Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held onsite* in the Conference room on Wednesday 22nd June at 3pm

Present:	Christine Bampton (Committee Chair)
	Mark Aberdein (Independent Governor) (from item 6.3)
	Margaret Boneham (Independent Governor)
	Michelle Brabner (Principal)
	Anita Holt (Associate Governor)
	Susannah Porter (Independent Governor) (from item 6.2)

In Attendance:	Maura Cummins (Deputy Principal)
	Lisa Farnhill (Clerk to the Corporation)
	Vickie Hayes (Head Of Learning Support And Inclusion) (item 9 only)
	Stephen Musa (Asst. Principal Student Experience and Welfare)
	Victoria Wickington (Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning and Quality)

Apologies:	Heather Austin (Student Governor)
	Katy Robinson (Independent Governor)
	Catherine Durr (Staff Governor)

Absent:

Minute No.	Minutes	Action

S.22.72 OPEN AND WELCOME

The Committee Chair opened the meeting, welcoming everyone to what was anticipated to be the last fully online meeting of the Committee.

S.22.73 ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from Student Governor Heather Austin and independent member Katy Robinson were provided and accepted by the Committee. Members noted that member Mark Aberdein would need to join shortly after the start. During the meeting apologies for Staff Governor Catherine Durr were received and accepted.

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

S.22.74 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.

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

S.22.75 **ITEM 3: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF MARCH 9th, 2022**

Members were given the opportunity to raise any points of inaccuracy from minutes of the meeting held on March 9th.

The Chair invited members to raise any additional matters not included under item 4 or elsewhere in the agenda, with none raised, the minutes were approved.

Item 3 - Approved: The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2022.

S.22.76 **ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING / ACTIONS SUMMARY**

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

The Principal confirmed the proposal to reconsider the targets was under review by the ESFA, with early indications suggesting this was a possibility. Members were informed it would be subject to a process of drafting and approval, and further information had been expected in March. The follow up was not received, potentially due to the changes at the ESFA, with Michelle committing to follow this up.

The Assistant Principal, Student Experience and Welfare fed back in relation to the internal audit on the student journey review, noting the Committee's request to review the new policy ahead of implementation. Members were advised that following a consultation process, staff concluded the policy needed only minor revisions, with no requirement for this to be re-written. Members confirmed there would be no requirement to present the policy to the Committee, thanking the Assistant Principal for undertaking the consultation.

The Clerk summarised the remaining actions, confirming the absence management policy will include clear definitions of authorised and unauthorised absence, the strategy for improving student responses would be covered under item 6.3, student feedback, and other issues related to data for inclusion in reports, has been noted for action at the next review point.

The Chair highlighted key points from the previous meeting reflection feedback, added as an annex to the actions. Members agreed this should continue in 2022/23, with the Chair urging all members and attendees to ensure they complete the short survey.

Item 4 - Resolved: The Committee noted the update, resolving to continue with meeting review surveys.

S.22.77 **ITEM 5: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

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

The Chair reminded members and attendees that the discussions within the meeting were considered confidential until the minutes are approved and published.

Item 5 – 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 6 QUALITY ISSUES

S.22.78 **Item 6.1: Curriculum Report**

The Deputy Principal provided the Committee with an update on the restructure, detailing the roles and responsibilities, including how this would be split across the campuses. In response to a question, members were assured HE was included and embedded into the structure, noting an external appointment to one of the positions had extensive experience of HE quality improvement.

Members were assured by the support structures and clear remit, and were assured this supported the expectation that areas for improvements would be actioned immediately.

Item 6.1 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the update.

S.22.79 **Item 6.2: Quality Development Plan Update**

Headline data was summarised for the Committee, noting predicted achievement rates of 88.39%, an increase of 5.65%. Members attention was drawn to issues with some online courses, impacting overall retention and subsequent achievement rates.

Challenges in relation to apprenticeship provision were detailed, with actions to address improvements with communication and documentation outlined.

Members expressed their concern over the issues raised, including the reputational damage to the College, and were reassured buy the College response. Members accepted the need for senior staff to be more operationally involved to drive and oversee the improvements.

Members asked for the consequences of failing to improve to be outlined to the departments, with the Committee advised that this had been done through one to one meetings, reviewing apprentices on a line by lone basis and through the initiation of performance management processes where necessary. Members asked if HE areas were embedded

Members commended the team for systems improvements, noting the advantages of 'OneFile'.

Members thanked the Deputy Principal for the work undertaken and the clear concise report, with it hoped the impact of the extensive work would be seen in the new year.

Item 6.2 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the update.

S.22.80 **Item 6.3: Learner Voice Semester 2**

The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality was thanked for the clear presentation of the outcomes, with questions and comments invited.

Members noted their disappointment for the low participation rates, thanking the Assistant Principal for the work towards improving completion, however, concluded there needed to be clear lines of accountability to ensure return rates improved without the need for senior level involvement at an operational level. Members insisted that this needed to be positioned as a compliance measure, with a need for honest and representative feedback from students to be built into the SAR.

Assurances were given that this would be addressed through compliance league tables, as well as course data packs provided to support course and curriculum reviews, with feedback embedded as a compliance measure and noted as an area for improvement where necessary.

The item concluded with the Committee insisting that improvements were expected at the next review point, with accountability and consequences should this not be achieved.

Item 6.3 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update, subject to improvements in completion rates, though accountability and consequences.*

S.22.81   **Item 6.4: Quality Strategy 2022/2023**
Members were provided with a summary of changes, noting a change to the way each curriculum area will be graded, with areas of high and low performance in each faculty to be identified. Members were given details of accountability measures and processes, driven by achievement boards at strategic points throughout the year.

Members proposed this would focus staff on progress, highlighting previous student feedback that students did not know where they were up to, adding that they hoped this would feed into focused discussions with students. Members offered to support the Achievement Boards and the SAR validation process, asking for invitations to be sent to governors.

AP T, L & Q

Members commended the focus on progress from a student's starting point and use of destinations as a measure of success and thanked the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality for the updated strategy.

Item 6.4 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the Strategy to the Corporation for approval.*

ITEM 7: SAFEGUARDING

S.22.82   **Item 7.1: Safeguarding Update**
The AP Student Experience and Welfare advised the Committee that it had been a busy term, summarising activities and issues, whilst outlining plans to undertake the Sefton Safeguarding self-assessment process to support the drafting of the annual report.

Members were assured by staff training and the scrutiny of the data around interventions, analysed to provide more meaningful support for students based on academic or conduct related support needs, with timely challenges in relation to behaviour.

Members agreed that actions and interventions needed to have more impact, noting a high number with low impact, and commended the proposed improvements to academic processes, reiterating the need for student feedback to further support improvements.

Item 7.1 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the report.*

S.22.83   **Item 7.2: Safeguarding Audit Report**
The Chair congratulated the AP Student Experience and Welfare on the excellent outcome of the review, confirming the external validation provided assurance to the Board on a key aspect of statutory responsibility for the Governing Board.
It was noted that not only was the outcome positive, but that the review itself was also thorough, with the auditors commended for their broad and all-encompassing approach.
The Clerk agreed to circulate the report to other members.

Clerk

Item 7.2 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the report with the Clerk circulating the report for information purposes.

S.22.84   **ITEM 8: RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING UPDATE**

The AP Student Experience and Welfare summarised the data, assuring members that although offers were down against the same point in the previous year at the time of writing, this had since improved with the data now mirroring the same point for week 42. Members noted that this year, students had attended onsite meetings, indicating a greater commitment to the college, with the expectation that this would create higher conversion rates.

Members commended the work of the marketing team in consistently improving applications and discussed in detail the purpose and content of the report. Members asked for additional information in relation to the potential cohort, including market share and expected enrolment and day 42 numbers based on previous conversion rates.

AP SE &W

In response to a question, members were advised that the cohort for 2022/23 was similar to that of 2021/22, with all schools oversubscribed and at capacity, and concluded the additional information would support and focus the marketing team as well as providing a more informative picture to member of the Board.

Item 8 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the report.

S.22.85   **ITEM 9 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**
Item 9.1: EDI Update

The Head of Student Support and Inclusion summarised the termly update, with monitoring activities continuing alongside work to reduce achievement gaps, with summer exam outcomes necessary to report on the impact of the support.

Efforts continued in supporting the disclosure of learning disabilities, with work to reduce negative connotations around the term 'learning support', with the area rebranded as the Learning Hub, with access encouraged to reduce achievement gaps.

In-college activities and awareness campaigns were summarised with the Head of Student Support thanked for the update.

Item 9.1 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the report.

S.22.86   **9.2 Annual Overview of EDI to include PSED Reporting**

The Head of Student Support and Inclusion provided the Committee with assurances around compliance with statutory duties in relation to Public Sector Equality Duty through the publication of the "Working for You" booklet.

Members were informed of plans to change the format to facilitate more timely updates in 2022/23, allowing the Committee or Edi Link Governor to review the information ahead of publication.

Item 9.2 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the report and recommend it to the Corporation as essential information.

S.22.87   **9.3 EDI Plans and Objectives for 2022/2023**

The Head of Student Support and Inclusion explained that the objectives were due for review and would receive a full overhaul in the next academic

year. The process would ensure stakeholder feedback would be built into the formation of the new long-term objectives and governors would be asked to approve the objectives and targets, with it anticipated this would be available for approval in June 2023.

Members agreed that the process and impact of information to the Corporation needed a review, with concise meaningful information that would facilitate impact at a strategic level, with less operational detail.
Head of SS
Members asked for the objectives to be more measurable, with the long term targets supported by annual success measures.

Members asked for the next report to include results and data to evidence the impact of activities, with the objectives and next annual report to be presented in June, confirming only two reports were required, with termly updates no longer necessary.
Head of SS

Item 9. 3– Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update, subject to a full review and approval of the EDI objectives in 2022/23. Members asked for these to be measurable long-term objectives, supported by annual measures of success.*

ITEM 10: REPORTING AGAINST STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ACTION PLANS

S.22.88 **Item 10.1: SO1 - To provide excellent teaching, learning and support**
The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality was thanked for the clear and honest update.
Members supported the assessment of areas for ongoing improvement, and accepted assurances over how these will be addressed with an emphasis on supporting improved practice.
Members noted the impact of deep dives was evident at data capture points for all but one area, as discussed within the progress against the quality improvement plan.
Members asked for clarification around the use of Alps and asked for training to be provided.
AP T, L & Q
In response to a question about the number of apprenticeships past their end date, assurances were given over the process for working through them on a line by line basis, withdrawing some where necessary and putting in place action plans and targets for those still outstanding, with clear accountability and staff being expected to own the data for their area.

S.22.89 **Item 10.2: SO2 - To meet the needs of the community and contribute to the local and national economy by offering a carefully considered diverse range of professional, technical, and academic programmes**
The Deputy Principal confirmed that the majority targets had been met, outlining plans to build on successes in 2021/2022 in 2022/2023.

S.22.90 **Item 10.3: SO3 - 10.3: To facilitate students and apprentices achieving the highest possible outcomes to progress on to ambitious destinations**
The AP Student Experience, Welfare and Support confirmed all targets had been met or were on target for completion, with particular attention drawn to progress towards achieving the Gatsby benchmarks.

Item 10 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to accept the update.*

S.22.91 **ITEM 11: RISKS RELATED TO STANDARDS**

The Deputy Principal summarised the risks, confirming the risk relating to the 16-19 tuition fund had been downgraded from high to medium following the recruitment of a progress coach, which would ensure the thresholds would be met.

In response to a question around the new 40-hour funding, the Committee were informed that the guidance relating to use funding of the funding was not specific, with plans to provide additional support around maths and English for students from specific post codes and low achievement rates.

It was clarified that the previous fund, as outlined in the risk register, had been to support with post-Pandemic learning gaps, with specific criteria for use. Members were advised this was continuing for a further year, with a clear plan for delivery against the allocation, whilst confirming the new 40 hours funding had fewer restrictions for use.

*Item 11 – **Resolved:** The Committee resolved to support the risk ratings and mitigations in place.*

ITEM 12: POLICIES

S.22.92 **Item 12.1: Admissions Policy**

The Committee supported the changes as summarised, resolving to recommend it to the Corporation for approval.

*Item 12.1 – **Resolved:** The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.*

S.22.93 **Item 12.2: Freedom of Speech Policy**

The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality clarified the changes were minimal, mainly relating to roles and responsibilities. Members noted they had anticipated a significant update as a result of the Freedom of Speech Bill as discussed at approval in 2021. The Clerk confirmed that the Bill had not yet been passed, with the Assistant Principal reassuring the Committee that the policy would be fully revised once the Bill receives Royal Ascent.

*Item 12.2 – **Resolved:** The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.*

S.22.94 **Item 12.3: Complaints Policy**

The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality summarised the changes, confirming the complaints report would be presented in September once the full year had ended, with the updated process summarised for members.

*Item 12.3 – **Resolved:** The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval*

S.22.95 **Item 12.4: HE Admissions Policy**

The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality explained that the policy would not be reviewed as recruitment was on hold subject to a review of the HE offer. Members accepted the proposal to maintain the previous policy on the website, with a view to embedding HE admissions into the FE policy to streamline information for staff and students once the offer and entry criteria had been worked through.

*Item 12.4 – **Resolved:** The Committee resolved to accept the position in relation to HE recruitment.*

S.22.96 **ITEM 13: HIGHER EDUCATION**

13.1   HE Quality Development Plan 2021-2022 Update
Members noted a number of unmet targets and were informed in detail of the process for reviewing the HE offer. Members agreed that the local HE market was competitive, featuring several high quality local HEI's, with a need for FE based HE provision to be focused on the needs of the local community, filling local skills gaps, without trying to compete in a saturated market.

Members were given details of plans to improve staff utilisation through the mapping of units across different provision. They commended this approach, not only from a resource perspective, but through the provision of an improved student experience.

A member recommended continuing to review the Apprenticeship Institute website as new higher-level apprenticeships were being developed that could add value to the new offer. There was also an offer of resources from a piece of research about issues around learning and good practice, with it agreed this would be shared.

Item 13.1 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the update.

S.22.97

13.2   HE Student Protection Plan
The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality highlighted the changes, which reflected updated dates and roles.

Item 13.2 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to recommend the plan to the Corporation for approval.

S.22.98

ITEM 14: PLANNING AND REFLECTING
Item 14.1 Standards Committee Terms Of Reference
The Clerk confirmed the updates were minimal in terms of accountability, with two points merged to reduce repetition of similar information, with the main change relating to membership requirements, with it suggested these are reduced to reflect the overall lower membership of the Corporation.

Members supported the reduction from 7 to 6 with quorum adjusted from 5 to 4 maintaining the requirement for 3 independents. It was clarified that 'independent' would include associates, only excluding staff and student governors as well as the Principal. Member Margaret Boneham was thanked for supporting the Committee in the final term to ensure minimum membership requirements had been met.

Members were actively encouraged to consider the Committee Chair vacancy that would arise as a result of the Committee Chair stepping back to reduce the number of additional roles she held, with the current Chair offering support to any interested party.

Item 14.1 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to recommend the updates to the Corporation.

S.22.99

Item 14.2: Quality Committee Work Plan 22-23
The Committee reviewed the workplan and calendar of reports and were supportive of efforts to reduce paperwork. Members considered whether oversight would be impacted, concluding link governors would ensure between meeting interaction was maintained and could report issues should there be any to ensure this can be added to the next agenda for review.

Members requested a number of amendments, including for outcomes and targets to be included in one report. Members insisted that once agreed, the schedule should form the basis for the agendas, without changes in reporting schedules and timings.

A member suggested maintaining the opportunity to attend meetings virtually to maintain higher levels of attendance and maximise member impact.

The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality agreed to share key dates with the Committee Chair and Clerk to ensure data would align with meeting dates ahead of final approval for the calendar at the meeting of the Corporation.

AP T, L & Q

Item 14.1 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to approve the work plan.

S.22.100   Item 14.3: Quality Committee Self-Assessment
The Committee reviewed the options and resolved to continue to maintain post-meeting surveys as well as analysis of the Committee's work against its delegated authority as laid out within its terms of reference.

Item 14.1 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to continue with ongoing Committee performance reviews with an annual assessment of performance against its terms of reference.

S.22.101   ITEM 15: ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE CORPORATION
The Clerk summarised the resolutions and recommendations to be presented to the Corporation as follows:

For information:
- a summary highlighting the information around curriculum developments and challenge in relation to student feedback

For approval:
- the Quality Strategy 2022/23
- HE Student Protection Plan
- Committee Terms of Reference Updates
- The following policies:
  - Admissions Policy 2023/24
  - Freedom Of Speech Policy
  - Complaints Policy

For assurance
- the EDI report to include PSED and commitment to fully review the objectives in 22/23
- Safeguarding Audit

Members considered the benefits of recommending for information the marketing update, with the Principal confirming this would be included within the Principal's report.

Item 15 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to recommend the information as outlined above to the Board of Governors.

S.22.102   ITEM 16: CLOSING COMMENTS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair thanked everyone for their time and support throughout the year, again requesting anyone interested in the position as Committee Chair to contact the Chair or Clerk for more information or an informal discussion.

Item 16 – Noted:

The meeting ended at 5.20pm.