

SOUTHPORT COLLEGE

MINUTES OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21ST MARCH 2018

Present:	Greta Fenney	Independent Governor (Chair)
	Veronica Fell	Independent Governor
	Rob Firth	Independent Governor (observer)
	Suzanne Knowles	Staff Governor
	Mo Kundi	Independent Governor
	Kathy Passant	Independent Governor
	Ian Raikes	Independent Governor (minutes 215 to 254)
	Anita Holt	Associate Member
In Attendance:	Anne-Marie Francis	Vice-Principal (Sixth Form & University Studies)
	Nicola Hurst	Director of Teaching, Learning and Support
	Gill Kitchen	Vice-Principal (Curriculum & Quality)
	Lesley Venables	Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

215 Apologies for absence were received from John Clarke (Principal/CEO), Sue McGuire (Independent Governor), Carol Reid (Staff Governor), Liam Gaskell (Student Governor), Matthew Bousfield (Student Governor) and Jesamine Kelly (Director of Curriculum & Quality).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

216 Declarations of interest were received from Greta Fenney as she is married to a member of College staff, Veronica Fell as she is married to another independent member of the Corporation and from Mo Kundi who is a trustee of the charity of which Greta Fenney is Chief Executive.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

217 **Resolved** - That the minutes of the meetings held on 5th December 2017 and 10th January 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to a small number of minor amendments

MATTERS ARISING

218 Governors noted that all actions arising from the previous two meetings had either been completed or were being progressed.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

219 No agenda items were classified as confidential.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES REPORT 2016/2017

220 The Committee received for information a report on the 5 performance measures published by the Department for Education and relating to 2016/2017.

221 The College's outturn for progress by learners or value added indicated that there had been a 13 point reduction for Southport College compared to the previous year, whereas KGV's score remained above the national average for sixth form colleges. It was felt that the fall in value added was partly due to insufficient stretch and challenge for learners, but evidence gathered in the current year through learning walks suggested that this had improved. Work was being carried out on the system to predict value added scores.

222 Attainment had improved from 29.22 to 31.15 for Technical qualifications but decreased from 34.16 to 32.95 for Applied General programmes and was below the national average at Southport College. For KGV both Technical and Vocational attainment was above the national average in 2016/2017.

223 Governors were advised of the initiative in place to maximise attainment amongst learners, including a weekly academic tutorial hour, aspirational target grade setting and monitoring. Further work on assessments was ongoing and it was hoped that this would impact positively on both value added and attainment.

224 Progress of learners studying Applied General qualifications at Southport College was a key area for development, with a robust and regular monitoring process now in place. The College had formed links with high performing colleges within the further education sector and was implementing some of the good practice that had been experienced during these visits, such as more varied assessment methods. A suite of interventions was available to improve learner outcomes, including tracking of unit grades by department, monitoring high achievers and bespoke workshops for under-performing students.

225 Progress in English and maths had improved significantly at Southport College and were now well above the national average, with maths in the top 10% of colleges in England. Comparative levels at KGV were also above the national average for sixth form colleges.

226 Governors were concerned that the College had graded itself as outstanding in the self-assessment report for 2016/2017, yet the data highlighted in this report appeared to evidence a lower level of performance. The Director of Teaching & Learning responded that outcomes for learners were high, including those for Maths and English and for Technical Levels and, following detailed discussion by the management team and governors, it had been decided that the small number of under-performing courses should not prevent the College overall being graded as 'outstanding.

227 Management was asked to ensure that the issues picked up in this report were translated into the Quality Development Plan and the College's risk register. The Vice-Principal Curriculum & Quality would present a report on this item to the next meeting, which would also cover projections on performance against targets for 2017/2018 and actions taken to address areas for improvement.

DESTINATIONS REPORT 2016/2017

228 The Committee received a report on destinations, which Southport College indicated that there was little difference between the outcomes for 2016/2017 and 2015/2016.

229 Data was now published externally by the DfE based on information from 2015. The College monitored destinations by curriculum area using a robust follow-up process for learners. It was noted that Engineering courses had the lowest levels of positive progression and that this had been a major focus in 2017/2018.

230 Statistics for KGV learners showed that the majority progressed to higher education.

231 Governors requested that a summary of the data by level and information on internal upward progression be provided in the next report.

DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – REVIEW 1

232 The Vice-Principal (Curriculum & Quality) presented a report on attendance and retention by department for the 2017/2018 academic year to date. This included a comparison against the targets and against performance in 2016/2017.

233 Overall attendance was 87%, which was 3% below the identified target and 1% less than the previous academic year. In response to questions from governors, the Vice-Principal reported that robust follow-up strategies were in place for those learners whose attendance fell below the target and that there was evidence of this work from student feedback.

234 Governors asked whether, in view of the reduction in attendance from 2016/2017, the College had gained any new strategies from working with other institutions and was advised that relationships had been established between Blackpool & The Fylde and Riverside Colleges. Text messaging of learners had been piloted in January and had had a positive initial impact, but then attendance had dipped again. Attendance levels varied according to curriculum area. It was felt that peer pressure within student teams was one of the most effective methods of maintaining and improving attendance.

235 The Committee questioned whether there was a correlation between levels of attendance and the proportion of learners within a department with work or caring commitments. Management responded that these students were not reported on separately within the statistics, but that Ofsted requested this data during inspections. Governors were advised that attendance in schools was proving to be equally challenging and it was suggested that the College could become more involved with its feeder organisations to encourage high levels of attendance from the start of further education courses. The College had systems in place for rewarding good levels of attendance.

236 In response to questions, the Vice-Principal advised that alternative learning methods were possible for more vulnerable groups of learners, including the use of the College's Virtual Learning Environment, using a Facebook page for individual courses and on-line group discussions. However, for 16-18 year olds there was a fine balance between providing a level of support, whilst ensuring the importance of attending College.

237 Management was asked to provide attendance data to future meetings for looked after children, students from widening participation postcodes and the respective information for male and female learners.

238 The report requested governors to approve the targets for the 2017/2018 academic year. The Committee was of the view that this process should occur much earlier in the cycle of business and should be completed at the November meeting in future, particularly as headline targets were submitted for approval at the September Corporation meeting. This would enable governors to receive information on performance much earlier and to ensure that strategies were in place to address any under-performance. The schedule of meetings and timetable of business for 2018/2019 would be reviewed as part of this process.

- 239 **Resolved -**
- 1 That the targets for 2017/2018 be approved
 - 2 That more detailed information on attendance be provided to future meetings
 - 3 That in future years targets would be submitted for approval at the November committee meeting
 - 4 That the meetings schedule and timetable of business be reviewed for 2018/2019

LEARNER FEEDBACK REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2017 TO JANUARY 2018

240 The Director of Teaching & Learning presented a report on learner feedback from September 2017 to January 2018.

241 The latest learner survey had been undertaken in October/November and there had been an overall response rate to the learner survey of 90% at Southport College and 70.7% at KGV. A high proportion of learners agreed that teaching and learning was good and that they felt safe within the College environment. The lowest scoring question related to the usefulness of progress hours, which had led to a review of this activity with the relevant staff.

242 The Committee was advised that the timing of this question may be too early in the academic year and that learners were basing their responses on limited knowledge of the content of progress hours. However, it was still felt to be valuable to ask learners for their views to enable any remedial measures to be put in place during the remainder of the year.

243 Governors questioned the relatively low scoring of the College's IT and on-line learning resources. The Director of Teaching & Learning reported that some of these comments related to infrastructure issues rather than the delivery of ILT and that a targeted meeting of student representatives had been held to discuss these issues and agree an action plan. It was agreed that the survey should separate both aspects of ILT in future.

244 The Committee commented that an amendment of Question 15 had been requested at the previous meeting but did not appear to have been changed from 'good' to 'outstanding'. Management undertook to action this in the next version of the survey.

245 Governors asked whether the data on satisfaction levels could be broken down in other ways, such as by level and by protected characteristic. The Director of Teaching & Learning advised that course teams examined the data by course rather than by level and that the Equality & Diversity Committee reviewed the data by protected characteristic. It was

felt by governors that management should receive the data in the same format as Ofsted would request, which included by age, gender and student group.

246 The Committee questioned what had occurred as a result of the student survey and was advised that an action plan had been prepared following meetings with student representatives and that this had been fed back to learners. Future versions of the report on student representative meetings would include a column explaining the actions taken to address any identified issues to evidence the impact of the process.

247 The College's learner voice strategies included systems of student representatives (which operated slightly differently at each campus), a Student Council and the 3 student governors.

248 In the current academic year there had been 11 complaints and 6 compliments, with the majority of the former relating to customer service and any classified as teaching and learning were about teaching cover and perceptions of tutors' comments. There had been one appeal on the outcome of a complaint which had been partly upheld.

249 Feedback was also provided on the latest employer survey, which had produced 68 highly positive responses.

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017/2018

250 The Committee received a progress report on 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. It was noted that the FE Commissioner had cited that high performing colleges should have a well-balanced curriculum plan and a robust QDP.

251 Following discussions at the previous meeting, a column to detail progress had been added to the report.

252 Governors were advised that there was still further work to be done to address the inconsistency on some programmes at KGV. On Biology A Level courses ALPs had decreased compared to 2016/2017, due to some learners not meeting their projected grades. The ALPs calculation would need to improve from 5 to 4 in Biology in order for the College's provision to be classified as 'very good'.

253 A number of areas of concern had been highlighted in the report following the mock examinations. Information on the outcomes of all A Levels mocks would be circulated to committee members, but governors were advised that these identified 'working at' grades rather than predictions, which were a more robust indicator of performance.

254 The Committee requested that more detailed information on withdrawing learners should be provided to future meetings. Currently retention was below the identified target, however, the Vice-Principal reported that only 14 students had left the College since the census date of November 2017. Retention information would be provided to the next Committee meeting.

Ian Raikes left the meeting.

255 Governors noted that one focus of staff development had been the development of independent thinking skills for learners and that this had been well-received by staff. The impact of this work would be measured through learning walks and student satisfaction surveys. A further report on independent thinking skills would be provided to a future meeting.

256 Concern over the current attendance figures was expressed, but management was confident that the current strategies in place would prove effective and impact positively on the levels of attendance.

257 The Committee complimented the management team on bringing together the two previous QDPs and received an assurance that all items featured separately had now been brought together in the one Plan.

258 Governors requested that a list of common acronyms should be circulated for information and that any future reports should include the KGV logo. The branding for the merged College would be discussed at a future Corporation meeting.

SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE REPORT 2017/2018

259 The Vice-Principal (Curriculum & Quality) presented a summary report on safeguarding and welfare issues that had arisen in the current academic year.

260 A total of 54 statutory safeguarding referrals had been made in 2017/2018, compared to 61 in the same period in 2016/2017. The College continued to work with a broad range of external agencies and there was a high level of training for staff working in this area.

261 Governors were informed that the same Safeguarding Policy and procedures were now in place across both sites and that all staff had received copies of these. New Government regulations were anticipated to be issued in June or July 2018 and governors would receive a briefing on this topic at an appropriate time.

262 The Committee sought assurance that the College's safeguarding arrangements were regularly audited and was advised that the Single Centre Record was checked externally and that there had been an Internal Audit visit on this area during 2017/2018, with a report on the findings submitted to the Audit Committee which would monitor progress against any recommendations.

263 One area of particular focus was on e-safety in relation to social media.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

264 Governors received for information the minutes of the College's Safeguarding Committee meeting held on 5th February 2018.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

265 The Director of Teaching & Learning presented for information the minutes of the Equality & Diversity Committee meeting held on 9th February 2018.

266 The E&D Committee had discussed the monitoring of retention and attendance by vulnerable groups. It was noted that there was a gap in these areas for learners from widening participation postcodes. Data would need to be collected in future on military veterans in line with the requirements of the Liverpool City Region and the Committee had reviewed how this should be undertaken.

267 The College's processes for recording additional support for learners had been reviewed by management and had improved significantly. The number of Education Care & Health Plans associated with learners had doubled in 2017/2018 compared to 2016/2017, with a high level of additional administration required.

268 E&D Committee members had discussed how the College could refresh the embedding of E&D strategies in the classroom and maximise the use of E&D Champions. A kitemark scheme was being examined for the College's work with LGBT students.

269 Governor training would be arranged on British Values and Equality & Diversity as part of the annual programme. It was agreed that the Clerk would research the on-line training packages available to governors through the Education Training Foundation.

HIGHER EDUCATION – STUDENT ENGAGEMENT REPORT

270 The Committee received for information a report on the engagement of the College's higher education students.

271 Governors noted that the level of satisfaction amongst learners had improved, however, the response rate to the survey was only 50%, which meant that the former may not be a true reflection of the position. Management was currently examining how the response rate could be improved, including the use of technology such as Google Docs to capture feedback.

272 During the latter part of the academic year staff would be exploring further with students the questions with the highest and lowest scores in the survey. A target response level of 80% had been identified for the end of year internal survey and a level in line with the national average for further education colleges for the NSS survey.

273 A dedicated event for learners wishing to progress from Level 3 programmes to higher education courses was being arranged for June 2018 and a graduation ceremony was planned for the end of August.

HIGHER EDUCATION – QUALITY REPORT

274 The Director of Teaching & Learning presented a report on Quality for Higher Education provision.

275 There had been no growth in student numbers in 2017/2018, however, retention levels had improved compared to the previous year. Overall the attendance level was 82%, which was below the target but it was recognised that adult students often have complex external factors to balance alongside their studies, including financial issues. It was noted that some learners were achieving high marks on their assignments without necessarily having a good attendance level and vice-versa.

276 A small number of programmes were performing below expectations and governors were assured that robust measures were in place to address these areas.

277 The current HE Strategy (2015-2018) was being reviewed and an updated version would be submitted to the Committee's next meeting for recommendation to the Corporation. Information on the number of enrolments received to date for 2018/2019 would be circulated to Committee members.

ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE CORPORATION

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

- Target-setting process was approved, however, the future timing would be reviewed
- Progress was noted against the HE Quality Development Plan for 2017/2018 and the revised College Quality Development Plan for 2017/2018. Both items would continue to be monitored by the Committee at future meetings.
- Reports were received for information on Performance Measures for 2016/2017, Destinations for 2016/2017, Learner Engagement, Safeguarding and Equality & Diversity.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13th June 2018 – time to be agreed.