SOUTHPORT COLLEGE

MINUTES OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13TH JUNE 2018

Present:	Christine Bampton	Independent Governor
	John Clarke	Principal/CEO (minutes 279 to 343)
	Veronica Fell	Independent Governor
	Liam Gaskell	Student Governor
	Suzanne Knowles	Staff Governor
	Mo Kundi	Independent Governor
	Sue McGuire	Independent Governor
	Kathy Passant	Independent Governor (Chair)
	Carol Reid	Staff Governor
In Attendance:	Anne-Marie Francis	Vice-Principal (Sixth Form & University Studies)
	Nicola Hurst	Director of Teaching, Learning and Support
	Jesamine Kelly	Director of Curriculum & Quality (minutes 279 to 343)
	Lesley Venables	Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

279   Apologies for absence were received from Marcus Godfrey (Student Governor), Matthew Bousfield (Student Governor), Ian Raikes (Independent Governor), Anita Holt (Associate Member) and Gill Kitchen (Vice-Principal Curriculum & Quality).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

280   A declaration of interest was received from Veronica Fell as she is married to another independent member of the Corporation.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

281   The Clerk advised that the previous Committee chair and vice-chair had retired from the Corporation. Following a nomination process, at the Corporation meeting held in May 2018, Kathy Passant had been appointed as the Committee chair.

282   Nominations were now being sought for the role of Committee vice-chair. Ian Raikes had expressed an interest in this to the Clerk and was nominated and seconded for the position by fellow governors.

283   **Resolved -**   That Ian Raikes be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee for a one year term of office, commencing on 13th June 2018

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

284   **Resolved -**   That, with two minor amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

MATTERS ARISING

285   Governors received a report that enabled them to monitor progress against the actions arising from the previous meeting and noted that the majority of these had either been completed or were being progressed.

286   Under minute 222, the Committee requested that an explanation as to how the scores for attainment were calculated should be provided.

287   Comparative data on positive destinations would be submitted to the Committee's next meeting in line with minute 231, with an interim report presented to the March 2019 meeting and a summary included in the Self-Assessment Report in November. Management reported that validated information on destinations to higher education would not be available from UCAS until January 2019.

288   In relation to minute 243 the Chair clarified that the Committee had asked for the teaching and ILT aspects to be separated from any feedback on the efficiency of the College's ILT infrastructure. This would be completed in the 2018/2019 student survey.

289   At the previous meeting an action had been recorded to provide information on outcomes of all A Levels mock examinations (minute 253). However, the Vice-Principal (Sixth Form & University Studies) reported that, as mock results were not a complete indicator of predicted grades, it would be more appropriate for data on current progress levels and predicted outcomes to be provided to the Committee and this was agreed by governors. The predicted grades that were included on university applications were a more holistic view and covered issues such as timed assessments, performance in class and attendance.

290   A list of acronyms commonly used in the further education sector would form part of the new Governance Handbook (minute 258 refers) that had been produced by the Clerk

291   The Chair reported that she had met with the Vice-Principal (Sixth Form & University Studies) and the Clerk to discuss the future schedule and content of each meeting in 2018/2019. A draft proposal had been prepared which centred on 4 committee meetings in the year, with the first held early in September to focus on learner outcomes from 2017/2018. The final version of the document would be circulated to Committee members prior to the start of the new academic year.

292   The Vice-Principal (Sixth Form & University Studies) reported that information on the outcomes for vocational programmes was almost complete for 2017/2018. The equivalent results for GCSEs and A Levels would be available in mid- to late-August. The review of results had been included in the College's quality calendar and the ALPs calculation would be discussed at the Committee's September meeting.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

293   No agenda items were classified as confidential.

DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – REVIEW 2

294   Governors received a report on progress against the key curriculum targets set for each department. The Vice-Principal advised that the information in the report was unlikely to change significantly by the end of the academic year.

295   National benchmark information was not available for A Level provision, due to this being the first year of the linear model. Governors noted that there had been 30 A Level subjects in which the pass rate had been 100% in 2016/2017. This was predicted to decrease in 2017/2018 and an explanation of this under-performance and mitigating actions were included in the Quality Development Plan.

296   Apprenticeship outcomes appeared to be broadly similar having improved considerably in 2016/17. In response to questions the Vice-Principal reported that the data provided did not include timely achievement rates, but that a column would be added to the final version of the document. It was noted that once the new 'standards' for apprenticeships (as opposed to 'frameworks') were introduced there would only be one measure of achievement in this area.

297   Whilst governors recognised that a prediction of the best case for achievement had been made, the Vice-Principal was asked to include this information in the commentary for future reports, together with the size of any under-performance. The Committee also requested that the gradings of curriculum areas should be consistent in future reports and that the information should be RAG-rated against the identified targets.

298   The Director of Teaching and Learning responded to a question about the low level of attendance on part-time Health & Social Care courses and advised that this was due to a small number of learners and an explanation had been included in the QDP. It was agreed that areas of concern or matters requiring clarification would form part of the narrative for the report.

299   Governors queried whether there were issues on the Level 5 in Health & Social Care. The Vice-Principal reported that this was due to the withdrawal of learners on the Care Leadership Programme, which had now been reviewed. Initial advice and guidance for these learners had not been as robust as it could have been which had caused some learners to be enrolled who were not suited to the rigours of the course.

LEARNER FEEDBACK REPORT – SEMESTER 2

300   The Director of Teaching & Learning presented a report on learner feedback, which included a summary of the positive comments and key improvements made during the year. At the recent Strategy Day governors had viewed the new stakeholder video that had been produced by the College.

301   Students felt that the College provided high quality teaching, learning and standards. The remaining areas for improvement centred around access to and the reliability of the College's wifi facilities and IT equipment, which had been explored further through a targeted focus group. The catering contractor had been changed for 2018/2019 following feedback and students had been involved in the selection process.

302   At KGV the student representative body (Student Direct) had been responsible for planning the awards ceremony. There had been wider involvement in College events for the Southport College Student Council. Governors were advised that management was currently identifying the best model to maximise the learner voice for different cohorts of learners. The level of communication and interaction with students and parents was higher at KGV. The same strategy would be used across both campuses for the Student Council, but at the moment there was no plan to integrate both student bodies.

303   A total of 15 compliments and 10 complaints had been received during 2017/2018. There were no discernible trends in the latter.

304   The Committee noted that the parent survey had had a low response rate, which made it difficult to determine the impact of any issues raised. The Marketing department would be reviewing how the survey is communicated and managed in future.

305   The student governor commented that communication with learners varied across different subjects, with some students not sufficiently confident to raise any concerns with staff and reluctant to provide negative feedback through methods such as the student survey.

306   It was agreed that the plan to address the issues raised by students in 2017/2018 should be publicised to relay the fact that learner opinions were important and would be acted upon.

307   Governors questioned whether staff felt that parents were sufficiently informed of potential career routes and what was being done to improve this level of knowledge. The Vice-Principal (Sixth Form & University Studies) reported that careers evening were held for Year 1 learners and that future career paths were a focus of reports sent to parents. Further information-giving opportunities would be built into the communication plan and on non-HE progression routes such as apprenticeships, in particular. A number of different approaches were being tested to determine which was the most successful for each cohort. It was suggested that a booklet or posters describing possible career destinations resulting from undertaking a particular course could be developed to raise aspirations and provide a visual representation of pathways.

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017/2018 – REVIEW 2

308   The Vice-Principal (Sixth Form & University Studies) presented an update of the Quality Development Plan for 2017/2018. Governors noted that the order of priority for some of the areas for improvement had now changed and that the progress column had been completed, in line with the request made at the Committee's previous meeting.

309   Although practical solutions had been applied to improve levels of attendance, this was still below the identified target of 90%. It was felt that the target should be reviewed and that there should be different targets for each level of qualification, to enable the College to pinpoint levels of performance and to realistically project future targets for attendance.

310   The Principal/CEO reported that staff had analysed attendance levels at colleges graded as 'outstanding' and that the level of study did impact on the rates of attendance. Good practice solutions had been identified from other organisations and would be implemented if appropriate.

311   Governors would continue to monitor attendance closely, as this also contributed to levels of achievement. Attendance provided a barometer of the effectiveness of leadership and management within the College.

312   The Committee noted that attendance during the GCSE Maths and English examinations had been broadly similar to that in 2016/2017, ie between 93 and 96%. This contrasted with classroom attendance of around 75%.

313   The data for levels of attendance at KGV excluded study leave for A Level learners and overall was 88%, a reduction of 6% compared to 2016/2017. In response to comments from governors on whether there was a need to continue with the same strategies on attendance and value added or to try alternatives, the Vice-Principal reported that for KGV staff the priority for 2017/2018 was improving levels of value added, with longer-term work to be carried out on changing assessment and optimising performance.

314   Governors questioned whether there was a correlation between attendance, retention, achievement and high grades. The Vice-Principal advised that this was the case and that there was a distinct difference between Level 3 and Level 2/Level 1 programmes and between adults learners compared to 16-18 classroom based learners. It was vital that the College reinforced the content of the learner agreement, which encouraged and expected good levels of attendance.

315   At -0.03 the predicted value added level was significantly above the national rate of -0.22, but there was still felt to be room for further improvement in 2017/2018. Meetings with curriculum staff were underway to maximise levels of performance. The College had been working with two institutions in the sector throughout the year to improve the value added scores.

316   There had been a clear increase in progress in individual subjects and ensuring that initial advice and guidance was appropriate for learners was a key priority. This should improve further as the merger provided additional (non-A Level) pathways for students.

317   Staff had requested that the time allotted to sharing good practice should continue, as the impact on teaching and learning had been positive.

318   The Committee was informed that the amount of work experience undertaken by students was increasing and it was agreed that a report on work experience would be provided to governors in November of each year.

319   The College had applied to participate in a national pilot project of the new Technical Level qualifications in the area of Construction. Further information would be provided to future Committee meetings when available.

QUALITY STRATEGY 2018/2019

320   Governors received the College's draft Quality Strategy for 2018/2019. It was agreed that the document should be amended to include a number of auditing points within the quality cycle and measurable outcomes wherever possible.

321   The key elements of the strategy would be monitored internally, which would enable any adjustments to processes to be made in a timely manner and included in the quality cycle. Any such issues would be fed into the progress column of the Quality Development Plan, which would provide an opportunity to adjust in-year measurements. Any items that were not fully completed or had not been successfully addressed would be included in the following year's Quality Strategy.

322   **Resolved -**   That, with the additional of appropriate audit points and measurable outcomes, the Corporation **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the Quality Strategy for 2018/2019

SAFEGUARDING

323   Governors received for information a report on the number of safeguarding issues that had been reported during Semester 2.

324   A total of 371 students had received assistance from safeguarding and welfare staff, compared to 353 students at the same point in 2016/2017. It was felt that the increase was partly due to improved reporting systems, but also the reduction in services provided by external agencies which meant that students were more dependent on the College's services. The Committee was advised of new complex legislative requirements that had been introduced in 2017/2018 which placed an additional burden on staff.

325   During Semester 2, 14 students had been classified as 'statutory obligations' compared to 10 in the previous academic year and there had been 46 statutory safeguarding referrals, against 11 in semester 2 in 2016/2017.

326   The Safeguarding Team continued to work closely with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable students achieved their qualifications and it was noted that retention for these learners to date was 91% (compared to 81% in 2016/2017), although attendance levels were lower than for the main student cohort.

327   There had been 72 referrals for counselling services, compared with 53 for the same period in 2016/2017, the majority of which were for female learners.

328   The Committee asked whether there was a geographical dimension to the safeguarding data. The Director of Curriculum & Quality reported that some students came from outside the College's recognised catchment area and there were issues relating to gang culture in South Sefton. The College was situated around two of the most deprived wards in the UK and other external agencies were operating on a 'crisis only' basis, which reduced the assistance available to students.

329   Governors received for information the minutes of the Safeguarding Committee meeting held on 14th May 2018. It was agreed that in future the report on Safeguarding would include a summary of any key issues raised, rather than the internal minutes being presented.

330   The College had been recognised as having good and excellent practice in support and guidance for students and this been reflected in the recent successful reaccreditation of the Matrix Award.

331   Governors were reminded of the Corporation's decision to require all new and existing governors to undergo Disclosure & Barring Checks, which was currently underway. Safeguarding training for governors would be provided early in 2018/2019.

332   The minutes of the Equality & Diversity Committee meeting held on 9th February 2018 highlighted the need for the College to review its strategy on military veterans. The Committee had also discussed the current E&D objectives.   During the remainder of 2017/2018 and in 2018/2019 a key focus would be the levels of retention and attendance for groups from widening participation postcodes. The College had been successful in its bid to obtain the LGBT kitemark and would apply this from 2018/2019.

HE QUALITY REPORT – SEMESTER 2

333   The Director of Curriculum & Quality presented a report on Higher Education. A total of 207 students had enrolled on HE programmes, which was a fall of 7 learners compared to 2016/2017. This was mainly due to the failure to recruit a first year cohort for the Foundation Degree in Computing and IT and a decline in enrolments on Health and Social Care programmes.

334   A fourth top up degree in Computing and IT had been introduced in September 2017 and students had also been enrolled on the newly validated Foundation Degree in Working with Children and Families, which was validated by the University of Cumbria.

335   For 2018/2019 an Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship pathway had been developed in partnership with local NHS trusts. A proposal for a new HND in Performing Arts had also been submitted for approval to the Pearson awarding body.

336   Retention on 2 year full time HE courses was 85%, which was in line with the previous academic year.   The Director of Curriculum & Quality reported that the best projected outcome for achievement in 2017/2018 was currently 85% (compared to 71% for 2016/2017) and was being monitored closely.

337   Staff were responding to the requirements of the new Office for Students (the successor body to the Higher Education Funding Council) and the College's processes would be updated to take account of these regulations.

338   Governors asked about recruitment for 2018/2019 and were advised that 231 applications had been received to date, which was slightly ahead of 2017/2018. It was noted that competition for attracting students was intense with some universities offering free mini-Access course to qualifying learners; the impact of this strategy on the College's enrolments was unclear as yet.

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY STRATEGY 2018/2019

339   The Committee received the draft HE Quality Strategy for 2018/2019 and noted that a number of elements were the same as for the FE Quality Strategy presented under an earlier agenda item.

340   The Director of Curriculum & Quality reported that the level of learner support had been reviewed and a dedicated HE officer post had been identified. A new dissertation system had been introduced for Level 6 learners, the results of which seemed to be positive.

341   The Strategy focused on providing opportunities for independent study in terms of the ways in which learners engage and the consistency of resources. High levels of attainment, particularly for the 18-21 age group, was a major aim of the Strategy.

342   Under consumer protection legislation and the regulations introduced by the Office for Students there was a need to ensure that learners who paid for their own programmes received good value for money.

343   **Resolved -**   That, subject to the addition of a sentence to reflect the dynamic nature

of the Quality Development Plan, the Corporation **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the HE Strategy for 2018/2019.

John Clarke and Jesamine Kelly left the meeting at this point.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

344   The Clerk presented revised terms of reference for the Committee. These had been updated to reflect the change of regulatory body to the OFS, the Committee's responsibility for recommending the HE Quality Strategy to the Corporation and additional guidance on the appointment of the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair.

345   Following a number of suggestions, it was agreed that a further version of the terms of reference would be circulated to Committee members for comment. A final draft would be presented to the next meeting.

346   **Resolved -**   That the revised terms of reference be circulated to governors for comment and presented to the September meeting.

COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION

347   Governors received a proforma which would enable them to evaluate the Committee's performance in 2017/2018 against a number of criteria.

348   Due to a shortage of time at the meeting it was agreed that the Clerk would circulate a draft of the proforma to members for approval.

349   **Resolved -**   That a draft of the self-evaluation proforma be sent to governors for approval by the Clerk

ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE CORPORATION

350   The Chair summarised the outcomes of the meeting, which would be reported to the Corporation on 4th July 2018:

- The proposed change to the Committee's cycle of business and the timing of meetings for 2018/2019
- Strategies to improve levels of attendance would be a key focus for 2018/2019

- For HE programmes it was noted that applications had increased slightly against a background of greater competition
- Progress and predicted outcomes would be monitored closely in 2018/2019
- Quality Strategy and HE Quality Strategy were recommended for approval by the Corporation
- Revised terms of reference were received, with further changes to be made

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed.