



PUBLIC MINUTES

MEETING:	EFI GROUP BOARD OF GOVERNORS
DATE:	Tuesday 21 October 2025
LOCATION:	Electra House, 84 Moorgate, London EC2M 6SE
PRESENT:	Kim Longman, Chair Laura Charles Linda Drew Fiona Gaughan Zareer Ghadially Sally Harris Susanna Kempe Lee Lucas, CEO & Principal Vanessa Spence Simon Williams The quorum for the meeting was four Governors
APOLOGIES:	None
IN ATTENDANCE:	Kelly Barry, Vice Principal (<i>items 5, 6, 7 and 8</i>) Amanda Colvin, Group Director of Marketing and Sales (<i>item 5</i>) Chris Maja, Director of Technology and Digital Innovation (<i>item 5</i>) Mia Campbell, Secretary to the Board (Incoming) Graham Cooper, Secretary to the Board (Outgoing)

Immediately before the board meeting, Governors received an overview of the 2025/26 approach to Learning, Teaching and Assessment Observations (LTAO) designed to deliver the best outcomes for students through high-quality pedagogy.

The Board meeting started at 12:30.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the new Clerk to the Board. No apologies were received.

The Board thanked the Outgoing Clerk for his 14 years' service and wished him a happy retirement. The CEO & Principal and Executive team (ELT) were commended for improvements to the length and format of papers.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members declared no financial or pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda.

3. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING OF 8 JULY 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 July 2025 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

In relation to matters arising, the Board NOTED that the new CFO would prepare a three-year financial forecast on commencement in post. All other actions were either completed or due for discussion at the current meeting.

4. CEO REPORT

The CEO & Principal presented his report on the key operational, strategic and partnership developments across the EFI Group, as well as the latest strategic projects and initiative tracker. Overall, the Group had continued to deliver strongly against its strategic priorities, with significant progress achieved in regulation with the successful registration with the OfS as an approved higher education provider and in strengthening partnerships within the beauty sector [REDACTED]. Notable developments were highlighted and discussed as follows.

Student Enrolment

EFI Group had achieved its highest-ever intake in the current academic year. Enrolments (excluding GCSE) were 9% higher than last year and 5% above target, led by growth in FE, particularly at LCBT. This offset softer performance in HE which was below its stretch target but still 21% higher than the previous year. The Board NOTED that although enrolment performance was strong and above target, the CEO and ELT would continue to monitor HE applications and conversion rates closely throughout the current cycle, as well as the impact of recent changes to LCBT's entry criteria.

The national benchmark for performance in English was attained, with continued improvement in maths outcomes. However, an increase in GCSE retake learners this year (the Group's largest ever) would place additional demand on teaching resources, especially during the exam period. It was NOTED that GCSE enrolment growth reinforced the need for ongoing focus on achievement and Board members should expect to scrutinise in-year GCSE outcomes to ensure continued improvement in grade 4+ attainment.

Proposed reforms to Maths and English resits were expected to come into effect in 2027 with the potential implications for the Group under consideration. The CEO and ELT were in discussion with ministers and senior officials.

Presently, the Group's ability to accept international students was limited. Degree awarding powers would address this but required further consideration to ensure alignment with strategic objectives and industry need.

Electra House and Ramillies House

The Board received an update on commercial lease discussions. [REDACTED].

Level 2 Centre

Proposed plans for a new Level 2 Centre were announced at the Fashion Retail Academy's 20th anniversary event to support fundraising efforts. [REDACTED].

Structure of EFI Group

The Board discussed the future structure of the EFI Group. [REDACTED].

The CEO & Principal was asked to refer discussion on the prioritisation of strategic projects and initiatives [REDACTED] to the strategic planning workshop on 30 January 2026.

Kelly Barry, Amanda Colvin, and Chris Maja joined the meeting at 13:05.

5. METRICS THAT MATTER

The Director of Technology and Digital Innovation demonstrated the new 'metrics that matter most' dashboard which provided real-time organisational performance data for monitoring and decision-making purposes.

Data was drawn from multiple sources across the Group and structured hierarchically to provide users with high-level metrics or more detailed breakdowns depending upon need. It was envisaged that the Board would receive high-level summaries and narratives (levels 1 and 2) in future board packs for governance and oversight, while Link Governors for HE and FE would receive more detailed data at QSC meetings.

The Vice Principal and Group Director of Marketing and Sales each provided a live demonstration of the dashboard as it pertained to further education and marketing respectively.

The CEO & Principal was asked to consider the inclusion of data on staff turnover, and student progression in English and Maths, and to explore ways to link data to the risk register.

Amanda Colvin and Chris Maja left the meeting at 13:20.

6. FE REPORT

The Vice Principal provided an overview of further education performance across FRA and LCBT, including KPI achievement, self-assessment outcomes, quality improvement priorities, and proposed targets for 2025/26. The Board NOTED and discussed her report.

In the 2024/25 the FRA had achieved its strongest FE outcomes in five years, while LCBT recovered from its special measures baseline with an improvement of 20% in retention and achievement. English and Maths outcomes had also risen year-on-year at both colleges. Considerable work had gone into achieving these results.

English and Maths provisions were much larger for the 2025/26 academic year, particularly at LCBT where most learners were enrolled in one or both. Teachers with previous experience in GCSE English and Maths had been recruited for the first time, and programme managers were specialists in their fields. Issues regarding the adaption and inclusion of learners who either had not engaged in GCSE English and Maths before or were rejoining after a period out of education were being considered, in addition to the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper and associated roundtables.

Self-Assessment Report (SAR) Grades and KPIs for 2025/26

It was proposed to align self-assessment grades for FRA with the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection, except for Quality of Education which would be increased to a Grade 1 (outstanding) due to significant improvement in achievement and high-grade outcomes. For LCBT it was proposed to maintain the same grades as the Ofsted Inspection. The Board APPROVED the proposed Term 1 Reflective Self-Assessment gradings across all provisions set out below.

Further Education	FRA	LCBT
Leadership & Management	2	2
Quality of Education	1	2
Behaviours & Attitudes	1	3
Personal Development	1	2
Safeguarding – effective	Y	Y

KPIs for 2025/26 were based on outturn data, action plans, and baseline information about student cohorts, with careful consideration given to stretch targets. The Board APPROVED the KPI targets for 2025/26 set out below.

Provision	Attendance	Retention	Pass	Achievement	High Grades	Student Satisfaction
FRA	86%	92%	99%	90%	74%	82%
LCBT	80%	90%	98%	88%	-	82%

The Board broke for student and staff engagement at 14:00.

Governors visited classrooms at FRA and LCBT and participated in focussed discussion sessions with staff from learning support, curriculum development and industry collaboration to exchange views and gather insights.

The Board meeting resumed at 16:00, and Kelly Barry rejoined the meeting.

7. HE REPORT

The Vice Principal provided an overview of higher education performance for 2024/25 and proposed KPI targets for 2025/26. The Board NOTED and discussed the report.

The 2024/25 academic year had delivered continued progress in HE quality, compliance and student experience with strong regulatory assurance and above-benchmark National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes. However, performance, particularly in relation to achievement and high-grade outcomes, was lower than expected. Targeted action plans had been implemented and were being monitored. In addition, a review of the student journey had been commissioned. The Board commended the data-led approach which sought to identify and address potential issues early.

Following the last Board meeting, Link Governors for HE and FE were now invited to Quality Steering Committee (QSC) meetings. This should eliminate the need for one-to-one meetings but would be kept under

review. Both Link Governors welcomed the opportunity to attend the meetings to examine the data in more detail and provide assurance to the Board.

Self-Assessment Report (SAR) Grades and KPIs for 2025/26

It was proposed to maintain the sector benchmark standards as 1 (outstanding), whereas B1 to B4 would be graded 2. The Board APPROVED the proposed Term 1 Reflective Self-Assessment gradings across all provisions as set out below.

Higher Education	
B1 Academic Experience	2
B2 Resources, Support, Engagement	2
B3 Student Outcomes	2
B4 Assessment & Awards	2
B5 Sector Benchmarks Standards	1

Proposed KPIs for 2025/26 were based on outturn data, action plans, and baseline information about student cohorts, with careful consideration given to stretch targets to ensure they were aspirational but realistic. The Board APPROVED the KPI targets for 2025/26 as set out below.

Provision	Attendance	Retention	Pass	Achievement	High Grades	Student Satisfaction
HE	75%	90%	95%	90%	74%	82%

8. SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Vice Principal presented the safeguarding report which provided an update on compliance, engagement, and emerging trends for the 2024/25 academic year with an early view of 2025/2026. The following matters were NOTED and discussed.

- The EFI Group remained compliant with all its statutory safeguarding and Prevent duties. New OfS Condition E6 requirements were fully met through new public pathways published on the EFI Group and FRA websites, staff/student training and the prohibition of NDAs.
- Annual staff training achieved 100% compliance across the Group. All delivery staff also attended specialist trauma-informed practice training to enhance early identification and student support capability.
- For ongoing assurance, the Link Governor for Safeguarding attended monthly DSL meetings and conducted stress tests on key areas.
- Early intervention and wellbeing support continued to be a strategic and proactive element of safeguarding. A substantial rise in wellbeing engagement at FRA and LCBT demonstrated increased student trust and the accessibility of support. It was NOTED that many LCBT learners had access to advocacy for the first time. It was suggested that entry requirements for LCBT should be further considered given its importance as a positive destination for learners.

Governors were encouraged to watch the short safeguarding video available on the Board SharePoint site (if they had not already).

The Board APPROVED the updated policies on anti-bullying, dealing with allegations of abuse against staff, preventing extremism and radicalisation, safeguarding (incorporating child protection), staff code of conduct, and sexual abuse and harassment.

Kelly Barry left the meeting at 16:45.

9. FINANCE REPORT

The CEO & Principal presented the finance report which provided an overview of the 2024/25 financial year-end ahead of audit completion and a forward-look at income, expenditure, risks, and opportunities across the EFI Group.

The statutory audit for the 2024/25 financial year was underway, with the final audited accounts due for presentation to the Finance and Audit Committee in December and to the Board for approval in January.

[REDACTED]. Concern was expressed about the level of movement from the May forecast and it was suggested that this should be an area of focus for the new CFO.

Overall, the Group entered the new academic and financial year in a strong position, subject to the reforecast. Income was up approximately 2% on budget, with 97% secured. Expenditure remained on plan and stable. EHCP growth required targeted staffing recruitment (fixed term) to deliver provision, otherwise core staffing was on plan. Pay efficiency was 52.2% of income, despite an increase in staffing levels. Key risks and opportunities for the current year were NOTED and discussed.

The CEO & Principal reported that he was satisfied with the current staffing levels and would continue to monitor the position, bringing any proposals for additional investment to the Board as required.

The CEO & Principal was asked to circulate monthly management accounts to the Finance and Audit Committee.

10. GOVERNANCE REPORT

The Outgoing Clerk presented his report, and the following governance-related matters were NOTED.

- To meet evolving regulatory requirements and good practice, the Group was expected to adopt a formal code of governance and carry out an external review of governance every three years. Both actions would be implemented in the current academic year.
- There was no requirement for the EFI Group to have separate finance and audit committees. While it was common in the education sector, charities often combined the two. Extending the remit of the Audit Committee to include financial monitoring would provide additional scrutiny and opportunity for discussion and debate at committee level whilst eliminating duplication. It would also reduce the burden and responsibility resting with a single Link Governor for Finance.
- The new Clerk had been appointed and would succeed the outgoing Clerk following his retirement at the end of the meeting.

The Board APPROVED the revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee and AGREED to rename it the Finance and Audit Committee.

The CEO & Principal left the meeting at 17:00.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

11. OUTCOME OF GOVERNOR ONE-TO-ONE MEETING

This item was subject to a separate Part B (confidential) minute and is not for public release.

12. PRINCIPAL'S PERFORMANCE AND PAY REVIEW

This item was subject to a separate Part B (confidential) minute and is not for public release.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

14. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

10:00 to 18:00 on Friday 30 January 2026 at Electra House, 84 Moorgate, London EC2M 6SE.

The meeting closed at 17:50.