

IEG CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

18 March 2025

4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Stamford College

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

Pamela Jane Kilbey	(Chair)
Nicholas Crippa	(Online - from Item 4)
Rachel Nicholls	
Jonathan Teesdale	(to Item 10)
Steve Saffhill	
Vincent Brittain	
Marley Sheridan	(Student Governor)
Kris Varslavs Da Silva	(Student Governor) (Online)

ATTENDEES

Debbie Barker	
Julia Bates	
David O'Garr	
Matt Shough	
Jane Spurgin	(for Governance Director)
James Whybrow	
Sarah Young	(from Item 4)

APOLOGIES

Tony Warner

1. WELCOME

Standing item

Speaker: Chair

- a. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Tony Warner
- b. **Confirmation of eligibility and declarations of interest:** No new notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and no interests were declared.
- c. **Requests for urgent business:** None received

2. MINUTES

Decision item

Speaker: Chair

- a. **Minutes of the last meeting (26.11.2024):** The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved for signature. [\(ACTION 1\)](#)
- b. **Matters arising from the minutes:** There were no matters arising
- c. **Actions from the minutes:** Either completed, included on the agenda or due for completion as part of the annual cycle of business.

3. APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

Information item
Engagement

Speaker: Group Director - Apprenticeships & Employer

The Committee noted a broadly improving position in a challenging market. New starter retention is strong at 98%, surpassing KPI target of 95%. Market share for apprenticeships has grown from 8% to 10% in the past year, despite national and regional decline. Enrolments are slightly below plan, with 275 starts against a target of 300.

Surveys show positive engagement from apprentices and employers, with better feedback and a clearer focus on skill development. Monthly performance reviews, enhanced tracking, and increased employer conversations are now embedded.

While achievement and income targets remain a stretch, the team is becoming more responsive to employer needs. Previous year (historic) withdrawals will impact reported outcomes next year.

The flexibility for adult apprentices to opt out of English and maths is now in effect, with 24 already doing so. Committee members also noted the risk posed by recent NI increases, adding further strain to a tough employer environment.

The Committee **welcomed** the positive developments in apprenticeship delivery, **thanked** the Group Director for his report and **noted** the legacy impact from previous years.

(Nicholas Crippa joined the meeting)

4. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR UPDATE

Information item

Speaker: VP C&Q

Members received a report updating them on key performance indicators (KPIs) for Education & Training and Apprenticeships, highlighting progress, challenges, and key interventions.

Education & Training (E&T) retention remains strong and student satisfaction is high, with 90% reporting positive experiences and support. A large proportion of students are on track or making better-than-expected progress (88%) with 96% predicted to pass. While 22% are currently below target grades, focused interventions are in place to support improvement. GCSE resit outcomes are strong, with pass rates of 87.9% in Maths and 91.6% in English.

In Apprenticeships, retention of new apprentices is high at 97.5% and attendance is stable at 90.2%. A new predictive model aligns 2024/25 achievement forecasts with this year's 63%, a solid performance in the current sector. 49% of apprentices are currently on track in OneFile, and satisfaction rates remain strong, with a 92% recommendation rate. Employer engagement and mid-year feedback are ongoing.

Attendance remains an area for development, particularly in English, Maths, and at Levels 1 and 2. Key interventions include tighter attendance monitoring, targeted support for at-risk learners, teams are using the 'fitness to study' policy and compact timetabling to support student attendance, with escalation procedures in place.

Committee members challenged low attendance levels (currently 83.7%) as a key risk to achievement, particularly at lower levels and in English and Maths. Members also discussed the 22% of students below target grades, the low scoring survey question on test preparation (now under review), and the lasting impact of school disengagement for some students. GCSE resit strategies were viewed positively, and assurance was given that concerns raised during learning walks are addressed through responsive action planning and stretch and challenge measures.

Acknowledging the large amount/variety of activities underway to support positive student outcomes, the Committee sent their **congratulations** to the teams concerned (**ACTION 2**), **commending** their continued efforts.

5. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN REVIEW (QIP)

Information item

Speaker: APs – Quality

The Committee received an update on the 2024/25 Quality Improvement Plan, noting strong progress in curriculum quality, student engagement, and retention. Targeted interventions are delivering measurable impact, and five of eight focus areas have improved, with the remaining steady. A revised format now includes new end-of-year and in-year impact measures, offering clearer oversight of strategic risks and priorities. Positive momentum is evident, particularly in the quality of education for apprenticeships.

A newly appointed Personal Development (PD) Manager is already having a notable impact with planning and delivering PD content, which students value. actionhe recent Student Conference also contributed to redesigning the PD offer, including fresh topics such as driving and life skills to enhance the perceived value of additional content.

Looking ahead, the focus will be on embedding attendance strategies, deepening employer engagement, and strengthening personal development to secure long-term improvements.

Students struggle to articulate the value of personal development, where attendance is below the 87% benchmark. Targeted interventions are in place to address these challenges.

The Student Governors were pleased that students are being listened to, helping to shape the PD offer to make it more useful and interesting. In particular, sessions held recently to talk about University life and CV writing were found to be very successful and positive. It was

further suggested that a differentiated approach could be looked at for first/second/third year students focussing on apprenticeships and universities to help them make informed choices. VP SSE to pick this up with the Student Governors (**ACTION 3**);

Members **noted** the QIP plan and the excellent presentation, **thanked** the teams involved and thanked the Student Governors for their very useful input.

6. UPDATE ON QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

Information item

Speaker: APs - Quality

The Committee received a report on recent developments in teaching and learning, continuous professional development (CPD), curriculum review, and student feedback. Members noted strong progress, including high levels of staff engagement in training, increasing lesson visits, and positive student satisfaction, with 3,725 responses to the latest survey. The February CPD Day delivered focused training on AI integration, SEND support, and effective lesson planning.

Since October 2024, 598 lesson visits have taken place, with greater attention on ICT use, lesson structure, and assessment. Quality Learning Partners (QLPs) are now active on both campuses, using a consistent approach to gather student feedback, observe engagement, and support skills-focused delivery. Staff are demonstrating a more open-door mindset, actively seeking support and inviting QLPs in.

Holistic reviews have been completed in Business, Early Years, and Maths, with Apprenticeships next. Emerging themes include improving attendance, aligning curriculum delivery, and strengthening consistency. Despite some delivery challenges in Maths due to exam schedules and staffing, targeted support is in place to drive greater consistency and ownership at faculty level.

While there are some concerns about assessment preparation, actions are underway to strengthen support. Next steps include CPD focused on questioning techniques, high-grade attainment, and refining assessment strategies. Lesson visit insights will continue to inform faculty development, and digital learning tools will be enhanced to improve engagement.

Targeted interventions, structured faculty engagement, and ongoing CPD are all supporting improvements in teaching, learning, and student outcomes.

The Committee **noted** the details of the report and the **positive progress** being made in terms of quality improvement initiatives.

7. STUDENT PROGRESS & PREDICTED FE OUTCOMES UPDATE

Information item

Speaker: APs - Quality

The Committee received a report on student progress on study programmes indicating that, overall, student progress is on an upward trajectory, with targeted actions in place to strengthen consistency and high-grade achievement.

A 96% pass rate is currently forecast, up from 94% in 2023/24, reflecting stability and effective teaching. Predicted grades are reviewed at three key points during the year, based on prior attainment and distance travelled.

At Level 3, 98% of students are predicted to pass. While 64% are on or above target, there are campus differences, with Stamford performing ahead of Peterborough (69% vs 58%). Leisure & Services at Peterborough was identified as an area for intervention. High-grade achievement also varies, with 27% of Stamford students exceeding targets compared to 14% at Peterborough.

Non-graded vocational courses are performing well, with a 95% predicted pass rate. Areas needing support, such as Motor Vehicle and SEND at Stamford, are being addressed through faculty QIPs. Stretch and challenge remain priorities, with Walkthrus and enhanced feedback in place to drive high-grade attainment.

Opportunities through EdTech and AI are being explored to better track progress and enhance teaching, with staff engagement seen as key to success. A new predicted outcomes report will soon provide further insight into who is on track to pass.

The Committee discussed the need to reduce cross-campus performance gaps, noting links to current QIP themes. Members acknowledged challenges in using academic prior attainment to set vocational targets and welcomed ongoing work by QLPs to address achievement differentials. EDI data is monitored at course level, with no current concerns identified, but any emerging trends will be brought forward with intervention strategies.

The CEO suggested that governors are welcome to attend any upcoming Curriculum Performance Review meetings (CPR) to better understand the detailed process ([ACTION 4](#)).

The Committee **received** the report, **noting** the details and looked forward to receiving an update report at its next meeting

8. STUDENT DESTINATIONS UPDATE

Information item

Speaker: Vice Principal Student & Staff Experience

The Committee received a report on student destinations and progression, based on responses from 7,986 students through the Purlos campaign (Nov 2024 – Jan 2025), with a strong 82% response rate. WhatsApp was the most effective communication tool.

Outcomes are positive, with 93% of all learners progressing into education, training, or employment – consistent with the previous year and exceeding the sector average of 85%. For 16–19 learners, 93% achieved a positive destination (from a larger cohort than last year), and adult learner progression improved slightly to 86%, with many transitioning successfully into employment or further study.

Internal progression within IEG is strong at 66.5%, while 15% of students entered employment, including a rise in self-employment, reflecting changing aspirations. 54% of employed students moved into LSIP-priority sectors, showing good curriculum alignment with regional workforce needs. Apprenticeship progression remains low at 3.6%, and 5.3% of students are NEET – underlining the importance of early support and re-engagement.

Next steps include deeper faculty-level analysis to inform curriculum planning, new student case studies, an updated destinations publication, and an April campaign to track sustained

outcomes. Work is also underway to improve employer engagement and strengthen internal pathways, with a particular focus on reducing NEET rates.

Members welcomed the dashboard now available to Curriculum Managers, providing detailed, filterable insights to inform planning. They noted the increasing number of students entering self-employment and discussed how personal development sessions are being refreshed to build skills in areas like tax, finance, and small business planning. Early engagement with students at risk of becoming NEET has already begun, particularly in Peterborough, where local support needs are higher.

Members **noted** the details within the report with interest and **welcomed** the future report which will come from the launch next month to look at sustainable destinations (**ACTION 5**).

9. PARTNERSHIPS & SUBCONTRACTING UPDATE

Information item Speaker: CCO

(Vincent Brittain declared an interest)

The Committee received an update report on the performance of its partnership and subcontracted provision noting that subcontracted provision supports specialist curriculum pathways aligned with IEG's strategy and quality standards whilst the partnerships are designed to meet local, regional, and national skills needs, ensuring strong learner progression, employer engagement, and high-quality delivery.

Key details on the current performance for 2024/25 were highlighted:

Subcontract Partner Performance:

Aspire (Adult Employability Programmes)

- Meeting contract targets, supporting adult learners into employment and further study
- High retention and achievement, with strong curriculum delivery and employer engagement

Eastern School of Performing Arts (ESPA) (Performing Arts FE Programmes)

- Student progression is strong, with learners successfully transitioning into HE and industry
- New University Arts London (UAL) Level 2 qualification introduced to address skills gaps
- Level 4 Professional Diploma ensuring tailored progression routes into HE
- Increased applications for 2025/26 signal growing demand for provision
- Review planned at Curriculum Performance Review (CPR) to assess impact of curriculum delivery model and use of Stamford College facilities.

GLADCA (Adult ESOL Provision)

- Recruitment shortfall impacting contract delivery
- Referral pathways strengthened
- New Employability Qualification launched to support CV writing, job search, and interview skills
- Contract value under review.

Inspire+ (Sports Apprenticeships in Schools)

- Slightly below target, requiring closer monitoring of apprentice progression and completions
- Overall quality remains very strong
- Additional curriculum opportunity for 2025/26:

- Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant
- Level 6 Teacher Apprenticeship (in collaboration with UCP).
- Apprenticeship tender for 2025/26 subcontracting required for:
 - Level 2 Community Activator Coach
 - Level 3 Teaching Assistant
 - Level 4 Sports Coach
 - Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant
- Geographical expansion – Pilot Programme
 A pilot (15 apprentices) in 2025/26 will extend Inspire+ delivery to their network of 200+ schools in Hounslow. Monthly quality reviews will assess learner experience, curriculum delivery, and progression rates. ESFA has no concerns about IEG's geographical expansion.

Supported Delivery Model (SDM)

Enrolments are strong (1,204 starts), with high in-year retention (96.2%). Monthly monitoring ensures provision quality, learner progress, and curriculum alignment, with ongoing work to refine data accuracy and reporting.

Members commented that subcontracted and partnership provision continues to deliver excellent quality and that the Quality Team at IEG has a strong relationship with partners to work together to address any issues which arise from time to time.

The Committee **received** the report, **noted** that this is strong positive provision that meets a niche need and **welcomed** the continuation of arrangements.

(Jonathan Teesdale left the meeting)

10. QUALIFICATION REFORM UPDATE

Discussion item

Speaker: CCO

The Committee received an update on national qualification reform, including the government's Pause and Review (PaR) process and the emerging landscape for Technical Occupational Qualifications (TOQs). The PaR, announced in December 2024, has reshaped reform in response to sector-wide concerns, particularly regarding learner choice, progression routes, and the workforce pipeline.

Key changes include the retention of 70% of previously defunded Level 3 qualifications, an extended transition period to T Levels (with funding now available until 2027), and new curriculum flexibilities. Students will now be able to combine small 'Alternative Academic Qualifications' with technical qualifications—not just A Levels—starting September 2025. While these adjustments preserve choice and improve sector alignment, they increase complexity in curriculum planning.

Several T Level changes were also confirmed, including the introduction of new qualifications in Marketing (2025) and Social Care (2027), and the removal of the Onsite Construction T Level due to employer concerns. Placement reforms now allow remote and simulated work experiences, helping broaden employer engagement.

At Level 2, reforms continue as planned, with the first wave of TOQs due for delivery from September 2025 in Early Years, Health & Social Care, and Construction. These are designed to ensure students stepping off at Level 2 gain full occupational competence and the right to

work in relevant settings. Faculties will oversee TOQ delivery, starting with sectors where placements are most viable. The IEG Employer Engagement Strategy Group will meet next week to define targeted actions and clarify sector-specific employment outcomes.

Strategic considerations remain high. A mixed qualification offer must be carefully structured to avoid fragmentation and low recruitment. Staff are managing reforms against ongoing delays in national guidance, relying heavily on teacher expertise and close links with awarding bodies. Governors noted concerns that middle managers may be overburdened with responsibility in this evolving and complex landscape.

While the PaR has enabled IEG to retain credible Level 3 qualifications, members acknowledged that curriculum planning remains challenging amid shifting policies and messaging. The complexity of the current system—particularly for students and parents—is a growing concern. A clear, coherent, and responsive planning strategy will be essential to secure curriculum viability, resource efficiency, and employer alignment through the transition to TOQs and broader qualification reform.

As further details on reforms are awaited, Members **encouraged** teams to continue to navigate the changing landscape to ensure that the offer is appropriate and viable.

11. PROPOSED OFSTED REFORM

Discussion item

Speaker: CCO

The Committee received an update on the upcoming Ofsted reform and new inspection framework, set to take effect from September 2025. The current single-word judgments will be replaced by a detailed report card model, with greater focus on skills alignment, employer engagement, and learner progression beyond qualifications. While full implementation is expected by late autumn, inspections in the latter part of 2025 may begin to reflect the new approach.

IEG is well positioned, particularly in adult learning and high-needs provision, with clear evidence of impact. Strengthening employer engagement for all provision types, remains a priority, with deeper, structured partnerships helping to shape curriculum, validate skills, and confirm job readiness.

A significant shift will be in evidence expectations. Inspectors will require robust, real-time data on learner destinations, employer feedback, and local workforce impact. Curriculum planning and financial sustainability will also be reviewed through the lens of alignment to skills needs.

Next steps include enhancing destination tracking, further embedding employer voice across all curriculum areas, monitoring Ofsted pilot activity, and preparing a confident, data-led narrative that demonstrates sustained outcomes. The Quality team will lead on implementation, with adjustments to the QIP already underway.

Members welcomed the increased transparency and recognised the emphasis on impact and local value. The change from 'Outstanding' to 'Exemplary' reflects a broader shift towards evidence-based evaluation. A 'golden thread' is emerging across reforms – connecting skills, employer engagement, and sustainable curriculum design.

Members **noted** the proposed changes to Ofsted judgements and that the Board will be **updated** once the changes have been confirmed ([ACTION 6](#)).

12. 2025/26 CURRICULUM PLANNING UPDATE

Information item

Speaker: VP C&Q

The Committee considered the curriculum planning update in the context of the wider Pause and Review (PaR) reforms. Planning across the Group is now taking a more strategic, future-focused approach, fully integrating workforce demand, funding realities, and long-term priorities. The embedding of a three-year planning cycle marks a significant shift—creating space for both coherence and adaptability in a rapidly evolving landscape.

The extension of Level 3 qualifications to 2027 through PaR offers welcome stability, while reforms at Level 2 and the introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) from 2026 bring both opportunities and complexity. Curriculum planning is now being conducted in full alignment with finance and estates strategies, ensuring that decisions are resource-informed and sustainable.

Recent work on room utilisation has provided valuable insights, particularly given the growing 16–18 cohort and pressure on physical space. The need for new facilities is becoming more acute, and there is a strategic opportunity to engage local stakeholders and funders in a shared vision for growth.

The curriculum offer is being reviewed at both ends of the learner journey—from the introduction of Entry Level 3 programmes to refining our Higher Education and adult portfolio. A new Level 1 pilot will trial a common curriculum structure, with students starting in broad pathways before specialising, fostering both belonging and clearer progression.

Mapping all provision types concurrently is enabling stronger progression pathways and a more joined-up learner experience. Provision on the margins is also under review, with a clear moral responsibility to expand targeted support for NEET learners, particularly in areas with entrenched disengagement.

The breadth of IEC’s offer—from NEET to HE—is a core strength but sustaining that breadth in the face of tightening budgets requires clarity, discipline, and prioritisation. Adult funding reductions, lagged T Level funding and continued pressures on HE viability highlight the need to maximise alternative funding streams and sharpen strategic choices.

Members recognised the progress made in repositioning the curriculum to meet the needs of students, employers, and communities. The new strategic approach will support the Group in navigating complexity while remaining focused on quality, inclusion, and long-term resilience.

The IEG Accountability Agreement is a key document and governor feedback will be invited at the May development event, with choices to be explored and made. The Draft Agreement to be shared with the Committee for comment in advance of Board approval ([ACTION 7](#)).

The Committee **noted** the curriculum plan developments, the associated challenges and gave its **support** to the process.

13. URGENT BUSINESS (ITEM 1C REFERS)

Standing item

Speaker: Chair

None.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Scheduling

Speaker: Chair

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 17th June 2025.

The Chair thanked management for the preparation of exemplary papers and thanked the student governors for their active participation.

Meeting closed at 18:22