

**Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held onsite*
Southport Campus Innovation Centre
Tuesday 5th March 2024 at 2.30pm**

*NB – although onsite, as per the I&A, remote access is permitted and is indicated where members are listed as present

- Present:** Roderic Gillespie (Committee Chair) (*remote access)
Michelle Brabner (Principal)
Kevin Burke (Independent Governor)
Catherine Durr (Staff Governor) (up to and including item 10)
Anita Holt (Associate Governor) (*remote access)
Kash Kalim (Independent Governor) (from item 6)
PJ McGreggor (Student Governor)
Susannah Porter (Independent Governor)
Katy Robinson (Independent Governor) (from item 7)
Elaine Small (Independent Governor)
Tracey Wood (Independent Governor)
- In Attendance:** Mark Burrows (Deputy Principal)
Lisa Farnhill (Clerk to the Corporation)
Stephen Musa (Vice Principal Curriculum and Support)
Fiona Chalk (External Reviewer of Governance) (*remote access)
Jane Rowley (Curriculum Director)
Caroline Wright (Head of Learning, Innovation and Teacher Education)
Vickie Hayes (Head of Learning Innovation and Support – in the capacity of Mentor for Student Governors)
- Apologies:** None
- Absent:** None

Minute No.	Minutes	Action
S.24.40	<p>ITEM 1: WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE The Committee Chair opened the meeting, welcoming everyone, inviting the Clerk to outline any apologies. Members noted that a member was delayed, and no other apologies the meeting. For the benefit of new members and the reviewer, members and attendees were asked to give a brief introduction.</p> <p><u>Item 1 – Noted:</u> <i>Members noted there were no apologies and the meeting was quorate</i></p>	
S.24.41	<p>ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS No interests were declared in relation to any agenda items.</p> <p><u>Item 2 – Noted:</u></p>	

Minute No.	Minutes	Action
S.24.42	<p>ITEM 3: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 5th DECEMBER 2023 Members were given the opportunity to raise any points of inaccuracy from minutes of the last meeting. The Chair invited members to raise any additional matters not included under item 4 or elsewhere in the agenda, with none raised, the minutes were approved.</p> <p><i>Item 3 - Approved: The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2023.</i></p>	
S.24.43	<p>ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING / ACTIONS SUMMARY The Clerk summarised the report, informing the Committee that carry forward items were now resolved within the agenda.</p> <p>Members were advised all items put to the Corporation had been approved without amendment. Members received details of discussions relating to staffing risks at Corporation and with the meeting of the Governance Committee, with consideration given to splitting the risk, or having a Committee focusing on personnel matters. Members noted the conclusion was for each Committee to review any risk incorporated into their terms of reference, even if this meant the same risk is reviewed by more than one Committee, and ensure this was incorporated into the feedback to Corporation, introducing a new pro forma to support Committee Chair's in providing feedback in a standardised way, to provide more rounded and complete oversight of the risks from different angles.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal drew the attention of members to the risk report, highlighting how it had been expanded to include risks which may directly, or indirectly impact on the quality of education.</p> <p><i>Item 4 - Resolved: The Committee noted the update.</i></p>	
S.24.44	<p>ITEM 5: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS No items on the agenda or within the agreed minutes were considered to be confidential.</p> <p><i>Item 5 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to approve the minutes for publication. The Committee confirmed they did not need any items on the agenda to be reviewed confidentially.</i></p>	
S.24.45	<p>ITEM 6 RISKS RELATED TO STANDARDS The Chair thanked the Deputy Principal for the providing details of risks that overlapped with the work of other Committee's, highlighting how they impacted their work and needed to be monitored. The Chair reminded the Committee of how the risks were cyclical, with risks increasing and decreasing based on the point in academic calendar, with focus shifting depending on the stage in the quality cycle and recruitment process. The Chair urged members to consider risk ratings throughout the meeting to allow for reflection on the discussions and risk ratings at the end.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal was invited to highlight key risks and any changes to risk ratings since the last meeting of the Committee, with the following highlighted:</p>	

- Attention of members drawn to the risk relating to pace of improvement when tackling capability issues, informing members of discussions within the Resources Committee relating to the application of HR procedures, with the HR link governor providing additional insight through link visits and a new standing invitation for her to attend meetings of the Resources Committee for HR items.
- An overview of the impact of the introduction of the Foundation Living Wage from 1st April, with the rating reduced following effective mitigations.
- The decision to pause on updating the skills risk following the Ofsted inspection and subsequent review of the grading in that area
- Explanation of the rationale for maintaining the risk rating for managing quality, contextualised against the improvements made and drive to further improve some areas

In concluding the review, the Deputy Principal invited comments, questions and challenges to the ratings, with a focused discussion relating to the impact of the Ofsted inspection. The Principal provided the Committee with an update of the Ofsted report drafting and publication process, advising the Committee that updated guidance allowed for discussion of the outcome with key stakeholders ahead of publication.

Members expressed concern over the impact on recruitment, and in response to questions, were reassured by the communication strategy, supported by additional resources, focusing on the inspection highlighting quality of education was 'good' which would mitigate any concerns from parents supporting their children when applying to KGV. Members were informed the impact on the Southport site was expected to be limited, as the courses offered were unique to the college, noting that the previous year's higher than target recruitment, provided additional internal progression for the next academic year.

The work of the Principal, Vice Principal Curriculum and Support and school liaison team in managing stakeholder communication was commended, with details of events and networking opportunities outlined. Members emphasised the importance of stakeholder management, thanking the team for their foresight and planning.

Members asked about the internal communication strategy and staff morale, reassured by the support, transparency and unified approach, ensuring staff were updated, yet able to focus on their work and improvements needed, resulting in a positive outlook and minimising the impact on morale, with the Staff Governor confirming this was reflective of her experiences throughout recent weeks.

The Chair concluded by reminding the Committee that the inspection had not raised concerns in any area that had not already been highlighted to the Committee by the senior leadership team. The Chair indicated the strategies and plans provided, particularly in relation to English, maths and apprenticeships offered the Governors suitable reassurances, enabling them to undertake their responsibilities for holding leaders to account through effective oversight.

Item 6 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update, agreeing to review the risks and scores again at the end of the meeting, to confirm if any risks need to be added, removed, or risk ratings updated.*

ITEM 7: QUALITY OF EDUCATION REPORT

7a and 7b – DP Report: Quality of Education

For the benefit of new members, the Deputy Principal provided a comprehensive overview of the inspection activity at the College, outlining the timing, and implications of the two visits, summarising the work of the senior team and governors during the past three months.

Members were given a summary of the challenges to the draft report, noting most had been accepted and amended, with further discussion held around the Ofsted inspection process, including quality assurance.

In response to questions, the Principal outlined the timeframe for the next steps, reassuring the Committee that challenges and complaints would focus on process and treatment, including consistency of the application of the framework, rather than the outcome, highlighting inconsistencies relating to the outcome when compared with other recent inspections where attendance had been an issue.

The conduct of the inspectors was discussed, with it clarified this would not be included in the complaint, with members asking about the impact on the wellbeing of staff, with the Committee assured by measures in place to support staff, and highlight the issues experienced, without allowing it to drain resources.

7c –English and Maths Provision Report

The Deputy Principal highlighted progress made, thanking associate member, Katy Robinson for providing contact details for an agency, which had resulted in the area now being fully staffed.

Members were informed the English deep dive had concluded, with the maths scheduled. Improvements were noted, alongside details of areas that continued to be a focus for further progress, including attendance.

The benefits and inconsistent use of the Century software was discussed, detailing a staff consultation, which resulted in agreement to continue with its use, with support provided for staff during development sessions on ensuring staff are confident and comfortable getting the most out of the system.

Members were informed of disruption and challenges caused by the processes for placing the students into sets, with plans to review and amend this in the next academic year. In response to information about the mock exams, predicted grades and standardisation, members asked if benchmarking would support the grading and if the volatility of grade boundaries had been taken into account, highlighting the impact this had on outcomes your learners in the previous year, with it agreed this would be reviewed with the team.

DP

7d – Apprenticeship Position Statement and Progress

The Deputy Principal confirmed progress against the improvement plan would be the focus within Committee reporting and the Apprenticeship Working Group, with any wider strategic discussions relating to the implications of the Ofsted outcome on the programme offer to be considered within the Strategy Event.

In response to being advised of a decision to pause new starts for five weeks whilst quality issues are addressed, members asked about stakeholder

engagement and transparency, commending the approach taken with employers and prospective students.

Members were informed that a review of progress may result in students being removed from programme, which would have a negative impact on the QAR data, with a need to ensure this was contextualised with the DfE and ESFA.

Members were informed of a cautious approach to discussions about taking on new learners from a training provider that was withdrawing from the market, with thorough due diligence ahead of any decisions being taken.

In response to a question, members were informed additional details, including the apprenticeship accountability framework would be presented at the Strategy Event, with the Chair proposing to move onto feedback from the Working Group, ahead of reviewing the KPI Scorecard.

7e – KPI Score Card (delivered after item 9)

The Deputy Principal, summarised the data, highlighting improvements and areas of ongoing concern.

All staff were commended for the focused effort on improving attendance, noting there was a range of strategies, with a targeted and individualised approach considered to have been instrumental in improving the overall rates of attendance.

Attendance and withdrawals in English and maths were reviewed, with retention rates discussed with comparisons against the previous academic year, with predicted achievement rates to be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

The governors were thanked for their support, noting a number of link visits had been arranged to triangulate the information, with all members reminded of the Learning Walk Day scheduled for 30th April.

The Committee Chair thanked the Deputy Principal for the update, welcoming the inclusion of predictions to be presented at the next meeting, indicating the importance in understanding the student journey.

Item 7 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the assurances offered by the update, asking volatility of grade boundaries is incorporated into the predicted outcomes.*

S.24.47 ITEM 8 - 2023-24 STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Deputy Principal highlighted how many areas had been discussed within the presentation of the Deputy Principal's report.

Members attention was drawn to the curriculum design process, with the systematic involvement of employers considered to be a strength, resulting in unique learning opportunities for students, and employers being avid advocates of the College.

Members commented on the improved quality of the reports, allowing them to focus on areas of concern whilst being able to track progress, offer support and ensure recognition is given to outstanding areas. Members asked how leaders were being supported and for more information about the impact of

the succession plans for internal progression. A number of case studies and initiatives were outlined, highlighting the benefits of the bespoke internal programme, ensuring the College's culture and values could be embedded throughout. The comments were triangulated with feedback from the staff pulse survey and insights from the staff governor, with members commending the development of a clear career progression plan and the plans to roll the programme out wider. In response to further questions, members were informed there were both internal and external development opportunities available.

Item 8 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update.*

S.24.48 ITEM 9 - APPRENTICESHIP SCRUTINY GROUP (delivered before 7e)

The Deputy Principal informed the Committee that the group had been set up to enable more detailed scrutiny and oversight of apprenticeships, utilising the support and expertise of Board members to ensure improvements are overseen effectively, with the group members thanked for their time.

Members were advised that the first meeting provided details of the context, history and challenges, along with agreeing terms of reference, as included in the pack. Members were informed the next meeting was scheduled to take place after the Strategy Event, to take into account the decision of the Board relating to the shape of the future offer and begin to look at data and the impact of improvement strategies in more detail.

Members noted this had been in progress ahead of the inspection, and was not in response to the inspection, asking if there were plans to look to grow the provision, with it clarified this would form part of the review at the Strategy Event.

The Chair closed the item by highlighting the level of focus and oversight of the Committee in this area, in addition to that of English and maths, thanking staff for providing the additional information and level of detail that has allowed them to be assured of progress and exercise their duties as governors in ensuring students are receiving the best possible outcomes, with actions in place where standards fall below expectations.

Item 9 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update and endorsed the Terms of Reference.*

S.24.49 ITEM 10: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Support, summarised the information within the report, confirming there was additional data available in the annexes which would be circulated with the post meeting survey, noting a technical error had prevented them from being included.

VP/Clerk

Issues relating to attendance were discussed at length and contextualised alongside the local school data. Issues relating to comparability and inconsistencies of recording and reporting in FE, and the shift in parental support were considered at length. Members were informed of the work of the Principal in engaging the Association of College's to work with the DfE on providing a framework for consistently recording and reporting college attendance, with a member providing details of work she had done on this a number of years earlier.

Members noted the significant improvement, and commended the individualised approach, with survey details triangulating the data, ensuring

staff focused on strategies that were considered by students to be effective. In response to questions, it was confirmed that the survey was broad, then targeted, assuring members that students were engaging, particularly through MS Teams messaging, even when not in attendance, noting that the barrier was onsite attendance, not interacting with the college.

A summary of industry and work placement information was provided, clarifying that some students had done more than one, and in response to a question, it was confirmed that any T Level student that had not yet done a placement, had one arranged.

Members asked if there were any barriers to improving attendance, discussing the issue of 'onsite absence' where students attend the college but not their lessons, with engagement considered to be key, noting the decline in parental support seemed to underpin the lack of student engagement, with working from home and the impact of the Pandemic considered to be influential factors. Members discussed the decline in attendance from early years through primary, secondary education and then Post 16, with members asking if attendance issues were limited to 16-18 courses, with the Principal advising there was a clear link between 16-18 students not attending and low attendance in adult learners, where those adults are parents of the 16-18 learners.

Members were given details of additional resources for targeting reengagement and support, particularly for apprentices, with members asking if students attended college on day release or completed their learning in the workplace, with it confirmed this was course dependant.

Members considered how the issues were sector wide, irrespective of the location and context of the college, with shared frustrations with the inability to benchmark. College size and resources were considered in recording and improving attendance, with it proposed resources should not impact recording once there was a consistent framework, however, could impact strategies and interventions.

In concluding, members reiterated the benefits of effective teaching and learning, reflecting on the value of investing in staff to ensure they are engaged, with the SLT agreeing, providing evidence of an area that is well staffed, having good attendance, against that of an area that has had staffing issues, where attendance is now challenging.

Item 10 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update.*

S.24.50 ITEM 11 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT REPORT - TERMLY FOCUS: COMPLAINTS

The Committee Chair opened the item by reminding the Committee of the importance of complaints in understanding learner voice, commending the move to resolving more complaints informally, with this indicating they were listening and taking early action, asking for more details around this.

In response to questions, members were informed this was to ensure issues were resolved in a timely way, with it clarified that complaints would only be treated as formal if it was clearly indicated within the complaint, or if they are escalated if they cannot be resolved informally, with members asking about the tracking, monitoring and escalation process, with this outlined, with members assured that none had been escalated to governors. Members

were assured by measures in place to ensure senior staff were not involved until later stages to ensure objective support with fair and balanced judgement when needed to support an appeal.

Members highlighted the importance of early intervention and resolution when any stakeholder indicates dissatisfaction, asking if there were any trends and who the complaints received had been from, noting it was students and parents. The Committee was advised the data had been analysed for trends with assurances there had not been any, with members asking for consideration to be given to providing a richer report, with more detail, acknowledging this was difficult whilst ensuring anonymity for those involved, insisting they did not want to create additional work, but needed a high-level overview of the types of complaints and areas involved. The Clerk advised this issue had been raised by the Committee previously with the previous report owner, with a resolution being to provide a very brief outline of the complaint type for each complaint, with a trend analysis, agreeing to provide a copy of this to the Vice Principal.

VP Curric.
& Supp.
/Clerk

Item 11 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to note the update, asking for additional detail to support with analysing trends and triangulating with other student voice information.*

S.24.51 ITEM 12: DESTINATIONS REPORT 2022/2023

The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Support explained that the provider had exceeded the deadline for information. The Committee agreed to accept deferment of the information.

Item 12 – Deferred: *The Committee resolved to defer this report to the next meeting.*

S.24.52 ITEM 13: SAFEGUARDING (Update Report September-March)

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal Curriculum and Support for the report, stating it further supported the Board's confidence in this area of the college.

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Support drew out key points, highlighting changes to the structure of the team to ensure increasing demands could be met. Members asked if staff were being supported, noting the impact the increasing support needs of students had on them, with a comprehensive package of support and supervision outlined.

Members asked if the figures within the report related to 16-18 students, or all provision types, with it confirmed it was across all provision types, and further details around student numbers provided, along with examples of the types of things that would be recorded and trigger support or intervention. Members were informed all stages of educations had seen an increased demand for support, particularly in relation to mental health and anxiety related issues, with the complexity of the cases also increasing, increasing the need for external support and intervention, with access to these services limited.

A member indicated the Prevent training had highlighted the complexities of the cases being faced by the college and the demands being placed upon the safeguarding team.

Item 13 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to note the update, thanking the team for the work they do in supporting the students.*

S.24.53

ITEM 14: Audit Outcomes and Recommendations**14.1: Safeguarding**

The Committee congratulated the team on the outcome of the internal audit.

Item 14 - Resolved: *The Committee resolved to note the assurances provided by the report.*

S.24.54

ITEM 15: POLICIES FOR APPROVAL**15.1. Malpractice Policy**

Members discussed the challenges relating to the pace at which AI is evolving, noting how this was embedded into the policy, and included the latest guidance from the awarding bodies.

15.2. Teaching and Learning Strategy

Members were informed this had been through a thorough drafting and redrafting process to ensure the content reflected the culture and values of the college in addition to the practical strategies employed, with careful attention paid to the level of detail included, noting there would be a simplified two-page version for use in induction and for reference.

Members indicated the strategy was comprehensive and well written, with a suggestion that SEND processes and practices should be built in, or alternatively, signposting to the SEND handbook.

DP

In response to a question, the Deputy Principal confirmed a digital transformation strategy was being drafted, with members discussing the need to support staff to ensure they had the confidence to utilise technology effectively, with member Anita Holt offering her support and expertise with the drafting of the strategy. Members were informed staff had been surveyed to give them the opportunity to highlight training needs, particularly in relation to IT. Training opportunities were discussed, noting IT staff would offer support alongside staff who had already embraced new technologies and could deliver engaging sessions around best practice. Members discussed the evolving importance of digital skills, now being considered as important for students as English and maths, with a member highlighting how it was a compulsory part of the curriculum in other countries.

DP/ Anita
Holt

Item 15 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the policies for Corporation approval subject to the inclusion of references to the SEND handbook.*

S.24.55

ITEM 16: HIGHER EDUCATION

The Deputy Principal provided the context to the report, reminding the Committee that 8 learners remained on the HE programme. Members thanked the Deputy Principal for including the student feedback and noted progress against the plans to progress with de-registration once the students course ended.

Item 16 - Noted: *The Committee resolved to note the update.*

S.24.56 ITEM 17 - MEETING REFLECTION: RISKS RELATED TO STANDARDS

Members proposed nothing changed based on the discussions held, with the Clerk agreeing to add an additional question to the post meeting survey that could allow any additional reflections to be fed back to the SLT ahead of their next review of the risk register.

Clerk

Item 17 - Noted: The Committee resolved to note the update

S.23.68 ITEM 18: ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE CORPORATION

The Committee Chair informed the Committee of the new process for summarising their work to the Corporation, presenting their top three discussion points, alongside the items that need to be presented as statutory information or for approval.

The Chair proposed the discussions around risks should form part of the top three, focusing on the mitigating actions and reassurances received relating to progress in English and maths, attendance and apprenticeships.

Members suggested the feedback should include progress being made in relation to developing a digital strategy, with the committee offering their support and expertise with this, as well as assurances around complaints oversight, with a view to reviewing how this is reported to ensure sufficient oversight.

The Clerk summarised the recommendations to be presented to the Corporation for approval, with the Committee agreeing the following:

- Malpractice Policy (subject to inclusion of SEND information)
- Teaching and Learning Strategy

Item 18 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to highlight these items to the Board.

S.23.70 CLOSING COMMENTS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions. The next meeting was noted to be on 16th June 2024.

The meeting ended at 4.33pm, with all members and attendees invited to attend the Hair and Beauty Showcase.