

**Tuesday 12th October 2021, 5.30pm
Remote Online Meeting via ZOOM**

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Ms P Rowe, Co-opted Governor, Chair
Mrs B Meier, Foundation Governor, Vice Chair
Mr N Sheta, Foundation Governor, Chair of Governors
Mr K Thomas, Foundation Governor
Mrs K Taylor, Foundation Governor (from 5.54pm)
Mr G Thompson, Principal
Ms K Foan, Associate Principal, Curriculum & Quality

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs E Lewis, Clerk to the Governors
Mr M Belfourd, Foundation Governor, Vice Chair of Governors
Mr S Ebele, Foundation Governor

The meeting was opened by Ms Rowe at 5.36pm and was quorate throughout - all participants could see and / or hear one another throughout. The agenda had been circulated to all governors in accordance with the terms of reference.

1. **Opening Prayer:** offered by Mr Thompson
2. **Welcome:** Mr Keni Thomas, Foundation Governor was welcomed and introduced himself.
3. **Apologies:** Mr R Vianello; Mr D Navarro and Mrs K Taylor (for late arrival). Mr D Freeman was not present.
4. **Declarations of Interests:** there were none
5. **Minutes of previous meeting, 19th May 2021:** previously circulated 28th June 2021, and included in the papers for the meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record to be signed in due course.
 - 5.1. **Matters Arising** for this meeting not on the agenda:
Item 8.5: Governors' Award to Students. Would be taken under item 10.
 - 5.2. **Actions to be reviewed:** There were none.
6. **Quality of Provision (improvement and outcomes):** Ms Foan
 - 6.1. **Outcomes 2021** Two papers had been included for this item. The Results Commentary (TAGs¹) and the Headline Data Report. Ms Foan confirmed that the commentary had been shared with all governors on 16th September 2021 and had not changed.:
Ms Foan introduced the Headline Data 2021, QAR and Value Added Report and highlighted the overall achievement data which showed a steady improvement over three years to 92.8% in 2021. She emphasised that the challenge would be to maintain that level of achievement using a key strategy of supporting and retaining students showing signs of being at risk of dropping out.

A-Level Data: Ms Foan noted that A-Level Pass Rates presented as a three-year comparative graph continued to be good and Value Added remained on an upward trajectory. She commented that whilst the TAGs had been awarded fairly and with integrity the challenge of maintaining the improved outcomes was significant. She said that 2018 – 2019 was a useful

¹ Teacher Assessed Grades (in 2020 CAG Centre Assessed Grades)

comparator as the year in which the most recent set of exams had been taken. The L3VA measure usually provided by the DfE had been calculated by the college and was above zero at 0.5. A final grades report 2021 from Sixth Sense which compared Sixth Form Colleges showed a strong outcome and the third measure “A-Level Alps Report” to which the college subscribes, showed the score and grade by subject, highlighting which were red hot zone (above average); in the middle or cool (below average). The overall QI score was 1.09 with a QI grade of 2 putting the college towards the top of the scale.

Level 3 Vocational (Applied General) Data, Year 13: Ms Foan noted that these were the final group of qualifications assessed entirely on course work – Science was not included as it had already moved to the new exam style assessment. She explained the tables which illustrated the improved percentage achievements on BTEC Extended Diploma courses, with the exception of distinction, and highlighted strong outcomes in the UAL Extended Diploma courses. The committee explored why, compared to 2020, Level 3 Diploma in Engineering had improved the percentage of Starred Distinctions but dipped in Distinction and Merit and gained some fails.

BTEC QCF Alps had not changed significantly compared to the previous year but a slight decrease overall had dropped the position on the thermometer from 3 to 4 (0.97 to 0.98).

Level 3 Vocational (Applied General) Data, Year 12: Ms Foan explained that the Year 12 data was the first year and was therefore without comparators. so no comparator. She said that the high merit grade was as expected. BTEC RQF² Alps data was noted.

Level 2 Data: Ms Foan highlighted that overall BTEC Level 2 students had done well. She said that whilst high grades had increased from 5% to 10% this remained an area of focus for improvement. She noted that fewer students had failed, compared with 2020, decreasing from 7% to 1% and commented that Level 2 students were admitted to SFX with weaker qualifications than other centres would take them on with.

GCSE English outcomes were noted to be improved following a strong set of results in November 2020 which was maintained to 35% of students gaining a grade 4 pass, 10% grade 5 and 1% grade 6.

GCSE Maths showed less of an improvement in percentage outcomes with 20% gaining a grade 4 pass - the same as in 2020. Ms Foan confirmed this would be an area to be worked on, but described the challenge of supporting Maths students to improve grades because students who had struggled with Maths continued to struggle. She noted that whilst the grade boundaries in English had got easier they had not changed in Maths.

Mr Thompson commented that the Sixth Form College sector showed the lowest inflation in grades awarded in the 2021 outcomes showing that the process had been undertaken with integrity in a honest and professional manner.

[Mrs Taylor joined the meeting at 5.54pm]

Ms Rowe asked that the level of appeals against TAGs had been. Mr Thompson said that there had been 19, many of which had been GCSE Maths and most of which had been investigated and resolved at college level (stage one).

[Mr Ebele joined the meeting at 5.56pm]

Mr Thompson explained that two appeals had progressed to stage two where one was upheld and the other rejected. He outlined the circumstances and concluded that the outcomes of the appeals were a reflection of the inherent positive fairness of the process.

Ms Rowe enquired about the destinations of students progressing from SFX to HE and whether any of them had experienced the press reports of universities being overwhelmed

² Regulated Qualifications Framework

with students holding high grades and not having enough places to take them. Ms Foan advised that some information was awaited but progression had been successful based on raw data - a higher number of students had been placed overall with an increase in the number gaining places at Russell Group and the top third universities. She said there would be a continued focus on raising the aspirations of students to go to those top universities but recognised that they would not always be the most suitable university for them. Mr Thompson commented that there were a considerable number of students who preferred to stay close to home for a variety of reasons and the college wished to support those students to make the best, individually aspirational selections. Raising aspirations / having high expectations was a strategic objective for the year.

Mrs Taylor commented that aiming for Russell Group universities may not be the best aspirational choice for every student, particularly those who had successfully followed the Applied General vocational and future T-Level routes, who might be seeking practical training. She asked how their aspirations would be raised and whether there was any support offered by the government about where to go. Ms Foan described the range of pastoral / careers support programmes and mechanisms offered by the college which provided access to individual advice via drop ins, talks, tutorials, House Days and careers events.

Mrs Meier asked when the student number for 2021 – 2022 would be confirmed for funding. It was noted that the number (1289) was currently ahead of the target (1281) to be finalised on the census date which was officially the following Sunday (17th October).

- 6.2. **College QuIP with summary of key emerging issues:** Ms Foan introduced the Quality Improvement Plan 2020-21, September Update, which had been included in the papers for the meeting, as the final review showing end of year RAG³ rated progress. Ms Foan explained that Amber rated quality risk areas would be carried over to the new QuIP (2021 – 2022) due to the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown and TAGs. She drew attention to updated data in the Quality of Education Key Priority 1 and explained subjects highlighted in red where concerns about improvement still remained.

Mr Ebele referred to risk 4.8 concerning the learner voice strategy and asked whether the May 2021 leaver survey had shown any changed trends from the previous survey. Ms Foan said that no significant differences had emerged but explained that the questions had been slightly re-framed since the previous lockdown survey. She said that focus groups were being used to follow up on specific areas of feedback. It was noted that a settling-in survey had just been taken.

Mrs Taylor asked how crucial it was to recruit an ESOL specialist teacher to support students who do not have English as a first language (4.7). Ms Foan said that other schools would not have this but the college considered it to be a necessary support aid, particularly for low level learners, and was working on how an ESOL specialist teacher could best be deployed.

Emerging Issues Report: Ms Foan introduced the report which had been included in the papers for the meeting and gave an overview of four⁴ current key emerging issues within the curriculum and strategies to address them.

- 6.3. **Curriculum Quality Partnership update:** Mr Thompson reminded the committee that the London Sixth Form Partnership (LSFP) had been a successful and valued quality group but explained that whilst some informal collaborative work was ongoing the drive for it had waned for a variety of reasons.

He advised the committee that an approach had been made by Kate Webb for the college to become founder member of a national “College Collective” pilot - the benefits and objectives of which were outlined in two documents included in the papers for the meeting. Mr Thompson said that it was intended to run the College Collective run along similar lines to the original hope for LSFP but on a larger scale (initially 16 AoC⁵ member colleges) with a more formalised constitution, which he outlined. Initially, SFX would be the only Sixth Form College

³ Red (not started), Amber (underway / ongoing), Green (completed / taken place)

⁴ Continued impact of COVID-19 on Learning and Teaching; Retention and Value Added Results in some Subjects; First full year of RQF Examinations; T-Levels and de-funding of Applied General Qualifications (AGQs)

⁵ Association of Colleges

and Mr Thompson said that one of the immediate areas of help and support available would be with T-Level delivery.

Ms Rowe asked for some information about who was leading the proposed concept. Mr Thompson explained that it was a joint collaboration between Kate Webb (a former SFC principal) Partnership Ltd and the AoC. He said the subscription would be £5k plus VAT. LSFP had been £10k.

Mr Belfour observed that Kate Webb was the sole director of KWP Ltd and sought clarification on what the collective was. Mr Thompson confirmed it was the structure of the group of colleges [supplying practising sector managers as AoC Associate Experts]. The fee of £5k was a subscription to a reciprocal agreement which would provide access to a specified number of days of sector-led consultancy and expertise. There would be no additional inter-college invoicing.

- 6.4. **Quality Day 2021:** Ms Rowe introduced this as an opportunity for governors to hear from curriculum leaders. Mrs Meier endorsed it as a transformational experience. Ms Foan confirmed the date as Friday 26th November and said it was intended to be an in-person event in the college at which the Directors of Faculty, some Heads of Department and Ousama Bouchaara (Director of Innovation in Learning and Teaching) would present their reviews. She proposed connecting this quality review to the link governor scheme and incorporating learning walks in the plan for the day. This was well received and Ms Foan would draw up a programme accordingly. Mr Sheta, Ms Rowe, Mrs Taylor and Mrs Meier indicated their intention to attend.

ACTION: Mrs Lewis to invite all governors to attend.

7. **The Student Experience:** Mr Thompson confirmed that governors had received the learner voice summary in the July 2021 Principal's report and the relevant extracts had been included in the papers for this meeting. He said that, as Ms Foan had mentioned earlier in the meeting, a few areas arising had been explored with small focus groups and the discussions had been enlightening.
ACTION: Results from the settling-in survey would be reported to the next meeting.
8. **The Staff Experience:** Mr Thompson advised that new staff members had settling-in meetings. He announced that a new way of collecting staff views had been launched, as part of the broader wellbeing strategy, to replace the annual York College benchmarking survey. Mr Thompson introduced a paper which had been circulated for the meeting setting out the new system, run by Tes, *Staff Pulse*. He explained how the questions would be selected for the surveys which would be circulated every three weeks and would benchmark against other schools and colleges. Responses would be anonymous and the scores coming back via week by week graphs would be analysed and followed up via action plans.
9. **Digital Learning Innovation Strategy update and impact:** Mr Thompson introduced the Digital Innovation 2020 – 21 Review and Priorities for 2021 / 22 report which had been included in the papers for the meeting. He confirmed that the strategy was continuing well and Parents meetings had been held with the aim of 85% of the student body having an iPad this year. Ms Foan outlined three areas of focus for learning and teaching: assessment for learning; lesson structure (supporting changed timetable) and digital innovation in learning and teaching. All departments are focused on two or three specific apps or uses of technology in the classroom. Ms Foan described what these might include. Ms Rowe confirmed that the strategy includes tools such as the Google Classroom and an Apple Academy. Ms Foan confirmed that every student is enrolled onto the Google Classroom for each subject for resources and assignments. She explained how Apple classroom was slightly different. Ms Rowe reflected on the good examples shown at the previous Quality Day including by some teachers who weren't natural digital teachers. Ms Foan gave an example of how technology had been embraced by a previously reluctant teacher which had emerged during a quality board meeting. Mr Thompson agreed that the lockdown had given a welcome boost to the strategy because the use of Google Classroom was essential. The iPads had also been deployed as an Internet phone to keep in touch with tutees. Ms Rowe asked how the impact of the digital strategy could be measured. Mr Thompson responded that in terms of the strategy it would be the number of students with iPads and comments on lesson observations would record how many teachers were using technology in the classroom.

Ultimately, he said, the impact would be seen on outcomes because learning could take place any time, any place due to the ease with which Google Classroom could be accessed.

Mr Belfourd asked whether students need a Gmail or SFX email account was needed to link to Google Classroom. He had experienced Google Classroom as an adult learner. Mr Thompson confirmed that all students have an SFX email account tied to a G Suite account. Mrs Lewis reminded governors that they could have an SFX email account which would give access to the Governors Google Classroom.

10. **Governor College Engagement:** Ms Rowe led a discussion covering the Link Governor Scheme, moving forward with learning walks and initiating some student focus groups. It was acknowledged that the Quality Day in the second half of term would re-launch the link scheme and provide an opportunity for learning walks to take place. Link Governors could, in the meantime, make contact with their Head of Department and some had already done so. The protocol had been updated and approved in July 2021.

Mr Thompson reminded governors that Open Day would take place on Saturday 13th November and that governors would be welcome and encouraged to come along to meet the staff, student and parents. He said that some additional virtual sessions would continue and a recreation of the summer event which had worked well outside in the garden was planned.

Ms Rowe summarised that the next steps would be to notify link governors about progress with the scheme and that her suggestion of an email / distribution group for link governors would be helpful to put in place. She noted that Mrs Meier had, at the Focus morning, stepped forward to be the RE link governor. Mrs Meier said she taken this on, in the absence of any other volunteers, because she recognised that a link was needed to that area particularly in relation to the Catholic inspections.

ACTIONS: Mrs Lewis to do a reminder with list of link governors and details of the Quality Day.

Mr Thomas would think about which department he would link with.

Mrs Lewis flagged up that there was a need for a governor to take responsibility for oversight of Safeguarding.

Student Focus Groups: Ms Rowe promoted the value of focus groups between two or three governors and a small group of students and urged the re-introduction of these. Ms Foan proposed to decide a date at the end of the Quality Day for further learning walks and a focus group with students soon after the Christmas holiday. It was agreed that the theme for the focus group should be the wider student experience rather than a subject area. Mr Thompson suggested the “student journey” as a topic for discussion and this was agreed.

The impressive contribution of the student governor, Roberto, to the discussions at the focus morning was acknowledged. He would be attending the Student Governor festival conference at the AoC Annual Conference in mid-November. Ms Rowe thought it would be good to have some link with the Presidents of the Student Council.

Governors’ award: Mrs Meier had prepared a proposal earlier in the year setting out her idea for an award to be made to the most improved student, funded by a collection amongst governors. This idea had been well received and it had been decided to review it with the student governors once they were elected. Mrs Meier explained that she had been inspired by the VESPA⁶ awards and thought that a governors’ award made to the most improved student would be an aspirational reward for effort. She suggested the prize could be afternoon tea somewhere special (eg the Ritz) - with perhaps a second or third prize - supported by a trophy for display in the foyer inscribed with the name of the award winner.

ACTION: Mr Thompson and Mrs Lewis to liaise and take this forward

Mrs Meier commended the student governor, Roberto, for the way he had spoken about VESPA at the focus morning and his natural references to what it means to the students.

11. **Effectiveness of committee:**

11.1. The summary of the online questionnaire responses, May 2021, had been included in the papers for the meeting and was reviewed. Submissions had been returned by four committee members and confirmed that the committee had operated effectively during the year 2020 –

⁶ Vision, Effort, Systems, Practice, Attitude

2021. Mrs Lewis said the comments had mainly concerned the Governors Link Scheme and had been picked up at Focus morning and in the approved revision of the protocol (July 2021).

- 11.2. Membership / vacancies on committee: It was agreed the membership was sufficient to achieve quorate meetings. Foundation Governors are required to join this committee which provides a natural feed. Governors had opted to continue with online meetings for committees and Ms Rowe confirmed with CSQ members that this was acceptable. The questionnaire had ratified remote / virtual online as an effective way of holding meetings of this committee. There were no pressing vacancies.
12. **Risk Management:** The committee considered whether this meeting had identified any new risks or modifications to existing risks on the register. Mrs Meier suggested strengthening connections between the college and local churches. Mr Thompson advised that the college had struggled to forge links with local Priests to run liturgies and the risk was particularly evident whilst the college was without a Chaplain currently. Mr Thompson would welcome any help from foundation governors in forging links with their Parish Priests. Mr Sheta would discuss with the Priests at Holy Ghost, Balham. Mrs Meier recollected Fr Joe who was formerly at Holy Ghost - he had moved to Dulwich and it was agreed to try to make contact with him. Mrs Meier would have a word at St George's Cathedral.
13. **Any Other Business:** There was none.
14. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 1st February 2022

The meeting closed at 7.05pm.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____