

**Tuesday 18th October 2022, 5.30pm
Remote Online Meeting via ZOOM**

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Ms P Rowe, Chair, Co-opted Governor
Mr G Thompson, Principal
Mr D Navarro, Foundation Governor
Mr N Sheta, Foundation Governor
Mr K Thomas, Foundation Governor
Ms K Bainbridge, Co-opted Governor
Mrs B Meier, Vice Chair, Foundation Governor, joined at 6.06pm
Ms K Foan, Associate Principal, Curriculum and Quality, joined at 6.28pm

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs E Lewis, Clerk to the Governors
Mr M Belfour, Foundation Governor observing

The agenda had been circulated to all governors - all (except staff & student governors) were invited to attend.

The meeting was opened at 5.34pm by Ms Rowe. It was quorate throughout and all participants could see / hear one another.

1. **Opening Prayer:** Offered by Mr Thompson
2. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair:** Ms Rowe had previously indicated that she would not stand for re-election as chair of the committee at the end of the meeting, having chaired / co-chaired the committee for six years and, additionally, did not intend to seek re-appointment as a governor when her current (third) term of office expires in December 2023.
Mr Dave Navarro was nominated and duly elected, unopposed and unanimously, to serve as Chair for a term of two years to October 2024, taking the chair at the next meeting scheduled for 31st January 2023.
Mrs Meier was duly re-elected, unopposed and unanimously to serve as Vice Chair for a further two-year term to October 2024.

Ms Rowe took the chair.
3. **Welcome:** Mr Chukwuweta Uraih, Foundation Governor.
4. **Apologies:** Received from Mr R Vianello were accepted. Mr D Freeman was not present. Mr C Uraih sent apologies for unavoidable absence, after the meeting.
5. **Declarations of Interests:** There were none.
6. **Minutes of previous meeting, 14th June 2022:** Included in the papers for the meeting, had been circulated previously on 4th July 2022, were agreed to be a true and accurate record for signing in due course.
 - 6.1. **Matters Arising** for this meeting not on the agenda: Ms Rowe reminded governors to complete the self-assessment questionnaires to contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness of governance in 2021 – 2022.
 - 6.2. **Actions to be reviewed:**

6.2.1. Governors' Award to Students: Mrs Meier had initiated the award. Mr Thompson recalled that the agreed timeline was to work towards presenting the award next summer.

6.2.2. Dates for student forums: Mr Thompson suggested the week leading up to the Quality morning event (Friday 25th November) or the previous week would enable feedback at that event. He and Ms Foan would identify a group of students from across the college and propose some dates. The intention would be to meet with them again after Easter (w/c 24th April 2023).

Ms Rowe commended the quality event and the student forums.

7. **Quality of Provision (improvement and outcomes):** Ms Foan joined the meeting during this item which was initially deferred and taken after item 10. Ms Foan confirmed that reports included in the papers for the meeting would be taken as read. She and Mr Thompson would respond to questions including those submitted in advance.

7.1. **Outcomes 2022:** The Results Commentary had been circulated to all governors on 12th September 2022. A supplementary "Headline Data 2022: QAR and Value Added" report included in the papers was presented and discussed in the context of CAGs awarded in 2021 which had created an inflation of students GCSE grades making it more difficult to "add value" to each student. L3VA had been -0.06 in 2018/19 and -0.25 in 2022.

Ms Bainbridge had asked what the plan was to turn the large number of grade 3s into grade 4s in GCSE Maths and English. Mr Thompson referred to the discussion under item 8 which had also addressed this. He emphasised the large cohort of 300+ students and focus on preparation for the November re-sit as this was the best chance of obtaining a pass (grade 4). He announced that MiDES data, received the day before, had shown the college English GCSE results to be well above the national benchmark for colleges with Maths GCSE one point above, although below Sixth Form Colleges (SFCs). Despite this context, Mr Thompson acknowledged that a pass rate of 17% required improvement.

Questions and comments had been submitted from Ms Bainbridge and Ms Rowe regarding the AS and A Level Results:

AS results: it was questioned, given the spread of results, no-shows and issues faced by the entrants, whether this had been the best course of action for the students. Mr Thompson explained that moving those students, with a pattern of unsuccessful interventions in those subjects, onto AS courses had been applied as a carefully considered strategy to salvage some UCAS points for progression to university. Ms Bainbridge wondered whether it would be better for them to concentrate on achieving two A Levels or BTECS with better grades. Mr Thompson explained that they had also been struggling in other courses and for some, possibly external, reason had become disengaged even when they had a good set of GCSE results. It was acknowledged that the ultimate intention was to do what is best for each student. Mr Thompson said the impact of the strategy would be analysed.

Ms Rowe asked whether EPQ would be discontinued. Ms Foan explained that some grades had been moderated down for the very small cohort that had started the EPQ course and she had requested feedback on why that had happened. The qualification was still considered to be a good course. It was being relaunched with greater numbers. The accuracy of marking would be monitored.

Ms Bainbridge had asked whether there was an underlying issue of some students being enrolled on the wrong courses which had contributed to 14 x U grades at A level. Ms Foan attributed the underlying issues to the disruption to students' learning during the pandemic periods. She explained why she did not particularly link the U grade outcomes to enrolment onto the wrong course but explained the impact of students arriving with CAGs¹ who would not have met the entry requirements previously. It was recognised that as a college that tries

¹ Centre Assessed Grades

to give students a chance, in some difficult subjects this might have been too challenging for those students. The academic history of those students had been set out in the commentary for context.

In response to Mr Navarro it was confirmed that the benchmark comparison was 2019 “with a softer landing”. Grade boundaries would be looked at in each subject and some adjustments might be made. Mr Navarro asked whether there was any data about whether the results would be weaker or stronger this year. Ms Foan advised that in theory GCSE grades could seemingly be inflated but the cohort was in a slightly better position than last years and measurements were generally looking more positive – to be confirmed by the first set of Value Added (VA) predictions.

Ms Bainbridge asked whether quality of teaching / enrolled on wrong courses / numeracy issues had contributed to the lack of high grades in A Level Physics 0% A*-B and Chemistry – 6% A*-B (same as 2019). Ms Foan confirmed this to be an emerging issue for quality improvement plans. She said that early intervention meetings had been held with the heads of those departments where results had raised concerns and action plans had been agreed. VA data had been used cautiously (as the calculation hadn’t changed with TAGs²) as an indicator of where there was a need for robust SLT intervention and inclusion in the QuIP along with learner voice feedback.

Mr Navarro asked whether the college was still in receipt of catch-up education funding. Ms Foan confirmed it remained available and would be used on the most cost-effective, successful strategies in those areas of concern. She said the most effective support usually came from the experienced teacher delivering the subject and, therefore, where necessary work would be done with supporting the teacher to improve and make the best difference. Revision conferences were being considered.

Mr Thompson gave some further background to the Physics outcome and explained how discussion of curriculum intent, including options between Directors of Faculty and Heads of Department (HoD) would underpin clearly understood option choices.

Ms Rowe observed that A level high grades were showing downward dip in the last 3 years with a significant drop off for A* in 2021 – 2022 and asked how governors could explain this to prospective parents, students and Ofsted inspectors. Ms Foan said that migration from CAGs had definitely impacted on the 2021 – 2022 results but noted that A* - B results had gone up since 2018 – 19. She emphasised that the focus would be to maintain the upward trend.

Mr Thompson reminded the committee that current performance tables did not include L3VA³ so the only published data was the qualification achievement rate⁴. This was noted to be strong overall at 90.9% compared with 82.2% in 2018 - 2019. (2018 – 19 national average was 86% and the sixth form college provider group average was 85%).

Vocational (Applied General) Data: Ms Foan reviewed the headline Alps figure of 6 (quality indicator score) which had dropped from 4 overall for and explained how BTEC data for Health and Social Care had been skewed by the lack of historical data at the time lockdown started.

University Destinations: Mr Thompson introduced a report on A Level destinations which had been included in the papers for the meeting. It was noted that applied general would be presented later in the year. Students’ progression to university was reported to be 82% of eligible A Level students. 93% of those who applied secured a place. This was noted to be above the average of 67% for Sixth Form Colleges. He described the work being done to raise the aspiration of students in their choice of university (9% has progressed to “Sutton30” universities). Mr Thompson said that, overall, students had progressed onto relevant courses but data would be interrogated to see whether the courses were sustained destinations. Some information was available about students who dropped out in their first year and this was an area that could correlate with advance indicators that university may not have been the best

² Teacher Assessed Grades (2021)

³ Level 3 Value Added

⁴ The number of students who started, retained and passed

choice and counselling onto other pathways could have been offered.

Mr Navarro asked, in the context of the Ofsted focus on the skills agenda, what evidence was available to show that the college had steered a student away from university because it was considered to be better for them. Mr Thompson replied that Ofsted inspectors would garner that information by speaking to students directly to find out what careers and opportunities guidance they had been given. Seeking to establish whether Gatsby benchmarks were being achieved.

Ms Bainbridge asked what factors had influenced those students who did go on to university and stay the course, not to go for higher aspirations. Mr Thompson outlined some of the key reasons which were mainly domestic, family and economic.

- 7.2. **College QulP with summary of key emerging issues:** The final update to the improvement plan for 2021 – 2022 had been included in the papers for the meeting. The emerging issues for quality improvement in 2022 – 2023 were summarised in an overview report which had been included in the papers for the meeting, setting out strategies in each of the four key areas identified.
- 7.3. **Inspection:** It had been agreed to keep inspection on the agenda as a standing information item. It had been covered extensively at the recent Focus Morning. Ms Rowe noted that the materials from the focus morning had been uploaded to ShareFile.
- 7.4. **College Collective update:** Ms Foan reviewed the successful engagement of three senior staff in the programme in 2021 – 2022 to become AoC associate experts supporting other colleges in a reciprocal arrangement. GCSE Maths and approach to teaching maths and A level learning and teaching in three 3 subjects had an effective impact.
This year two more senior staff, Aaron Takyi and Tom Worms would train as Associate Experts in T Levels and digital / pastoral curriculum and learning and teaching. This year the college would seek expert help in science; level 2 high grades in BTECs and bid writing – to be agreed at an imminent college collective meeting.
Ms Rowe commended this as a valuable collaborative project for senior managers in the area of developing and sharing good practice.
- 7.5. **Quality Day 2022:** Had been confirmed earlier in the meeting as Friday morning, 25th November. Ms Foan received confirmation that learning walks should be included in the programme.
8. **The Student Experience:** Mr Thompson introduced the Student Experience – Learner Voice Survey 2022 report which had been included in the papers for the meeting. He reminded the committee that responses from the leavers had been shared with the full governing body via his principal's report in July 2022 and now included responses from year 12 level 3 leavers. He explained that using surveys was just one way feedback information was collected and was another dimension to the governor / learner forums.
Mr Sheta asked why the level of responses from GCSE Maths cohort were almost always lower than others. Mr Thompson explained that none of the students in this cohort had been successful at maths at school and, because it was not their choice to continue with Maths GCSE and resit the exams, an element of being coerced into doing something they did not want to do was reflected in their responses. Mr Sheta asked whether it was, therefore, understandable reticence rather than something the college was not doing? Mr Thompson said that a new staff team was in place working to introduce different methods of teaching GCSE Maths and building up the students' confidence with Maths.
Ms Bainbridge had submitted a question asking what the strategy was for supporting students to move from a grade 3 to a pass grade (4). Mr Thompson said that the most urgent focus was on supporting the cohort to pass and the November resits was the best opportunity to do this. There was increased revision and plugging of identified gaps. He explained that because the November resit results weren't issued until January, the students convinced themselves that they had passed and they had to be encouraged to continue to attend the classes in that waiting period. He said that a new level 2 course "number and measure" had been introduced which was a good steppingstone qualification to achieve for some students before having another go at the GCSE. Ms Bainbridge asked whether students sat a diagnostic test on enrolment and this was confirmed. Mr Thompson

also described the extra support that was in place in ALS (additional learning support). Ms Bainbridge said the range of online support / courses was impressive and acknowledged that the students lacked motivation. Mr Thompson noted that because the success rate of doing work outside the class was very low the amount of time allocated to Maths GCSE had been increased. He commented that the negative attitude was from Maths more than English GCSE. Mr Thompson informed the committee that the data from the survey is discussed with the HoD in Quality Board meetings and comment is made in the SAR⁵ and. Further drilling down would be done in subjects rated below average on a number of questions. Mr Navarro asked how many students had completed the survey and whether it was, therefore, representative. Mr Thompson estimated it to be 60 – 65%.

9. **The Staff Experience:** Mr Thompson introduced the Staff Experience Report (October, 2022) which had been included in the papers for the meeting. He described how the views of staff were sought once per term using the Tes⁶ app “Staff Pulse” which focuses on wellbeing and perceptions. The report was for the first half term and showed how the college compare against national benchmarks of all subscribing schools and colleges and included a commentary of the results.

[Mrs Meier joined during this item at 6.06pm]

Mr Thompson referred the committee to the summary in the report of the annual York Survey taken at the end of each academic year benchmarked against other colleges with pleasing results.

Mr Navarro said that he had read that SFC teachers were to be balloted on whether to strike against the pay offers and asked whether the college staff would do so. Mr Thompson confirmed that the National Education Union (NEU) was balloting its members for strike action but emphasised that this was not action against the college but against the Secretary of State. The unions were asking for a pay award linked to inflation (11%) but SFCs were not funded to pay that award. Mr Thompson did not know how the membership in the college would vote but was anticipating it would be in favour of strike action. He explained that, nationally, there had to be a 50% turnout for a vote to be valid. Mr Thompson had spoken at staff briefing to say that whilst he understood their position he couldn't condone a strike - students had to be put first. He explained how the rules had changed so that bringing in agency was now allowed to cover the classes of striking teachers. He confirmed that the college had always managed to remain open during previous strikes.

10. **Digital learning Innovation Strategy:** Mr Thompson confirmed that the strategy continued to move ahead albeit at a slower pace this term. He reported the level of ownership and use of iPads and laptops, explaining that, mainly attributable to the cost of living crisis, students' uptake of purchasing their own iPads this year had been slow and they were, therefore, more reliant on the college bank of iPads. The intention was to increase that bank because it was a bit more difficult in class if not all learners had iPads.

Mr Navarro asked what impact the change in staff leadership of the strategy was having and Mr Thompson confirmed that a successor was in post whose strength was working with teaching colleagues. The new postholder was supported by a number two along with six digital champions. Mr Navarro agreed that the strategy relies on staff having the capability and skills drive it with a tenacious and persistent focus on getting teachers trained. Mr Thompson reported that all staff members have a new iPad which has relaunched it.

Ms Bainbridge had asked whether students were fully engaged with *Google Classroom* and how this was monitored / measured. Mr Thompson confirmed that students were engaged because the majority of homework and assessment was via *Google Classroom*. All teachers were expected to operate a *Google Classroom*, monitored by Heads of Department.

It was agreed that it was important to continue with the strategy as one of the three learning and teaching foci.

[The meeting returned to take item 7 at this point]

11. **Governor College Engagement:** Governors had the opportunity to feedback on conferences, webinars etc they had attended. Mrs Meier commented on an impressive turnout at the Diocesan Start of Year Mass at the Cathedral.

⁵ Self-Assessment Report

⁶ Formerly known as the Times Education Supplement

12. Effectiveness of committee:

12.1. Questionnaire responses, May 2022: Ms Rowe reviewed the summary response paper included in the papers for the meeting. Mrs Lewis drew attention to the attendance at meetings which had dropped from 87% to 71% reflecting that people were resuming busier lives away from desks and homeworking. She suggested it should be monitored.

The committee decided to invite the Head of Health and Social Care to the spring meeting.

ACTION: Mr Thompson / Ms Foan / Mrs Lewis to arrange.

Mrs Meier suggested that in twelve months' time the committee might find it helpful to hear about the journey towards improvement in science. Mr Navarro agreed this would fit with governors' responsibility for monitoring improvement and enable governors to articulate how they know progress was being made.

12.2. Membership / vacancies on committee: Mrs Lewis said it was a current expectation for new foundation governors to join the committee as a matter of course but was mindful of that as a potential overload on foundation governors who are also recruited onto other committees. Mr Belford suggested that they could attend without being a member of CSQ as all governors were invited to do. Mrs Lewis advised that current membership was sufficient to cover quorate meetings. Ms Rowe confirmed she would remain on the committee.

12.3. Farewell wishes were extended to Mr Vianello in his absence. He would be standing down as a foundation governor on 27th October 2022.

13. Risk Management: Governors were invited to identify any new risks or modifications to existing risks on the risk register arising from discussion at this meeting.

Mr Navarro highlighted the significant risk to college finances arising from increasing energy costs.

Mr Thompson advised that the risk register was being updated for discussion with the Audit Committee on 15th November and would reference energy costs and the financial situation. Quality was a ranked risk and would be updated with some of the areas of risk in curriculum areas where poor quality had been identified from outcomes and self-assessments.

Mrs Meier asked whether interventions should be referenced. Mr Thompson said they would be in the QuiP - but were also integral to the Risk Register as mitigating factors where a quality issue is identified. Mrs Meier asked how interventions were tracked. Mr Thompson said that there was not a mechanism for this detail to governors, as it was more operational, his termly report would present a more global sense check.

14. Any Other Business: Warm thanks were expressed to Ms Rowe for her chairing of the committee.

Mr Thompson paid warm tribute to her drive and determination to get the governor link scheme up and running.

15. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 31st January 2023. NB: This date would be rearranged to facilitate Mr Navarro's attendance as Chair.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____