

Tuesday 8th October 2024 at 5.30pm
Remote Online Meeting via ZOOM

Present:

Dave Navarro – Foundation Governor/Chair of the Committee
Kate Bainbridge – Foundation Governor
Nader Sheta – Foundation Governor/Chair of Governors
Keni Thomas – Foundation Governor
Graham Thompson - Principal
Gabrielle Williams Hamer – Foundation Governor/Vice Chair of the Committee

In attendance:

Sarah Medicoff – Foundation Governor
Karen Foan (Associate Principal)
Clare Baskott - Clerk to Governors

Apologies:

Chukwuweta Uraih
Michael Belfourd

The meeting was quorate throughout.

All Reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Minutes

Item 1 Opening Prayer

The Principal opened the meeting in prayer at 5:31pm.

Item 2 Election of Chair and Vice Chair for a one-year term of office

Dave Navarro was elected as Chair of the Committee.
Gabrielle Williams Hamer was elected as Vice Chair of the Committee.

Item 3 Apologies:

Apologies were received from Chukwuweta Uraih and Michael Belfourd.

Item 4 Declarations of Interest

The Clerk reminded Governors to update their annual declarations of business and pecuniary interests.
There were no declarations of interest to any items on the agenda.

Item 5 Minutes of previous meeting, Thursday 13th June 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of the

meeting and were approved by the Committee. Clerk to send the link to the Chair of the Committee to electronically sign the minutes. **Action: Clerk/Chair.**

Item 5.1 Matters Arising for this meeting not on the agenda

None.

Item 6 Quality of Provision (improvement and outcomes: Principal/Vice Principal)

Item 6.1 Outcomes 2024 [Results Commentary was circulated to all governors on 17th September 2024]

The Principal and Associate Principal gave an update on the A Level exam results, summer 2024, and reported that the overall achievement rate had increased to 92.1%. Results for Levels 1, 2 and 3 had also improved, and were above the national benchmarks.

The Associate Principal provided an overview of the value-added data, as detailed in the report. The overarching goal for this year was to "Aim High."

Governor question: Are the added value scores what we were expecting?

Result: There are areas of concern in some subject areas.

Governor question: What are the key subject areas of focus?

Response: The raw grade and pass rate has improved for Business Studies; however, the ALPs, which is the value-added score, did not improve.

The Associate Principal explained that the ALPs score gave the college comparisons with other similar institutions. The DfE measures were expected to be published in January 2025.

Governor questions: How do the subject areas compare to last year?

Response: Not all students passed Maths, Economics, Biology and Psychology, so the value-added scores will not be as good. However, the results stayed broadly in line with previous years. We have new Head of Departments in place to make improvements and we have already seen positive changes as a result.

A discussion took place about target setting. The Associate Principal explained that the college did not want to put limits on students based on their GCSE results. Conversely, they also did not want to set targets too high, as this could lead to students feeling demotivated.

The Associate Principal explained that there were no ALPs score for T Levels, because so many of the subjects were new and the ALP scores relied on former data sets. However, the college knew that students had performed well in the Management and Administration course.

A discussion took place about the UpLearn platform which the college had recently introduced. The Principal explained that the impact of the platform was being assessed and that the uptake had been excellent from the current Year 13s, who were expected to benefit from accessing the platform for longer.

Item 6.2 College QulP with summary of key emerging issues

Item 6.3 Curriculum Update - covered above

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the QUIP and the emerging issues.

Governor question: Do you expect that the Red sections to turn to amber given time?

Response: Yes, the red section relates to work experience. The key focus this year is to give students more of an experience of the workplace.

A discussion took place about the new exam board for GCSE Maths. The Associate Principal reported that the college had conducted a trial with a Welsh exam board, involving a small sample of students during the summer. Students re-sitting their GCSEs will also be sitting them with the Welsh exam board in October.

The Associate Principal explained that there was currently a 5% lea-way which was a condition of funding. However, next year there will be no tolerance given.

A discussion was held regarding the impact of re-sits on students. The Associate Principal explained that the Maths Department had made considerable efforts to create engaging lessons. However, there was a concern regarding the high number of students entering the college with GCSE grades f 1 and 2 in Maths. It was noted that some Sixth Form Colleges are not accepting students whose GCSE Maths grades were below a grade 3. The Associate Principal reported that all students in the college with a grade 1-3 in GCSE Maths were required to re-sit the exam.

Destinations

The Associate Principal explained that the aspiration was for students to attend the top universities, and these percentages had all increased.

A discussion was held regarding the college's aspiration programme. The Associate Principal explained that the programme has been revised to support students with strong GCSE results with their applications to the top universities. Students will gain workplace experience, receive assistance with their applications, and hear from key speakers. The Associate Principal further noted that the responsibility for determining students' predicted grades has been removed from teachers, aiming to empower students to aim higher.

A Level courses

The Associate Principal reported that an external quality review of science had been scheduled to take place and it will focus on A Levels. The college had recently introduced a Statistics Course.

The Associate Principal explained that independent study will be closely monitored. Teachers were establishing clear expectations in lessons regarding independent study and were being more explicit about the requirements. The college has invested in UpLearn, as it focused on the key areas and subjects of concern.

A discussion was held regarding the possibility of completing the curriculum earlier to facilitate improvements. The Associate Principal explained that pre-reading will aid in this effort; however, this initiative was still a work in progress. The Associate Principal explained that the aim was to complete the curriculum by Easter. However, since Covid, exams were being brought forward earlier.

Item 6.4 EQR update

The Associate Principal reported that the college has now joined the External Quality Review (EQR) initiative. The EQR consists of Sixth Form Colleges and Further Education Colleges. Through this scheme, colleges can request reviews of specific areas conducted by staff from other institutions. The college has requested a review of its Science department and the Work Experience programme. Additionally, teachers from the college were participating in reviews of other colleges. A discussion took place about the benefits of the EQR. It was noted that colleagues had noted the value of being part of the EQR.

Item 6.5 Quality Day 2024 – Friday 29th November

A discussion took place about the Quality Day on Friday 29th November 2024. The Committee agreed that the Learning Walks offered valuable insights into the college. The Committee agreed that it was also important for Governors to also speak to students.

Item 6.6 Update on the upskilling of middle leaders

The Associate Principal reported that all Heads of Departments had begun the Sixth Form College Association Middle Leader's Course. This course focused on team development, leadership, and facilitating challenging conversations. Feedback from staff has been positive.

Item 6.7 Dream College follow-up update: Follow up session to be arranged this year.

Action: Keni and Karen.

It was agreed that the Chair of Governors and Keni Thomas will undertake a follow up session. **Action: The Associate Principal, Keni Thomas and Chair of Governors.**

Item 7 The Student Experience: Principal/Associate Principal

Item 7.1 Year 12 Survey

The Principal gave an overview of the Year 12 survey and reported that he was pleased with the responses. The satisfaction rate was 80%+ and there was an individual response for courses.

Governor question: What are the key areas you want to improve in response to the survey?

Response: We want to encourage more teachers to be more creative in lesson planning and creativity.

A Governor noted that students in Level 1 and 2 courses had noted that feedback was an issue. A discussion took place about the importance of good quality feedback. The Principal reported that grades for Level 2 had improved drastically.

Item 7.2 Parent Survey

The Principal gave an update and reported that although there had been a low response rate, he was pleased with the positive responses received.

The Principal explained that the college had historically struggled with parental involvement, and this was a key area for improvement. The recent “Meet the Tutor” event for parents had been well attended this year.

Governor question: Why do you think that the Digital Results for Level 1 and 2 were lower?

Response: We are assessing this and the digital innovation team are looking into more creative ways to increase engagement including the use of VR headsets.

Item 8 Staff Survey

The Principal gave an update and reported that the York survey benchmarked against other similar colleges and the comparisons were positive.

The Principal gave an overview of the last three year’s result and noted that the responses were improving.

A discussion took place about the feasibility of flexible working arrangements for staff. The Principal explained that future student progress review meeting was being held on-line to help with staff’s work life balance. The college was also looking at other flexible working options for teachers.

The Principal reported that recruitment remained an issue nationally.

The Principal gave an update and reported that in the latest staff Pulse survey, staff workload had come out positively.

A discussion took place about incentives for retention and recruitment. The Principal explained that this was not something which the college offered, but he was aware of colleges introducing ‘Hello Payments’ as an incentive for recruitment. However, Teachers were able to apply for levelling up payments.

Item 9 Governor College Engagement: Discussion and feedback on recent activity

The Two Link Governor reports undertaken by Keni Thomas had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Keni Thomas gave an overview of the two visits. The visits had focused on T Levels and work experience and ways to make improvements by making links with employers.

Keni Thomas gave an overview of the Wimbledon Tennis work experience programme.

Keni Thomas gave an overview of the community work he was involved with, and the links he could make with the college.

The committee thanked Keni Thomas for the update.

Item 10 Effectiveness of committee:

Clerk to circulate questionnaire following the meeting and link to Link Governor roles. Action: Clerk.

Item 11 Risk Management: Have governors identified any new risks or modifications to existing risks on the register?

A discussion took place about the future of online exams. The Associate Principal explained that AQA had been scheduled to run an online exams pilot, however, this had been put on hold due to cyber security issues, so it was not an immediate risk.

Item 12 Any Other Business

None.

Item 13 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 5:30pm on Zoom

The meeting closed at 7pm.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____