

**Tuesday 14th November 2023, 5.30pm
remote online meeting**

Present:

Somayina Ebele – Chair of the Committee
Dave Navarro
Chukwuweta Uraih

In attendance:

Clare Baskott, Clerk to the Governing Body
Margaret Searle, Director of Finance and Resources
Graham Thompson, Principal

Minutes

The meeting was quorate throughout and all participants could see and hear each other.

Item 1 Opening Prayer

The Principal led the meeting in prayer at 5:31pm.
The Chair of the Committee thanked all present for attending.

Item 2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sarah Medicoff.
The Clerk explained that under the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference, members of the Finance and Resources Committee were not permitted to also be members of the Audit Committee. As a result, Sarah Medicoff had stepped down from the Audit Committee with immediate effect.

Item 3 Declarations of interest

None.

Item 4 Minutes of meeting held on 16th May 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2023, were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and will be moved to the approved minutes file for electronic signature. **Action: Clerk/Chair.**

Item 5 Matters arising:

- a. The Whistleblowing Policy had been approved by the by the Full Governing Body on 4th July 2023.
- b. The Letter of engagement with Buzzacott had been forwarded to the Chair of the Committee by email following the meeting.

- c. Enrolment issues had been added to the agenda for this meeting.
- d. The Board Assurance Framework had been added to the agenda for the Full Governing Board meeting on 4th July 2023.
- e. The Clerk had emailed the meeting dates for 2023/24 to the Committee.
- f. Teacher Recruitment had been added to the Risk Register.

Item 7 Regularity Audit Self-Assessment 2022-23

This Regularity Audit Self-Assessment 2022-23 was approved following consultation with the Audit Committee members, by email on 5th October 2023, and subsequently signed by Nader Sheta (Chair of Governors) and Graham Thompson (Principal).

The Committee noted the approved Regularity Audit Self-Assessment 2022-23.

Item 8 Internal Audit: College Action Report: Director of Finance and Resources

The Internal Audit College Action Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Director of Finance and Resources gave an update and explained that there had not been an internal audit since the last Audit Committee meeting.

The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the report gave an update on the previous audits.

Governor question: Could you update us on Action 3: “Without IPS/IDS, it increases the risk that the network may be left vulnerable to cyber-attacks and that cyber-attacks are not detected, which could lead to data breaches and data loss.”

Response: This relates to cyber security, we will consult with IT about the issue.

Governor question: It is good to see that the actions have been implemented and closed, what stage are we now at?

Response: It is partially completed; we need to get an external engineer on site to complete the work.

Governor question: It is noted that we have a date for January 2024 for the Network Configuration, has this date been confirmed and what vulnerabilities will we be exposed to until then?

Response: It is worth noting that we have been reaccredited for Cyber Essentials, which provides assurance. The next stage is to move on to Cyber Essentials Plus. We need to programme the engineer to complete the work.

Item 9 Risk Management:

Item 9.1 To receive the updated risk register and policy

Item 9.2 Principal to present verbal report on key active and emerging risks.

The Principal gave an update and invited questions. The highest risks were student recruitment, funding and finance and the quality of education. IT and the risk of cyber-attack had also been added to the Risk Register following a recent cyber-attack of the college sector.

The Principal explained that one of the college’s feeder schools in Stockwell had recently opened a sixth form without consultation and this could impact on the college in the future. The Harris Clapham MAT had also opened a sixth form locally. Both provisions were risks to the college, in terms of competition.

The Principal explained that the Teacher's and support staff cost of living award had been agreed at 6.5%, and it was a significant increase on previous years. The college had budgeted for 6% and colleges had been awarded additional funding rate to cover the increase this year. However, this will impact future budgets if similar pay increases were to continue. From April 2024, colleges will also be required to pay additional contributions to Teacher's pensions.

The Principal explained that at the recent Curriculum Standards and Quality meeting the Chair of the Committee had shared concerns about the recruitment and retention of good quality teaching staff. This risk was also featured under HR and employment on the Risk Register.

Governor question: Under the section 9: HR, of the Senior Leaders which of these posts stipulate that the post holder must be a Catholic?

Response: The Principal and the Associate Principal for Ethos and Welfare are the two protected senior posts which require the post holders to be practicing Catholics.

A discussion took place about the importance of succession planning for the senior roles in the college.

Governor response: Can you tell us more about the Taking Teaching Further programme?

Response: It is a programme designed to bring people with industry experience into teaching. The programmes are aligned with the skills agenda and T Levels, to deliver industry level skills. We have recruited one member of staff through the programme. The college receives government funding under the programme.

Governor question: What initiatives are there to recruit and retain employees and do you currently offer any retention allowances?

Response: The initiatives for retention are around what we do around well-being. Staff are informed about the support and professional development they will receive. Other settings offer retention allowances, particularly for areas where recruitment is difficult e.g. Economics, Maths and Science.

A discussion took place about the possibility of offering retention allowances in the future.

Governor question: How effective are retention initiatives?

Response: There is no central place to measure the success of offering incentives. We would need to contact each individual institution. This is something that we can investigate.

The Committee thanked the Principal for the update.

Item 10 Internal Audit: Assessment of internal control/audit assignments

Item 11 Specification for Internal Audit 2023/24, reports to include:

Funding Assurance

Key Financial Controls

The Director of Finance and Resources gave an overview of the internal control and audit assignments and explained that it was a working document.

The Committee noted the reports.

Governor question: Any there any areas which you would like to highlight?

Response: Once we get the audits underway, we will update with the areas covered and the committee can also agree other areas they would like to cover.

The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the financial handbook was due to be published in March2024 which will outline more about future audit requirements.

Item 12 Board Assurance Framework

The Committee confirmed that the Board Assurance Framework, reviewed in Summer 2023 and approved by the Governing Board, provided assurance in conjunction with the IAS assignments for end of year financial statements 2022-23.

It was agreed that the Clerk to the Governing Body will update the Board Assurance Framework throughout the year.

Item 13 Audit Committee Annual Report to Governors for 2022-

It was agreed that the Clerk will update the Audit Committee Annual Report to Governors for 2022-23 and circulate to the Committee for approval and then forward to the FGB for approval. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 14 To receive an update on any enrolment issues and any actions taken to mitigate any issues

The Principal gave a verbal update. The college had exceeded their target, there were currently 1269 students on roll, the target for 2022-23 had been 1250. The college will receive £5.5k funding for each student.

Item 15 Any Other Business

None.

Item 16 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 27th February 2024 at 5:30pm

Item 17 Closing Prayer

The meeting closed at 6:08pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chair of the Committee

Actions:

Action 1: Minutes of meeting held on 16th May 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2023, were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and will be moved to the approved minutes file for electronic signature. **Action: Clerk/Chair.**

Action 2: It was agreed that the Clerk will update the Audit Committee Annual Report to Governors for 2022-23 and circulate to the Committee for approval and then forward to the FGB for approval. **Action: Clerk. Completed.**