Minutes
SEG Standards Committee Meeting
Governor Meetings

Date	04/03/2026
Time	3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Location	KGV Boardroom
Governors Present	Michelle Brabner - Principal – (Ex-Officio Member) Jamie Boland (Student Governor) Kevin Burke (Independent Member) *Roderic Gillespie (Committee Chair - Independent Member) Chelsea Hassanyeh (Student Governor) Anita Holt (Associate Member) *Kashfa Kalim (Independent Member) Sophie Kinnear (Staff Governor) Susannah Porter (Independent Member) Elaine Small (Independent Member)
Invited Attendees	Rachael Brownhill (Assistant Principal Learner Development and Careers) (items 10 & 11 only) Teresa Catterall (Assistant Principal Planning and Projects) (item 8 only) Lisa Farnhill (Dir. Governance and Compliance) Vickie Hayes (Director of Student Support and Inclusion) (item13 only) Shaun Hindle (Assistant Principal Apprenticeships and External Relations) (item 8 only) Stephen Musa (Deputy Principal) Jane Rowley (Assistant Principal Curriculum & Quality) (item 8 only)
Apologies	Tracey Wood (Independent Member and Committee Vice Chair)

***indicates attendance via videoconferencing facilities**

Agenda

1 - Welcome and Apologies for Absence
The meeting commenced with apologies for absence noted and accepted. The Chair expressed thanks to the Committee Vice Chair for chairing the last meeting in his absence. A special welcome was extended to the new student governors, noting this was their first meeting since their appointment.

Item 1: Accepted

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2 - Declaration of Interests
The Chair asked if there were any declarations of interest from the attendees. No conflicts of interest were identified by the members present.

Item 2: Noted

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3 - Minutes / Matters Arising
The Chair requested comments on the minutes from the December meeting, with members asked to point out any inaccuracies or omissions. There were no objections or amendments proposed, and the minutes were accepted as accurate and approved.

Item 3: Approved

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4 - Follow-up of the Previous Meeting - Actions and Impact Summary

A brief update on actions arising from previous meetings was provided, with members updated regarding investigations into the potential benefits and drawback of recording calls. It was confirmed that research indicated it was not common practice in the sector. Members reflected on the rationale for its consideration, to protect staff and support with handing the rising number of AI-generated complaints. It was noted that while recording calls was technically feasible, it had been decided not to be taken forward at this time.

Members discussed the impact of AI-generated complaints on staff workload, and instances of verbal abuse. Members asked about the current process and support for staff, being advised of a malicious communications policy in place and warning system that allowed staff to end calls if parents were aggressive or abusive. The Chair linked this to the upcoming agenda item on risk movements, emphasising the importance of considering the impact of AI-generated content across a arrange of areas, which could be considered relevant when reviewing the risk register.

Item 4: Approved – The Committee noted the update and approved the impact statements

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5 - Confidential Items

The Director of Governance and Compliance confirmed that there were no confidential items within the current agenda that needed to be marked as confidential and discussed without the presence of staff or students. It was agreed that any concerns regarding specific courses that risked identifying individuals, would be addressed as they arose during the meeting.

It was confirmed that there were no recommended redactions within the minutes presented and approved.

Item 5: Agreed – The Committee agreed the minutes could be published in full without redactions and that the full agenda could be reviewed in the presence of staff and students.

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6 - Risk Movements

The Deputy Principal presented the risk movements, noting that the senior team had reviewed the risk register in February. Members were notified of the reasons behind the high-risk rating associated with the new Ofsted framework.

The Committee discussed at length the evidence and context surrounding the scoring, including concerns about the lack of consistency in inspection outcomes, with examples of varying achievement rates leading to different grades. The Committee agreed that the uncertainty and ambiguity of the new framework justified the high-risk rating, following assurances around work done to ensure staff were prepared.

Members expressed concern over Ofsted being considered one of the highest risks facing the organisation. It was explained that the risks included were only those relevant to this Committee, with it reiterated that the rating was high due to the level of uncertainty, over both the framework and impact. The Committee noted the rating was also influenced by the College's previous experience, referencing feedback from college's that had been inspected around the impact of the new framework on staff wellbeing.

Members discussed key themes of inspections, reflecting on the beneficial positioning of inclusion and staff wellbeing, noting the strength of these within SEG, however, conceded that the focus on data could potentially jeopardise a positive outcome should the inspection take place before QAR data is released.

Members also considered the risk around failure to manage quality, asking about triggers for reviewing the rating of this area. The Deputy Principal assured the Committee that the SLT continually assesses the mitigations around quality management, with predicted outcomes strengthened and a particular focus on attendance and retention. It was confirmed that the risk rating would reduce once a further set of results provide greater confidence in the accuracy of predicted grades. The discussion covered how prediction accuracy varies between different types of courses, highlighting that frequent assessments in vocational subjects help improve accuracy, whereas end-of-course exams make it more difficult with A Level results.

Members were given details of the development of the quality team over the last six months, and new post of Curriculum Intervention Manager, with it expected that the risk score would reduce once outcomes evidence the positive impact of these roles.

Members confirmed they were satisfied that risks were thoroughly and accurately considered, highlighting examples of work and improvements seen during their time on the Board, agreeing to reconsider Standards related risks again at the end of the meeting.

Item 6: Noted – The Committee noted the updates to the risk register, and assurances provided over the accuracy of the ratings.

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7 - Impact Report

The Deputy Principal introduced the new impact report, thanking the Vice Chair for providing an example. Members were informed that it summarises achievements, outcomes, and metrics for external marketing and stakeholder understanding. In response to questions, it was clarified the report would only be produced annually, aiming to consolidate the organisation's strengths and was praised for its clarity and positive portrayal of the college's achievements.

The discussion included the potential internal use and benefits of the report, helping staff take pride in their work and better understand the college's direction. It was suggested that the report should be reviewed by an external party before wider distribution to ensure it can be understood by those outside of the sector.

Item 7: Resolved – The Committee resolved to endorse the format and content of the Impact Report, subject to minor refinements to ensure understanding by external stakeholders.

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8 - Quality of Education Reporting

The Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal Quality, Teaching and Learning presented the KGV aspects of the quality of the education report, focusing on attendance, progression, and predicted outcomes. Attendance at KGV was noted to be strong, noting that Level 2 provision required closer monitoring.

The Committee discussed attendance targets and interventions, contextualised into sector wide variations in what is considered ‘good’. They agreed that although the aspirational targets should remain in place, SEG should also acknowledge and be praised for the attendance rates achieved, and the progress made. Members discussed local schools’ data and progress made by those who had been ‘school refusers’ or NEET (not in education, employment or training). Members confirmed the figures used were year to date, acknowledging the impact of the point in the year on each absence, being advised that the data had not changed since the report was written, with some courses celebrated for exceptional attendance.

Members were given an overview of the analysis of predicted achievements, considered against the previous year’s outcomes, showing improvements in retention and predicted grades. The accuracy of the evidence base was discussed, with assurances provided. The introduction of AS levels was highlighted, with high retention rates expected. The discussion emphasised the importance of accurate predictions and impactful interventions to support student success, focusing on bespoke and student centric approaches. Members acknowledged the challenges and improvements in various areas, including attendance and high grades, noting the positive impact of interventions in areas previously flagged as areas of concern. Members asked about risks of decline in areas that were not under intervention, assured by the oversight of the quality team.

The Committee discussed the importance of value-added metrics, and available benchmarking data. Questions were raised about what constitutes a ‘high’ grade and an A-level pass, noting high grade boundaries are not consistent across all colleges, with some including C grades, with concerns raised over the lack of transparency and consistency within the sector.

The Assistant Principal for Curriculum Planning and Projects provided an update on Southport College data. Members observed varied grading systems at the site, including ungraded provisions, pass/fail assessments, and multi-level grades. Retention rates showed positive trends in maths and slight improvement in English, with a continued focus on improving attendance.

Members highlighted that courses identified for recovery are showing positive progress, however, indicated concern about retention in specific Level 1 courses, asking about the causes and interventions. Detailed explanations were provided, including the demographics of the cohort, with work underway to ensure stereotypes are not used to push lower-level learners towards courses that may not be motivated to study. Initiatives to broaden opportunities were outlined, including the first women in STEM subjects enrichment group meeting, with examples given of the positive outcomes for individual students.

Members were advised the Engage programme, aimed at learners who would otherwise be NEET, was successful in improving attendance to previously disengaged learners and ensured targeted support was available. The Committee was informed that despite what may be considered low attendance rates, comparative to the school attendance for this cohort, improvements in attendance were significant, noting that the programme ensures young people not only stay in education, but also have access support.

Members asked about the oversight and impact of interventions, noting the strength of the range of experience of the management team and collaborative approach being used. The Deputy Principal highlighted the introduction of Quality Recovery Interventions, a mechanism to support courses that are currently struggling. Members were given an overview of the support provided, using a team approach where Assistant Principals meet to discuss and implement strategies for improvement, sharing good practice and offering cross team support.

The Assistant Principal Curriculum, Planning and Projects also provided an overview of business planning, noting the use of Forecast software to refine curriculum planning. An outline of courses to be introduced in September was provided. Members noted this included Level 3 bricklaying and Level 3 carpentry and joinery, with members clarifying demand, noting the withdrawal of T Levels in this area. Members noted market intelligence informed curriculum decisions, having identified a need for creative subjects. The Committee noted high numbers of applications received for the new drama and dance courses, with this expected to build further once a teacher is in post to support with marketing the courses. Members questioned what was influencing the shift in demand and sought assurances over evidence-based decisions, discussing changes in government policy, industry links and the range of career opportunities and transferable skills gained through creative subjects. Members asked about the awarding bodies for new courses, considering the benefits of structure, balanced against the freedom to tailor the content and contextualising the literacy and numeracy elements.

Members asked about the development and inclusion of courses that focused on newer technologies, including cyber and green skills. It was noted that the industry has maintained an emphasis on upskilling in renewable technologies, rather than prioritising these areas as foundational curriculum content. It was noted that a strategic shift is required to enable students to receive primary instruction in green skills.

The item concluded with a review of the progress made in apprenticeship provision, with the Assistant Principal Apprenticeships and External Relations advising the data had improved further since the report was drafted. Members asked about the levels offered and elements making up achievement rates and datapoints used in an inspection. Members discussed changes to the use of levy funding, noting single units can now be studied, clarifying these standalone elements do not provide a qualification, but can be built up to combine units to achieve a full apprenticeship.

The increase in the number of fails was challenged, with explanations provided of the circumstances. Members asked how the decision to progress to gateway is made, confirming that no pressure is put on tutors by employers or learners. A summary of the progress in reducing out of funding learners was provided, with the Committee commending the improvement.

Item 8: Resolved – The Committee resolved to accept assurances over the continued focus on improving outcomes for learners, with the impact of interventions monitored and overseen effectively by management and accurately reported.

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9 - 2025-26 Strategic Improvement Plan Update

The Deputy Principal provided an update on the implementation of the quality development plan, referred to as the QAP (Quality Action Plan). He highlighted the impact of interventions and progress made, with high predicted pass rates for courses that had been areas of concern. Members discussed attendance interventions at length, confirming that this remains a significant challenge, however, had seen improvement.

The discussion included clarification around the ALPS grades used to measure student progress. Members were reminded a lower ALPS grade indicates better progress, noting the current predictions are favourable. The complexity of ALPS grading was discussed, with the Deputy Principal explaining how it works across different subjects and qualifications, with student governors providing details of their experience of calculating minimum expected grades and working towards targets.

Members were informed the Intervention Manager will start on the 13th of April, with members asking about the remit of the role, being advised it is expected to bring additional focus and support to areas in intervention that need to improve.

Item 9: Noted – The Committee noted the progress made.

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10 - Learner Perspectives & Engagement

The Assistant Principal Learner Development and Careers provided an overview of learner perspectives and engagement activities since the last meeting. Members noted the number and range of learner voice activities, including feedback from student representatives and a focus on targeting apprentices for feedback. Members endorsed the launch of a "You Said, We Did" campaign to highlight the changes implemented based on learner feedback, discussing at length the low response rate to the apprenticeship survey. Members were assured that the feedback received had been positive, with ongoing efforts to generate additional responses to ensure it is representative.

Members were informed that the apprenticeship conference was well attended, with positive feedback from learners regarding the event. There was a notable improvement in the session on radicalisation and rights, which scored the highest in learner feedback this year, having been one of the lowest scoring areas in the previous year.

Attendance initiatives were discussed, including the launch of the ABC principles (Attendance, Behaviour, Commit). Members discussed the communication to students, parents, and staff to improve attendance and engagement, with student governors asked for their thoughts on awareness of and engagement with the new initiative. Members asked how the impact is being measured and confirmed it was supported by consistent messaging and threaded through all communications.

The introduction of attendance officers was highlighted as a response to staff feedback. Members discussed the remit of the role, acknowledging the benefit of building relationships to gain more positive responses to the calls, and discussing the drawback of calling from a withheld number. Members noted the officers will focus on contacting students during lessons when they are not in attendance, allowing teachers to concentrate on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Members discussed the approach to advertising for the role, asking about the skills and experiences considered to be essential to ensure its effectiveness. The Committee asked about measuring the impact of attendance officers, commending the approach of the Assistant Principal who had trialled the role herself to support with drafting training and a framework for the newly appointed candidates. In response to questions around parental and student contact, it was confirmed the first contact would be the student, followed by the parent if there was no answer. Members discussed the broadening of communication methods, including consideration being given for WhatsApp messages, along with system updates that would facilitate additional attendance information, not just highlight the current absence. Members highlighted the benefit of the student first approach, in building stronger relationships and mitigating against situations where parents were less supportive and not encouraging engagement in education.

Members discussed the ongoing legacy impact of the Pandemic and parents working from home. In concluding, they asked about the use of attendance data in an inspection, being assured of the work to contextualise data.

Item 10: Noted – Members noted the update.

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11 - Destinations Report 2024/25

The Assistant Principal Learner Development and Careers provided an update on destinations and progression for the 2024/25 academic year, highlighting the improved data, with nearly 96% of students progressing to positive destinations, a further increase from the previous year. Members commended work to reduce the number of unknown destinations, noting this had significantly decreased, attributed to the efforts of the current team.

Members discussed the decline in the number of learners progressing to apprenticeships, being assured by work done to create targeted career events and increased CPD for progress tutors to highlight the benefits and opportunities available through apprenticeships. The discussion highlighted the challenges learners face in securing apprenticeships and the need to link students with internal opportunities within the college. Members were advised learners apply to university as a backup while preferring apprenticeships, leading to a slight decline in university progression rates as a percentage, with a slight increase in the headcount. The conversation also touched on the broader national trends, government focus, and the impact of industry changes on apprenticeship opportunities.

The Committee discussed at length efforts to track destinations, including the use of intended destinations and longer-term tracking with the help of the DFE. The complexities of tracking large numbers of learners over a number of years were acknowledged, with work being undertaken to develop a new alumni network to facilitate ongoing contact to meet the requirements under the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The importance of aspirational career pathways was emphasised, noting a number of targeted talks had been arranged for learners to encourage higher aspirations and inform them of the necessary grades for prestigious universities. Specific examples of successful career talks were provided, highlighting positive feedback from both students and teachers.

Item 11: Resolved – The Committee resolved to accept the assurance provided by the comprehensive data collected on destinations and ongoing efforts to improve the long-term tracking of destinations data.

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12 - Safeguarding

Members were provided with an overview of the safeguarding data, noting the report indicated a significant drop in safeguarding concerns by 22% in the first semester, with support provided by the team to 489 learners. In response to questions about the potential cause of the reduction, members were informed the decrease was attributed to improved training for progress tutors, support services, and LSAs, leading to earlier interventions that prevent issues from escalating to formal safeguarding concerns and intervention. The conversation acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on young people and the effectiveness of staff training, particularly the whole college approach to trauma informed practice, in reducing safeguarding cases. The college's strong safeguarding practices were praised, with the Committee advised the progress tutors were playing a crucial role in early intervention.

Questions were raised about staff training completion rates, with 86% of staff having completed their safeguarding training. Members were assured that this included staff unable to complete training as it included those on long term leave due to maternity, paternity and ill health. Members were informed of measures in place to ensure compliance, including annual training updates for all staff, even though the requirement is biennial.

Members expressed concern over the increase of incidents reported to the police, being advised that this reflects the college's proactive approach to dealing with issues and was seen as positive. The importance of staff training and support in handling police referrals was emphasised, noting extensive training undertaken by the safeguarding team, noting they constantly update their skills, with examples of courses and skills updates provided. The discussion also highlighted the local context, including the impact of civil unrest in Southport on young people's interactions with the police. The item concluded assurances of the college's strong relationships with local police, with collaborative work undertaken in restorative and preventative work.

Item 12: Resolved – The Committee resolved to accept the assurances provided by the report, noting the reduction in formal interventions.

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13 - Internal Audit of Equality & Diversity

The Dir. Learning, Support and Inclusion summarised the outcome of the internal audit of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Members commended the outcome, which provided substantial assurance, the highest possible rating, with no high, medium, or low-risk recommendations raised. Members were informed of one minor operational action suggested, which related to the inclusion of the impact assessment date on policies. It was explained that this had been removed recently, as part of an updated policy management process, following incorrect completion of the summary box by staff updating policies and indicating they had done an EDI impact assessment. The Committee noted that this process was now managed by the EDI committee, as the most appropriate and skilled group to effectively review policies to ensure they do not inadvertently have a negative impact on marginalised individuals.

The Dir. Learning, Support and Inclusion highlighted several key strengths identified in the audit, including a fair and inclusive recruitment process, strong training and awareness, robust governance and oversight, strategic use of EDI data, and comprehensive and inclusive policies. The audit concluded that Southport Education Group operates with a strong commitment to fairness, inclusion, and compliance. The Committee expressed their gratitude to the team, highlighting how this positive feedback triangulates internal information and supports their understanding of the College culture. Members discussed and acknowledged the importance of this strong position going into an Ofsted inspection, noting how inspections now have a strong focus on inclusion.

Item 13: Resolved – The Committee resolved to accept the assurances provided by the outcome of the review.

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14 – Policies

The Committee reviewed updates to the Malpractice Policy. The inclusion of AI representation in the policy was discussed, with concerns about the challenges of implementing AI usage guidelines and the potential defensiveness of students when questioned about AI-generated content.

Experiences with AI in student work were shared, noting that while some students admit to using AI, others deny it, with students positively contributing to the discussions, providing details of their own experiences. Students provided details of the approach of their teachers, confirming that appropriate and ethical use is supported where it is permissible, with students asked to ensure they reference AI in their research and check the accuracy.

The importance of disciplinary actions for AI misuse was stressed, discussing the expectation that spotting AI-generated content will become more challenging in the future. The discussion also touched on broader perspectives on AI, recognising its potential benefits, especially for students with dyslexia.

The importance of human input in AI-generated content was emphasised, ensuring that the final work aligns with the organisation's standards. Student governors provided their views on AI usage in a college environment, noting the importance of keeping research sources and the practical aspects of using AI for different tasks. They indicated that although it was becoming normalised for their generation, they remained aware it was not reliable or accurate. Members highlighted the advantage that students were learning new skills of maintaining an audit trail of their research to ensure they can substantiate the originality of their work.

The conversation concluded with reflections on the future of AI in education and the responsibility of educators to embrace AI positively while managing its risks. Members agreed the policy should be presented to the Corporation for approval.

Item 14: Resolved – The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.

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15 - Meeting Reflection

15.1 - Risks Related To Standards

The Committee Chair led the discussion on risks related to standards, specifically in relation to managing quality and the new Ofsted framework. The Committee reflected on the current high-risk rating, agreeing it should remain high, but did not need to be raised further. They clarified that although they felt assured that the team were doing everything possible to mitigate risks and prepare for the inspection, uncertainties remained around the framework, particularly in relation to data analysis, with early indications that there remained concerns over the consistency of approaches, supporting the high risk rating.

Item 15.1: Resolved - The Committee resolved not to recommend any updates to the risks related to the Standards Committee.

15.2 - Items To Be Reported To The Board

The Committee agreed to summarise and contextualise their discussions from the QoE report, providing high level feedback of the progress made, without including the full report.

They proposed that the impact report and student perspectives information should be included and presented to the Board, with the verbal update needing to highlight the positive impact of early interventions around safeguarding, and the outcome of the EDI report. They suggested that the improvements in apprenticeships and destinations also needed to be included as part of the verbal update. Members agreed that ongoing challenges in attendance, maths and English needed to be highlighted, however, the progress also needed to be included.

Item 15.1: Approved - The Committee approved areas to be highlighted to the Corporation at its meeting 24th March 2026.

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16 - Closing Comments

The Chair brought the meeting to a close, noting that the next meeting is scheduled for 16th June at 2.30pm in the Boardroom at Southport College. The Committee expressed their thanks and acknowledged the productive discussions held during the meeting, with the new student governors praised for their confident contributions within their first meeting. The meeting closed at 5.20pm.