

Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held via MS Teams on Wednesday 15th September 2021 at 3pm

Present: Christine Bampton (Committee Chair)
 Mark Aberdein (Independent Governor)
 Michelle Brabner (Principal)
 Anita Holt (Associate Governor)
 Suzanne Knowles
 Kathy Passant (Chair of the Corporation) (From Item 7.2 Onwards)
 Susannah Porter
 Carol Reid (Staff Governor)
 Katy Robinson (Independent Governor)

In Attendance: Lisa Farnhill (Clerk to the Governors)
 Stephen Musa (Asst. Principal Student Experience and Welfare from item 8)
 Jesamine Kelly (Assistant Principal Curriculum & Quality)
 Victoria Wickington (Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning and Quality)

Apologies: Maura Cummins (Deputy Principal)

Absent: Victoria Fenner (Student Governor)

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S.22.01 OPEN AND WELCOME

The Committee Chair opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance. The request for additional reports and the approval given for the late circulation of some papers was contextualised, with members offering support of the decision to ensure timely and accurate information.

S.22.02 ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Deputy Principal, with the Principal providing details of the personal circumstances for the absence. The Clerk informed the Committee that member Kathy Passant would arrive late due to an unexpected delay with an earlier appointment.
 The meeting was confirmed as quorate with the apologies accepted.

Item 1 – Resolved: *Members accepted the apologies as provided above.*

S.22.03 ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Clerk declared an interest in relation to her employment at St Mary's College, as the Clerk to the Board of Governors and as a Governor at St Barnabas Primary School, Darwen.

Item 2 – Noted: *The Committee resolved to note the declaration.*

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S.22.04 ITEM 3: APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR

The Committee Chair confirmed that in line with the TOR and Corporation Standing Orders, the Committee was seeking to appoint a Vice Chair, either in an active capacity, considered as succession planning or remain as supportive role

With no one feeling able to commit to any additional responsibilities at this time, the Chair proposed a deferral of the decision. Members seeking additional information or wishing to put themselves forward were asked to contact the Clerk.

Item 3 – Deferred: *The appointment of a Committee Vice Chair was deferred*

S.22.05 ITEM 4: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 9TH JUNE 2021

The Clerk was thanked for the timely drafting of the minutes, with members indicating that they were accurate and offering their approval.

The Chair invited members to raise any additional matters arising that were not included under item 5 or elsewhere in the agenda, none were raised.

Item 4 - Approved: *The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2021.*

S.22.06 ITEM 5: MATTERS ARISING / ACTIONS SUMMARY

The Clerk summarised the report, highlighting the importance of the action summary in demonstrating the impact of the Committee.

The Committee Chair explained that the ERG had indicated impact was not evident, which on reflection was considered to be related to how impact was documented and communicated, with the Committee annual report clearly addressing this misconception. The Committee Chair highlighted the importance of the strategic impact, reminding the Committee not to stray into operational aspects when setting actions and seeking to make an impact.

Item 5 - Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the report and continue to highlight impact through impact statements and ongoing assessment of its own performance.*

S.22.07 ITEM 6: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

No items within the minutes or on the agenda were considered to be confidential.

Item 6 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to approve the minutes for publication. The Committee confirmed they did not need any items on the agenda to be reviewed confidentially.*

ITEM 7 OUTCOMES FOR 2020/21

S.22.08 Item 7.1 – FE Outcomes

The AP Quality and Performance summarised the circulated report on behalf of the Deputy Principal, proposing that the impact of two periods of lockdown had been partly responsible for the decline in 16-18 outcomes.

Positive trends were highlighted and commended; with those declining noted as being subject to heightened scrutiny and offered support. Members noted

the detrimental impact on lower level learners, with the Committee informed that these learners were used to varied assessment methods and enhanced practical support, therefore disproportionately affected by the Pandemic.

Members asked how the results compared nationally, and were advised that this had not been made available, with the only comparison available is against the colleges own pre-COVID-19 data.

The Committee discussed in detail the detrimental impact of digital poverty and engagement issues for adult learners, with engagement, access and retention issues compounded for those working in the healthcare sector. Plans were outlined to minimise future issues, to include a modified process for laptop loans to maximise the impact of the additional resources.

In discussing the outcomes, members challenged the use of 'strength' instead of improving where high grades were 50% and asked for clarity around the decline in sub diplomas. Following discussion, it was agreed that increased monitoring of Sub Diplomas was necessary, and this should be reported to the Committee as part of the curriculum update.

Deputy
Principal

Members were assured by considerable efforts to ensure students were supported into the new academic year, with an action plan in place to review progress across the first six weeks to ensure students were studying at the correct level.

Concern was expressed over the delay in the publication of adult learners outcomes, with the Committee assured that work was completed with relevant staff continuing to pursue this on behalf of the learners.

Members indicated that the foundation learning and functional skills results did not highlight issues for particular cohorts, asking for a more detailed breakdown. The Committee were advised of the continued use of examination assessment for functional skills, which had been a barrier for many students, in particular the adult learners in terms of attendance and attainment. The Committee were also informed of a condition of funding changing the structure of the courses, resulting in more students sitting a GCSE, with a smaller cohort also impacting the data.

Deputy
Principal

Members concluded by asking for their complements to be passed on to the Deputy Principal for the concise and comprehensive report and results summaries, whilst indicating that the MIS generated data was confusing and repetitive, suggesting that this did not need to be included in future circulations.

Deputy
Principal

S.22.09

Item 7.1 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to maintain continued oversight of actions for improvement. The Committee acknowledges improved reporting, requesting additional cohort data to be included in future analysis.*

Item 7.2 – GCSE outcomes

The AP Quality and Performance summarised the report, advising the Committee that it covered English and maths GCSE and Functional Skills, noting a decline across all cohorts. A reluctance to sit exams, and only limited circumstances that could be used in mitigation was considered to have resulted in the decline for functional skills outcomes.

Plans to address the decline were summarised, with actions spanning the curriculum, focusing on raising awareness and embedding learning to bridge gaps in learning that would support all learners, even for those not resitting.

Members highlighted the need to continue to develop strategies and resources for online working due to expected further isolations and risk of further lockdowns.

The decline was noted as disappointing with retention and engagement an issue, noting these would be addressed under item 8. In discussing the decline, including the impact of the Pandemic and other influences, members noted that issues present ahead of the Pandemic were not yet fully addressed.

Members were assured that this would be a priority area, subject to a deep dive, additional support and increased monitoring. Members insisted that they needed to be updated on the progress and outcomes of the monitoring.

Particular concern for the digital resource gap for adult learners and plans to address this earlier in the year were outlined. Members reiterated the need to develop strategies and resources for online working. Members were assured of training for students in accessing and using the VLE's, however, it was suggested that the accessibility of resources should be audited and staff trained in developing more accessible resources. It was suggested that online learning delivered well could enhance learning experiences, with associate member Anita Holt offering to share her experiences with relevant staff.

Anita Holt
and AP
T&L

The Item concluded with the Committee advised of AOC data that highlighted Southport College achievement rates for those remaining on the programme and engaging compared favourably nationally. This reiterated earlier concerns over retention and engagement as the source of the low outcomes. Actions to address this included pastoral support, acknowledging the unseen mental barrier for some in attending.

Item 7.1 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the information, whilst committing to maintaining oversight of actions for improvement, including facilitating support to improve the quality and accessibility of remote learning*

Item 8.3: HE Outcomes

S.22.10

The AP Quality and Performance informed the Committee of the challenges faced in obtaining timely results data from the awarding universities. The deferred submissions and later than usual Boards were considered as rational for the delay, noting that although students expect results the university deadline for publication remained as December.

The Committee commended positive outcomes, noting those enrolled onto full time HE courses performed above sector benchmarks, a credible achievement, noting this had been achieved with a cohort dominated by mature students. Members acknowledged the lower than anticipated outcomes in for Health and Social Care and PGCE Cert Ed, noting particular concern due to the large cohort for the PGCE Ed Cert. Reassurances were given over actions for improvement, including a new management structure.

Members were informed of the complexities relating to incomplete placements, with students completing a third year not included in student numbers, with clarification given over the terminology for interrupted, deferred, referred and not achieved.

Item 7.3 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the outcomes, acknowledging the commitment to improvements.*

S.22.11 Item 8: English And Maths Attendance Improvement Plan

The contents of the plan was summarised, with complements for the detailed considerations, centring around a set of principals to underpin improvements in 2021/22. Members agreed that it was comprehensive, stating close monitoring, internally and strategically from a governance perspective would ensure swift action could be taken if the measures were not as effective as anticipated, asking that best practice be shared internally.

Members considered the impact of higher pass rates for GCSE's and the impact of lower cohorts for the coming year, with concerns over differing circumstances and inconsistency in approaches by schools. In response, the Principal outlined plans for the controlled and planned use of the tuition fund for maximum impact, whilst informing the Committee of the use of the Progress Tutor role for additional pastoral support, highlighted as key for easing the transition from school to college learning.

Members reiterated the need for close monitoring asking for their thanks to be passed onto the Deputy Principal for her work in drafting the Improvement Plan.

Item 8 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the plan and support the ongoing monitoring of its effectiveness.*

S.22.12 Item 9: Learner voice

The Chair provided the rationale for bringing forward the report, to ensure timely consideration of information and the challenge and oversight of subsequent actions.

The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality highlighted the key points from the circulated report, informing the Committee that low scores had been interrogated. This revealed underlying dissatisfaction with the variety of teaching and learning for lessons delivered online.

Subsequent actions included Deep Dives for areas of concern, a tailored approach to training needs and the drafting of action plans to drive improvement.

Members commended the targeted approach for action through the use of triangulated data, however, suggested that questions should be revised to reflect the different circumstances surrounding teaching and learning in a Pandemic. Members questioned the response rate, requesting additional comparative data in future reports, noting that the pandemic will have impacted responses for the last year.

Whilst acknowledging the impact of the Pandemic on wellbeing and engagement, members highlighted how online learning can increase variety and enhance engagement through the use of tools available through MS Teams, apps and other platforms.

Options for improvement, including forums for sharing best practice were discussed, suggesting a review of lesson plans including adaptations for online delivery. The Committee were assured that actions were in place to support staff with new technology including app driven learning and interactive whiteboards being explored, with training to support their use.

**AP T,L &
Q**

Minute No.	Minutes	Action
	<p>Members reiterated the need for comparative information, recalling some low scoring areas were those that had previously scored unfavourably, indicating this required monitoring. Members insisted comparative data needed to be available for scrutiny and knitted into observations and performance management measures. Members were assured that processes were being put in place to incorporate this into the support measures being introduced.</p>	AP T,L & Q
	<p>Members asked if type of learner was considered when reviewing responses, with the Assistant Principal, Teaching, Learning and Quality confirming they were looked at from an equality and diversity perspective to ensure the provision was accessible to all. Members noted in omitting the type of learner in terms of the provision undertaken, considering whether they were on site full time, part time or on occasion as an apprentice, could impact on their level of satisfaction and connection to the college. Members proposed it was essential to understand which learners are satisfied, dissatisfied or even responding, to enable the College to begin to make targeted improvements.</p>	AP T,L & Q
	<p><u>Item 9 – Resolved:</u> <i>The Committee resolved to accept the report subject to more contextualised questioning and detailed data for subsequent reports, incorporating learner type and historical response data.</i></p>	
S.22.13	<p>ITEM 10: ENROLMENT REPORT</p>	
	<p>The AP Student Experience and Welfare provided a summary of the report, as well as an update on the movement in enrolment numbers since the report was drafted, indicating that enrolment was now close to the financial target, however, not yet achieving the Transaction Unit (TU) target of 1818.</p>	
	<p>Members were reminded that the TU target was ambitious, did not take into account the impact of the Pandemic or under-recruitment in previous years. Members celebrated the success of the recruitment campaigns, resulting in an increase of 80-90 enrolments against the same point in the previous year and increased market share of school leavers, which now exceeded 50%.</p>	
	<p>The Committee received a summary of the market share changes for each school with most having increased, however, noting that Meols Cop had declined for the third consecutive year, with actions for addressing this provided.</p>	
	<p>Members discussed in detail concerns over the impact and risks of working towards dual recruitment targets, indicating that previous reports detailing progress against revised targets and not the TU targets had misled Governors, stating the only targets members should be focusing on were those detailed in the Strategic Plan, which aligned with the TU targets.</p>	
	<p>The Principal summarised the process that had led to multiple revised targets being streamlined into a financial target, which would maintain good financial health, and the TU targets, set at the point of merger. It was noted that the targets set ahead of merger had never been revisited or revised by the ESFA, with the context of the Pandemic providing solid rationale for revision, however, this could not be considered without dialogue with and permission from the ESFA.</p>	Principal
	<p>Members concluded by thanking the AP Student Experience and Welfare for the transparent reporting that clearly indicated the progress against the dual targets. Members asked for it to be formally recorded how pleased they were with the enrolment results, noting a marked improvement, closing the gap against the TU target and meeting the financial target. They highlighted the</p>	

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benefits of the increased market share, acknowledging that students often enrolled at the same college as their friends, with an expectation that the increased market share would have a snowball effect on future recruitment.

Item 10 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the report with the Principal considering exploring the possibility of revising the TU targets with the ESFA.*

ITEM 11: Safeguarding

S.22.14 Item 11.1: Annual Safeguarding Report 2020/21

The report was summarised, contextualising the increased interventions to support mental health and wellbeing, noting the national increase in issues due to the impact of the Pandemic.

Plans to support students in the coming year to include additional exam preparation support were outlined, which included the appointment of a new welfare officer, early help and self-care through a pastoral programme.

Members were informed of the strategies discussed in the Safeguarding Committee to ensure all staff read KCSIE 2021, including increased accessibility by recording it as an audio file, improved tracking and adding completion to staff appraisals.

Members commended the safeguarding team for the efforts throughout the last year and indicated they felt reassured by the planned initiatives that continued to prioritise student wellbeing.

The Committee agreed that the report accurately summarised the termly information as presented to the Committee throughout the year, detailing how the college had met its statutory objectives in relation to safeguarding, agreeing to recommend the report to the Corporation as essential information.

Item 11.1 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the annual safeguarding report to the Corporation as essential information.*

S.22.15 Item 11.2: Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

The AP The Student Experience and Welfare was thanked for highlighting changes, which reflected the updated KCSIE guidance.

Members asked for minor updates, to clarify the wording around recording information on ProMonitor, which was currently misleading, indicating that governors would add information to ProMonitor, noting they did not have access to the system. Members clarified that the Clerk’s extension would be redirected if unanswered, and asked for additional email contact details to be included.

Members offered their support of the policy subject to the minor changes as detailed, agreeing to recommend it to the Corporation for approval.

Item 11.2 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure to the Corporation for approval, subject to updated wording relating to governors not able to add information to ProMonitor and the inclusion of additional contact details for the Clerk.*

Minute No.	Minutes	Action
S.22.16	<p>Item 11.3: Consider the options relating to Part 1 of KCSIE The Committee were in agreement with the recommendation of the DSL and Safeguarding Link Governor, to maintain a single system where safeguarding was prioritised by all staff. The Committee rejected the proposal within the updated KCSIE that allowed support staff to read a condensed version of Part A of KCSIE to ensure all staff know that they maintain an equal responsibility for safeguarding.</p> <p><i>Item 11.3 – Resolved:</i> <i>The Committee resolved to recommend to the Corporation that all Staff continue to read the full Part A of KCSIE.</i></p>	
S.22.17	<p>ITEM 12: POLICIES FOR APPROVAL</p> <p>Item 12.1 Admissions Policy The AP Curriculum and Planning summarised the changes, noted as minimal to include updates to the roles and responsibilities for staff. The Committee thanked the AP Curriculum and Planning for highlighting the changes and agreed to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.</p>	
S.22.18	<p>Item 12.2 HE Admissions Policy The nominal changes were summarised, with the Committee informed of necessary changes relating to the domicile status of applicants, reassuring the Committee that the information was captured during pre-course enquiries and at enrolment. The Committee thanked the AP Curriculum and Planning for highlighting the changes and agreed to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.</p>	
S.22.19	<p>Item 12.3 Freedom of Speech Policy The AP Curriculum and Planning informed the Committee that minimal revisions had been made to the policy, however, indicated that more substantial changes would be necessary in HE that may also cascade to FE relating to free speech following the passing of a Parliamentary Bill in the summer. The AP Curriculum and Planning confirmed that the implementation of the Bill would be closely monitored to ensure that the policy remained compliant with any new requirements. The Committee thanked the AP Curriculum and Planning for highlighting the changes and agreed to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.</p> <p><i>Item 12 - Resolved:</i> <i>The Committee resolved to recommend the Admissions Policy, HE Admissions Policy and Freedom of Speech Policy to the Corporation for approval.</i></p>	
S.22.20	<p>ITEM 13: COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION The Clerk summarised the report, explaining that the format had been revised following a point raised in the ERG, which indicated that the impact of the Committee was not evident. The Clerk confirmed the way in which actions had been minuted and the previous format of the annual self-evaluation failed to demonstrate the impact, which were clearly identifiable from the new report. The Clerk summarised the key action points, which included ensuring the terminology of the Terms of Reference reflected those of policies used in College, changing ‘Learner Involvement Strategy’ to ‘Student Engagement Strategy’ and providing continued feedback on effectiveness through end of meeting surveys. The Clerk highlighted two points from the Terms of Reference that required further information to demonstrate full compliance, suggesting the Student</p>	

Engagement Strategy should be reviewed annually along with the provision of external assurance reports to supplement the timely verbal updates of the outcomes to provide external assurance of the quality of provision. Members approved the report as an accurate reflection of its performance in 2020/2021 and committed undertaking the actions to facilitate ongoing improvements.

Item 13 - Approved: The Committee resolved to approve the self-evaluation as drafted by the Clerk, committing to undertaking the actions to maintain improvements in the oversight of quality.

S.22.21

ITEM 14: MEETING IMPACT

The Clerk reminded the Committee that it had been proposed at the meeting on 9th June that the Committee should reflect at the end of each meeting on the impact of their actions, clarifying that this was in addition to the circulation of a confidential feedback survey.

Each member was asked to contribute their thoughts, with members having a detailed discussion and concluding the following actions would have impact on the performance of the College as a result of the Committee meeting:

- The Committee members constructively challenged throughout the meeting, with College SLT supported in the delivery of improvements
- The Committee had reviewed the way targets are reported to ensure the Corporation is not misled in the reporting of enrolment data
- The Committee would receive results data in a more user friendly and less repetitive format to ensure focus in the areas requiring improvement
- The Committee would receive additional detail from student voice surveys, to include a breakdown in student type and comparative data from previous reports to highlight improvement and decline, resulting in targeted improvement and support
- The College would continue to prioritise the importance of safeguarding with all staff reading KCSIE Part One
- Timely annual approval of policies to embed a culture of continued compliance
- The Committee has requested increased monitoring of English and maths as well as short courses/A Level equivalents to monitor their success more strategically
- Improved presentation of information and executive summaries, ensuring meeting presentations and discussions are not a repetition of report data, with focused questions and robust challenge with more time for suggestions and debate

The Clerk summarised the impact of the Committee as being felt through the embedding of a culture of high expectations, evidenced through consistent challenge and scrutiny.

It was clarified that members expect information to be detailed, analytical and evidence based to underpin strategies for improvement. The Committee's focus ensures timely information and actions, with a student centred approach, offering additional time to share their expertise and best practice.

Whilst challenging, members remain consistent with their support of the work of staff at all levels, commending staff where improvements are evident.

Item 14 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to acknowledge the continued impact of their actions on improving the quality of education.

S.22.22

ITEM 15: ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE CORPORATION

The Clerk summarised the resolutions and recommendations to be presented to the Corporation as follows:

- All outcomes papers should be recommended to the Corporation as essential information
- Enrolment information would be provided, noting that this would be delivered as an updated standalone item
- Safeguarding Policy (for approval) including the recommendation regarding reading KCSIE part A
- Safeguarding Annual Report to include a verbal summary from the AP Student Experience and Welfare, presented as essential information
- Admissions Policy (for approval)
- HE Admissions Policy (for approval)
- Freedom of Speech (for approval)
- Terms of Reference (one line only – update learner involvement to student engagement)

It was agreed that in addition to circulating the reports as outlined above, the Committee should also provide a verbal update to the Corporation on:

- The Committee's debate and discussion relating to enrolment including the need to reconsider the ongoing use of dual targets
- Receipt of the English and maths attendance strategy and request for ongoing monitoring reports
- The review of the student feedback report including the committee's request for additional breakdowns in terms of learner type and comparative information
- The outcomes of the committee's self-evaluation and commitment to maintaining impact

S.22.23 Item 16: Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting

The Chair thanked staff for their efforts in presenting reports and for having taken on board the feedback of the Committee and Corporation to deliver detailed yet concise information.

As a note of additional business, a member asked staff to consider responding to the consultation on degree apprenticeships which was set to close the following day.

The Chair thanked members for their time and attention, highlighting how much had been covered, commending members and staff for bringing the meeting to a close on time whilst still providing sufficient detail and challenge to each item.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as December 1st.

The meeting ended at 16.45pm.