

Education committee Minutes

Meeting	Education Committee	Date	27 th February 2025
Location	Folkestone Executive Board Room (Anne's Building)	Time	14:30
Membership	John Korzeniewski (JK, Chair), Graham Razey (Chief Executive Officer, CEO), Ella Brocklebank (EB), <i>Sam Lawrence-Rose (SL-R)</i> , Natalie Garner (NG), Evie Kuschel (EK), Helen Hammond (HH), Tammy Mitchell (TM), Charles Buchanan (CB)		
In Attendance	Lucy McLeod (LM) (Deputy CEO) Victoria Copp-Crawley (VC-C) (Executive Principal) Nick Holbrook-Sutcliffe (NH-S) (Chief Education Officer) Sharon Hollingsworth (SH) (Group Director of Governance) Claire Banks (CSB) (Governance Officer) Gemma Stevens (GS) (Group Head of Alternative Provision) Item 5 only		

(Italics denotes absence)

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and apologies for absence	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and introductions were made. Evie Kuschel was welcomed to her first Education Committee meeting as Student Governor and Claire Banks was welcomed in her role as Governance Officer. Apologies were received from Jack Collison Natalie Garner joined the meeting online. Sam Lawrence-Rose did not attend the meeting.	
2	Declarations of Interest	There were no additional declarations to the meeting than those declared as standing	
3	Minutes of the meeting held 14 November 2024 including any	The minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on the 14 November 2024 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.	

	confidential minutes		
4	Matters Arising not covered by this agenda:	No matters arising.	
5	Alternative Provision Update	<p>Gemma Stevens, Group Head of Alternative Provision was welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>An Alternative Provision Update was delivered by GS, and the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Kent College Group launched a Further Education (FE) Alternative Provision Centre during the 2024-25 academic year. • Premises were identified in Aylesham and capital works were undertaken to create a suitable learning environment. • Staff were recruited during the summer break and referrals to the unit began in October. • Total student number is currently 16, with a maximum capacity of 26. • Each student has a four-week induction phase, personalised learning plan and support for transition to college. Learning is a Project Based curriculum (PBL) with additional Mathematics and English. <p>Governors questioned whether referrals to the Alternative Provision Centre were internal or external. The Group Head of Alternative Provision confirmed that initially referrals were internal but now include external referrals from Kent County Council (KCC) and The Education People.</p> <p>Governors queried whether the Alternative Provision Centre continues to use a 10km catchment parameter for referrals. It was explained that the 10km parameter was a guide to aid attendance, but not a rigid requirement.</p> <p>Governors noted that data should be regularly monitored to ensure the reason for withdrawals are clear and referral opportunities are not missed.</p>	

		<p>Governors questioned the robustness of the transition process for returning to mainstream education. It was explained that comprehensive measures are in place and campus mentors are provided to support transition.</p> <p>Governors queried the duration of an EKC Alternative Provision placement. It was explained that a placement would usually be for one academic year, but short-term respite placements are also available if capacity allows.</p> <p>Governors suggested local employer engagement may help with the off-boarding transition.</p> <p>Governors noted the challenge of managing students with complex requirements and queried how the Alternative Provision Centre fulfil such needs. It was explained that staff are very well trained, and the Head of Centre has established good communication with parents and carers and this was a key element to the success of a placement.</p> <p>Governors questioned how provision will evolve for future years. It was explained that the Centre will remain reactive for each new cohort of students and will work closely with colleges and schools to adapt as required.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Group Head of Alternative Provision and GS left the meeting at 14:50. The Chair queried with Governors and Members if an update to Alternative Provision would be required at every meeting. It was agreed that a yearly update would be sufficient, but effectiveness of the Alternative Provision will be measured by the success of student transition back to mainstream education.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Noted: The Alternative Provision Update</p>	
6	Safeguarding & Prevent Update	<p>The Safeguarding & Prevent update was given by the Executive Principal, and the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of safeguarding cases are marginally higher than the previous year, but key trends remain consistent. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases of bullying have increased in the last two years but this may be due to cases being categorised as bullying rather than low-level behaviour issues. Further training will be offered to support staff with awareness and categorisation of safeguarding cases. • The tutorial programme continues to be successful in delivering response-based sessions. External agencies support the programme by offering specific sessions as required. • The key areas of the Safeguarding, Prevent and Mental Health Action plans are all on-track. • The new National Referral Form has been implemented. <p>Governors commented that community ideologies are filtering into college life. The Chair noted that incidents of gang-based crimes had been reported in Sheppey and queried if this was a significant problem. It was confirmed there have been several reports of gang assaults and theft in the community, however it is difficult to combat this influence.</p> <p>Governors questioned if student attendance is recorded for the tutorial programme. It was explained that attendance is not recorded as the programme sessions are offered on a flexible basis.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that the Student Governor may have a valuable viewpoint on this area. The Student Governor commented that Canterbury College students used to digitally scan attendance using EKC lanyards and it could be useful to reimplement this procedure. It was agreed this could be useful.</p> <p>Governors queried if tutorial sessions were offered to all students or to targeted groups. All students gain the full tutorial programme however additional sessions, guest speakers and activities were offered to compliment the programme based on student need. This is sometimes offered to all students but not always.</p> <p>Governors queried progress on the invacuation pilot scheme at Folkestone College. The Executive Principal reported the scheme is progressing, and supplementary options are being reviewed for it to be fully comprehensive.</p> <p>The Chair questioned if there are plans to counteract perceived increased dangers.</p>	
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		<p>The Chief Executive Officer suggested there may be a need to review security and further prevention required to improve safety.</p> <p>Governors suggested fingerprint technology could be a more secure option as EKC lanyards can be lost. The Chief Executive Officer reported that the Group had investigated using a digital ID system with mobile phones, but there is a risk that data could be inappropriately shared. The difficulty is finding a system that is proportionate to both cost and implementation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Noted: The Safeguarding and Prevent Update</p>	
7	Standards of TLA Update and Education CPIs	<p>The Executive Principal updated governors on the standards of Teaching, Learning and Assessment and the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Education continues to be rated as good or better, particularly in T-Level programmes. There are improvement plans in place for several departments with support provided by the Group Improvement and Leadership Teams. • GCSE pass rates for English and mathematics are lower than previous years and lower than the National Pass rate. However banked achievement is in line with previous years. Interventions and targeted support are in place to work with students who have not yet passed. Functional Skills English is currently stronger than mathematics. Members discussed the merits of exam entries irrespective of ability to pass in GCSE's specifically, and how this reflects poorly in data and can decrease morale in the students. There are now Group approaches in place to ensure there is consistency and more effective to support the right students in early exam series. • 16-18 retention and attendance show improvement. Senior Leaders have focused on stabilising attendance and have implemented strategies to maximise achievement. • Adult retention and attendance has declined in some areas and Senior Leaders have been implementing intervention plans for programmes that require improvement. • EKC Group have successfully retained Matrix accreditation for the delivery of high-quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) provision. • The Kent Further Education (KFE) Skills competitions have generated significant momentum across all areas and participation have been strong. 	

		<p>The student governor (EK) reported she had been invited to Bali as part of the Turin Leadership Work Placement Programme but was unfortunately unable to attend. EK also noted there had been positive feedback from the student president training programme and finance training.</p> <p>The Chair noted there appear to be improvements in attendance and the Executive Principal confirmed this was the case. A stable curriculum combined with a focus on quality of teaching are proving to have a positive impact on attendance.</p> <p>NH-S suggested students often have pre-existing attendance issues prior to enrolment at EKC Colleges. It would be beneficial to identify this demographic so learning support can be implemented early, particularly in English and mathematics.</p> <p>LM noted that attendance in adult learners has declined and suggested there has been a change in the attitude of this demographic.</p> <p>It was noted that Folkestone College had been through some challenges at the start of the year but these are now stabilised. The Folkestone College Chair paid tribute to the work of the Principal of Folkestone College in improving standards, but noted the attendance issue was not endemic across the colleges.</p> <p>Governors noted the benefit of collaboration with parents to better understand the absence reporting process.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: The Standards of TLA Update and Education CPI's</p>	
8	QIP 2024-25 Further Education Terms 1-3 update	<p>The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was summarised by the Executive Principal and the following noted:</p> <p>Two areas have been identified as requiring improvement following the EKC Group Self-Assessment Report (SAR) in 2023/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sixth Form</u> 	

		<p>Improvement strategies have been implemented in the sixth form provision in relation to examination results in academic subjects. Strategies include investment into Programme Directorship, Academic Learning and Skills Coaches, investment in independent learning software packages and a new resourced study centre. A new role of Academic Senior Innovator has been established to support teaching pedagogy of exam-based subjects and a new Academic CPD hub has been created for all teachers. Work is also continuing to improve moderation and support of mock exams and assessment practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Two-year Level 2</u> There have been improvements in attendance for Year one and Year two courses with intervention activity in terms one, two and three. Programme Director Group training activities and college focused workshops have taken place to review the sequence of activities and subject delivery. <p>Governors queried if students become demotivated after receiving an unconditional university offer. LM confirmed it can affect both exam preparation, and expectations of the start of the course.</p> <p>Governors suggested that support could be offered to students following award of university offers. This would help prepare for examinations and highlight the impact that poor examination results can have on the start of university.</p> <p>The Student Governor (EK) confirmed university preparation support had been offered to her.</p> <p>Governors questioned if improvements can be made to the enrolment and induction process to more accurately determine student levels prior to commencing an A' Level course.</p> <p>Governors queried if a strategy needs to be implemented to demonstrate how the EKC Group can continue to deliver 24 academic A' Level subjects.</p> <p>NH-S commented that a reduction in academic subjects is not anticipated but acknowledged that the Group need to continue to improve the quality of delivery.</p>	
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9	Mid-Year Review of Nurseries QIP 2024-25	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive Officer gave an update on nurseries:</p> <p>Progress against the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and the financial update is positive. Since the writing of this committee paper, an Ofsted Inspection has taken place at Broadstairs Nursery and it was rated as 'good' overall.</p> <p>The highlights of the Ofsted report show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff can articulate the vision and demonstrate that the safety and wellbeing of children is paramount • Key person relationships across the setting are strong and used well • There are strong examples of how the curriculum is meeting children's needs in all areas of the Nursery • Independence skills have been developed well and are clearly sequenced in the setting • Open ended questioning and intervening at the point of learning are strengths 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum is well sequenced and meets the Nurseries' intent • Assessment is regular and effective • Leaders are proactive in supporting the professional development of staff and there is a wide range of training opportunities that are valued by staff <p>The Chair noted that the report shows that nurseries are improving and it is pleasing to see the positive links now established with the Trust Principals.</p> <p>NOTED: The Mid-Year Review of Nurseries QIP 2024-25</p>	
10	Feedback/Minutes of the Local College Boards and EKC Training Local Board	<p>The Local College Board (LCB) Chairs summarised their previous meetings and the following was noted:</p> <p>The Chair suggested starting the feedback with Sheppey LCB as the Sheppey LCB Chair needed to leave the meeting early.</p> <p><u>SHEPPEY</u></p> <p>The Sheppey LCB Chair reported a positive meeting and there were no referrals to the Education Committee.</p> <p>The LCB Chair noted there was growing concern about the readiness of the new-build project and the impact this may have on curriculum provision. The LCB Chair suggested that delays in completion may affect the good reputation of the EKC Group.</p> <p>Governors suggested the significance of delays to the build should be made clear to the Chief Infrastructure and Transformation Officer.</p> <p>The CEO reported that there is contingency provision in place to ensure students are not affected by delays, so there may be adjustments that can be made.</p>	

	<p>The LCB chair left the meeting at 16:15</p> <p><u>ASHFORD</u></p> <p>The Ashford LCB Minutes were taken as read.</p> <p>The Chair gave Members the opportunity to ask questions from the submitted minutes but there were no queries. raised.</p> <p><u>BROADSTAIRS</u></p> <p>The LCB Chair noted there were three items to share with the Education Committee Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of Student Showcases as an alternative to parents' evenings. Families were invited to attend a student showcase and share achievements, observe work, take part in activities and talk to Tutors. Food was offered to those that attended. Feedback has been positive and it has proved a successful way of engaging parents and carers. <p>Governors noted this success and suggested it could be used as a model at other EKC Colleges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The continued debate of whether to ban mobile phones in classrooms and if the EKC Group need to implement a Group policy. <p>Members discussed the issues of imposing a ban and it was agreed that further evidence was required before the Group debate whether to implement a mobile phone policy, or for colleges to continue to have local autonomy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-year level two courses – how effective is the Group at addressing the Not in Education, Employment or Training Students (NEETS). <p>The Deputy CEO suggested that the increase to demographic growth adds to the complexities of this problem.</p>	
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	<p>The CEO commented that funding in this area is limited.</p> <p><u>CANTERBURY</u></p> <p>The LCB Chair confirmed it was a positive meeting and a guest Governor (EB) had attended. The main point of discussion centred around Higher Education (HE) provision and concerns relating to under-recruitment.</p> <p>The Chair queried if HE recruitment was a local College issue or if it applied to the Group as a whole. The Chief Education Officer confirmed that it was a Group issue.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that HE is discussed in more detail at the next meeting and Members agreed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AGREED: HE to be included as an agenda item at the next Education Committee meeting</p> <p><u>DOVER</u></p> <p>No LCB Chair present for Dover.</p> <p>The Chair gave Members the opportunity to ask questions from the submitted minutes but there were no queries raised.</p> <p><u>FOLKESTONE</u></p> <p>The LCB Chair reported it had been a positive meeting but noted there are areas for improvements in relation to teaching and learning. The principal has worked hard to implement necessary improvements.</p>	JC
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11	Any Other Business	No other business.	
12	Matters Considered Confidential	There were no matters considered confidential.	

13	Date and time of next meeting –	Thursday 12 th June 2025 at 14:30	
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There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:40

Signed: *J M Korzeniewski*

Print: John Korzeniewski

Date: 12 June 2025