

**GOVERNORS CURRICULUM STANDARDS & QUALITY
COMMITTEE (STUDENTS AND STAFF EXPERIENCE)**

**Tuesday 2nd February 2021, 5.30pm
Online via ZOOM conference platform**

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Ms P Rowe, Co-opted Governor, Chair
Mrs B Meier, Foundation Governor, Vice-Chair (from 5.43pm)
Ms K Foan, Associate Principal, Curriculum & Quality
Mr D Freeman, Foundation Governor (audio only)
Ms S Jones, Co-opted Governor
Mr D Navarro, Foundation Governor
Mr N Sheta, Foundation Governor (Chair of Governors)
Mrs K Taylor, Foundation Governor (6.08pm – 7pm)
Mr G Thompson, Principal
Mr R Vianello, Foundation Governor

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr M Belfourd, Foundation Governor (Vice-Chair of Governors)
Mrs E Lewis, Clerk to the Governors
Ms M G Zingale, Head of Modern Foreign Languages & Team Leader Travel & Tourism (BTEC Level 3) for items 1 to 5 inclusive

The agenda had been circulated to all governors. All governors (except staff) had been invited to attend.

The meeting was opened by Ms Rowe at 5.33pm. It was quorate throughout and, for the most part, all participants could hear, or see and hear, each other.

1. **Opening Prayer:** Offered by Mr Thompson
2. **Apologies:** Apologies for absence were not applicable. Mrs Taylor had sent apologies for late arrival and early departure from the meeting.
3. **Declarations of Interests:** There were none.
4. **Membership:**
 - 4.1. **Welcome:** Mr Sheta, Mr Freeman, Mr Navarro were welcomed as new members of the committee. Mr Belfourd was welcomed as a governor observer.
 - 4.2. **Stepped down:** Ms Rowe acknowledged with appreciation the contribution made by Mr Ebele, who had stepped down from the committee and Mr Garvey who had retired.
5. **Ms Maria Grazia Zingale, Head of Modern Foreign Languages A Level and Team Leader, Travel & Tourism (BTEC level 3).** Ms Zingale's presentation of the work of both departments was supported by PowerPoint slides and demonstrations of online programmes and apps used by the students and teachers. (The slides were shared with the committee after the meeting.)
Ms Zingale introduced herself. She had been teaching at SFX for 11 years.
Ms Zingale explained the result achieved in both departments in 2020 presented as retention rate, achievement rate, pass rate and high grades. It was noted that there was 100% rate in each subject. Ms Zingale analysed the variation in results and explained why the retention rates differed between the languages and the strategies in place to improve those that were lower. Travel and Tourism outcomes were agreed to be impressive.
Ms Zingale introduced the strengths of both departments which had delivered excellent results and positive feedback from Learner Voice. She described successful delivery of online lessons and

confident use of Google Suite and other Digital “smartwork” Applications (Flipgrid, Edpuzzle, Jamboard, Flippitynet, Mentimeter, Padlet) which she demonstrated.

Ms Zingale presented the improvement targets that both departments were working towards taken from the SAR and QuIP and evaluated the extra activities which students enjoyed in languages and how they were being adapted to remote / online experiences.

Ms Zingale concluded that students in both departments were not missing out on any learning opportunities despite the restrictions on face to face teachings and she commended the range of digital resources available and the support given to the teaching team to use them.

Ms Zingale was thanked for her inspiring presentation and for giving governors some experience of the teaching that was going on and demonstrating how the digital innovation strategy was being put into practice. Mrs Meier said she was hugely impressed by the various digital / online techniques Ms Zingale and her team were employing to keep content creative, sharp and interesting.

Ms Rowe had noted retention was an area for improvement and asked Ms Zingale how the staff in the department were addressing that target. Ms Zingale outlined the range of tailored strategies that were being used. Ms Foan explained how flexibility had been introduced in the package of language qualifications guiding students away from the heavy load of a four A Level equivalent to a more manageable, achievable three A-Level equivalent which would retain learners. Ms Zingale said that students were being encouraged to continue to attend lessons by motivated teachers who were creating variety and embracing the digital resources and iPad strategy to its full advantage.

Ms Zingale acknowledged her own journey from initial reservation about the digital innovation strategy towards fully embracing it and experimenting with the teaching and learning applications available.

Ms Zingale left the meeting at 6.20pm

Ms Rowe invited the committee to introduce themselves.

6. **Minutes of previous meeting, 13th October 2020:** The minutes, included in the papers for the meeting and previously circulated 26th November 2020, were agreed to be a true and accurate record to be signed in due course.
 - 6.1. **Matters Arising:** There were none that would not be covered by the agenda
 - 6.2. **Actions to be reviewed:** Ms Rowe noted that the Protocol for Link Governors was to be reviewed. Mr Thompson confirmed this was being updated.
ACTION: Mrs Lewis / Mr Thompson
7. **The impact of Covid-19:** To inform this item the committee had received the “SFX Remote Learning Policy”; “Remote Education provision FAQs (for parents / carers)” and “2021 Assessment Consultations” in the papers. Mr Thompson also referred to the summary of what had been put in place in the college that he had sent to governors by email on 7th January 2021. He reported the numbers of staff and students who had tested positive for Covid-19 and advised that some staff had been sent home earlier in the day due to the emergence of a new variant of the virus in the area where they live requiring surge testing and isolation precautions.

Mr Thompson said that the college had been well prepared for the transition to remote learning and working on 6th January 2021. He said that all but ten students had the technology to access online lessons and materials. He described how staff briefings, student tutorials and welfare provision were being maintained as normally as possible remotely and that there was weekly contact with tutees. He explained that the planned BTEC examinations had gone ahead on 6th January but taking account of the feelings of students and views of staff, the remainder had been cancelled.

Mr Thompson said that a skeleton staff of between 15 and 20 were attending college each day

including the Additional Learning Support team who were working with 20 to 25 high need (those with an EHCP) and vulnerable learners. Mr Thompson commended their work. He described how lateral flow tests were being offered and administered for staff and the logistical challenges of putting a testing plan in place had been overcome ready for when students return to college.

Mr Thompson confirmed that the college had submitted a response to the DfE consultation which had closed the previous Friday about how GCSE, AS and A Level grades should be awarded in summer 2021, based on the views of staff and that governors had been invited to put in a response too.

Mr Thompson described the activities and ways in which the wellbeing of staff and students was being made a priority and how they were being encouraged to take part.

Mr Navarro commented on how much the use of technology in teaching and learning had developed and asked Mr Thompson what would be continued if there was a return to college now. Mr Thompson said that the hardware and programmes Ms Zingale had described and the techniques that had developed would continue to be valuable in teaching and learning in a traditional classroom setting. He said that the motivation, engagement and confidence using them had increased through familiarity and focused CPD.

Mr Navarro asked how what is being learned when working online could be shown or evidenced. Ms Foan responded by describing the range of ways in which this was being done including checking of assignments on Google Classroom; lesson observations; end of term assessments and staff markbooks.

Ms Rowe commented that teaching online was very intense. Mr Thompson emphasised the importance he placed on making sure staff were working safely and appropriately with adequate facilities from home and a policy was in place to underpin this. Some staff would deliver remote lessons from college if their home circumstances were not conducive.

Mr Thompson had used the DfE “review your remote education provisions framework¹” and reported that the college remote teaching and learning achieved good scores against that as a checklist.

It was noted that a Student experience survey had been sent out the previous week which carried an incentive to encourage responses. Ms Foan reported a response rate of 25% so far and outlined the range and purpose of the questions which were exploring whether the students had adequate resources; their experience of the teaching and learning and their welfare / wellbeing. Analysis of the feedback was looking for emerging patterns. Overall there was an improvement over the first lockdown.

Mr Thompson reported that 130 laptops and about 30 iPads had been issued to students and that the college was being allocated 267 more under the “Get help with technology” scheme. He added that Vodafone had offered 30gb data sim cards free to students for 90 days and the college had secured and were distributing 100 of those. He was, therefore, confident that the students had been well supported with access to hardware and Wi-Fi connectivity.

Mr Thompson discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the key points of the consultation into assessments in summer 2021 and the aspects that were of concern to the college as set out in his paper “2021 Assessment Consultations”.

8. **Quality Improvement:** Mr Thompson / Ms Foan

8.1. **QUIP – progress to date:** Ms Foan introduced the Quality Improvement Plan 2020 – 21 which had been included in the papers for the meeting updated to show the RAG² rated progress and impact of each risk area identified for improvement from the Self-Assessment Report. The

¹ Published January 2021, not statutory.

² Red (not started), Amber (underway / ongoing), Green (completed / taken place)

QuIP was mapped against the Key Priority areas of the Education Inspection Framework (EIF). The committee noted progress and impact towards the milestone and targets. It was expected that most of the milestones would be reached by the end of the year.

[Mrs Taylor left the meeting during this item at 7pm]

Mrs Meier was impressed by the attention to the plan during the disruption of the operating in a lockdown. Ms Foan explained how the milestones and targets in teaching and learning requiring adaptation and sharing of good practice remained relevant as were improvements in student attendance and wellbeing.

Ms Foan emphasised that the QuIP was a working quality tracker against which leaders and governors could monitor progress towards improvement.

- 8.2. **Governor link scheme:** Ms Rowe reviewed the purpose of the scheme and emphasised commitment to it. She outlined the expectations of being a link governor which started by building rapport with a head of department and getting to know the staff and students in the college context. Ms Jones had described her connection with the Health & Social Care department, Mrs Meier with the English Department and Ms Rowe with the Business department. Mr Vianello had confirmed his interest in forming a link with Politics. Ms Rowe invited Mr Freeman and Mr Navarro to choose a link of interest to their skill / experience. Mr Freeman volunteered Physics / Science. Mr Navarro would revert to Mrs Lewis in due course.

Ms Rowe proposed that link governors should create an email or similar group to share good practice and experience and as a means of catching up on the scheme.

ACTION: Link governors to confirm that non-sfx email addresses³ can be exchanged for this purpose.

ACTION: Mr Thompson to review and update the protocol to incorporate covid safe procedures.

- 8.3. **Student focus forums:** It was agreed to set up some mixed groups of students from across subject areas and years in the next half term. Suggested topics which governors and SLT would be interested in talking about included lockdown learning, how the survey went down with students, mental health, how the students are feeling about summer assessments, pastoral care and wellbeing. Ms Jones agreed that the wellbeing element was really important for young people right now. Previous forum discussions with students had been highly valued. Ms Rowe recalled that students had appreciated being listened to.

[Mr Vianello left the meeting at 7.16pm]

It was suggested that an outline agenda might be helpful to students to put them at ease since some of them might be shy about the situation. Ms Foan said that whilst students wouldn't be "hand picked" to take part they would need to be confident about talking to governors.

ACTION: Mr Thompson / Ms Foan to propose some suitable times in the next half term for a forum to be held remotely and suggest what the focus could be.

[Ms Jones left the meeting at 7.30pm]

- 8.4. **London Sixth Form Partnership:** Ms Foan reported that the Associate Principals had met three times mainly focusing on Covid and lockdown. There was currently no partnership co-ordinator. Subject groups were being set up to liaise across the partnership to provide the valuable sharing of best practice. Ms Rowe said it was good that the partnership was being developed again.

³ All governors have an SFX email address which could be used appropriately for college / governor business without compromising privacy

8.5. **OfSTED Annual Report 2019 – 2020:** had been included in the papers for the meeting for information.

9. **Curriculum Development:**

9.1. **T Level development:** This would be a standing item. Mr Thompson advised how the college was moving forward to run the first T level course In Business Administration from September 2022 with a planned cohort of 20 students and expansion in subsequent years. He explained the government view of a binary system of either A Levels or T levels for post-16 education in the future and how this would conflict with the current suite of popular BTEC and CTEC qualifications which had served SFX students incredibly well. He stressed, however, that T Levels were not going away and the college would have to move forward particularly as T Levels were attracting significant funding. He announced that the latest round of match funded T Level capital funding had opened and an application was being drafted to bid for monies to revisit the modular-build plan that was originally intended to be an art block and construct a T level business hub instead.

9.2. **Post-16 education consultation SFCA⁴ response:** The response had been included in the papers for information. Mr Thompson explained the gist of the response which rehearsed an objection to the dual binary route and advanced the argument in favour of retaining applied general qualifications. He said the response provided an interesting idea of what the future landscape might look like.

10. **Risk Management:** Governors considered whether any new risks or modifications had emerged to existing risks on the register.

Mr Navarro asked Mr Thompson whether the increase in student enrolments was a V shaped recovery or a W shaped recovery. Mr Thompson said difficulty predicting this was the rationale for student recruitment being ranked number one on the risk register. He said there had been a predicted climb out from a demographic dip but the population in London had decreased due to the pandemic and since Brexit. It was hoped that it would be a V shaped recovery delivering a continuous uplift in numbers. Applications for 2021 entry were being monitored and, Mr Thompson reported, even without an in-person open day were ahead of the previous two years though not as high as this year (2020 entry). It was acknowledged that an effective marketing strategy was essential.

[Mr Freeman left the meeting at 7.28pm]

Mrs Meier noted the opening of a new Harris Academy sixth form centre in September 2021. Mr Thompson said it was still not clear whether this was going to rationalise other Harris sixth from places in the area or provide additional places although it was expected to grow.

11. **Any Other Business:** There was none.

12. **Review of meeting:** It was acknowledged that there had been much to get through that the committee wanted to hear about, not least Ms Zingale's talk. Mrs Meier noted that some members had left after the estimated finish time had passed and wondered whether the timing of the agenda needed to be more ruthlessly adhered to. Members discussed how the meeting could be made more efficient. There was an expressed expectation that governors read papers in advance and came to meetings prepared with questions (or send them in advance as invited). The central purpose of the committee to focus on the quality of provision and progress towards improvement targets should be clear from the agendas and the terms of reference (due for review at the next meeting).

ACTION: Mrs Lewis to review agenda format and terms of reference.

13. **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 19th May 2021

The meeting closed at 7.35pm

⁴ Sixth Form Colleges Association

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____