PUBLIC MINUTES

MEETING:	**EFI GROUP BOARD OF GOVERNORS**
TIME AND DATE:	12:30 Tuesday 28 April 2026
LOCATION:	Electra House, 84 Moorgate, London EC2M 6SE
PRESENT:	Kim Longman, Chair Laura Charles, Vice Chair Linda Drew Fiona Gaughan Sally Harris Vanessa Spence Simon Williams The quorum for the meeting was four Governors. The meeting was quorate.
APOLOGIES:	Lee Lucas, CEO & Principal Susanna Kempe Zareer Ghadially
IN ATTENDANCE:	Kelly Barry, Vice Principal Chris Amadeo, Director of Strategic Insights *[Item 9]* Grant Ayliffe, Director of Further Education *[Item 12]* Katherine Boxall, Director of Higher Education *[Item 13]* Fabiola Osei-Hwedieh, Associate Director of Apprenticeships *[Item 14]* Hannah Rimbault, Head of Human Resources *[Item 8]* Aparna Sambasivan, Finance Director *[Item 6]* Mia Campbell, Secretary to the Board

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Zareer Ghadially, Susanna Kempe, and Lee Lucas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes from the Board meeting held on 30 January 2026 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

Matters arising were reviewed as follows.

- 2025-10-AP1 (Ramillies House): [REDACTED]. Item closed.
- 2025-10-AP5 (Metrics that matter): Governors asked for staff turnover to be included in future reports for enhanced oversight.
- 2025-10-AP6 (Quality assurance): 1:1 meetings for Link Governors for HE and FE were not required in addition to attendance at QCS meetings. Item closed.
- 2025-10-AP7 (LCBT entry requirements): Under new reforms the grade entry profile of learners would determine their English and Maths qualification, regardless of the qualification studied. Item closed.
- 2025-10-AP10 (Staffing): Proposals for additional staffing would be brought to the board as required. Item closed.

- 2026-01-AP3 (Level 2 centre): Fundraising would be referred to a future board meeting. Item closed.

Remaining action points were either due for discussion at the current meeting or completed.

Strategy workshop
The minutes of the strategy workshop held on 30 January 2026 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

Governors asked the ELT to review the weightings and conclusions arising from the risk appetite and strategic initiatives discussion as part of their reflections on the strategy workshop. The strategy would be considered at the June meeting.

4. CEO REPORT

The Board NOTED the CEO & Principal's report which provided an update on staff changes within the senior leadership team, national reform of Level 3 and below qualifications, and recent engagement undertaken with staff, students and external stakeholders. The following matters were highlighted and discussed.

A new Chief Financial Officer and an Associate Director of Marketing had been recruited. The Board NOTED the resignation of the Director of Marketing and commended her contribution to the Group.

The Vice Principal advised that application volumes had improved steadily throughout the year and were reflective of a changing learner profile and the current cost of living. Moving forward, conversion would become a key metric, rather than applicant volume. Governors highlighted the need for continued monitoring of behavioural trends driven by economic conditions and AI-related developments to ensure the organisation remained responsive and future-ready.

The Board welcomed formal partnerships with beauty industry bodies and discussed engagement with fashion and retail industry bodies. The Vice-Principal was asked to provide Governor VS with an update on recent engagement with the new CEO of the British Fashion Council prior to a forthcoming meeting.

There was a comprehensive discussion on the significance of the reforms to level 3 and below qualifications and their potential impact on EFI Group provision and staff resource. Close collaboration was underway with awarding bodies, local authorities, DfE, and other key stakeholders. Governors requested that the reforms appear at the top of the main risk register, with any significant developments communicated outside of formal meetings to ensure full awareness.

EFI Awards
The Link Governor for Finance reported on discussions at the most recent Finance and Audit Committee on the financial position of EFI Awards and the level of additional funding required to transition to a combined Awarding Body and End-Point Assessment Organisation. The Committee recommended financial support was increased beyond that originally proposed, with an expectation that this would be repaid once EFI Awards moved into a surplus position.

The Board APPROVED an additional [REDACTED] grant to EFI Awards, [REDACTED].

The Finance Director joined the meeting.

5. METRICS THAT MATTER

The metrics that matter most report was NOTED. Overall, performance across key indicators remained stable and consistent, with a positive divergence from broader sector trends in some areas, most notably complaints. Governors commented positively on retention rates, particularly the improvement at LCBT.

The reporting tool, which had been introduced at the start of the current academic year, was used to informed internal decision-making and continued to be refined to user needs. Governors observed that the traffic light system did not always align with the accompanying narrative and requested clarification on the criteria used for status changes.

6. FINANCE REPORT

The management accounts for the eight months to 31 March 2026 and financial outlook were NOTED and discussed.

Governors queried the time taken to identify the historic VAT liability. It was NOTED that the liability had been identified in the last audit due to the differing treatment of reverse-charge VAT between LCBT and FRA. Registration under the partial exemption regime was underway to ensure the appropriate treatment of overseas services moving forward. The expected liability had been accrued in the 2024/25 accounts, with the current year's costs factored into the marketing budget.

Governors requested details of any measures implemented to mitigate increased costs resulting from the Iran conflict. It was NOTED that there was a contingency within the budget, reserves were healthy, and energy saving measures were being actively explored. Further consideration would be given during the May forecast.

The Finance Director left the meeting.

7. SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Vice Principal provided an update on safeguarding, wellbeing and SEND activities across the EFI Group. Overall, safeguarding arrangements remained effective, well-embedded and fully complaint.

Activity was discussed with reference to the strengthened requirements set out in '*Keeping Children Safe in Education* 2026' and national SEND reform '*Putting Children and Young People First'*. Board-level assurance on the implementation of these reforms would take an inclusive approach, with key performance indicators covering both SEND and non-SEND learners.

The Board NOTED that the Link Governor for Safeguarding met with the CEO & Principal and Vice Principal (who is also the DSL) on a monthly basis to discuss safeguarding matters. She also regularly reviewed the Single Central Record, met with the wider safeguarding team, and attended the breakfast club.

The Head of Human Resources joined the meeting.

8. HR REPORT

The Head of Human Resources presented the annual report on workforce performance, highlighting key trends and priorities across EFI Group.

The Board NOTED the report and discussed matters relating to staff recruitment and retention, career development, and pay structures. The impact of staff turnover on learner outcomes and staff wellbeing was also considered, alongside trends in staff attrition (particularly at LCBT), absence levels and flexible working requests across the Group.

The Head of Human Resources left the meeting. The Director of Strategic Insights joined the meeting.

9. INDUSTRY VOICE

The Director of Strategic Insight presented a practical example of how a data-led approach was being used to inform the development of new level 4 qualifications as part of a strategic partnership with a leading industry body.

The Board discussed the potential benefits to students, employers and wider industry and how the approach could be used for other industries. The importance of future-proofing qualifications was highlighted. A document outlining the work undertaken by the level 4 curriculum team which leveraged the insight data was TABLED.

The Director of Strategic Insight was asked to share the presentation with the Clerk for inclusion on the Governor's SharePoint site.

The Director of Strategic Insight left the meeting.

10. LEARNER VOICE

The meeting was adjourned for 75 minutes to enable Governors to visit classrooms and engage with students to inform their assurance on the learner experience.

Governors shared their high-level feedback from the classroom visits. The Vice Principal was asked to follow up on feedback regarding access to career services.

11. STAFF VOICE

The meeting was adjourned for 30 minutes to enable Governors to engage with staff from the library, IT and HR departments to support their assurance and understanding of operational practice.

Governors were invited to share feedback from the staff voice session with the Vice Principal via email.

Governors NOTED the value of the student and staff voice sessions.

The Director of Further Education joined the meeting.

12. FE REPORT

The Director of Further Education provided an update on further education performance including quality, standards and student experience across the EFI Group. The Board NOTED the report and discussed matters relating to attendance, retention and student satisfaction.

Overall, provision remained stable and well-controlled, with challenges at LCBT well understood and actively managed through strengthened triage, targeted interventions, and curriculum adjustments. The Board NOTED that the position at LCBT was stronger than at the same point last year, however further improvement in entry requirements was required.

The Director of Further Education left the meeting. The Director of Higher Education joined the meeting.

13. HE REPORT

The Director of Higher Education provided an update on higher education performance including quality, standards and student experience, and shared observations from her first six months in post. The Board NOTED and discussed the report.

Provision remained stable with no material concerns identified in relation to continuation, completion or academic standards. Student retention and outcomes (particularly at Level 5) were positive with targeted interventions to support Level 4 attainment and engagement.

Results from the Graduate Outcomes Survey were expected to improve following proactive interventions, with closer collaboration between student services and HE teams. Courses were scheduled for revalidation in 2027 with new provision also under consideration, alongside opportunities for staff development in curriculum design.

The Director of Higher Education was asked to circulate details of the end-of-year show in August to enable Governors who are available to attend.

The Director of Higher Education left the meeting. The Associate Director Apprenticeships joined the meeting.

14. APPRENTICESHP REPORT

The Associate Director of Apprenticeships provided an update on apprenticeship quality, performance and outcomes across EFI Group provision. The Board NOTED and discussed the report.

Overall, provision remained strong with high attendance, improving achievement, and a significantly strengthened projected year-end retention rate, despite the defunding of a popular standard. In addition, new brands had been onboarded and forecasting processes strengthened.

The Board discussed some of the practical challenges to employer take-up of apprenticeships and NOTED the newly introduced apprenticeship units which were under consideration for the next academic year could help address these.

The Associate Director Apprenticeships left the meeting.

15. GOVERNANCE REPORT

Governors NOTED that EFI Group was expected to publish Board and Committee minutes from the start current academic year as an ongoing condition of OfS registration. The Board APPROVED the policy on the publication and redaction of Board and Committee minutes.

Independent review of governance
The external review of governance was almost completed. A member of the review team would attend the next meeting to answer questions on the final report and action plan.

Board meeting dates 2026/27
The Board AGREED to retain the current schedule of four half-day board meetings in 2026/27.

Companies House Webfiling security issue
The Board NOTED the actions taken to mitigate potential risks to EFI Group and its subsidiary companies following the recent security incident at Companies House.

16. POLICIES

The Board APPROVED the policies on general data protection, fees and risk management.

Governors asked for the risk register to become a standing item within the CEO & Principal's report with key risks highlighted and changes discussed at board.

17. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

18. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

12:00 to 18:00 on Monday 29 June 2026 at Electra House, 84 Moorgate, London EC2M 6SE.

The meeting closed at 17:50.