

SOUTHPORT COLLEGE

MINUTES OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5TH SEPTEMBER 2018

Present:	Kathy Passant	Independent Governor (Chair)
	Christine Bampton	Independent Governor
	Veronica Fell	Independent Governor
	Suzanne Knowles	Staff Governor
	Mo Kundi	Independent Governor
	Ian Raikes	Independent Governor
	Carol Reid	Staff Governor
	Anita Holt	Associate Member
In Attendance:	Anne-Marie Francis	Vice-Principal (Curriculum & Quality)
	Nicola Hurst	Director of Teaching, Learning and Support
	Jesamine Kelly	Assistant Principal (Curriculum and Quality)
	Lesley Venables	Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1 There were no apologies for absence.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2 A standing declaration of interest was received from Veronica Fell as she is married to another independent governor.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH JUNE 2018

3 **Resolved -** That, with minor amendments to paragraphs 311 and 332, the minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

MATTERS ARISING

4 Governors received a progress report on the actions identified at the last meeting and noted that the majority of issues had either been completed, were in progress or were featured on the agenda. For future meetings, the Clerk was asked to ensure that the progress and target completion date were filled in for each item.

5 Under minute 283, the Committee confirmed the appointment of Ian Raikes as the Vice-Chair for 2018/2019.

6 It was agreed under minute 286 that a guide to national performance measures would be circulated prior to the next meeting and that the Director of Teaching & Learning would provide a short presentation on this topic.

7 Governors were informed that destination data was compiled every year by the College. Management was requested to provide trend data on destinations by the College's students, together with information on the national position to enable comparisons to be made on performance levels. It was noted that national measures of destinations were relatively new and the Vice-Principal undertook to supply the relevant internally-generated information, where available. Destinations would also be analysed within the College's Self-Assessment Report for 2017/2018.

8 Under minute 321, governors requested that information on the number of actions from the Quality Strategy that were outstanding and where insufficient progress had been made should be provided to the Committee. The Vice-Principal agreed that the Quality Improvement Plan would include a sufficient level of detail to address this. The report would be amended to state that the necessary information would form part of the Self-Assessment Report for 2018/2019 and the Quality Strategy (the latter had already been updated to ensure that monitoring points were built in throughout the academic year).

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

9 The Clerk reported that she had reviewed the minutes of meetings held in 2017/2018 and had determined that no confidential issues had been discussed, which meant that there was no need to consider reclassifying any minutes.

10 No agenda items for this meeting were deemed by the Committee to be confidential. However, it was noted that discussions around the actions that had been devised to raise outcomes for learners may relate to the performance of individual staff members.

SOUTHPORT COLLEGE OUTCOMES 2017/2018

11 The Vice-Principal presented a report on learner outcomes at Southport College for 2017/2018. It was noted that the figures quoted were still subject to finalisation, but it was unlikely that these would change significantly.

12 Learner outcomes were in line with expectations and with the final outturn for 2016/2017. Overall, the level of achievement was 88%, which was above the identified target.

13 Governors asked why information on performance had not been presented by level and by course, to enable them to fully understand the outcomes for learners. The Vice-Principal responded that this data was available but that management had felt that this would comprise a sizeable amount of information for governors to navigate. However, the Committee requested that this information should be provided, even if the report was on a 'by exception' basis, as it would support governors in identifying good or poor levels of performance across the College. It was noted that this would be easier to provide for KGV outcomes, as this involved a more limited number of subjects.

14 The Vice-Principal would consider the way in which this data could be presented to governors. The Committee also commented that it would have been useful at this meeting to receive a written analysis of the results for 2017/2018, including the key areas that were causing concern, together with current and planned actions. Management advised that the relevant information had only been received by the College recently and, as some of the outcomes had been unexpected, it would take some time to provide a full analysis.

15 Value added had improved by 0.28% compared to 2016/2017 and was above the national average for General Further Education colleges. However, the level was still not positive on the scale and this would be a focus for the College in 2018/2019.

16 Outcomes for apprenticeships had decreased slightly in relation to the previous academic year, but were still above the national benchmark. The overall levels of timely achievement would not be finalised until October, but it was likely that these would be lower than last year.

17 In response to questions on the projected reduction in the timely achievement rates, the Vice-Principal reported that this was due to a number of factors outside of the College's control, such as learners taking study breaks or moving between employers. Initial advice and guidance on the Level 5 Health & Social Care Leadership & Management programme and the extended period of sickness absence by an electrical assessor had impacted negatively on timely achievements. Management was confident that the measures that had been implemented to address any issues on timely achievement were sufficiently robust.

18 Although it had been predicted that some areas of provision at KGV would underperform against the target, the actual outturn was lower than this and had caused the College's ALPs grading to decrease from a 4 (good) to a 6 (satisfactory).

19 Governors noted that achievement levels were high in some curriculum areas, particularly those where students were expected to undertake extended writing as part of the course, but that for subjects such as Maths and Science, the results were disappointing. Initial analysis indicated a correlation between the experience level of some staff and its impact on outcomes, together with the accuracy of learner responses to questions allocated with a small number of marks overall.

20 A number of courses had been closed for 2018/2019, such as Government & Politics and Music. Some further interventions had been actioned before the results had been published, for example, KGV managers were being supported by the Director of Teaching & Learning and the structure and operation of the Progress Team had been revised and aligned to the system at Southport College, with a focus on influencing attendance, retention and progression for 2018/2019. Some A Level teaching staff had been asked to review their own performance and clear targets for improvement had been set.

21 The Vice-Principal reported that the methodology for timed assessment was under review and that there would be weekly interventions and monitoring by managers. External teaching and learning experts and more experienced staff were being drafted in to support the College's improvement plan.

22 A system known as "ALPs Connect" was currently being rolled out to all members of staff, which would assist in monitoring performance in comparison to the ALPs scale and identifying the level of progress that had been made by learners over time. The amount of stretch and challenge would be increased for students in 2018/2019.

23 At future Committee meetings the report provided by the Vice-Principal would include information on progress monitoring. The Committee also commented that the inclusion of some narrative on the action plan (for both cross-College and subject areas) resulting from the learner outcomes would have been informative for governors (including any targets that had been set, to enable performance and progress to be monitored by the Committee) and should be provided.

24 In response to questions on the College's capacity to raise performance levels amongst inexperienced staff, the Vice-Principal reported that the College was part of a sixth form consortium, which could provide some assistance in this area, and best practice from high-performing curriculum areas would also be applied to subjects that had underperformed. Management was confident that lecturers had an appropriate level of subject knowledge, however, the level of examination preparation required improvement. Entry requirements for programmes at KGV had been strictly adhered to for 2018/2019.

25 Other measures in place included the oversight of timed assessments in some areas by the senior leadership team. Although there were no staff at KGV who were qualified as external examiners and a number of individuals had been set targets to achieve this.

26 It was important to ensure that staff were adequately supported and that any criticism was constructive.

27 Governors were advised that there would be an Ofsted monitoring visit in January 2019. In the past, a one-off reduction in performance, such as at KGV, would not trigger a full Ofsted inspection.

28 The correlation between levels of performance and the comments included in the report on Learner Voice was noted by the Committee.

29 It was agreed that information on BTec programmes (where the ALPs score had been 2 overall and individual subjects had been graded as either 2 or 3) would be circulated prior to the next meeting.

30 In response to questions the Vice-Principal reported that a significant majority of students had been successful in enrolling at their first choice of university, even if they had missed the projected grade by one point. This was partly due to the highly competitive market for higher education places against a background of a demographic dip in the number of college leavers in 2018/2019. A more detailed analysis would be included at the November Committee meeting.

31 The Chair summarised the comments made at the meeting. It was apparent that governors had not been expecting these results and it was not reassuring for the committee that provided oversight of progress on teaching and learning. Governors had received information from management on the remedial measures that had already been put in place (in most cases) and would be monitoring progress robustly throughout the year.

32 An analysis of the discrepancy between previous reports on performance to the Standards Committee and this set out outcomes was requested, along with a detailed action plan, to provide assurance to governors that these measures were accurate and effective. The Vice-Principal reported that this would be included in future reports to the Committee and would enable governors to determine levels of performance at subject level.

SOUTHPORT COLLEGE - GCSE ENGLISH & MATHS 2016/2017

33 Governors were reminded that, as a condition of receiving funding from the Education & Skills Funding Agency, all students who had not achieved grades A* to C in their GCSE maths and English on entry from school were required to study these qualifications at the College.

34 The results had not been anticipated by management, with a slight reduction in performance in English compared to 2016/2017 and a significant decline in maths GCSE. The majority of students re-sitting GCSEs were at Southport College.

35 Management had reviewed the data closely but had found no discernible trends. For maths there had been no changes to staffing, methods of delivery or assessment in 2017/2018, but the pass rate had fallen by 15%. College staff were discussing performance levels with colleagues at other local institutions, where there had been a similar trend. It was felt that this was a national issue and may be due to changes in the grade boundaries. The College had requested a review of its results by the examination board (OCR-Pearson).

36 The Vice-Principal reported that staff needed to fully understand what had happened prior to drafting an action plan. It was agreed by the Committee that this would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

37 The Principal/CEO felt it was important that staff morale should be maintained in this area, particularly as performance had been strong in 2016/2017.

38 In response to questions about the impact of the GCSE results on progression opportunities for learners the Director of Teaching & Learning advised that some learners had been unable to progress to university due to failing their English and maths qualifications.

39 Some learners had asked to re-sit their English and maths qualifications in November, however, the College considered that this was too soon, except for those who had been very close to passing. The diagnostic tool had been redesigned to enable staff to focus on the gaps in learner knowledge.

STUDENT EXIT SURVEY 2017/2018

40 The Director of Teaching & Learning presented a report on the Student Exit Survey for 2017/2018. Learners had been asked a total of 27 questions and the response rate had been good, with KGV students completing the survey for the first time.

41 Governors noted that this amounted to only one strand of the College's Learner Voice Strategy and provided useful information for course team reviews. Some of the questions that had attained a lower score were linked to earlier discussions about outcomes, especially at KGV.

42 Management was currently trying to improve the level of timeliness for the actions identified in the survey. It was noted that one of the questions in the survey for 2018/2019 had been amended from 'outstanding' to 'excellent' in line with a previous request from the Committee.

43 The student representatives group would be asked how to maintain interest amongst learners and for them to provide valuable feedback on their experience at the College

44 Governors asked whether any benchmarking was undertaken for student surveys. The Director of Teaching & Learning advised that the ESFA undertook an annual survey in January/February, in which the College participated. However, the published information resulting from this exercise could not be further analysed.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY

45 The Assistant Principal (Curriculum & Quality) presented a draft Policy on Freedom of Speech. This was a requirement of the new Office for Students (the regulatory body for higher education) and the draft had been based on best practice at other institutions.

46 Governors requested that a clause should be added to the Policy to address any potential appeals and that the terminology used in the document was consistent. It was felt by management that there was no need for the Policy to be reviewed by the College's solicitors, as any feedback on the content would be provided by the OfS.

47 **Resolved -** That, subject to the amendments suggested by the Committee, the Corporation **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the Freedom of Speech Policy

TERMS OF REFERENCE

48 The Clerk reported that the current terms of reference had been approved by the Corporation at its July 2018 meeting and that, at this point in the year, no further amendments were proposed. However, these would be kept under review throughout 2018/2019.

COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION

49 Governors received the final draft of the Committee's Self-Evaluation for 2017/2018, which had previously been circulated.

50 The narrative against each of the criteria was noted and it was agreed that the Committee had fulfilled its terms of reference in 2017/2018. The section whereby governors were asked to grade the Committee's performance would be removed.

51 **Resolved -** That the Committee's Self-Evaluation for 2017/2018 be approved

COMMITTEE TIMETABLE OF BUSINESS 2018/2019

52 The Clerk reported that she had met with the Committee Chair and members of the management team to draft the timetable of business for 2018/2019. The content would be kept under review and would be included with each set of Committee papers in future.

ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE CORPORATION

53 It was agreed that a list of significant items to bring to the Corporation's attention would be circulated by the Clerk.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

29th November 2018