EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2 December 2024 at 5.30pm via Zoom

Present		Sue Clarke	Chair
	To 18.32	John Laramy	Principal/CEO
		Jess Adams	
		Bindu Arjoon	
	From 18.18	Ashish Ghadiali	
		Lucy Gregson	
		Antony Hart	
		Ayomide Okesola	
		Vicki Roberts	
		Lindsay Skinner	
Apologies		Pam DeGregorio	
		Tim Quine	Vice Chair
Observers		None	
In Attendance		Jade Otty	Deputy CEO
		Sam Hillman	Deputy Vice Principal
	Item 5.1 and 5.2 only	Kristyn Woodward	Director of Student Services
	Item 5.3 only	Lisa Cummings	Deputy Head of College Information Services
		Alison Layton-Hill	Head of Governance

			Action
1.	**Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest.**		

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to the student governors, Jess Adams and Lucy Gregson, to their first committee meeting. They were encouraged to seek clarification during the meeting and the Chair asserted that the contribution of student governors is invaluable to the College. Ayomide Okesola was also welcomed back to the Committee as a co-opted governor.

Apologies were received from Tim Quine and Pamela DeGregorio and no declarations of interest were received.

2. **Minutes**
2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2024, as circulated, were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising**
The Chair acknowledged the Committee's scrutiny of the EDI statement which had been approved by the Board.

4.   **Quality Assurance**

4.1   Quality and Resources Review feedback

The Deputy CEO explained the College's quality and resources process. The recent reviews had been the most consistently high quality with more outstanding faculties than previously experienced. There had been a positive start to the year in terms of behaviour and expectations, attendance levels had increased and retention of high needs learners had improved. Space remained a challenge, however the College was hoping to receive additional government funding to alleviate this issue.

The time dedicated to the quality and resources reviews by SLT was acknowledged, along with the excellent preparation by faculties which allowed for evidence based and consistent assessment.

The Committee noted the assurance provided by the update

4.2   Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2023/2024 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024/2025

The SAR 2023/2024 was received and the Committee noted the overall assessment grade of 'outstanding', with all faculty and support departments being graded as 'good' or 'outstanding' bar one. This RI faculty had amalgamated with another, and the curriculum had been reviewed with an aspiration of better outturns. The Deputy CEO highlighted the key achievements and the areas for improvement defined under intent, implementation and impact and reassured the Committee that the College is rigorous in terms of its self-assessment and grading.

There remains a gap related to high needs learners, however the College is confident that the provision remains good and is on a journey to outstanding.

The Committee challenged whether governors were aware that a faculty had been graded RI. It was confirmed that the grade was based on data that had been available to the Board, which indicated outcomes that were below the national average. The programme referred to was within that data line.

Governors questioned why A level high grades (A*/A) were below the national average. The College explained its commitment to inclusivity and that it has the lowest entry criteria. This affected high grades, however, the College would like to improve its value-added score (ALPS) and has invested in a product called Alps Connect, which allows for improved diagnostics.

Following governor question, the method of recording attendance related to transport failure and extreme weather conditions was explained.

The Committee raised that Ofsted is moving away from the existing grading areas and enquired as to whether the College had any thoughts

about how its self-assessment would be graded. The College had discussed the issue and will share proposals with the Committee. However, governors were encouraged to continue to gain assurance from the data, outcomes and student experience.

The Chair thanked the Deputy CEO for the very coherent document and helpful summary.

The Committee agreed to recommend the College SAR 2023/2024 to the Board for approval at its meeting on 13 December 2024   **HofG**

The Quality Improvement Plan 2024/2025 was received and the progress against actions was noted.

**The Committee agreed to recommend the Quality Improvement   HofG
Plan (QIP) 2024/2025 to the Board for approval on 13 December 2024**

4.3   HE SAR 2023/2024 and QIP 2024/2025
The Committee received the report and noted the achievements during 2023/2024 and the rationale that supported the 'outstanding' grading. The highlights and key priorities for 2024/2025 were also discussed. The HE provision is included in the whole College SAR, however it was explained that the separate HE SAR was produced to meet OfS requirements for more comprehensive and bespoke scrutiny.

It was advised that Ofsted had paused inspections and therefore the College expects to be inspected after September 2025.

In response to governor challenge, it was acknowledged that in one particular area 2022/2023 retention issues were exacerbated due to the information, advice and guidance not being sufficiently robust. For the majority of those learners, the financial impact was minimal as the withdrawals were early and the College had placed some learners on an alternative course. Improvements have been made and excellent retention had returned for the 2023/2024 cohort.

The Committee noted the imminent leadership changes in HE, including a nationally advertised role, and agreed to seek assurance at a future meeting that the strength of the leadership will be retained.

**The Committee agreed to recommend the HE SAR 2023/2024 and   HofG
QIP 2024/2025 to the Board on 13 December 2024 for approval**

Kristyn Woodward joined the meeting for item 5.1 and 5.2

5.   **Safeguarding**

5.1   Safeguarding Annual Report
        The Committee received the safeguarding annual report and presentation
        and acknowledged the complexity and sensitive nature of the
        Safeguarding team's work.

        The Committee enquired as to how the rise in kinship care is monitored
        and tracked. The challenge was acknowledged as it depends on self-
        disclosure, however there is confidence in the transition information which
        has never been better.

        Governors queried how the vist forms support safeguarding. It was
        explained that the information provided is disseminated to key staff
        around the young person and directed to tutors so that additional support
        can be offered following an incident at home.

        The Committee expressed concern about the significant increase in the
        number of safeguarding alerts and concerns raised. Governors queried
        whether this was due to data being captured and recorded more
        effectively, which was confirmed. There are more mechanisms for
        reporting concerns, including concerns about someone else.

        The impact of the newly structured safeguarding team was questioned.
        There was now more opportunity to have conversations with tutors,
        including out within faculties, to give them the confidence to host and
        respond to approaches from learners. Feedback from faculties and heads
        of department had been encouraging.

        The Committee enquired as to whether the College should add resource to
        bolster the support provided by social care and NHS providers. The
        Safeguarding team had doubled in size and the level of competency had
        been increased. The College also invests in support for personal tutors to
        provide wellbeing support through PDP. A workshop model is being
        pursued to promote resilience around mental health support, the College
        is unable to provide 1-1 support due to the scale of demand.

        All learners receive a universal wellbeing offer, however, it was noted that   **KW/**
        this is raised in tutorials only once per year. It was agreed that   **GN**
        communication related to the difference between safeguarding and
        wellbeing and how to access those services could be refreshed.

        The Committee agreed to: **HofG**
           a) recommend the Safeguarding Annual Report to the Board for
              approval on 13 December 2024

5.2   Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
        The Committee received and considered the updated Safeguarding and
        Child Protection Policy, which is reviewed annually. The Director of
        Student Services highlighted the updates and explained that a more
        significant review would be undertaken the following year.

The Committee agreed to recommend the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy to the Board for approval on 13 December 2024 **HofG**

Lisa Cummings joined the meeting

5.3   Digital Safety Policy
The Deputy Head of College Information Services highlighted updates to the digital safety policy.

The Committee questioned the restriction on accessing college systems using a personal device during working hours. Governors requested clarification on which college systems were being referred to.   **LC**

Governors considered the document to be thorough but questioned how the content is communicated to staff and students in a more informal way. It was confirmed that the safe use of technology is included in the mandatory safeguarding training and the code of conduct. There is tutor time dedicated to the safe use of digital technology for students and the student code of conduct explains what is safe.

Governors highlighted the need for regular reminders and communications.   **SLT**

The Committee agreed to adopt the Digital Safety policy

6.   **Responsiveness**
6.1   Student Induction Survey outcomes
The Committee received the report and noted the excellent completion rate of over 90%. There appears to remain a reluctance from some schools to give meaningful access to college advisers and learners are finding out more through social media. Results also show that there may be a need to provide improved information about travelling to college and bursary support. The College was also committed to ensuring learners who are not on city centre sites have the opportunity to participate in the EXtra fair. 96% of students agreed that they are happy or very happy at College.

The student governor advised that her experience of induction had been very supportive. Learner Voice also confirmed that the College is welcoming and friendly with opportunities to socialise. The length of the induction period was considered, and it was confirmed that the College will be reviewing the programme. The Committee Chair had attended Learner Voice and felt that the customer satisfaction was very high and commended the College that lessons were praised as interactive and creative.

The Committee noted the assurance provided by the report

7.   **Risk Register and Emerging Risks**
7.1   Risk Register

      The Committee noted that the risk register had not changed significantly and the risk mitigations were noted. It was advised that more information related to curriculum reform should be received prior to Christmas. The new condition of funding for English and maths resits would not impact the College as it is already delivering a high quality provision.

      The Committee did not propose any additional risk

8.   **Future Meetings**
8.1   Items to take to Board were agreed as:
      - Safeguarding Annual Report and Policy
      - College QIP and SAR
      - HE QIP and SAR

8.2   Items for the next meeting
      The Committee reviewed the cycle of business for the meeting on 3 March 2025.
8.3   Date of future meetings:
      - Monday 3 March 2025
      - Monday 23 June 2025

9.   **Minutes/reports for information**
      The following reports were **received and noted:**
9.1   Safeguarding Working Group minutes
9.2   EDI Working Group minutes
9.3   College EDI Characteristics
      The Chair highlighted the interesting EDI data and enquired whether there is anything related to disabilities. This data could be made available, however as it is self-reported, the broad nature of it may not be meaningful.