of teaching practices, a more robust induction process, and increased access to Level 3 teaching qualifications within the community provision. The Access provision remains outstanding, with strong progression to university. Governors discussed the Foundation and Level 1 provision. The Assistant Principal for Student Services and SEND advised that retention in Foundation programmes remains strong; however, attendance, while higher than the overall College average, could be further improved. Further development in relation to Speech and Language support is underway with a targeted development plan, including collaboration with external specialists, intended to enhance staff confidence and improve classroom practice. Transition out of the College was identified as an important area for further development. In Level 1 provision, attendance and behaviour remain areas for improvement. Staff are to be trained in Norfolk Steps to support the implementation of a consistent, whole-College approach to behaviour management.	
QC/26/04/8.1	Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Review	
	The Teaching and Learning Manager presented the report, including an update on progress against the agreed actions. There were areas of excellence, but a lack of consistency across the College, which needed to be driven by Heads of Department to ensure quality improvement. Governors commented that the issues highlighted in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) aligned with those discussed in the quality update and reiterated that consistency was central to the College's continued improvement and quality teaching and learning.	
QC/26/04/8.2	Communities of Practice (CoP) Progress Report: 2025-26	
	The Teaching and Learning Manager presented the report. This academic year, ECC transitioned from the RED (Research into Education and Development) model to Communities of Practice (CoP), retaining an evidence-informed focus while strengthening collaboration, peer support, and classroom-led professional learning. Engagement has fallen from circa 70% in the first event to circa 40%, which is disappointing and needs addressing. Those who did attend valued the process. Governors who had attended the online huddles shared their observations, noting poor attendance, limited engagement from some participants, passive engagement from others and a lack of clarity about expectations and purpose. They suggested that the huddles should be led by the Heads of Department and concentrated on common issues. The Chair commented that the College had trialled a range of approaches to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and sharing best practice and expressed concern that this model appeared less effective, potentially hindering progress towards an inclusive College culture and consistent best practice. The Deputy Principal commented that Heads of Department needed to take greater responsibility for driving key themes and best practice. While effective leadership by some Heads of Department had resulted in clear change and improvement, in a few areas this amounted to a lack of management oversight, with responsibility being deferred to HR and Advanced Teaching Practitioners.	

QC/26/04/8.3	Governor Visits	
The Governor's Visit reports were noted.		
MM left the meeting.		
QC/26/04/9	Termly Safeguarding and Prevent and Wellbeing Update	
QC/26/04/9.1	KCSIE Consultation	
QC/26/04/9.2	Link Governor Reports	
The Assistant Principal for Student Services and SEND presented the report and advised that the College's response aligned with the AoC submission to the KCSIE consultation, which was included for reference. It was felt that it was very school-centric and needed adapting for a college environment. Governors noted that financial hardship had been identified as a key risk and referenced a BBC report highlighting higher than average use of debt respite services in the Great Yarmouth area. They challenged whether the College was accessing all available support. The Assistant Principal for Student Services and SEND advised that financial pressures had led some students to withdraw or combine work with study, and that support included internal and external entitlement checks and access to charitable grants where available. Governors agreed that the key questions identified in the summary report should form the focus of strategic-level reporting to Governors: • Are current safeguarding and wellbeing arrangements effective in identifying and managing risk? • Which safeguarding and wellbeing risks are increasing despite falling overall case numbers? • How well are early-help and prevention approaches supporting vulnerable learners? • What are the potential implications for retention, student safety and operational capacity going forward? Governors noted that the support that the College offered was part of it being an inclusive College.		
QC/26/04/10	Careers Update	
QC/26/04/10.1	Governor Visit Report - Festival of Careers	
The Assistant Principal for Student Services and SEND presented the report, highlighting the success of the Festival of Careers. The Peer Review had been completed, with positive feedback on the College's approach, and confirmation that the careers team was well positioned. The College's strategy to deliver Gatsby Benchmark 8 was reported to be on track, with the College being the only provider in the wider region aiming to achieve this. Over 1,000 one-to-one careers guidance sessions have been delivered this academic year. Governors noted the report, the success of the Festival of Careers, and the Governor's report on the event. It was agreed that the next update, as already referenced in the action log, should include the Peer Review findings and the resulting action plan.		
QC/26/04/11	Learner Voice Update	
The Assistant Principal for Student Services and SEND presented the report and updated Governors on the On Course survey results and the Question of the Week. Attendance at Student Representative meetings had been disappointing; however, an online board had been established to post questions and gather feedback from representatives and their respective groups. Governors challenged how the survey results were used. The Assistant Principal for Student Services and SEND advised that the results have been shared with the Heads of Departments, and each will formulate an action plan to address.		

Governors commented that student engagement with the survey was disappointing, particularly at Lowestoft Sixth Form College and within apprenticeships. The Principal of Lowestoft Sixth Form advised that this was linked to poor attendance at Personal and Social Development (PSD) lessons, through which survey completion was promoted. Changes to the PSD lessons for 2026/27 were being developed in response to student feedback to help improve engagement. Governors agreed that it was important for students to receive clear feedback on changes made as a result of the survey and the Question of the Week, through a “You Said, We Did” summary.		
QC/26/04/12	Employer Voice Update	
	The Employer Voice update was noted. The Chair commented that the Committee needed assurance not only on the range of engagement activities but also on their impact on curriculum design, development and delivery. The Principal advised that the College was reviewing its Employer Strategy, which included consideration of the impact of collaborative working with employers. The Assistant Principal (HC) assured the committee that the work with employers did impact on the curriculum.	
QC/26/04/13	Agenda planning	
	NEET – Deep Dive June 2026 Committee Colleges' Review of Success Coaches June 2026 Committee Marketing Strategy: Student Recruitment and Retention	
QC/26/04/14	Review of Meeting	
	1. Confidential Items: None. 2. Were Learners prominent in discussions: A focus always of the Committee. 3. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None. 4. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None, inclusivity had been a focus of the meeting. 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 – Marketing Strategy Review at the next meeting 8. How did the meeting go? The meeting overran, and it was agreed that the approach to future meetings should be reviewed. This would include consideration of extending meetings to 9.00–12.30, with managers attending for their relevant items and leaving once their reports had been presented, if they wished.	