

Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held via MS Teams on Wednesday 9th June 2021 at 3pm

Present: Christine Bampton (Committee Chair)
Michelle Brabner (Principal)
Anita Holt (Associate Governor)
Suzanne Knowles
Kathy Passant (Chair of the Corporation)
Susannah Porter
Carol Reid (Staff Governor)

In Attendance: Mark Aberdein (Independent Governor)
Lisa Farnhill (Clerk to the Governors)
Nicola Hurst (Director of Teaching & Learning – for item 6.3)
Stephen Musa (Asst. Principal Student Experience and Welfare from item 8)
Jesamine Kelly (Assistant Principal Curriculum & Quality)
Maura Cummins (Deputy Principal)

Apologies: Katy Robinson

Absent: Loange De Silva (Student Governor)
Victoria Fenner (Student Governor)
Dyese Bruce (Student Governor)

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The Committee Chair opened the meeting by thanking members and attendees for giving up their time to support the work of the Committee.

S.21.48 Item 1: Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katy Robinson these were accepted by the Committee.

The Clerk to the Governors confirmed the meeting was quorate.

Item 1 - Noted

S.21.49 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.21.50 Item 3: Minutes of the Previous Meeting of 10th March 2021

The minutes were reviewed for accuracy and content, with members agreeing that they were an accurate record of the meeting held on March 10th. The Chair invited members to raise any additional matters arising that were not included under item 4 or elsewhere in the agenda, none were raised. The Committee offered their unanimous approval of the minutes.

Item 3 - Approved: The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2021.

S.21.51 Item 4: Matters Arising / Actions Summary

The Clerk presented the Actions Summary and confirmed members had commented on the improvements seen in the content and quality of the reports following the training by the Principal, with further guidance now provided on ensuring that the executive summaries were a concise reflection of key points, to include analysis and actions over no more than two sides.

Item 4 - Noted: The Committee resolved to accept the report.

S.21.52 Item 5: Confidential Business

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

Item 5 - Noted

ITEM 6: QUALITY ISSUES

S.21.53 Item 6.1 - Curriculum Report

The Deputy Principal provided the Committee with a detailed summary of the content of the circulated report, highlighting the following key points:

- Having developed new distance learning with 300 students enrolled, the Adult Education Budget is on target and within the LCR tolerance with a three-year curriculum plan drawn up, which included new content for September.
- The LCR lifetime Guarantee qualification criteria was summarised along with plans for new T-Levels in 2022/23 and 2023/24
- The feedback from the ESFA meeting was provided, noting the positive progress made.
- A collaborative bid with MCA was being prepared which incorporated green energy and a number of small qualifications for employers, to support with training and upskilling staff
- The marketing update was summarised, including plans, subject to government guidance, for face to face events
- The TAG process was outlined, noting it had been labour intensive for those involved
- The progress against targets as outlined in the report were noted as a 'worst case scenario', providing details of criticism by the link governor for the colour coding of red for those close to target, with

actions in place to bring the grades in line with targets and improve the pass rates.

- Plans for more in depth data as discussed previously with the Committee Chair were outlined

The Committee Chair confirmed reiterated their comments in relation to the missed targets and the colour coding, where targets were close to being achieved. The Chair noted how reassured they had been by the actions being undertaken to improve outcomes.

A member raised a concern over the attendance for GCSE English and maths lessons, acknowledging the difficult circumstances of the last year, however, pointing out that this was an ongoing issue that has still not been resolved and had further declined. The member urged for a robust and responsive reaction that took into consideration and overcame the challenges presented.

The Deputy Principal advised the Committee of a restructure, with leads identified and proposals completed, including a review of timetables and resources, noting consideration of best practice from other colleges that would need to be adapted to work at Southport as a smaller College. It was noted as a sector wide issue and the Committee was advised that schemes of work had been reviewed and that further actions would be put in place with a paper to be presented at the next Committee meeting

**Deputy
Principal**

A member highlighted this as a key weakness which was an issue with leadership and management with it noted that considerable information had been provided that had not been indicated in the report, with the committee welcoming the offer of the paper on the actions and impact.

An attendee outlined details of further opportunities around 3 new green apprenticeships recently published and noted a focus on timely and **asked** if the College had moved on to standards for apprenticeships or were still working on frameworks. The Deputy Principal advised that most were now on standards, however, there were a few still on framework, with considerable work to do for some strands, highlighting areas of strengths and some for improvement. The Principal noted that timely was not a measure in the standard and would not be looked at by OFSTED, however, considered it wise to have timely element to prevent the delay of completion. The Principal confirmed it provided a way of managing completion regardless of the measure, noting it still had an impact on funding, therefore would be maintained as an internal measure. The Deputy Principal added that the measure also supported curriculum planning, particularly with end point assessment preparations.

A member raised concern over retention in sociology, noting that this had been an issue in the past, **asking** if there had been improvement and subsequent decline or if the issue had been ongoing. The Deputy Principal indicated that there had been improvement from 69% in 19/20 to 83% for year 2 in 20/21 and 90% in year 1 and this was being closely monitored. The Committee were advised that any areas presenting concerns would be included within the SAR and subject to Deep Dive reviews as part of the Teaching and Learning Strategy, with the Principal indicating it was right to raise concern, offering further reassurance that actions put in place were having impact with some taking time to impact on the data.

A member asked if the standardisation of Deep Dives had been actioned, with the Deputy Principal reassuring the Committee that all information was

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	<p>triangulated to include student and staff input, work scrutiny and observations, with areas revisited to see the actions and impact.</p> <p><u>The member clarified</u> that the concerns were not related to triangulation of information, but over the framework and consistency necessary to be effective, rather than the depth of the scrutiny, requiring actions and goals that were specific.</p> <p><u>Item 6.1 –Noted:</u> <i>Members noted the details of the report, noting an action to receive a report on actions and impact on the attendance for maths and English.</i></p>	
S.21.54	<p>Item 6.2: Quality Development Plan Update</p> <p>The Deputy Principal summarised the report, noting the thorough ‘root and branch’ revisions being undertaken.</p> <p>The Committee were informed that as part of the restructure, 5 departments had been merged into 4 faculties, with Head of Faculties replacing Head of Department roles.</p> <p><u>A member noted</u> the number of changes in staff roles and titles, asking for a copy of the management structure and acronyms to be provided to Board members.</p> <p>The Principal advised the Committee that this would be included in the Principals Report to the Corporation in July, with a full update on the restructure process to ensure members were fully apprised of the latest staffing changes within the College. It was noted that the structure chart would summarise the courses each faculty head was responsible for. The Principal confirmed this would be included as a standalone document that could be saved for future reference.</p>	Principal
	<p><u>Item 6.2 – Noted:</u> <i>Members noted the details of the report and the action for an updated staffing structure chart to be provided to the Corporation.</i></p>	
S.21.55	<p>Item 6.3: Learner voice</p> <p>The AP Teaching and Learning summarised the content of the report and the associated annexed documents. The Committee were advised that students had not wanted to attend online forum events, with a move to focus on written feedback, removing the requirement for attendance, with this resulting in an increase in responses with 40% more courses responding in February than in November.</p> <p>The Committee were advised that the process would be fully revised in the coming year, which would include looking at the student council and the student governor processes as well as developing the Progress Tutor’s role in the facilitation of feedback.</p> <p>The continued positivity around the knowledge and support of staff was not underestimated or taken for granted, with new strengths noted around varied course content, delivery and assessment. The strength around safety was well received as a recognition that the COVID-19 safety measures were effective and well communicated.</p> <p>The AP Teaching and Learning summarised the areas for development and actions taken to address them, with some related to the pandemic, including the limited catering service, and lack of seating, as well as missing opportunities for practical application of subjects.</p>	

The seven complaints received were summarised with actions outlined, noting a commitment to undertake a full review of access arrangements in the coming year.

The Committee were informed that the end of year survey remained live and would follow the same format, with the full cycle, methods, impact and effectiveness including the frequency and focus of the surveys to be reviewed for the coming year

A member asked if the feedback from students provided any insight into the attendance issues for the English and maths or retention in sociology. The AP Teaching and Learning explained that level of information came more from the deep dive process, with no specific issues relating to teaching and learning having been evident from the subject specific focus groups. The Committee were notified that time tabling issues had been raised as part of the process and this had been addressed in semester 2. The deep dive process was explained in full, highlighting the student voice component with plans to strengthen that element.

A member asked if the students selected to provide and the questions asked would be effective in gaining the insight necessary for these specific subject concerns, noting that those not attending would be unlikely to have concerns over the quality of lessons that they had not been to. **The member considered** that the deep dive process, if questioning those present, would still not provide the information necessary, with a separate strategy and specific targeted questioning for these learners to ascertain the root cause and barriers.

The Principal agreed that the college needed to be tactical and summarised best practice examples that could be trialled to ascertain the level of control and influence the college can exert over any issues raised for non-attendance to remove any barriers or perceptions of barriers and that this would be followed up.

A member indicated that alternative ways to ascertain specific student feedback could be fed back as part of the English and maths strategy. The Deputy Principal provided further examples seen elsewhere with all staff involved in the collation of feedback through learning talk surveys that resulted in immediate actions and this would be considered as part of the strategy for 21/22.

Item 6.3 - Noted: *The Committee resolved to note the information presented.*

S.21.56 Item 7: Quality strategy

The AP Quality and Performance informed the Committee that the Strategy had been reviewed and revised, incorporating the changes in the SLT structure and reflecting discussions from planning meetings and quality development plan actions from the previous year.

It was noted that the focus on oversight would be key, with plans to revise the quality of teaching, evaluation of the reflective practitioner programme, revised quality procedures for apprenticeships and the introduction of quality dashboards from course to top level.

The Committee were informed that there were plans in place to improve mechanisms for one to one support and advice in all student contexts, including the provision of careers guidance.

The AP Quality and Performance added that a review of the effectiveness and impact of the student voice process including the intent of the student

council and process for appointing a student governor would be reviewed, with the consideration for introducing learning talks, and ad-hoc opportunities to obtain quick answers and immediate impact.

The Committee were notified that the Progress Tutor role would be revised and a mental health strategy would be implemented to promote resilience and wellbeing and reduce the impact of the pandemic and support retention and attendance.

The AP Quality and Performance was thanked for the update and the inclusion of highlights in the report to draw attention to changes, with the Committee offering their support of the strategy.

Item 7 – Approved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the Quality Strategy to the Corporation for approval.*

S.21.57 Item 8: Safeguarding Report

The AP Student Experience and Welfare highlighted the increase in mental health concerns with a significant number of interventions in place to support students, with the Matrix report having highlighted the strength of the safeguarding provision.

It was noted that despite the high number of concerns, early intervention, regular communications and new ways of interacting with students alongside the promotion of support, has led to less escalated cases. The number accessing counselling had increased, although not to the level expected due to the success of early intervention.

The AP Student Experience and Welfare outlined the plans and rationale for a certified mental health programme for all students.

A member asked about the summer service and the status of employment for the mental health support worker. The AP Student Experience and Welfare confirmed that the post would be externally funded and serve a number of schools and colleges. In outlining the summer service, it was noted that a full service was not possible, but there would be cover through a safeguarding officer across the summer period.

Concerns over the completion rate for some mandatory elements of the safeguarding training, including the reading of the KSIE were discussed. Failure to pass on information from new staff and staff who have not had hours were considered to be making up the 20% that were recorded as having failed to complete the activity.

A member asked if a time limit or penalty could be imposed relating to the mandatory safeguarding requirements. The AP Student Experience and Welfare, indicated that staff without hours did not always access their emails making communication difficult. **A member insisted** that it needed to be the responsibility of the employee in order to obtain hours to 'check in' with the employer to ensure that essential communications were received and training completed in a timely way, noting the seriousness of the requirement. The member added that the time taken by senior staff in chasing completion could be better spent, with the annual requirement resulting in a continual issue as delayed completion then impacts on the completion timing for the next return.

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A member asked if the decline in attendance for vulnerable groups, in particular, LAC and young carers, was linked to poor attendance in English and maths, indicating that management needed to be seen to be taking action to improve this. The AP Student Experience and Welfare advised the Committee that a case review process for vulnerable learners was due to be introduced. As Chair, the AP Student Experience would facilitate and oversee the process, which was outlined to include pastoral, safeguarding and academic support and intervention.

Item 8 - Noted: The Committee resolved to note the details of the report.

S.21.58 Item 9: Equality and Diversity

The AP Teaching and Learning was thanked for producing the report at short notice, advising that the meeting schedule for the coming year would better take account of any internal meeting and reporting points. The AP Teaching and Learning advised the committee that the pandemic and lockdown had resulted in a delay in holding the meeting, insisting that the normal cycle of business for the Standards Committee would fit in with the Equality and Diversity Committee meeting structure.

The AP Teaching and Learning summarised the report, including the key actions taken as a result of the committee meetings, which prioritised progress with specific work undertaken to reduce achievement gaps at KGV. Other progress included improvements in inclusive blended learning and the achievement of kite marks.

Training as a result of committee discussions was summarised, with inclusive learning training delivered to assessors then cascaded to all staff. Sessions looked at embedding inclusivity, gathering information regarding barriers to ensure students benefit from a joined up approach.

It was noted that the close monitoring of widening participation and free school meals groups resulted in improved retention for A level learners, whilst the introduction of analysis of UCAS applications by EDIM resulted in increased promotion of HE to male students.

The AP Teaching and Learning concluded the summary by informing the Committee that the website accessibility was confirmed to be compliant against accessibility guidance, however, the committee and college were committed to reviewing this further to establish if further improvements could be made.

A member asked if students would be involved in this review, with the AP Teaching and Learning confirming that this would be a collaborative process involving the learners.

Item 9 - Noted: The Committee resolved to note and accept the report.

S.21.59 Item 10: Complaints Policy

The AP Quality and Performance reminded the Committee that the policy had undergone a full revision in the previous year, with only minor amendments to be included for approval in this academic year. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the introduction of appendix 4, setting out the College's appeals procedure for Teacher Assessed Grades Summer 2021.

The Committee were notified that as an academic appeal, it does not form part of the complaints policy, however, is likely to trigger a complaint. Members were notified that for the CAG's, parents or students would access the information in the event of an appeal through the complaints process, therefore this was being pre-empted with the insertion of this appendix which would only be included for the coming 12 months.

A member asked how many complaints had been received relating to CAGs in the previous year, with the Committee advised that ahead of the government decision relating to grade changes, it had been 55, which was reduced to seven for GCSE's and one in respect of A level's. It was noted that the opportunity to sit mock exams and the communication of the evidence used to inform grades should ensure students are better informed and reduce the likelihood of appeals. **A member asked** if the information was available on the college website and if the complaints received in the previous year had been directly from students or by their parents. The AP Quality and Performance confirmed the information was on the website, advising that most appeals had been initiated by parents although some had come directly from students.

The Committee were informed that the Centre Policy had been submitted, noting the innovative and different ways students were able to be assessed. The AP Teaching and Learning advised that students had been invited to submit details of mitigating factors, with parents and students having been communicated with throughout the process to ensure a full understanding of the process. It was clarified that although students do not know their final grades they do know the assessments to be included as evidence to shape their final outcome.

A member asked if staff were fully aware of the procedures with the AP Teaching and Learning confirming that there had been training on the provision of grades and the full process, noting that the awarding bodies had introduced a sampling process to provide further quality assurance.

With no further questions, the Committee were asked confirm that they were happy to present the policy to the corporation for approval. His was offered unanimously.

Item 10 – Approved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.*

Item 11: HIGHER EDUCATION

S.21.60

Item 11.1 HE Quality Development Plan

The AP Quality and Performance informed the Committee that since the last update in March, curriculum leaders had met and reviewed causes for concern and improvements. Lower applications for males in HE was noted an issue nationally, with college specific rates close to the national benchmark.

The National Student Survey had been issued whilst lockdown measures were in place, noting that whilst the response rate had increased, it was difficult to support and monitor completion remotely and had been lower than anticipated.

The committee were informed that the student to student marketing strategy had been postponed due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Retention actions were outlined including a new curriculum leader and team for the PGCE and Certificate in Education courses.

The Committee was provided with assured that all OfS deadlines had been met throughout the pandemic.

An attendee noted that there was no mention of marketing apprenticeships to employers. The AP Quality and Performance confirmed that this was a strand of the marketing strategy, with Southport as one of the few colleges in the region that offers teacher education apprenticeships, with students coming from across the north to access this provision, highlighting the need for this to be high quality provision and noting the opportunity this presents.

Item 11.1 – Noted: *The Committee resolved to note the detail of the update.*

S.21.61 **Item 11.2: HE Quality Strategy**

The AP Quality and Performance informed the Committee that the QAA preferred for the HE strategy to be maintained separately from the FE strategy, however, they were reviewed together, noting some common threads, although some were specific to HE.

The AP Quality and Performance highlighted the importance of building on the developments that had resulted from the pandemic, noting the highest ever attendance rates.

The focus around the KPI's was highlighted, with the intention to review course offers, including the intent of a programme, and the progression it offers, whilst supporting and developing staff.

The AP Quality and Performance invited questions, with **a member commenting** that there had been significant changes in staffing and strategies and they were looking forward to seeing the impact and improvements as a result of the developments.

The Committee Chair thanked the AP Quality and Performance for highlighting the changes and asked the Committee for their support in recommending the Strategy to the Corporation for approval. this was offered unanimously.

Item 11.2 – Approved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the Strategy to the Corporation for approval.*

S.21.62 **Item 12: Terms Of Reference**

The Clerk explained the rationale for the changes, which included changes to wording in relation to membership and the removal of the two year term of office in alignment with the role of the Governance Committees in reviewing and recommending Committee membership changes.

With no further questions or comments, the Committee offered their support for the changes.

Item 12 – Approved: *The Committee resolved to recommend the updated Terms of Reference to the Corporation for approval.*

S.21.63 **Item 13: Standards Committee Work Plan**

The Committee Chair advised that the September meeting would be a short focused meeting to ensure the timely evaluation of outcomes and to establish indicative enrolment figures. The Committee were notified that papers would be kept to a minimum to ensure focus remains on these two key elements, however, policies required to be in place for 2021/22 would be included to enable recommendation to the Corporation at the first full meeting of the year.

The Committee Chair confirmed that the marketing oversight needed to be included as a measure of the quality of the provision and the curriculum report would include all relevant attendance, retention and departmental data including the deep dive outcomes.

The Committee discussed the most suitable approach for reviewing the Equality and Diversity Committee information, agreeing that the minutes did not need to be presented to the Standards Committee, however, noted that an annual report prevented any in year progress updates. The value of the different perspective of the Equality and Diversity Committee in reviewing attendance and retention was highlighted with it agreed that a summary of the Committee meetings along with their actions and impact would be presented to each meeting of the Standards Committee.

Item 13 – Approved: *Subject to the inclusion of regular Equality and Diversity updates, the annual work plan of the Committee was approved.*

S.21.64

Item 14: Committee Self-Evaluation

The Clerk asked the Committee to consider the most effective way to evaluate the performance of the Committee, summarising the previous report where the minutes were analysed against the terms of reference by the clerk with the report presented to and approved by the Committee, with limited opportunity for interactive and constructive analysis or improvement.

The benefits of this approach were considered to include a factual overview of the committee's delegated authority and confirmation that the committee had acted within that and met all of its obligations as expected of it by the Corporation. It was agreed that this was still important but needed to be supplemented with continual detailed evaluation of the impact of the committee on the quality of education.

A member suggested that each meeting could end with an evaluative summary of the impact of the Committee on teaching and learning, allowing the learner impact to be captured throughout the year to see what has led to improved practice and outcomes.

Clerk

The Committee agreed from September, each meeting should be followed up with a short survey asking members opinions on what has gone well and what could have been improved upon and to gather views and actions for improvement throughout the year.

Examples were discussed **with a member commenting** that the pace of this meeting had been good, with a lot covered and contributions from most members.

Item 14 – Approved: *The Committee approved a formal process for self-evaluation. This will include the annual assessment by, the clerk, in meeting impact assessment and the opportunity for members to feedback on effectiveness after each meeting.*

Item 15: Items To Be Reported To The Corporation

The Clerk informed the Committee that in addition to the presentation of the minutes, the work of the Committee had been divided into two sections, those for approval and those for recommended review, providing details of those included on the draft Corporation agenda under each section.

A member noted the value in the feedback from the E&D committee, with **another raising concern** over the volume of information included within the Corporation packs.

The Committee agreed that the annex 'You Said, We Did' provided a useful summary that was only one additional page.

It was agreed that the following Standards Committee items would be included in the Corporation agenda as needing approval:

- Quality Strategy 2021/22
- Complaints Policy 2021/22
- HE Quality Strategy 2021/22
- Standards Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee agreed the following items should be highlighted to the Corporation for information:

- Learner Feedback ('You Said We Did')

Item 15 – Resolved: *The Committee resolved to report the items as detailed above to the Corporation in July.*

S.21.66 Item 16: Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting

The Chair extended her gratitude to all the staff who had supported the collation of the reports provided to the Committee, thanking all attendees for their contributions. The Clerk informed the Committee that dates for the coming academic year remained tentative and would be circulated following Corporation approval.

The meeting ended at 16.30pm.