

Full Governing Minutes

Meeting	Full Governing Body	Date	Friday 4 October 2024
Location	The Yarrow Hotel, Broadstairs	Time	3.30pm
Membership	Charles Buchanan (Chair), Graham Razey (CEO) (Chief Executive Officer, Ella Brocklebank, <i>Gail Clarke</i> , Miranda Chapman, <i>Natalie Garner</i> , Jason Howard, <i>John Korzeniewski</i> , Peter Cheney, <i>Joanna Worby</i> , Francesca Lashmar (Staff Governor), Helen Hammond, Carmel Togher, Sam Lawrence-Rose, Tammy Mitchell, John Oliphant, Jaidan King (Student Governor)		
In Attendance	Lucy McLeod (LM) (Deputy Chief Executive Officer) Lindsey Biggs (LB) (Chief Innovation and Skills Officer) Dan Shelley (DS) (Chief Infrastructure & Transformation Officer) <i>Chris Legg (CL) (Chief Financial Officer)</i> Nick Holbrook-Sutcliffe (NH-S) (Chief Education Officer) Victoria Copp-Crawley (VC-C) (Executive Principal) Kerry Hickmott (KH) (Chief People Officer) Paul Sayers (PS) (Chief Information and Strategy Officer) Jamie Weir, Chief Communications Officer Sharon Hollingsworth (GDG) (Group Director of Governance) Georgia Shelton (GS) (Governance Officer)		

Italics denotes absence

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Gail Clarke, Joanna Worby, Natalie Garner, John Korzeniewski, and Chris Legg.	
2	Declarations of Interest	Miranda Chapman (MC) and Ella Brocklebank (EB) declared interest in items 8 and 9 due to the referencing of Otterpool Park and Jenners Ltd. MC's interest was noted, and it was suggested that this would not impact the item, while EB was asked to leave the room during item 9. NOTED: Miranda Chapman's and Ella Brocklebank's declarations of interest.	

3	Minutes of the meeting held 9 July 2024, including any confidential minutes	<p>The minutes and confidential minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on 9th July 2024 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.</p> <p>APPROVED: Minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on the 9th July 2024.</p>	
4	Matters Arising not covered by this agenda:	There were no matters arising.	
5	Chair's Report	<p>The Chair thanked the Board for their time and contribution at the strategy event earlier in the day.</p> <p>Introductions were made to the new student governor; Jaidan King was welcomed by the board.</p> <p>The Chair informed the Board that Georgia Shelton (Governance Officer) would unfortunately be leaving the Group in November, Georgia was thanked for her support and was wished the best of luck for her future endeavours. Also, Peter Troke had regrettably resigned due to ill health and was wished well. It was noted that Peter's diligent and insightful questioning has been a great benefit to the board, as well as in his role as Broadstairs Local College Board (LCB) Chair. Governors wished to pass on their thanks and appreciation.</p> <p>The Full Governing Body, LCB, and EKC Group staff members have been made aware of Graham Razey leaving the Group at the end of the academic year. Governors were reassured that there are plans in place to ensure a smooth transition.</p> <p>NOTED: The Chairs report.</p>	
6	CEO's Report	<p>The CEO's Report was taken as read and summarised as follows:</p> <p>The Group have achieved a strong recruitment performance across all business units and are 500 learners above allocation. It was explained that apprenticeship recruitment is above target, adult programmes are doing well, and each college has exceeded allocation and internal target. There are no apparent trends in this yet, but governors will be kept informed as these emerge over time.</p> <p>Education outcomes are currently being finalised and will be presented to the Education Committee in November. These have shown how strong the technical provision is, and how well the GCSE's performed. A-Level results were disappointing, coming in below target, however student and parent reactions on results day were positive with many students getting into their intended destinations.</p>	

		<p>One of the Group's strategic priorities is based on student campaigns; it is important to help students develop more than technical and vocational skills and therefore a draft campaign plan has been created. A Student Campaigns Officer, Luca Fasulo, has been appointed to ensure these campaigns are executed.</p> <p>Work is taking place, focussed on the six areas in which the staff survey performed less well. The Group Leadership board are doing deep dives into these consistent responses to ensure that the correct actions are being taken.</p> <p>The Aylesham Alternative Provision's staffing and line of reporting was questioned. The CEO explained that the provision provides an alternative facility for students in danger of leaving college due to SEMH needs. It was suggested that students will likely come from Canterbury or Dover due to its proximity, and that the provision is suitable for 30-40 learners. Currently the staffing consists of a manager, teacher and support worker, and this will be increased as necessary. Line management is with the Group Head of Alternative Provision in the first year and the structure will be determined for the future, with possibilities of being under Dover Technical College, Canterbury College, EKC Training or remain as a group resource.</p> <p>It was queried whether student destinations should be reviewed based on the relevance to their course. It was explained that currently destinations are reviewed based on whether they are positive or negative, and while employers are captured, roles within this are not as this is not captured nationally. While this method would be beneficial, it is important to acknowledge the personal skills that students achieve during their time in the Group; individuals need to have a choice in their employment and this is often representative of jobs available to them.</p> <p>Governors expressed concern over the A-Levels results and questioned whether this was a national trend. It was explained that these results are likely due to the impact of COVID-19; grades were inflated during this time, lessening expectations, and sixth forms have become complacent in making students aware of expectations. A full report will go to the next Education Committee.</p> <p>NOTED: The Group CEO report.</p>	
7	Group Director of Governance Report	<p>The Group Director of Governance gave their report and the following was noted:</p> <p><u>Written Special Resolution</u></p> <p>A written special resolution took place on the 17th September for the appointment of Jenner as the preferred contractor for Margate Digital; this was approved.</p>	

		<p><u>EKC Group and EKC Schools Trust Governance Agreement</u> A shared meeting will be taking place between EKC Group Governors and Trustees of EKC Schools Trust on the 10 December. This will be an opportunity to share work embedded between the Group and Trust, as well as review the proposed updates to the Governance Agreement made in September 2019 given the significant growth of both parties.</p> <p><u>Mandatory Safeguarding & PREVENT Online Training</u> Governors were reminded to complete the Mandatory Safeguarding & PREVENT online training. The previous deadline for this was the 31 July 2024, and the importance of completing this as soon as possible was emphasised.</p> <p><u>Annual Safeguarding Update, KCSIE, and Criminal Declarations 2024</u> Governors were reminded of the annual declaration form circulated in September and were asked to complete this at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p><u>New Student and Staff Governor AoC Offer</u> The AoC have introduced a new programme for staff and student governors, including a two-day summit, designed to equip governors with the skills, knowledge and networking opportunities essential for their roles. Further details will be circulated following the launch.</p> <p><u>Governor Data Collection</u> Guidance for reporting governance data has been published by the DfE, with data fields including gender, age range, disability, ethnicity, and length of service served. Return is mandatory, with collection window opening 17 October 2024.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: The Group Director of Governance Report</p>	
8	Margate Digital Lease	This item was considered confidential and will form Part A of the Confidential Minutes.	
9	Sheppey Main Contractor and Lease Approval	EB left the room for this item at 16.19pm. This item was considered confidential and will form Part A of the Confidential Minutes.	
10	Management Accounts – July-24	EB rejoined the meeting.	

	(provisional year-end position)	<p>In the Chief Financial Officers absence, the CEO presented the July 24 year-end accounts which are provisional pre-audit results.</p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EBITDA is better than budgeted for by £3million, driven by additional growth income from ESFA; this income has had a positive impact, having been used on IT, catering and hospitality, and mini busses. - Outstanding financial health is expected to be met, with the maximum number of points. - The level of borrowing within the Santander loans is expected to continue to decrease. - All banking covenants are being met. - Commercial outlets performed well. The year was challenging for refectories, with the cost of living having a big impact, but other commercial outlets like the nurseries continue to perform well. <p>Governors recognised an increase in surplus and queried whether this is being allocated to any investments. It was explained that a draft capital plan for this surplus will be going to the Business Committee in November, with a view of informing the strategic plan in terms of investment.</p> <p>The gap between vacancy budget and spending was observed, and governors questioned whether this is likely to close. It was explained that work has been done within the resourcing department to close this gap; recruitment days have been reduced to 30 days, resulting in vacancy factors decreasing, and vacancies are currently at an all-time low. This gap is expected to close.</p> <p>Governors noted the 'bad debts' within the report and questioned the background of this. It was suggested that this is likely a combination of student and employer debt or could be impacted by the DWP figure which is a historical debt which cannot be recovered.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AGREED: The Chief Financial Officer to clarify what the 'bad debt' refers to at the next meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: The Management Accounts – July-24 (provisional year-end position)</p>	CL
11	Safeguarding Update to include the Safeguarding (including Child	<p>The Executive Principal (VC-C) summarised the safeguarding update, as well as any changes made to the safeguarding policy and procedure, and the following was noted:</p> <p>The subsequent amendments were made to the safeguarding policy and procedure:</p>	

<p>Protection) and Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy and Procedure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roles and titles are now reflective of the structure change. - Dates were updated where necessary. - Policy page 6 (7.6) – wording within the full time Pre-16 students programme of learning in the Junior College, including safeguarding requirements, has been refined. - Policy page 8 (8.1) – refreshing term of Learning Centres. - Procedure page 11 (3.15) – definition of extremism is now in line with national definition change. - Procedure page 3 (4.2.2) guidance on the recording of incidents to include actions has been updated to reflect the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education. <p style="text-align: center;">APPROVED: Safeguarding (including Child Protection) and Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy and Procedure</p> <p>The following safeguarding updates were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The start of the year has focussed on ensuring students feel safe, welcomed and well-informed. Students are settling in well, with tutorials on safeguarding and prevent having taken place. - The new evacuation procedure will be piloted in Folkestone College, and if successful, will be rolled out across the group. VC-C informed governors that they would be kept updated on any changes. - The new alternative provision at Aylesham is now in place, following all EKC Group policies and procedures including those around safeguarding, the student code of conduct and student charter. - Senior leadership sessions have taken place to help inform the DSL annual training and ensure that all business unit representatives are informed of the guidance updates. In addition to this, business unit DSL training has taken place. - Kendra Houseman, the new Director of Student Experience and Safeguarding has started in her role. She will be a great asset to the Group, coming from a strong safeguarding background. <p>Governors scrutinised the tutorial programme and questioned what is in place regarding fear mongering on social media. It was explained that while the tutorial programme is pre-planned, this allows capacity to add tutorials where necessary. In addition to this, the first tutorial has been amended to address some of aspects of social media.</p> <p>It was queried whether there is any available extra training for staff regarding PREVENT following the issues in Lebanon and Israel. Members were informed of the new Director of Student Experience and Safeguarding's involvement on the PREVENT board and were reassured that any feedback she receives will be passed on.</p>	
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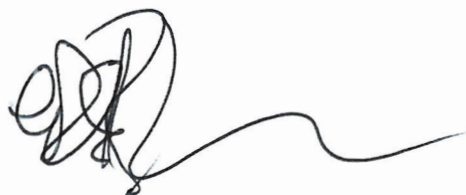
		NOTED: Safeguarding Update to include the Safeguarding (including Child Protection) and Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy and Procedure	
12	<p>Annual Reports:</p> <p>a. Staff Survey results 2022/23</p> <p>b. Complaints 2022/23</p> <p>c. Use of the College Seal 2022/23</p>	<p><u>Staff Survey results 2023/24</u></p> <p>The Chief People Officer (KH) summarised the results of the staff survey 2023/24.</p> <p>It was noted that the results were slightly lower than the previous year; likely due to changes within the colleges, such as the change in Principals, or could be a decrease in morale following the previous year's Outstanding Ofsted Inspection.</p> <p>It was noted that five questions received a positive response of 90% or above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am aware that the College has policies and procedures that support my rights and responsibilities (96%) - Safeguarding arrangements are effective at the College (95%) - I understand my role and contribution I am making to the goals of the College (95%) - Students are supported to develop positive attitudes to learning and work (92%) - I am proud to be a member of staff at the College (90%) <p>The lowest score was 67% and applies to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication is effective in the College - Adequate resources are provided by the College for staff - Adequate resources are provided by the College for students <p>The overall number of staff completing the survey and completion rate has increased since the previous year.</p> <p>In response to the taking action to address the questions that scored lowest,, task and finish groups have been put in place. In addition to this, all principals were sent the results from their individual college surveys and tasked with presenting what actions they will take at their performance reviews. KH will be contacting colleges who have performed well to see what they are doing differently.</p> <p>It was queried whether college principals shared the comparative data of the other colleges in the Group. It was suggested that this data is shared and will be discussed at local board level.</p> <p>NOTED: The Staff Survey results for 2023/24</p>	

		<p><u>Complaints 2023/24</u> The Chief Information and Strategy Officer (PS) presented the Annual Complaints Report with a comparison against 2022/23.</p> <p>It was noted that there has been a significant growth in complaints since the previous year, and that this is likely due to substantial student growth, duplication of complaints by multiple students, an increase in alleged discrimination (most were not upheld), and improved awareness of what constitutes a complaint. The rise in complaints is most significant at Broadstairs College, Folkestone College, and EKC Training.</p> <p>The number of exam-related complaints was queried. It was suggested that this has increased due to the impact of COVID-19 on the students' examination skills, as well as an increase in students' awareness of access arrangements. Work continues to be done with students to ensure they are prepared for exams, and staff are having early conversations about increasing student independence.</p> <p>Governors noted and questioned the significant increase in alleged discrimination. It was suggested that this is likely due to parental attitudes and involvement regarding EHCPs and levels of entitlement. This is a universal change, and a Vexatious Parent Policy has been put in place to manage this.</p> <p>Support continues to be provided to senior leaders by corporate services, to ensure that complaints are handled fairly and with integrity.</p> <p>NOTED: The annual report of Complaints for 2023/24</p> <p><u>Use of the Group Seal 2023/24</u> The Full Governing Body were informed that the Group Seal has been used once in the 2023/24 period; this was relating to the Thanet District Council Levelling Up Fund Agreement.</p> <p>NOTED: The use of the College Seal for 2022/23</p>	
13	Any Other Business	There was no other business to be discussed.	
14	Matters Considered Confidential	Items 8 and 9 were considered confidential and will form Part A of the Confidential Minutes.	

15	Confidential Matter (Restricted item for Independent Governors only)	This item was considered confidential and will form Part B of the Confidential Minutes.	
16	Date and time of next meeting	The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 10 th December 2024.	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.30pm

Signed:



Print: Charles Buchanan

Date: 10 December 2024