Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Corporation

Curriculum and Quality Committee (Committee)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11 March 2026 (Meeting)

Present:

- David Powell (Chair)
- Dmitry Fedotov
- Vijay Teeluck
- Judith Kidder

In attendance:

- Lorraine Cross, Group Executive Director of External Relations and Development (GEDER)
- Lisa Macdonald, Group Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality Standards (GEDCQ)
- Clare, Allcock, Group Executive Director of Student Experience and Support (GEDSE)
- Andrea Quantrill, Director of High Quality and Performance (DHQP)
- Sam Cremore, Head of Governance and Legal Services (Clerk)

Apologies:

- Alex Miles

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

1.1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, noted that it was quorate and that it had been called in accordance with the Instrument and Articles and Standing Orders. He extended a particular welcome to Judith, attending her first Committee meeting. Apologies were noted from Alex Miles.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 November 2025

3.1. The Committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2025.

3.2. The Chair noted that he had reviewed the minutes and that they had already been presented to the Board.

3.3. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2025 be approved.

4. Matters Arising

The Clerk provided an update on matters arising from the previous meeting. It was noted that all actions had been completed except for an action to speak with Sam Wright, the Principal, regarding a former member of the Committee and his availability to rejoin. It was reported that due to ill health this action would not progress further. The Chair stated he would speak with the Principal regarding this matter and suggested the Committee may wish to send the former member a card, noting that he was a founding member of the Committee and held in high regard.

5. Chair's Update

5.1. The Chair reported on three key items:

5.1.1. He had attended an Ofsted briefing on the inspection toolkit and highlighted the emphasis on breaking down barriers to learning, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. He noted the message that “if we get it right for the most vulnerable, we get it right for all” and stressed the importance of progress and standards of work alongside achievement data.

5.1.2. He raised a concern regarding the research base underpinning the inspection toolkit, stating that it remained unclear what FE-specific research, particularly since 2019, was informing the approach.

5.1.3. He had attended an AoC briefing on curriculum reforms. He noted that the proposals aligned with recent internal updates but expressed concern about aspects of the reforms, including potential level 2 pathways. He also highlighted continued uncertainty around English and Maths reforms.

5.2. Questions and answers:

5.2.1. Q: Are there going to be two routes at level 2, including a two-year employment pathway?
A: The GEDCQ confirmed that there would be two routes at level 2 and expressed concern about the feasibility of a one-year level 2 certificate, highlighting the risk to retention.

6. Executive Director Performance Update on good performance and areas of concern related to Inclusion, Curriculum, Teaching and Training

6.1. The GEDCQ presented her performance update and highlighted three key points:

6.1.1. Retention was strong and tracking ahead of the same point last Year.

6.1.2. Professional judgement processes indicated no current concerns regarding forecast achievement.

6.1.3. An emerging challenge related to the accuracy of data relating to “at risk” students which was being addressed.

6.2. Questions and answers:

6.2.1. Q: Could you explain the professional judgement grades table showing high completion but lower proportions achieving grade 4+?
A: The GEDCQ explained that “completion” referred to completion of professional judgement grading rather than course completion. The January professional judgement point identified learners tracking at grade 4+, with further review points scheduled across the year.

6.2.2. Q: The report refers to lack of standardisation in target grade setting undermining value-added analysis – what is being done?
A: The GEDCQ explained the issue largely related to data entry and formatting errors rather than inconsistent professional judgement. She reported a low error rate and outlined ongoing checking and correction activity.

6.2.3. Q: Would it be appropriate to include adult learners’ starting points in the same tables?
A: It was noted that adult provision used a separate approach due to rolling starts and the prevalence of pass/fail programmes which did not use professional judgement grades in the same way.

6.2.4. Q: The report references concern regarding engineering management. Is this organisationally significant?
A: The GEDCQ confirmed this was significant because it related to line management stability. Interim support arrangements were in place and there were no concerns regarding learner achievement, with apprentices on track to achieve.

6.2.5. Q: The number of learners with a fail grade appears higher than those identified as high risk – does this suggest problems with risk identification?
A: The DHQP explained that staff training and AVAR meetings were used to align professional judgement grades and risk indicators, ensuring corrections were made and appropriate interventions put in place.

7. Student Experience Update on Safeguarding, Inclusion and Participation and Development

7.1. The GEDSE presented her update, structured around key themes.

7.2. She provided assurance that learners felt safe, supported and included across the Group, and that safeguarding culture remained strong.

7.3. She reported increasing complexity in student needs, particularly around wellbeing and personal circumstances, but noted that early intervention approaches were effective and enrichment activities beyond the classroom were improving, albeit unevenly across areas.

7.4. Questions and answers:

7.4.1. Q: Behaviour regulation meetings appear higher than last year, is this due to a change in approach?

A: The GEDSE explained that student experience and support leaders were now more involved earlier, with stronger early intervention. Many BR1 cases related to attendance due to increased organisational focus.

7.4.2. Q: To what extent is trauma-informed practice embedded across the college?

A: The GEDSE confirmed trauma-informed practice had been part of training for several years, with further development ongoing. A working group was currently focusing on mental health and trauma-informed classroom practice.

7.4.3. Q: How does the “future self” programme work and who can access it?

A: Dmitry, the Lead Governor for Student Experience, explained that it targeted 16–25-year-olds with low to moderate mental health needs. Referrals were self-referral but could be supported by practitioners, including Group staff.

7.5. The Lead Governor for Student Experience also shared examples of student leadership activity observed at Wakefield, including environmental initiatives and fundraising. The Committee discussed future student engagement arrangements, noting the move towards link governor visits while recognising the value of broader enrichment activity.

7.6. The Lead Governor for Safeguarding noted that he had met with GEDSE prior to the meeting and could give assurance to the Committee regarding safeguarding practices and outcomes.

8. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Update on QA calendar and forthcoming activities

8.1. The DHQP updated the Committee on teaching, learning and assessment activity.

8.2. Questions and answers:

8.2.1. Q: Are staff rated against the "Teaching Excellence Matrix"?
A: The DHQP confirmed that the process was developmental and coaching-based, not judgemental, with outcomes used to guide professional development.

8.2.2. Q: Are there common themes emerging from area improvement monitoring?
A: The DHQP stated that focus was being kept narrow in areas under monitoring due to staffing instability, with feedback and assessment identified as a key forthcoming theme.

8.2.3. Q: What have been the three biggest impacts of teaching and learning activity?
A: The DHQP highlighted improved planning and sequencing through planning workshops, rapid improvement in response to student feedback, and a cultural shift towards coaching and reflective practice.

9. Quality Improvement Plan Update

9.1. The GEDCQ introduced the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) update and described the use of Lead Governors across priority areas, supported by meetings and learning walks for information triangulation.

9.2. The Committee noted that Link Governor visits were planned to take place and the scheme was viewed positively.

9.3. Three areas of improvement had been secured:

9.3.1. The high needs achievement gap had been closed within Motor Vehicle.

9.3.2. Construction apprentices were progressing their achievement in line with expectations.

9.3.3. Apprentices participating in enrichment development had improved as required but 16-18 English and Maths attendance continued to be an area of weakness which was impacting achievement and high grades.

9.4. Questions and answers:

9.4.1. Q: Why is progress in engineering and motor vehicle challenging?
A: The GEDCQ explained that while staffing was more stable than last year, teams still contained many new staff, making it harder to embed improvement activity.

9.4.2. Q: Why had “Ready to Learn” been identified as an area for improvement?
A: The DHQP noted that inconsistency in practice, particularly among agency staff, had impacted compliance with expectations, such as mobile phone use. A focused “pulse” check was planned.

9.4.3. Q: How is adult provision using learner starting points more effectively?

A: It was noted that Microsoft Forms was being used to capture and revisit starting point information in a consistent, adaptable and data-driven way.

9.4.4. Q: What is a realistic benchmark for participation in enrichment activity?

A: The Lead Governor for Student Experience opined that 100% participation was unrealistic and that the focus should be on offering accessible, diverse opportunities rather than universal uptake. The Committee noted its agreement.

9.5. The GEDER noted that future reports would include clearer numerical breakdowns alongside narrative, particularly in relation to apprenticeships.

10. Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech

10.1. The Committee considered the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.

10.2. The Clerk confirmed the document had been checked against an external Eversheds precedent.

10.3. Members discussed drafting and legislative coverage, noting these points would be addressed prior to Board consideration.

10.4. Questions and answers:

10.4.1. Q: Are all relevant pieces of legislation covered in the draft?

A: Members agreed this should be checked as part of finalising the document.

10.5. IT WAS RESOLVED TO recommend the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech to the Board for approval subject to suggested amendments relating to spelling and grammar and a check of legislative coverage.

11. Briefing Papers

11.1. The Committee received the briefing papers listed on the agenda (Maths and English; Digital; Quality; Apprenticeships; HE; Complaints).

11.2. Due to time constraints, members agreed that any questions would be submitted by email.

11.3. Answers would be circulated to all and the relevant email threads would be kept with these minutes.

12. Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risk

12.1. Members reflected positively on the effectiveness of the meeting, noting that the shorter, more focused papers supported good discussion.

12.2. Members welcomed the use of glossaries but noted that acronyms and local terminology could be a barrier for new governors.

12.3. The Committee also welcomed the increased use of Link Governor activity to strengthen scrutiny.

13. Date of Next Meeting

13.1. The next meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee will take place on 9 June 2026.

13.2. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed ………………….........................………… Date 09.06.2026

Action

Number	Minute	Action	Deadline	Owner
1	4	The Chair stated he would speak with Sam and suggested the Committee may wish to send the former member a card.	ASAP	Chair
2	7.5	Consider how student engagement sessions will operate alongside link governor visits.	ASAP	Clerk/Dmitry
3	9.5	Provide numerical breakdowns alongside narrative in future QIP reporting.	Next Committee meeting	GEDER

5	10.5	IT WAS RESOLVED TO recommend the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech to the Board for approval subject to minor suggested amendments.	Next Board meeting	Clerk
6	11.2	Members agreed that any questions regarding the Briefing Papers would be submitted by email. Answers would be circulated to all and the relevant email threads kept with the minutes.	ASAP	Members