

College of West Anglia
Minutes of Performance Review and Quality Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 10 June 2026
8:30am – 11.00am
Remote Meeting via TEAMS

Present	Jan Feeney Jemma Curtis Craig Morrison Gemma Standen Donna Woodruff	Governor (Chair) Governor Governor Governor Governor (Staff)
Attending	Kerry Heathcote Rob Petto Sarah Anstiss Rachel Boast Paul Gibson Clare Pelling Jules Bridges	Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality Assistant Principal Funding and Performance Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning Head of Public Sector Services Head of Quality Head of Learner Experience Head of Governance

No.		Action
1	Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from David Pomfret and Fliss Miller. The Head of Faculty, Technology, Sue Moore, also passed on their apologies.	
2	Declarations of Interests There were no items of interest declared.	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 March 2026 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2026 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate record.	
4	Matters Arising The progress arising from the previous meeting were summarised in the progress report and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda. Further to the query raised at the last meeting concerning the allocation of ALS funding, it was confirmed that the college can draw down ALS funds to use for specialist equipment, additional human resource (staffing), exam arrangements, tailored materials, or for example extending tutor time. The percentage of how the funding is allocated may differ dependent upon learner needs and therefore allocation maybe learner specific and not necessarily allocated just to the element of teaching and learning or pastoral care. All other completed items are to be removed from the report.	
	S Anstiss joined the meeting at 8.35am S Anstiss was congratulated for completing the level 7 senior leadership apprenticeship end point assessment with distinction.	HoG
5	Priority Item 1 – Apprenticeships/Technology The committee considered the report which outlined progress and sector developments noting that; Apprenticeship achievement rates are improving, though out-of-funding learners remain a challenge and require close monitoring.	

- The current achievement rate is 65.5% (target is 68%). Progress is generally positive despite some challenges in electrical provision, which are being closely managed.
- The policy reforms are significant. SMT are reviewing the departmental structure to strengthen employer engagement and compliance.
- The recent apprenticeship internal audit was broadly positive, with actions focused on improving training plans and consistency in off-the-job training records.
- The development of new apprenticeship provision (Growth and Skills Levy) is underway, with the initial focus on engineering and sustainability.
- The apprenticeship standard for Early Years provision is progressing well, with the first learners starting under the new assessment model and strong IQA capacity in place.
- Work continues to transition to the new student portal for apprenticeships, with a pilot expected in October 2026.

A query was raised regarding the current figure of 47% of learners likely to achieve merit or distinction, and how this compares with national benchmarks. It was noted that national benchmarking data is not typically published at this level of detail, as reporting tends to focus on overall achievement rates however governors were informed that the 47% figure is considered strong and represents an improvement on previous performance. The Head of Apprenticeships and WBL will investigate if any relevant comparative data is available for reporting back to the committee in future reports.

HoAPP&WBL

R Petto joined the meeting at 8.45am

A question was raised regarding engagement with major local infrastructure projects and national contractors, in addition to existing partnerships (e.g. Anglian Water and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital). It was noted that there are multiple large-scale projects emerging locally, presenting opportunities to align skills provision with future employment needs.

Governors noted the planned pilot of the new student portal in October and supported this as a sensible timeline. It was highlighted that delaying the pilot until after the September enrolment peak should allow for a smoother rollout and more effective student testing.

S Anstiss left the meeting and C Pelling joined the meeting at 8.50am

6 Learner Voice (*Students invited to attend the meeting*)

Two students, Fin Dye, and Callum Gordon-Farleigh, attended the meeting.

Fin is a Level 2 Carpentry student based at the King's Lynn campus. He reported a positive overall experience, highlighting:

- The diversity of learning experiences (practical workshop learning alongside theory).
- Exposure to a wide range of curriculum areas and faculties across the college.
- Opportunities to engage in enrichment activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

A suggestion for improvement was made to increase opportunities for cross-programme interaction, particularly through events or competitions, to enable students in different trades to engage more with one another.

The student identified limited areas for improvement:

- Travel and transport challenges, with long commute times impacting some learners.
- Social space constraints, particularly crowded indoor areas during poor weather, with a suggestion to explore covered outdoor seating.

Governors noted that transport can act as a barrier to participation, with some learners choosing alternative providers due to accessibility challenges.

Fin mentioned that he had experienced good access to careers support, including:

- Careers fairs and employer engagement activities.
- Support from staff and work placement coordinators.
- Awareness of progression pathways, including apprenticeships.

In summary, Fin described the college's key strengths as, 1) its diverse and inclusive community, including a wide range of learners and provision types, and 2) the expertise and supportiveness of staff. Governors welcomed the feedback, noting the importance of learner insights in informing ongoing development.

When asked about their choice of college and course, Fin chose CWA because:

- The limited local availability of construction provision, with nearby providers offering primarily sixth form (academic) pathways rather than vocational options.
- It was the closest provider offering suitable construction courses, despite a longer commute.
- Positive impressions of facilities and learning environment.
- Confidence in staff, following initial interactions, which influenced their decision to enrol.

Callum is a Forensics and Criminology student at the King's Lynn campus, nearing completion of their second year. Callum reported a positive experience and confirmed progression plans to university (Anglia Ruskin University) to study Forensic Science, with career aspirations in detective work.

An issue was raised by the student regarding delays in assignment feedback. Feedback for one unit (Forensic Genetics) was received after approximately 13 weeks, significantly exceeding the expected 3–4-week timeframe. It was agreed that this was not acceptable and would be investigated.

DCEO/VPC&Q

A further concern was noted regarding the learning environment in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC), where disruptive behaviour can make studying difficult.

When asked about their choice of college and course, the student indicated this was influenced by course availability, with the relevant science provision based at the King's Lynn campus.

Overall, governors welcomed the feedback and recognised the importance of timely assessment feedback and maintaining appropriate study environments.

Finally, it was suggested that additional structured questions could be introduced to learner surveys to capture views on a) how courses are progressing over time, and b) what improvements students would like to see at both course and college level. These questions would help ensure consistent opportunities for all learners to contribute feedback, rather than relying on ad hoc comments. This will be considered by the Head of Learner Experience.

HoLE

Fin and Callum left the meeting at 9.10am

7 Student Satisfaction

Governors received an update on the final student survey of the year, noting that feedback remains consistently positive across campuses with strong participation rates.

Key themes arising from student feedback included:

- Toilet facilities, with issues linked to vandalism; students expressing concern about peer behaviour rather than criticism of the college.
- Wi-Fi access, with some negative perceptions noted. It was explained that cyber security requirements restrict access for outdated personal devices, contributing to this view.
- Cost of food and access to specialist software/computers, particularly within the Learning Resource Centre (LRC).

It was confirmed that support is available to students experiencing digital access challenges, including signposting to external schemes. Governors discussed variations in feedback across campuses, noting slightly lower scores at the Cambridge campus. This was attributed in part to staffing changes (loss of a work placement coordinator) and is under review.

Governors debated the interpretation of survey ratings (e.g. “good” vs “excellent”), noting potential inconsistencies in how students understand these terms. Alternative approaches, including RAG-style ratings, were suggested for consideration and it was confirmed that survey design and rating scales are kept under review and continue to evolve. It was highlighted that student feedback trends have remained consistently strong over the past three years, with all qualitative comments reviewed and followed up where needed.

Finally, governors discussed responses to the question on whether the college listens and acts on student voice, noting several “not sure” responses. This was partly attributed to students not having provided feedback themselves. It was therefore agreed that further development and promotion of “You said, we did” communications would be carried out to better demonstrate responsiveness to student feedback.

HoLE

C Pelling left the meeting at 9.25am

8 Ofsted Update

The report to the committee provided an update on Ofsted development and sector changes. The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality highlighted:

- New FE Initial Teacher Education (ITE) reforms from September 2026 will introduce statutory requirements
- The new Ofsted framework aligns with the college’s approach to self-assessment as it already puts inclusion and safeguarding into context, and achievement, and operates a five-scale measure (BRAGP) mirroring the new five point standards dashboard (exceptional (blue), strong (green), expected (amber), needs attention (red), urgent improvement (purple).
- External benchmarking (shown in Capel Manor College inspection report) demonstrated sector expectations and improvement trajectories.

It was noted that Teacher Education provision sits within the Quality (Learning Practice), rather than HR, and is overseen within the college’s higher and teacher education strategy. This positioning is important, as Ofsted may ask governors to confirm where this provision sits organisationally.

Governors were advised that more ‘amber’ ratings will appear in reporting, reflecting the new “as expected” baseline rather than a decline in performance. It was noted that achievement outcomes for 16–18 learners and apprenticeships require improvement, with further discussion scheduled under later agenda items

9 Operational Oversight Report

The report details in-year performance data, highlighting:

- 16–18 retention is 89.5% which is below the 92% target, but +2.1% improvement on last year.
- Adult retention remains strong at 93.7%.
- Apprenticeship achievement performance is improving and above target trajectory at this reporting time.
- Early indicators (including mock results) suggest overall A Level achievement is strong, although high grades may not improve on last year.
- There is continued concern regarding Year 2 A Level cohort outcomes.

Governors received an update on latest in-year achievement data across key cohorts.

16–18 Study Programmes

The previous year achievement rate was 74.9% against current best-case projection of 89.3%, indicating a potential significant improvement.

Apprenticeships

The previous year achievement rate was 58.5% against current best-case projection of 77.2%, representing improvement on last year and +4.4% at the same point in-year. The target has been stretched to 70%+ to drive further improvement, particularly in higher-grade achievement.

Adult Learning

The previous year achievement rate was 82.4% against current expected achievement of 89.9%, with a best case of 92.4%. High retention (over 93%) continues to be a strength. Improved tracking is linking attendance more closely to achievement outcomes.

It was noted overall that achievement across all cohorts is currently stronger than at the same point last year, with positive progress expected.

Noting the recent drop in retention since March, governors expressed the need for a continued focus on improving retention and achievement, to further year-on-year improvement.

10 Learning and Curriculum Report

The report confirmed strong teaching, an inclusive curriculum, and positive learner feedback. There is effective staff support and development programmes, but greater consistency in teaching practice, and assessment feedback remains an area of focus. There is an acknowledgement of the need to improve the use of data and student portal systems, and further work on attendance and engagement required. Governors noted the scale of activity including 285 lesson visits and extensive mentoring support.

Areas for development were also highlighted, including improving lesson planning and structure to ensure sufficient stretch and challenge, strengthening the quality and consistency of assessment feedback, and improving the use of learner targets within the student portal. Attendance monitoring remains a priority, with a need to sustain early intervention throughout the academic year rather than losing momentum after the initial term.

Governors were informed of planned developments, including a revised approach to lesson visits focused on professional development and sharing best practice, alongside enhanced CPD pathways for both new and experienced staff. Ongoing work will assess the impact of APR findings and support cross-college learning. In addition, student survey methods are under review to improve clarity and reliability of responses. Governors welcomed the comprehensive and reflective approach to quality improvement.

R Boast joined the meeting at 9.55am

R Boast was congratulated on her appointment as Assistant Principal Student Services. She takes up the post in the new academic year.

11 Priority Item 2 – A Level Provision

The committee reviewed the progress made against the A Level Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The progress confirmed a strong Year 1 retention (96%), but weaker Year 2 retention rate (77%), hence the learner outcome concern mentioned in item 9 above. Student starting points limit achievable high-grade outcomes, predicted outcomes broadly align with CWA management expectations and as reported previously to the committee the recruitment challenges around Accounting and Economics remain with provision likely to be withdrawn for September 2026.

Grade outcomes in August last year were a shock to the faculty, SMT and governors. A more rigorous approach is now being taken to monitor and predict A Level outcomes, providing greater assurance that there will be no unexpected results this year. A strengthened applicant screening and guidance process is now in place, including subject-based tasks and enhanced IAG, which has already resulted in some applicants being redirected to more appropriate vocational pathways. This is increasing confidence that students are enrolled on the right courses.

A recent quality review confirmed positive improvements in A Level delivery, with strength in some subject areas. Targeted support is being provided where needed, including mentoring for less experienced staff and sharing of best practice across subjects. Governors discussed opportunities to further strengthen teaching quality,

including encouraging staff engagement with examiner and moderator roles to deepen subject expertise.

Progress has been made against system improvements and reporting capability, with developments expected to enhance oversight of A Level performance from September. Timetabling for the next academic year has also been improved significantly, that will provide a more coherent and effective student experience.

R Boast left the meeting at 10.10am

12 Headline Quality Improvement Plan 2025/26

In summary the progress report shows that many areas are rated green (good progress) or blue (completed). There are no areas currently rated red or purple.

Enhancements to reporting were highlighted. An oversight column has been added to detail where progress is reported and kept under focus and tracking and timeline changes for key actions have been improved. Governors noted the positive trajectory and improved visibility of progress recognising that the strong position reflects collective input from across teams.

13 HE Performance Report

The committee reviewed and discussed the HE performance data that shows strong retention in teacher education (levels 3 to 7) at 98.4%, lower retention in Access to HE programmes (85.9%) and undergraduate retention below target overall but strong in-year performance. Access provision was highlighted as a key pipeline into HE, with 149 learners currently enrolled.

Performance targets were confirmed. Retention is at 92% and 88% achievement for Access programmes, and 70%+ achievement for undergraduate provision. While undergraduate outcomes dipped to 59% last year, this was attributed to small cohort sizes impacting percentages, with no third-class degrees recorded and outcomes concentrated in 2:1 and First-class awards.

Governors discussed lower retention in some Access programmes, recognising both the risks and importance of this provision. It was confirmed that withdrawals are largely due to student life circumstances, and that the college maintains a highly inclusive approach, providing pathways for learners who may not otherwise access HE. It was acknowledged that this inclusivity increases risk but remains core to the college's mission, with robust support processes in place to support learner success and progression.

14 HE Update

Governors received an update on the Higher Education (HE) Strategy, presented as a position statement rather than a full refresh, reflecting a deliberate pause to allow further development. It was confirmed that strategic priorities remain in progress.

Operational considerations made include reducing the HE demand at the Cambridge campus, resulting in more flexible use of space. The Office for Students (OfS) registration has been paused due to associated administrative and financial requirements, with a continued focus instead on strengthening partnerships and renewing opportunities for employer engagement, including with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The additional Assistant Principal post (Skills and Adult Learning) will support growth in Level 4+ provision, with a focus on identifying new curriculum opportunities and strengthening delivery. Governors were assured that HE provision does not present a financial risk and continues to make an appropriate contribution within the wider curriculum. The decision to pause and reassess the strategy was supported as appropriate at this stage of development.

C Pelling joined the meeting at 10.20am

15	Single Quality Action Plan	The action plan confirmed the strong emphasis on staff and student engagement and inclusive practice. New governance and engagement mechanisms have been implemented and actions arising include neurodiversity support, accessibility improvements, and wellbeing initiatives. A streamlined committee structure has been introduced, alongside new staff drop-in sessions across all campuses, virtual and physical suggestion boxes, and improved mechanisms to ensure staff can easily raise feedback and feel heard. Governors noted that the action plan is a live, regularly updated document, despite a minor reporting date error that will be corrected. Progress on specific actions, including development of a staff toolkit, remains on track for pilot next academic year. Governors welcomed the progress and the enhanced focus on staff voice, wellbeing, and inclusivity.	
	C Pelling left the meeting at 10.25am		
16	Strategic Targets 2025-26 – Progress Review	The committee reviewed progress against the strategic targets. In summary, of the 10 targets monitored by the committee, 1 has been achieved, 6 are showing good progress, and 3 have made reasonable progress. No targets are currently behind schedule. In summary progress is on track, with an expectation that a significant number of targets will be completed by the end of the academic year.	
	D Woodruff left the meeting at 10.30am		
17	Review of Committee’s Performance, Terms of Reference & Annual Business Cycle	The committee considered the prepared review and concluded that it provides a fair and accurate summary of the committee’s performance during the year. The Terms of Reference were considered by the committee. It was proposed to increase committee membership from six to seven members, with a corresponding change to quorum from three to four. Governors also reviewed the annual business cycle, with minor adjustments to report timings which would be agreed outside the meeting to ensure alignment with reporting periods. Governors discussed further enhancing oversight through the inclusion of employer voice, recognising its importance alongside student feedback. It was agreed this could be incorporated into the committee’s work, potentially as a regular agenda item inviting the new Assistant Principal (Skills and Adult Learning) as an attendee. This would be added to the Terms of Reference and annual business cycle. It was noted that some Terms of Reference areas (e.g. comparative data and value-added measures) require further development and additional analysis will be undertaken over the summer and proposals brought back to the committee in the new academic year as it was recognised that the new FESIT benchmarking data may not be a useful comparator to rely upon. Governors approved the revised Terms of Reference and annual business cycle, subject to the minor amendments proposed.	Chair HoG/HoQ HoG DCEO/VPC&Q HoG
18	Any Other Business	There were no other items of business.	
19	Chair’s Items for Briefing to Corporation	Apprenticeships continue to improve, with achievement rates rising and strong progress against targets, although some challenges remain in specific provision areas.	Chair

- Learner voice was a strong feature of the meeting, with students reporting positive experiences of teaching, support and diversity, alongside practical issues such as transport barriers and study space constraints.
- 16–18 retention remains below target (c.89.5% vs 92%), but is improving year-on-year, with a continued focus required on retention alongside achievement.
- Overall achievement across all cohorts is improving, with best-case projections showing significant gains in 16–18, apprenticeships and adult learning compared to last year.
- A Level provision shows stronger Year 1 retention, which is expected to positively impact Year 2 outcomes moving forward.
- Robust processes are now in place for A Level monitoring, giving governors confidence that there will be no unexpected (“no shocks”) outcomes this year.
- Student satisfaction remains consistently positive, though recurring themes include Wi-Fi access, facilities (linked to vandalism), cost of food, and access to specialist resources.
- The Higher Education strategy is currently paused, with a focus on strengthening partnerships, maintaining provision viability, and developing future Level 4+ opportunities.
- Strategic and quality plans are on track, with the majority of QIP actions rated green, no areas of concern, and strategic targets progressing well with none behind schedule.

20 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 8:30am (Meeting Room, Principal’s Suite, KL)

Meeting ended at 10.40am