

Minutes of the Learning & Quality Committee Meeting held at 4.30pm 11 March 2026

Present: Huw Chapman, Robbie Coates (student governor), Mark Cooper, Tim Jackson, Shirley Nellthorpe (chair) & Katy Quinn

Apologies: Prue Amner, Lyndsey Mason (staff governor) & Mike Stoneman

In attendance:

Mickiela Blake	Director of People & OD
Tess Cole	VP Foundation & Adult Learning
Graham Goddard	Governor (observer)
Matt Phelps	Deputy Principal & CEO Curriculum & Quality
Emily Pountney	DP Quality & Innovation
Jo Shankland	VP Student Experience
Paola Schweitzer	Director of Governance
Sarah Warren	VP Curriculum & Quality

Minutes

205 Attendance and Participation

Prue Amner, Lyndsey Mason (staff governor) and Mike Stoneman sent their apologies.

206 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

207 Introduction to the new meeting format

The revised agenda was organised against the new Ofsted framework and provided an enhanced and more holistic oversight of College performance. Reports included RAG rated evidence against Ofsted's '*meets expectations*' criteria, supported by detailed hyperlinked documents. Information was at whole College level and in future would be by provision type where applicable (curriculum, teaching and training, participation and development and achievement). The Chair believed the new format would prepare the College for inspection and thanked the Deputy Principal & CEO and his team for their work in producing an excellent quality and data rich meeting pack.

208 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 26 November 2025 were **Agreed** as a correct record.

209 Matters Arising

Governors **Noted** that actions from previous meetings had been completed, except for one which was ongoing: **Minute 175**: The PFA audit was likely to be in September 2026.

210 Safeguarding (paper 943/26/L&Q)

The report provided an update on safeguarding performance, compliance and risk indicators, trends in Low Level Concerns and LADO referrals, the impact of

Safeguarding and Prevent education, progress in DBS and Safer Recruitment compliance, reports on staff safeguarding training, the Single Central Record and an analysis of current safeguarding concerns affecting students. The College met the Ofsted standard for safeguarding at whole provider level, with arrangements continuing to be strong, compliant and improving in key areas. Learners reported that they felt safe. Low Level Concerns were increasing, reflecting better understanding and clearer processes. Appropriate disciplinary outcomes and LADO referrals made where necessary. Safeguarding and Prevent education remained highly effective. A three year DBS renewal cycle was proposed and there were strengthened Safer Recruitment processes. Safeguarding student data showed stable referral volumes but increased complexity and need at Highbury and Sixth Form campuses. Increased online related concerns and Smoothwall alerts signalled increased digital risk behaviours.

One governor asked how the College would achieve 100% staff training, to which the VP Student Experience responded all permanent staff were taken through due process to ensure compliance. The staff who had not completed training were on long term sick leave, maternity/paternity leave or were sessional staff (who completed the training when necessary). The VP Student Experience did not believe Smoothwall was reporting a high volume of false negatives. She reported that all alerts were followed up with teaching staff and intervention/support put in place for students as appropriate. Governors discussed the increase in referrals from MASH (often due to parent/sibling concerns which enabled the College to put additional support in place for the students) and the reduction in College initiated referrals (where students were already associated with external services or where issues were dealt with internally). In response to whether safeguarding capacity was sufficient, the Principal & CEO stated this was a challenge for all colleges as resources could be invested in this area indefinitely. A recent analysis of safeguarding activities had resulted in some remodelling within the team. Phones and social media were at the root of a lot of mental health and/or safeguarding concerns and the College was keen to engage with students further. The student governor did not believe the College could do much to regulate the use of social media but could play a role in educating students. One governor asked how far away the College was from being *Exemplary* in this area. The Deputy Principal & CEO stated this was the strongest area in terms of Ofsted but the safeguarding judgement was either *met* or *not met*. Exemplary practice would be woven into the narrative at provision type. Governors **Noted** the Safeguarding report and **Agreed** to recommend the amended Safeguarding Policy re DBS checks to Corporation.

211 Inclusion (paper 944/26/L&Q)

This report provided an update on inclusion activity across the College including embedding inclusion, developments in tutorial curriculum, student voice, enrichment, SEND and specialist support, wellbeing and safeguarding linked early intervention. Ofsted's definition of disadvantaged groups was much broader than previously. The College largely met the revised Ofsted expected standard for inclusion at whole provider level, with strong evidence of an embedded culture promoting safety, belonging and equitable access to learning. Areas of development included fully embedding inclusion policy and preparing for SEND reform.

The student governor asked why so many areas were RAG rated amber, to which the VP Student Experience responded that there were gaps in the College's baseline data and that whilst the College was on the right track, there was insufficient evidence and consistency. The Principal and CEO stated that the new Deputy Principal Digital, Data & Funding would strengthen the College's data integration to improve the tracking of vulnerable groups and evaluating the impact of interventions. There was a discussion

about staff training, and the Director of People & Organisational Development stated that in addition to equality and diversity training and a well-being week, staff were asking for neurodiversity and unconscious bias training. There were brief discussions about the recent S&G Committee discussions to address one of the areas for development (addressing underrepresentation of diverse groups within governance) and the possibility of additional funding to support SEND and NEET provision. Governors **Noted** the Inclusion report and **Agreed** to recommend the Inclusion Policy (rebranded EED&I policy) to Corporation for approval.

212 Leadership & Governance (paper 945/26/L&Q)

This paper provided an update on leadership and management across all provision aligned to the revised Ofsted toolkit and whole College QIP. The College was largely meeting the expected standard in leadership and governance. Leaders had a clear understanding of the College's strengths and areas requiring development, governors remained well informed, particularly from undertaking link visits and attending QRMs, student voice and EABs, and as a result provided appropriate and triangulated support and challenge, provision for learners with additional needs was supported through strengthened safeguarding and improved tutorial content and the College's Team Around the Student (TAS). National qualification reforms created additional risk.

One governor believed it was important to strengthen the governor link framework and ensure that QRM information was shared. Governors would be invited to submit their views on the scheme prior to S&G Committee consideration at their next meeting. Governors considered the governors questions. Leaders used several mechanisms to demonstrate live evidence for the Ofsted curriculum, inclusion and apprenticeships report card areas such as lesson observations, the quality cycle and QRMs. Post the last ILR return, there were fewer Out Of Funding (OOF) apprentices (12.3%) and the target was to be below 10% by the end of the academic year. The VP Student Experience noted the pilot being undertaken at the North Harbour Campus to increase enrichment and the VP Foundation & Adult Learning reported that engagement at the Arundel Campus had improved due to the use of the Base at the Guildhall. One governor asked about the College's approach to national qualification report and in particular V Levels. The Deputy Principal & CEO provided an initial summary of the announcements made the day prior to the meeting and stated that SMT would consider the matter the following week, identifying a strategy and timeline to ensure that the College was ready for the changes and that this would be brought to Corporation. Having reviewed the effectiveness of leadership and management in ensuring the focus was on quality improvement to ensure progress in the learning experiences of students and apprentices, governors **Noted** the leadership and governance paper.

213 Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs (paper 946/26/L&Q)

This report provided an update on progress against the Ofsted criteria of contribution to meeting skills needs as well as areas for development. The College met the Ofsted expected standard. The College was making a strong contribution in three of the four judgement areas and was at expected standard in '*how well skills-related aspects of curriculums are planned and taught*'. The College would strengthen this area by continuing to ensure unit selection and practical tasks were shaped by employer feedback and clearly highlighted on schemes of work. Governors discussed the judgement '*how well leaders developed partnerships with stakeholders that make a positive contribution towards meeting local, regional and/or national skills needs*' and in particular, the first Cluster Connection meeting for the Clean Energy, Marine, Aerospace & Defence sectors. These high level meetings focused on skills needs,

careers advice & guidance and curriculum mapping as opposed to shaping the curriculum which took place through Employer Advisory Board (EAB) meetings. Tim had attended this meeting and would report back to governors through the feedback form. There was a discussion about the work needed to emphasise industry skills to students and translate opportunities for them, supported by the digital Skills Passport. Governors **Noted** the contribution to meeting skills needs paper.

214 Curriculum, Teaching & Training (paper 947/26/L&Q)

The paper provided an update on the quality of education across all provision types aligned to the revised Ofsted toolkit and the whole College QIP. Overall, the College largely meet the Ofsted expected standard for curriculum, teaching and training with strong sequencing, clear learning intentions, effective modelling, well planned assessments and high quality academic and vocational delivery evidenced across the majority areas, supported by robust leadership oversight that allowed leaders to identify concerns and act quickly. Students reported that teaching was well organised and built effectively on prior learning. Teachers' expertise was strengthened through structured CPD and coaching. Whilst there were improvements in all areas, including technical and vocational provision, the main issue was consistency.

There was a discussion about the targets being set alongside the PMP process, with the DP Quality & Innovation confirming that students reviewed their targets during pastoral or curriculum tutorials. The student governor confirmed targets were updated every half term with the teachers discussing them with students. The VP Curriculum & Quality stated that she anticipated a further four or five vocational and technical areas would move up to expected progress in the next round of QRMs. The student governor then reported on the use of AI at the Sixth Form Campus. His conversations with 49 students showed that AI was mainly used in four ways: as a revision tool, to mark essays, for inspiration and ideas and to answer questions, particularly within the context of long homework tasks. AI was increasingly used by teachers but less in science subjects. The DP Quality & Innovation was encouraged that students were using AI to support learning rather than doing learning. Governors thanked the student governor for this insightful information and asked that it was summarised in a feedback form and circulated to all governors. Having reviewed the activities taking place to ensure the focus is on quality improvement to ensure progress in the learning experiences of students and apprentices, governors **Noted** the curriculum, teaching & training report.

215 Achievement (paper 948/26/L&Q)

This paper provided oversight of College performance and assurance that performance reported elsewhere at the meeting was evidence based. Overall, the College largely met the Ofsted expected standard for achievement in education and training. Early in year education and training attendance and retention indications, when compared to the same point last year, showed a 1% improvement at whole College level. Best case achievement was also at this level, meaning that assuming the forecast 1% achievement rate improvement was achieved, COPC would be above the national average for 16-18 achievement for the first time since merger. The Deputy Principal & CEO noted that attendance had improved but was variable in some areas. There was an improvement in GCSE maths and English resit achievement in November 2025 but further work was needed. There was a brief discussion about the apprenticeships benchmark with the Deputy Principal & CEO noting that there had been significant improvement, as triangulated at Audit and F&R Committees, but it continued to be a focus of activity. Governors also referred to destination data and virtual work experience, noting that the governors' questions had been covered during the

discussions. Having triangulated the data in the paper and supporting documentation and assured themselves that College performance against the Ofsted framework was evidence based, governors **Noted** the achievement paper.

216 Participation & Development (paper 949/26/L&Q)

This report provided an update on participation and development performance across the College including attendance, enrichment, careers, school liaison, work experience and industry placements. The College largely met the Ofsted expected standard in this area, demonstrating strong evidence of impact in several areas. Attendance showed year on year improvement and the College had strengthened its focus through new Attendance Working Groups and increased cross team coordination. Enrichment participation was strong but equity gaps remained at North Harbour and Arundel campuses. Careers education remained strong and whilst Gatsby Benchmarks remained strong overall, improving the personal guidance benchmark was a priority. School liaison activity had been extensive and impactful, with more schools attending taster days in summer 2025 culminating in a notable increase in applications. The expansion of employer networks and improved tracking was essential to achieving parity in work experience and industry placements across campuses. Governors focused on the governor questions, in particular supporting vulnerable learners. Collating data would enable the College to provide more effective support to vulnerable learners and the TAS model was being further developed for technical and vocational learners to ensure it is consistently effective. Governors supported the focused actions to strengthen participation and development across the College and **Noted** the participation and development paper.

217 Review of Revised Meeting Format

Governors welcomed the revised agenda format, agreeing that it focused their attention on how College performance would be assessed in Ofsted judgement areas. Governors made the following points:

- One governor welcomed the shorter pack but thought there were too many **supporting papers**. Another governor appreciated management's open culture as demonstrated by the supporting papers. Governors were reassured that a significant number of supporting papers were written for other purposes.
- One governor welcomed each report's **governor questions**.
- Importance of **consistency in reporting so progress could be tracked** (suggestion to add additional column for updates in the RAG rating table)
- **Refine RAG rating** to capture each criterion more fully (likely to develop as the College achieved *meets expectations*)
- **Policies** requiring approval were best included in the pack, not hyperlinked.

The meeting ended at 6.45pm