

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at Harlow College on Thursday 12 March 2026, 9.30am

Membership: *Rod Bristow (Chair)
 *Caroline Betts
 *Vic Goddard
 Neala Goddard-Bird
 Stephen Isherwood
 *Ayub Khan
 *Karen Spencer

*denotes present

In attendance Becky Jones, Deputy Principal
 Simon Boyce, Vice-Principal
 Kirstie Craig, Vice-Principal
 Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal
 Wendy Martin, Assistant Principal
 Tracy Mucci, Assistant Principal
 Laura Moore, Assistant Principal
 Kelly Edwards, Executive Director – Quality
 Julien Sample, Executive Director – Business Development
 Viv Kimeng-Nwauzu, Head of Academy
 Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Stephen Isherwood due to work commitments and Neala Goddard-Bird due to personal reasons.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 3 December 2025 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes (not mentioned elsewhere on the agenda)

There were no matters arising.

5 Key Performance Indicators and Quality Improvement Plans

5.1 Curriculum, Teaching and Training

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on curriculum, teaching and training, presented by Kelly Edwards, Executive Director – Quality.

Kelly Edwards reported that strong outcomes last academic year are linked to excellent teaching, learning and assessment.

Governors were informed that this year is the first year of the new walkthrough format, with the number of judgements reduced from 15 to 11 and the language simplified. Any judgements that were at 100% have been taken out this year. There has been positive feedback so far on the new format and the walkthroughs are due to be fully completed by April.

Deep dives have changed to teaching, learning and assessment reviews. There have been positive outcomes from these reviews however there is always work still to be done. Formative assessment is the key area of focus with bespoke support being provided to teams where required, The use of Showbie is being looked at to see what it can provide in next level up reporting.

A Governor asked what is materially going to change around formative assessment.

Kelly Edwards reported that formative assessment is currently tracking at 82% “met or seen in planning” in walkthroughs. The opportunity during a three-hour lesson for formative assessment is there and is recorded through Showbie however teams pick up things at different times and in different ways. Teams formatively assess students in a variety of ways, such as with quizzes, exam questions, presentations etc. This is all captured on Showbie and seen in 82% of walkthroughs that have currently been completed.

Karen Spencer reported that formative assessment is taking place and that the issue is capturing it.

Becky Jones reported that tracking of formative assessment is not yet consistent across all teams, therefore it is a focus of teaching, learning and assessment. Showbie has introduced a new formative assessment mark-book to track through time the formative assessment grades per learner, enabling staff to see learners’ progress against their TMG. The College’s achievement rates have improved however value added (progress) has not, therefore a sharper focus on formative assessment will help drive higher grades.

Karen Spencer reported that not all qualifications have a progress measure and a value added measure. The DfE has published a data set with all the underlying data therefore the College is able to use its own system to track progress. This is a work in progress.

A Governor asked about the inconsistency of embedding formative assessment and the lack of visibility in measuring it. Becky Jones reported that the tracking of formative assessment is the inconsistency and Governors were informed that a meeting is planned for Friday 13th March to see if Showbie could develop the higher level tracking at team, academy and overall College level.

A Governor asked about the green rated behaviour judgement and the rationale for it being green.

Kelly Edwards reported that this is based on the behaviour seen in the classroom during the 20-minute period of the walkthrough and is based on student behaviour and attitude in class.

Karen Spencer reported that Ofsted have consistently fed back that student behaviour is positive.

A Governor asked what is behaviour like every day. Simon Boyce reported that it is monitored in other ways as well as in the walkthroughs, such as recording any behavioural concerns on Pro-Monitor. In the context of this report, a green judgement is correct.

Kirstie Craig highlighted that the data in this report is based on the judgement of the teachers' ability to manage student behaviour and that there are other ways of monitoring overall behaviour.

A Governor asked if the green judgement is based on all the information being taken into account and Becky Jones reported that this is the case.

Karen Spencer highlighted that in the College's Self-Assessment Report, there is an overall judgement for behaviour however this has been separated out in the reports presented at this meeting for the different types of provision.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on curriculum, teaching and training.

5.2 Education Programmes for Young People

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on education programmes for young people, presented by Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal.

Laura Wedgbury-Glew reported that predicted achievement in the report is 73.5%, however the current rate as of today is 84.1%. There has been a change in the flagging process and in April, teams will reflag all their learners using a simplified Red/Green model, whereby only learners assessed as unlikely to succeed despite intervention will remain Red. Karen Spencer reported that predictions are always lower before Christmas.

A Governor asked what has caused the swing. Becky Jones reported that this is due to a change in the flagging criteria. All students were flagged in the first term based on how they had settled in and in the second term they were flagged based on the progress. Progress was defined by working at or above their Target Minimum Grade (set by Alps and aspirational targets) or working above the level they entered the College at. Next term they will be flagged red/green based on their likelihood to pass, and amber flags will be removed.

Viv Kimeng-Nwauzu reported that maths has also had an impact on these rates.

A Governor asked if the flags are seen by students and Becky Jones confirmed that they are.

Laura Wedgbury-Glew reported on the external competitions which students have taken part in and Governors thanked and congratulated Laura on her co-ordination and management of these events. The College is looking to expand its participation in these events with other teams and students reported they have really enjoyed making links with students from other colleges through collaborative events.

Governors were informed that work is continuing on attendance, with a particular focus on the reasons for non-attendance. Currently a high number are reported as “unknown”.

A Governor asked about the 77.9% of observed teaching meeting expectations and the College’s view on this.

Kelly Edwards reported that it is early in the walkthrough cycle, that not all walkthroughs have been completed and that this is based on 37 members of staff.

A Governor asked if 37 staff members were observed, 22.1% of them were not meeting the expected standard. It was agreed that it could be semantics around the wording used in the report.

A Governor asked if this was an issue replicated across the College.

Kelly Edwards reported that the judgements have been changed and they have been made harder to achieve, with a higher benchmark having been set. CPD is put in place to support staff to move forward where required.

Becky Jones reported that an overall judgement for the teacher is not given and that judgements do not reflect that a teacher is weak in every element. There are always new members of staff and development is needed.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on education programmes for young people.

5.3 Adult Programmes

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on adult programmes, presented by Wendy Martin, Assistant Principal.

Wendy Martin reported that learner feedback is positive with 99.5% reporting that their teaching was good (11%) or very good (88.5%). Positive feedback has also been received on learners’ wider professional and personal development.

The Adult Team has built good employer partnerships and there is good engagement with employers. 56% of learners have benefitted from some form of employer engagement however the team is looking to improve this.

Achievement on long courses is set to increase slightly mainly due to the accountancy course which has a high volume of learners.

Achievement on short courses is at 67% however this is not an area of concern due to the large number of ESOL starts who have not yet been flagged due to timings.

Wendy Martin reported that the Adult Team won the College's Team of the Year award.

A Governor asked what can be done about long course attendance.

Wendy Martin reported that there is an ongoing challenge with a number of these learners around other commitments. The majority of learners are female and often have childcare commitments or part-time jobs. The team is constantly looking at ways to support non-attendance.

A Governor asked what more needs to be done around achievement rates on long courses.

Another Governor reported that attendance stands out and if there are other ways for learners to access content to increase their attendance.

Karen Spencer reported that the issue is around female attendance and there is not a complete overlap between attendance and achievement. Some learners can have 100% attendance and still not achieve.

Wendy Martin reported that it is a complex picture. The nature of the learners is one factor and that there are other factors linked to specific courses which has been identified and additional support will be provided to increase achievement. Entry requirements on some courses have been changed and lower-level courses have been introduced as a stepping stone for learners not ready to undertake a higher-level course.

Karen Spencer reported that the home study mark has been removed from registers however there are ways to verify learning if it is completed online.

Wendy Martin highlighted that attendance is in line with the AoC benchmarking data and that the team is constantly looking at ways to improve attendance. Better information, advice and guidance is provided at the start of the programme to ensure that learners are aware of the commitment requirements from the start. Digital resources are provided so they can access the content and this helps to ensure they achieve. Additional workshops are also being put in place.

Becky Jones highlighted that the overall adult attendance is currently at 87.4% and the overall College attendance is currently 87.5% therefore they are in line

with each other. Current achievement is based on the current progress with flagging and this is currently being undertaken.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on adult programmes.

5.4 Apprenticeships

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on apprenticeships, presented by Kirstie Craig, Vice-Principal.

Kirstie Craig reported that current achievement is now at 42% compared to 39.6% at the time of writing the report and this is in line with this time last year.

Governors were informed that there are approximately 80 apprentices who are classed as past planned end date (PPED), 50% of which have gone through the gateway and are preparing for their end point assessment and the College is confident that they will achieve. The majority of PPED apprentices are in electrical and engineering. Electrical are making good progress with getting them through however additional intervention and support is being put in place for engineering.

Kirstie Craig reported that the Government has changed the way timely completion is calculated and it is now based on PPED. It is believed that this will make it easier for the College.

Governors were informed that there has been a slight decline in attendance which is currently at around 90%. This is due to having more accurate data as a result of changes made to the way in which registers are marked. Active learning in a calendar month is monitored. English and maths attendance is a concern. Employers are contacted if apprentices do not attend College. The biggest impact on attendance is the NVQ only learners. These learners are already competent in their job and it is harder for them to be released by the employer for them to attend College. Apprentices taking annual leave also has a negative impact on attendance.

Kirstie Craig reported that the first apprenticeship units are being released in April and this might have an impact on how employers use their apprenticeship levy.

A Governor asked about the quality of teaching judgement and if the figures are low for it being half way through the year.

Karen Spencer reported that there is an issue with how things are being labelled in the reports.

Kirstie Craig reported that only four members of staff have been observed therefore the data needs quantifying. A Governor highlighted that it is percentages and not numbers being reported.

A Governor asked about the current position compared to the target for retention and achievement and what gives the College confidence that it is on track to achieve the targets.

Kirstie Craig reported that this year's data is compared with last year's and taking into consideration the number of apprentices due to complete this year, the College is confident that this year's figures will improve. Meetings are taking place with teams where support is needed.

Karen Spencer reported that these are the actual figures for those that have achieved to date and that expected and maximum rates should be included in future reports.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on apprenticeships.

5.5 English and Maths

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on English and maths, presented by Viv Kimeng-Nwauzu, Head of Academy.

Viv Kimeng-Nwauzu reported that there are over 1,000 students studying maths and 800 studying English. These high numbers present challenges however staffing is now stable.

Governors were informed that the predicted outcomes are based on student flagging and that current predicted overall achievement as of the date of this meeting is 76% for English and 72.8% for maths.

English attendance is better than maths however progress in maths is better than in English.

The November GCSE resits saw 53% of students achieving a grade 9 – 4 in maths against the national rate of 23.2% and 38% of students achieving a grade 9 – 4 in English against the national rate of 37.5%.

Adult English and maths provision is strong.

Governors were informed that there is a focus on attendance, improving English high grades, improving maths achievement, improving lower-level adult outcomes and improving apprentices' English and maths outcomes.

A Governor asked about the implications of the Government's White Paper. Karen Spencer reported that she has been invited to meetings and the College is trying to have some influence on it however it is too early to say what the implications will be.

A Governor asked whether English or maths needs to do better. Viv Kimeng-Nwauzu reported that English has historically had lower outcomes. IT has been used to mark mock exams and this has resulted in students being graded higher in English than they should have been. Karen Spencer reported that maths predicted achievement is always lower than the final position and English

higher. Nationally maths rates are lower than English however this is not the case at the College and often the College's maths rates are double the national rates.

A Governor asked comparing this year to last year, is the College on track to do at least as well for achievement and high grades in both English and maths and Viv Kimeng-Nwauzu confirmed that it is on track.

Viv Kimeng-Nwauzu reported that the latest outcome on the Level 1 Award in Number and Measure is a 40% achievement rate.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on English and maths.

5.6 Inclusion

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on inclusion, presented by Tracy Mucci, Assistant Principal.

Tracy Mucci reported that overall inclusion is a strong feature of the College with the progress of all groups of learners being broadly in line with their peers. There are however some gaps, with those with learning difficulties or disabilities at 2.9% and bursary at 6%. This is largely due to attendance and retention rather than these learners not being able to achieve,

Governors were informed that a SEND audit has been completed and the full report is expected in the next few weeks. Initial feedback from the audit is that students feel safe, supported and included.

The College is strengthening engagement with potential students with SEND needs before they start at College. A video is being produced to highlight the support offered and a dedicated SEND session was held at the recent open evening. This early engagement helps students feel confident and supported.

Tracy Mucci highlighted the changes in SEND funding to a banding system and that the College is undertaking work around this to determine how it translates to appropriate and sustainable support for students.

A Governor highlighted that Arab students are the lowest achieving for the last three years and asked if there was any mentoring in place for these students. Karen Spencer reported that Arab students are mainly on the College's ESOL programme and are classed as Looked After Children. Once they turn 18, they are often moved out of the area and cannot complete their course. Simon Boyce reported that enrichment interventions and additional support has been put in place for ESOL students.

A Governor asked that with inclusion being a particular focus in the new Ofsted framework, how would the College grade itself for inclusion. Karen Spencer reported that the College has graded itself as at the expected standard in the College's 2024 – 2025 Self-Assessment Report.

A Governor asked about the latest student survey and if students report that they feel safe at College. Karen Spencer reported that this always comes out strong in the student surveys and this was also reflected in the SEND audit.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on inclusion.

5.7 Participation and Development

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on participation and development, presented by Simon Boyce, Vice-Principal.

Simon Boyce highlighted that the additional 100 hours of delivery outside of the curriculum has a focus on employment, enrichment and pastoral activities. Currently 69% of learners have achieved this against the KPI target for the year of 90%. There is ongoing work with the Student Futures Team and the delivery teams to improve engagement with this.

Governors were informed that the introduction of Student Inclusion Ambassadors has been really positive.

Simon Boyce reported that there has been improvement in internal progression and an increase in returning students. 90% of students have completed the Moving-On survey and there is a focus on maintaining this dialogue through 1-2-1 tutorials.

There has been an increase in the number of applications for 2025 – 2026, compared to 2024 – 2025. Currently there has been a 25% increase in offers for next academic year compared to this academic year. The conversion rate from application to enrolment dropped for 2024 – 2025 however the key message was around waiting lists and it is believed this had a negative effect. This has been moved away from with more positive messages being sent to applicants and resourcing being looked at. Karen Spencer reported that conversion rates are not a concern and that student numbers are still high.

A Governor reported that work experience correlates strongly with success and asked if there is a limit to the level the College can achieve on work experience.

Simon Boyce reported that it remains a challenge, especially with the demand for T-Level placements increasing however the KPI target is a realistic aspiration.

Becky Jones reported that all Level 3 students should undertake some form of work experience however the College is not expecting Level 1 students to go on work experience therefore something different is offered for Level 1 and Level 2 students.

Simon Boyce highlighted that there is a lot of work being undertaken around employer experiences and interactions.

Governors were informed that an application is being submitted to the Turing Scheme, which targets T-Level students.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on participation and development.

5.8 Meeting Skills' Needs

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on meeting skills' needs, presented by Julien Sample – Executive Director, Business Development.

Julien Sample reported that good progress is being made with the QIP targets.

Governors were informed that the delay in recommissioning the Construction Hub is not of concern. Discussions are taking place with the Council over planning requirements and there is a possibility that the May target will be met. There have been delays with the UK Health Security Agency relocating to Harlow therefore there are no concerns if the timescales for recommissioning the Construction Hub slip.

The College has submitted a plan to deliver two Skills Bootcamps next year and a small allocation has been granted however the College's breadth of offer has had to be reduced.

Governors were informed that opportunities are starting to come through from the Eastern region's Construction Technical Excellence College.

Julien Sample reported that the College held an engineering roundtable event in partnership with Essex Chambers of Commerce as part of the LSIP refresh. The event was well attended and there was strong engagement with employers and stakeholders.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on meeting skills' needs.

5.9 Key Performance Indicators

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on key performance indicators (KPIs), presented by Becky Jones, Deputy Principal.

The KPIs were covered in detail in agenda items 5.1 – 5.8 above.

Becky Jones reported that the Health Science Academy Advisory Board has been set up with an inaugural meeting taking place on 26 March 2026.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on key performance indicators.

5.10 Quality Improvement Plan

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on the quality improvement plan (QIP), presented by Becky Jones, Deputy Principal.

The QIP was covered in detail in agenda items 5.1 – 5.8 above.

Governors' attention was brought to the areas RAG rated red that had not been covered in previous agenda items.

A-Levels and Health Science were highlighted along with issues specific to these teams. Karen Spencer reported that the College's A-Levels results are still strong and Becky Jones highlighted that applications for next academic year in these two areas have significantly increased.

Governors' attention was brought to the plan of estates work and noted that this has been discussed in detail by the Resources Committee.

A Governor asked what is the one thing that keeps management awake.

Becky Jones reported that it is changes imposed by Government and qualification reform. The College is working through the latest announcements in terms of curriculum and qualification reform. New T-Levels are being introduced and there is a concern around the required placements. Karen Spencer reported that they are trying to influence the requirements around T-Level placements and improve T-Levels.

Becky Jones reported that V-Levels being introduced will be A-Level sized qualifications and not equivalent to BTECs therefore they might not have the impact that the College had hoped for.

Reforms at Level 2 are being introduced. There will be a two-year course designed to get the students into work and a one-year course to get the students to progress onto a T-Level, V-Levels or A-Levels.

A Governor highlighted that attendance had been a reoccurring theme throughout the meeting and asked if there needs to be a focus on improving attendance and teaching, learning and assessment at future meetings.

Karen Spencer reported that the College has an Attendance and Retention Taskforce and that the College's attendance is reflective of the sector and not an outlier. The College's attendance data is broadly in line with Year 10 and Year 11 school attendance data. Human intervention has the biggest impact on attendance.

Becky Jones reported that attendance is being monitored team by team and every team with attendance below 82% has specific actions set to improve attendance. Teams with exclusive Level 3 provision is higher with attendance in the 90s, the issue is with the lower-level courses.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on the quality improvement plan.

6 Curriculum Update

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that this had been covered and discussed in agenda items 5.1 – 5.10 above.

7 Higher Education

7.1 Higher Education Update and Quality Assurance Report

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Higher Education (HE) Update and Quality Assurance Report, presented by Becky Jones, Deputy Principal.

Becky Jones reported that offers on the College's higher national programmes have improved slightly and highlighted the courses offered.

Governors were informed that there has been lots of positive work undertaken with the Institute of Technology.

The College has introduced a Level 4 Oral Health Practitioner higher apprenticeship and a Level 3 Dental Nursing.

The higher education development plan for 2025 – 2026 and progress against the actions were highlighted.

Governors were informed that the Office for Students are proposing to reduce the reporting requirements for colleges which is welcomed however this still needs to be confirmed.

Becky Jones confirmed that all Office for Students regulatory requirements are being met.

A Governor asked about how the College feels with higher education recruitment currently.

Becky Jones reported that this will depend on how many offers convert to enrolments. Where the College has feeder courses onto a higher education programme, it is confident that the numbers will convert.

Karen Spencer reported that the College's market is adult on access programmes and young people already studying at the College, rather than wider out in the community.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Higher Education Update and Quality Assurance Report.

7.2 OfS Reportable Events

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that there has been no OfS reportable events since the Committee last met on 3 December 2025.

8 Admissions Policy

The Standards and Curriculum received and considered the Admissions Policy, presented by Simon Boyce, Vice-Principal.

A Governor asked why attainment has been changed to achievement. Karen Spencer reported that achievement is the word used throughout the College therefore it has been changed to ensure consistency.

A Governor asked why achievement has been moved to the top of the list. Simon Boyce reported that this is for internal applications and that achievement is the main factor on determining internal progression.

A Governor asked if appeals were part of the governance framework and Karen Spencer reported that complaint appeals would go to the DfE.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the Admissions Policy.

9 Any Other Business

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that this would be Rod Bristow's last meeting and thanked him for chairing the Committee and his commitment and dedication to the College over the last seven years. He was presented with a card and gift on behalf of the Corporation.

10 Dates of Future Meetings

Summer Term 2026	Thursday 18 June 2026	9.30am
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Key Points From The Meeting For Corporation:

1. Key Performance Indicators

To receive and note the key performance indicators.

2. Quality Improvement Plan

To receive and note the quality improvement plan.