

SOUTHPORT COLLEGE

MINUTES OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10TH JANUARY 2018

Present:	John Clarke	Principal/CEO
	Greta Fenney	Independent Governor (Chair)
	Veronica Fell	Independent Governor (observer)
	Rob Firth	Independent Governor (observer)
	Mo Kundi	Independent Governor
	Sue McGuire	Independent Governor
	Carol Reid	Staff Governor
In Attendance:	Anne-Marie Francis	Acting Principal KGV
	Nicola Hurst	Director of Teaching, Learning and Support
	Jesamine Kelly	Director of Curriculum and Quality
	Gill Kitchen	Vice-Principal (Curriculum & Quality)
	Lesley Venables	Interim Clerk to the Corporation
		Heads of Curriculum Departments
	Pat Byrne	minutes 197 to 203
	Theresa Catterall	minutes 172 to 174
	Andrew Kitchen	minutes 187 to 192
	Stephen Rogers	minutes 189 to 196
	Carol Speakman	minute 171
	Jane Rowley	Head of A Levels, KGV – minutes 175 to 186

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

155 Apologies for absence were received from John Fell (Independent Governor – observer), Marcus Godfrey (Student Governor), Liam Gaskell (Student Governor) and Anita Holt (Associate Member).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

156 Declarations of interest were received from Greta Fenney as she is married to a member of College staff and from Veronica Fell as she is married to the Chair of the Corporation.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2017

- 157 **Resolved -**
- 1 That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2017 Be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair
 - 2 That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th December be circulated by e-mail and would be considered at the next meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

158 Governors noted that all actions arising from the November 2017 meeting had either been completed or were being progressed. An update on the actions from the December meeting would be reported to the Committee in March 2018.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

159 No agenda items were classified as confidential.

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017/2018

160 The Director of Curriculum & Quality presented the Higher Education Quality Development Plan for 2017/2018.

161 Governors were advised that increasing levels of recruitment was a high priority in the current academic year, particularly amongst male learners. In response to questions about the link between male recruitment and levels of achievement, the Director of Curriculum & Quality reported that targets were set based on a 2 to 3 year pathway, as it took time for the impact of any measures to be evidenced for some courses.

162 Retention in 2017/2018 was 99% and management was hoping to maintain this figure. However, it was acknowledged that the College had not met previous high targets for achievement. Governors noted that the data only reflected a proportion of the HE cohort, ie those studying for more than 30 weeks.

163 The Committee asked whether the College had benchmarked its performance against that of similar colleges and was informed that nationally there was no clear benchmark in all areas and that, for some programmes, following the national average would mean lowering the College's performance rates.

164 Curriculum planning for HND programmes had taken place to improve retention and to address the course management issues raised in some areas in the National Student Survey.

165 The College aimed to engage learners so that a distinct ethos was created for HE provision. Teaching and learning was being designed to ensure that each qualification was right for the targeted learners.

166 Best practice on employer engagement would be shared across curriculum areas and students would be supported in the development of independent study skills.

167 The Committee requested that a visual representation of the quality cycle for both HE and FE provision should be circulated to members.

168 Governors questioned whether the views were sought from learners who were not eligible to participate in the NSS survey and were advised that the College used its own separate survey for this group of students.

169 **Resolved -** That the Corporation **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the HE QDP for 2017/2018

REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE BY DEPARTMENT 2015/16

170 The Committee received for information a report from the head of each curriculum department on performance levels in 2016/2017, together with an outline of the areas for improvement for 2017/2018.

Health, Care and Service Professions

171 This area had been graded as 1 in the Self-Assessment Report process and the following areas for improvement were noted:

- Retention of apprentices – governors were advised that it was unlikely that this would improve in the current academic year, as more learners than anticipated had left the College. In response to questions about the reasons for withdrawals, the Head of Department reported that this was due to the move from apprenticeship frameworks to standards with an associated change in the delivery model, together with some Health & Social Care learners being taught solely in the workplace, rather than attending College one day per week.

A full curriculum review had been undertaken and staff would be clearer in setting out the expectations of employers in releasing learners to attend regular training at the College

- Improved levels of Value Added in Health and Care full time BTEC course
- Increasing the rate of timely achievement in Health & Social Care Apprenticeship provision

Construction, Engineering and Sports Studies

172 This curriculum area had been graded as a '2' and had evidenced an 11% improvement in achievement compared to 2015/2016. Particular strengths were noted in course management and achieving ambitious targets.

173 Areas for improvement in 2017/2018 focused on increasing retention and attendance on a small number of courses, raising levels of stretch and challenge and improving performance on Building/Construction and Engineering apprenticeships which had been below the national rate, albeit on very small numbers.

174 Governors questioned the level of achievement in the identified apprenticeship programmes and were informed that of a total of 6 starts only 2 learners completed their programmes. Two apprentices lost their jobs within the industry and a further 2 did not engage with the course at all.

Level 3 Programmes (KGV)

175 The Head of A Level provision at KGV reminded governors that only a small number of AS Levels had been offered by KGV in 2016/2017, but that from 2017/2018 A Levels were linear and were for 2 years. Students could also opt to undertake one of 6 extended diplomas or BTec subsidiary diplomas (the equivalent of one A Level).

176 The College's A Level results had been good and its ALPs score was '4' or 'very good' for A Levels and '2' or 'outstanding' for its BTec provision (with the latter being one of the best outcomes in the country). In the SAR, KGV provision had been assessed as a grade '2'.

177 3 areas had been identified where results were lower than anticipated, namely, Maths, Physics and Law. The underlying reasons for this performance related mainly to staffing issues, all of which had now been resolved and there were positive signs that the situation would not be repeated. Tracking and management information was felt to require strengthening and staff had worked with Southport College to achieve this.

178 High quality teaching and learning still needed to be embedded in a small number of areas, for example, BTec outcomes were good, but retention was not as high as expected. Progress was also a concern and governors noted that a significant impact had been made by the recently-appointed manager in this area.

179 Attendance required improvement on some courses and it was felt that this was linked to initial advice and guidance for learners. The situation had been reviewed, but the effect on 2 year programmes would not yet be noticeable. Local schools were now systematically engaged at an early stage, to encourage pupils to apply to the College in the future.

180 In terms of outcomes for learners the College had performed at or around the benchmark in most subjects, however, the lower than average achievement rates for Maths and Science were a concern. This was thought to be due to retention issues, some uninspiring teaching and poor IAG.

181 Governors asked what new initiatives were being brought in to improve the recruitment of learners on courses such as Maths, Physics and Law. The Head of A Levels reported that 74% of Year 2 learners had achieved grades A* to C, however, Year 1 students had failed and had been re-directed to other programmes within the College.

182 Weekly testing had been introduced for Maths courses, the results of which were recorded on the College's MIS so that the level of progress could be determined.

183 Following more robust monitoring being introduced, management was confident that issues could be identified and addressed earlier in future.

184 The Committee was concerned about the impact on the re-introduction of Further Maths courses at KGV. The Acting Principal reported that this decision would need to be based on solid demand for Further Maths: otherwise, the course would be unviable. This qualification was being promoted at open evenings and students were asked if they were interested.

185 Currently 2 learners were undertaking Further Maths, but it was noted that the College still had a vulnerability if the member of teaching staff responsible was on sick leave. This would not be resolved by the merger, as SC had no spare capacity for teaching such specialist qualifications, but this may change with any new appointments within the Department.

186 The Principal/CEO reminded the Committee that the breadth of the curriculum was part of the plan submitted to the Transaction Unit and had contained a maximum of A Level 36 subjects.

Science and Adult Learning

187 The Head of Science & Adult Learning reported that the Department comprised about 1000 learners and that rates of satisfaction and progression continued to be high. The diverse curriculum met the needs of a wide variety of students and support mechanisms, such as the Virtual Learning Environment, were operated successfully, which impacted on the outcomes for Level 1 to Level 3 learners.

188 The department was graded as outstanding with a small number of areas for improvement identified, including raising performance levels for ESOL Level 2 and Level 3 (Speaking & Listening courses) and attendance of 19+ learners which, although it had improved to 87% in 2016/2017, was still below the target of 90%. Stretch and challenge required improvement on Level 3 16-18 Science courses and Initial Advice & Guidance for 16-18 year olds enrolling on adult programmes was an area for further work.

English and Maths

189 Governors noted that a similar number of learners had achieved a grade 'C' (now graded as a '4' under the new GCSE syllabus, which was effective from 2017/2018) compared to 2015/2016. There had been a slight reduction in the number of students on English and Maths programmes.

190 Overall, the level of achievement was 91% compared to the benchmark of 81% and the Department had been graded as a '2'. Planning and quality processes were judged to be robust and effective, with inspiring but challenging teaching and learning. Students' behaviour was good and progress of learners was outstanding, with a 4 year upward trend.

191 Areas for further consolidation included greater collaboration between departmental and vocational staff and higher levels of parental engagement to boost attendance. A standardised approach would be used from 2017/2018 to supporting learners outside the classroom. Achievement levels for 16-18 Functional Skills courses in English and Maths required improvement and it was hoped that this would be partly met by changes to timetabling to provide additional stimulus to learners later in the College day.

192 The Committee asked whether 16-18 Functional Skills would be delivered by curriculum areas and were advised that the issue was closely related to the differences between GCSE and Functional Skills qualifications. For the former, students were required to have a wider knowledge that could then be applied to the examination paper. Nationally, there was a debate as to whether all post-16 learners should undertake GCSE courses, but currently there was no viable alternative.

Business, Digital and the Creative Industries

193 This department had been graded as 'outstanding' or a grade '1' in the SAR, with a year on year improvement trend in achievement (87%) and retention (91%). Apprenticeship outcomes in this area were above the national average and compared favourably to 2015/2016.

194 Teaching staff were highly qualified and experienced, with teaching and learning inspiring and robust and good outcomes for learners.

195 The areas for improvement in 2017/2018 were detailed, including IAG on a small number of courses (Travel & Tourism and Business), the need to introduce earlier interventions to meet learner needs and the introduction of greater stretch and challenge for Advanced Level learners. Further monitoring of performance had been introduced in 2017/2018 and staff appraisals now included target-setting in order to drive up quality.

196 Governors queried why there were no areas for improvement in relation to learner outcomes, as some had been highlighted for teaching, learning and assessment. The Head of Department responded that a detailed action plan was in place and included a small area where further improvement was required.

196 Staff were working to improve the number of work placements for courses in Computer Science, ICT and Games Design, which were difficult to obtain due to the sensitivity of the data owned by companies working in these areas. The courses were being re-designed to make them more effective. Governors suggested that there was a gap between learner outcomes and the skills required by employers in this industry, which should be further explored.

Apprenticeships

197 The Head of Employer Engagement updated the Committee on the development of apprenticeships in 2016/2017. It was noted that there had been an 4% improvement in overall achievement rates, which were 7% above the national average, and a 18% increase in timely achievement (8% above the national average). The overall effectiveness had been judged as a grade '2'.

198 Performance measures for this department were high, with leadership and management significantly exceeding national benchmarks, consistently good teaching and learning, high standards of behaviour and increased levels of achievement.

199 The areas for improvement that had been identified focused on the use of ILT in the classroom, undertaking a significant proportion of English & Maths at the beginning of the programme and increasing advanced level achievement rates.

200 Staff were monitoring closely the withdrawal of apprenticeship frameworks and the introduction of standards. The Department was working in partnership with the NHS locally to offer higher level qualifications and was gaining a good reputation for this work.

201 In response to questions on the participation rate of employers in the new standards, the Head of Employer Engagement reported that some employers had been part of the trail-blazer groups, however, the majority required support from the College on the implications of the new Apprenticeship Levy and how this could be spent to upskill their workforce.

202 Although not involved directly in the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Hub, the College continued to attend events run by the Local Enterprise Partnership. It was noted that to date these sessions had not been relevant in terms of improving recruitment. The Hub was an independent entity offering a brokerage service, but this had the effect that employers could not approach providers directly.

203 Governors requested that a summary of the recent Apprenticeship Reforms be circulated for information.

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017/2018

204 The Committee received the College's Quality Development Plan (QDP), which had been derived from the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) that had been approved by the Corporation in December 2017.

205 Management had identified a list of areas for improvement that would be monitored by the Committee throughout 2017/2018. These items included attendance on Maths & English courses, increasing applied course value added (for a small number of programmes) and raising timely achievement for apprenticeships from 68% to 70%.

206 Better use of VLE to support learners was planned and more learning walks would be undertaken with the aim of a higher percentage being graded as 'outstanding'. Increased opportunities for student work placements would be sought and staff would measure learner progress in building their 'softer' skills as well as their academic ability.

207 Governors noted that some actions had already been taken to address these areas for improvement and expected that the progress column should be completed for all future versions to enable them to monitor performance.

208 **Resolved -** That the Corporation **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the Quality Development Plan for 2017/2018

POST-INSPECTION ACTION PLAN – KGV

209 The Acting Principal of KGV presented the Post-Inspection Action Plan (PIAP). Governors were informed that most of the points contained in the Plan had been identified by management prior to the Ofsted inspection. There would, however, be a wider focus on areas where the College wanted to improve particular subjects and progress against targets.

210 Ofsted had focused their concerns on the College's BTec provision.

211 The Committee noted that there were no significant gaps in the achievement data between groups with protected characteristics and those without. A plan had been put in place to improve the retention of learners from widening participation postcodes.

212 Attendance was 94% at the time of the inspection, but due to changes in the way in which the data was reported, the target of 93% had not yet been achieved.

213 Governors were advised that the key risks relating to the PIAP were maintaining the quality of provision, staff retention and engendering a culture of transparency and communication with both students and staff.

ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE CORPORATION

214 The Chair summarised the content of the meeting which would be reported to the Corporation's January 2018 meeting:

- HE Quality Development Plan for 2017/2018 and College Quality Development Plan for 2017/2018 were recommended for approval by the Corporation. Progress against both items would be monitored by the Committee.

- Reports from each Head of Curriculum Department were received on 2016/2017 levels of performance and areas for improvement in 2017/2018
- Post-Inspection Action Plan for KGV was received for information and would be monitored at future meetings

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

21st March 2018 – time to be agreed.