

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 10 March 2025 at 4.00pm

Present physically at ASFC: K Points, EEGT Trustee
M Williams, WSC Staff Governor
R Cannon, WSC Governor
S Daley, EEGT Trustee and WSC Governor – **Chair**

Present virtually: C Chua, WSC Governor
J Wakelam, EEGT Trustee and WSC Governor – **Vice Chair**(part)
M Downes, WSC Governor

In attendance: A Adamson, Group Deputy Principal–One Sixth Form
A Harvey, Group Assistant Principal – Sixth Form Provision
A Hurrell, Group Head of Quality Assurance
C Durrant, Group Head of Pastoral and Administration
C Fisher, Group Head of Connections and Opportunities
C Shaw, Group Principal – West Suffolk College Sixth Form
D Barton, Group Assistant Principal – Adult
J Finch, member of the SEND Educational Excellence Committee (observing)
J Robson, Group Principal – One Sixth Form
J Stockings, Group Assistant Principal – Sixth Form Provision
L Chapman, Regional Director – SEND and Outdoor Learning(part)
L Moody, Group Principal – University and Professional Development
K Brown, Group Assistant Principal – Teaching, Learning and Educational Partnerships
M Cadman, member of the SEND Educational Excellence Committee (observing) (part)
N Payne, Group Director Careers, Opportunities, and Progression
R Bamford, Group Assistant Principal – Quality
S Langthorne, Group Assistant Principal
S Small, Group Deputy Principal – Abbeygate Sixth Form
S Gales, Governance Professional
T Lloyd, Executive Director Skills and Strategic Development

Apologies: C Warren, Group Head of Careers Guidance Services
G Evans, Group Quality Manager
J Drake, WSC Governor
K Gwara, WSC Student Governor
L Ireland, EEGT (OSFC) Parent Committee member
N Savvas, Chief Executive Officer
S-L Neesam, Group Head of Welfare and Safeguarding
S Snowdon, EEGT Trustee and WSC Governor

Absent: R Holden, EEGT (ASFC) Parent Committee member

Action

1. Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence

Members recognised the standing declarations. No other conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies for absence were received from J Drake, K Gwara, L Ireland and S Snowdon. The absence of R Holden was noted.

The Chair welcomed Josie Finch and Mike Cadman as observers of the meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 10 February 2025

Members reviewed and **agreed** the minutes of the meeting on 10 February 2025 as an accurate record.

3. **Matters arising from the meetings on 10 February 2025**

Three of the seven matters arising from the previous meetings were complete and four will be presented in the summer term.

4. **First-Hand Feedback**

J Wakelam fed back from her visit to ASFC's extended project qualification exhibit and commended the outstanding work on display.

Review of in-year performance

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5. **Sixth Form Provision**

i. **ASFC**

Members received and considered the paper provided which provided analysis on retention, progress against the quality improvement plan, an update following the progress review 2, analysis of courses to monitor and an update on curriculum development for 2025/26. S Small summarised the key points.

Members reflected that local news is reporting a rise in the number of young people who could work that aren't working, circa 14% of young people becoming NEET, and queried how we support young people to progress into positive destinations. S Small confirmed that the team remain live to the risk and we continue to monitor key data to identify students' progress, intended destinations and the impact of our futures team in raising aspirations and providing information, advice and guidance which supports students to progress. C Durrant reflected that, across all three colleges, we are seeing an increasing number of students with SEMH needs either retaking part of their course or considering withdrawing from their course due to poor mental health. C Durrant reflected that, while we support these students and they do continue their courses and achieve, this suggests a trend in that students feel less mentally/physically able to engage in education than in previous years. C Durrant summarised how the senior leadership team are responding to this trend, including exploring different delivery methods, different courses/provisions and a focus on developing skills. D Barton explained that for potential NEET adults we work with the local County Councils and Department for Work and Pensions to help create courses to upskill adults and support them to progress into work.

Members commended the improvement in predicted grades. Members queried if there is a correlation between lower attendance and the 'courses to monitor'. S Small confirmed that there is no direct correlation to courses to monitor. S Small explained that overall attendance is good and summarised the support activities used in small cases where attendance is not as good, including working with parents and families to have a joined-up approach.

Members queried whether parental engagement was working well. S Small explained that it continues to be a challenge, but we are seeing an improvement on previous years and explained the work underway with teachers to develop their skills in communicating with parents.

Members queried when the additional resources will be available to students linked to plans to address concerns in the 'courses to monitor'. S Small explained that the resources are online on a system called UpStream and explained that while we had this system last year, this year we are significantly expanding it to give access to the entire system. S Small explained that this is a significant investment and teachers are working to ensure the resources complement our homework assessments and are embedded into schemes of work, allowing UpStream activities to help with revision and review of previous topics, as well as support students to catch up if they were absent.

Members queried what is meant by the line "all Trial Examination outcomes should be considered carefully, and in full context, as these examinations are internally

produced and assessed". S Small explained that we need to be alert to the risk of drawing poor conclusions based on the incomplete/skewed picture they present (e.g. did the trial examination cover everything the students had studied or was it skewed to work they did in Year 12 or more recently?) as these could impact the results. R Bamford also reflected that we also need to review whether the trial examinations used the same marking scheme and grade boundaries as the awarding bodies as, if not this could lead to unclear analysis and next steps. The Chair reflected that when we analyse the student outcomes, we also reflect on whether our predicted grades were accurate or not, to identify what/where improvements are needed.

Members queried what support and interventions are being put in place to address 'courses to monitor', and whether there are any patterns to those courses. S Small explained that teachers have responded well to the supportive approach and gave examples of types of interventions used e.g. providing training, re-evaluating assessment methodologies, setting a standard for high aspirations for our students – and checking for impact of these interventions.

Members queried why Criminology despite being one of the largest subject areas, has a lower average point score than other subject areas, and what is being done to improve outcomes. S Small explained that as Criminology has both an in-year exam and assessed coursework, so we do not ask students to complete an additional trial examination, hence the average point score does not include the data from a trial exam which is why it appears lower.

ii. **OSFC**

Members received and considered the paper provided which provided analysis on retention, progress against the quality improvement plan, an update following the progress review 2, analysis of courses to monitor and an update on curriculum development for 2025/26. A Adamson summarised the key points.

Members discussed the progress review data and queried what is being done to improve outcomes for students with poor predicted grades. A Adamson summarised the support being put in place, though echoed the discussion above about the fallibility of predicted grades. J Robson summarised how we are working with teachers to identify improvement areas and devise appropriate interventions.

Members reflected that our quality improvement plans identify the need to support effective use of independent study time and that, linked to the discussions about trial examinations being skewed by a focus on older topics which students may not readily recall, we need to support students to revise effectively and independently. Members queried what support and scaffolding is being provided. S Small noted that ASFC is trying to establish a supported study hub to replicate the proven and effective practice at OSFC which has a dedicated supported study zone. A Adamson added that OSFC has worked on the timetable to schedule independent study time within the college day and purposefully naming the sessions (rather than free periods) to support students to stay at the college to study and access support if needed. A Adamson noted that students' perception of the effectiveness of independent study time will be captured as part of the next progress review.

iii. **WSC sixth form**

Members received and considered the paper provided which provided analysis on retention, student demographics, progress against the quality improvement plan, an update on progress reviews, lesson observations and work scrutiny, and an update on work quality. S Langthorne summarised the key points.

Members commended the robust approach of analysis within the report and the improvements to the performance of maths and English.

Members discussed the 'areas for improvement' and queried if the Resources Committee need to be aware of the lack of technician support if it is impacting lessons. S Langthorne explained that these are in hard to fill subjects and are being

supported by HR.

Members discussed the retention data and queried what definition is used for 'vulnerable' students. S Langthorne explained the term and commended the effective approach to support these students.

Members queried why there is lower retention of T-Level students at Year 1, impacting continuation to Year 2. S Langthorne explained that students are leaving to progress into positive destinations (employment).

M Cadman left the meeting at 4.56pm

iv. **High Needs students (SEN)**

Members queried why no report was provided. L Chapman explained the reasons for the delay to the paper. Members asked L Chapman to share report with the Governance Professional to circulate to the Committee.

L Chapman

L Chapman left the meeting at 5.12pm

SKILLS NEED

6. **Skills Need Update (WSC)**

i. **Accountability Agreement (WSC)**

Members queried why no report was provided. T Lloyd explained the reasons for the delay to the paper. Members asked that the draft Agreement, when ready, be shared with this Committee and with members of the Apprenticeship and HE Educational Excellence Committee, in readiness for review by this Committee before being recommended to WSC Corporation. T Lloyd to share report with the Governance Professional to circulate to the Committee.

T Lloyd

BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES

7. **Attendance (sixth form)**

Members received and considered the paper provided which provided analysis on attendance at ASFC, OSFC and WSC sixth form. S Langthorne summarised the key points.

The Chair commended the improved maths and English attendance across all three colleges.

Members reflected that there is no correlation between the courses with weaker attendance this academic year to last academic year, which indicates that the interventions were effective and/or that weaker attendance was not a reflection on the course teacher.

Members asked that future reports summarise the impact of the strategies being put in place for courses with weaker attendance.

S
Langthorne

8. **Involvement in the community and competitions**

Members received and considered the paper provided which provided analysis on student engagement in competitions and in charity and/or volunteering activities in the community. N Payne summarised the key points.

Members queried whether employers see the benefit of students' involvement in the community and competitions. K Points, as Governance Lead for People and an experienced HR professional, fed back that it can be especially helpful for students who are just starting in their careers as it gives them experiences which they can talk about at interview to demonstrate their skills in action. N Payne added that these activities also help develop student's oracy skills and to develop confidence in new environments.

Members discussed the Turing trips and N Payne confirmed that these are inclusive and accessible for all students.

J Wakelam left the meeting at 5.26pm

9. **Work Experience**

Members received and considered the paper provided which provided analysis on work placements. C Fisher summarised the key points.

Members commended the strength of the report and the robust methods being used to evaluate the impact of work experience opportunities for students. Members queried if we evaluate the employers' feedback on the work experiences. N Payne explained how this is captured.

Members commended the work to improve recording on the ILR to maximise funding to support this work, though queried what action is being taken to close the gap for any students yet to complete work experience and or complete their full hours. C Fisher summarised the actions being taken both short and long term.

Members discussed the new approach taken at ASFC and the impact this is having for students.

Members asked future reports to analyse work placements by EDIM.

C Fisher

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

10. **Student survey: on programme (sixth form and elected home educated)**

Members received and considered the paper provided which provided analysis on surveys. A Hurrell summarised the key points.

Members discussed the strategies being considered to improve engagement and asked that to receive updates on any emerging themes from the quality reviews and student feedback sessions.

A Hurrell

Members discussed the responses to the question relating to 'number of hours on homework', in the context of information discussed earlier about changes to support independent study and expectation setting with students about the time required for independent study and queried why such a high proportion of students at OSFC responded that they spend less than 1 hour. J Robson explained that the data is consolidated and so does not differentiate between the student's level of study, and informed that the required independent study time varies by complexity of the level of study. Members asked that future reports differentiate the data by level of study to help identify trends.

A Hurrell

Members commended the positive feedback.

11. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy**

Members considered and **approved** the policy and **agreed to recommend it to the Corporation and Trust Board**, though suggested the Executive reconsider the language in section 4 which moves from third person to direct address.

Members reflected that the duty to prevent sexual harassment changed recently and queried how this is being addressed by EEG. J Robson informed that training is being provided to staff/managers.

12. **Risk Register Extract**

Members received and considered the Risk Register extract provided which included 0 red, 5 amber and 2 yellow risks.

Members discussed whether, given a rising number of students with SEMH issues, there is a risk to this adversely impacting students' attendance and outcomes.

Members agreed that we need to remain live to this risk, however our interventions are proving effective as shown by high levels of student retention and progress. Members agreed that the risk was green due to the effective mitigations.

Members reviewed the risks and **felt assured** that the mitigations were appropriate.

13. Any Other Business

None.

The meeting closed at 6.00pm