

**Wednesday 19th May 2021, 5.30pm
Held remotely via Online ZOOM conference**

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Ms P Rowe, Chair, Co-opted Governor
Mr N Sheta, Chair of Governors, Foundation Governor
Mr G Thompson, Principal
Ms K Foan, Associate Principal, Curriculum and Quality
Ms D Ohiwereh, Foundation Governor
Mrs K Taylor, Foundation Governor
Mr D Navarro, Foundation Governor
Ms S Jones, Co-opted Governor

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs E Lewis, Clerk to the Governors

The meeting was opened at 5.34pm by Ms Rowe and was quorate throughout. All participants were able to see and / or hear one another.

1. **Opening Prayer:** Offered by Mr Thompson
2. **Apologies:** Mr R Vianello, Mrs B Meier, Mr D Freeman.
3. **Welcome:** Ms Deborah Ohiwereh, Foundation Governor was welcomed and introduced herself.
4. **Declarations of Interests:** there were none
5. **Minutes of previous meeting, 2nd February 2021:** Previously circulated 22nd February 2021 and included in the papers for the meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record for signing in due course.
 - 5.1. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters for this meeting that were not on the agenda.
 - 5.2. **Actions to be reviewed:** Student Focus Forums (item 8.3): It was agreed that this would be picked up under item 8.1 (Link governors protocol review).
6. **Quality of Provision (improvement and outcomes):**
 - 6.1. **Progress against College Quality Improvement Plan:** The QuIP May Review had been included in the papers for the meeting. Ms Foan introduced the RAG¹ rated tracking of progress against improvement targets arising from the college Self-Assessment process, matched to the four areas of the Education Inspection Framework. She confirmed that the QUiP was renewed regularly and the May update had been reviewed formally by the College Management Development Committee (CMDC) in advance of this meeting.

The committee was invited to ask questions. Ms Rowe referred to Risk 1.4 which addressed required improvement in high grade achievement on listed A* courses and asked why this had been rated amber. Ms Foan explained this was because all date targets were in progress / pending as part of the TAG (Teacher Assessed Grades) which required a process of quality assurance, moderation and evaluation of historical data including CAGs (Centre Assessed Grades) from last year. Improvement in retention rates on specified courses had been achieved and were coded green. Ms Foan emphasised that whilst an upward trend was expected this year, improvement strategies would continue even if grades were above target to ensure outcomes were sustained in a normal exam process.

¹ Red (not started), Amber (underway / ongoing), Green (completed / taken place)

Mr Sheta asked whether a trend could be identified with attendance and punctuality (key priority area 2.1, behaviour and attitudes). Ms Foan observed a slight drop in attendance since the return from the last lockdown and outlined the reasons for this. Absence was followed up with students using weekly reports and engagement with students had been maintained and TAGs could be awarded. Overall attendance at 88% was an improvement on previous years and was moving towards the Sixth Form College standard of 90%. Mr Thompson had reported to governors in March that attendance via remote learning had been better than in person for a variety of reasons.

Mrs Taylor highlighted the risk and challenge of finding work experience placements for the students (key priority area 3.2) and asked how those placements could be secured going forward with the heightened shortened of opportunities, especially given the extent of work experience in the T level programme. Mr Thompson confirmed this was a significant area of priority. Ms Foan outlined the strategies and events that were being put in place to find places and smart, innovative ways to provide experience of work.

Mr Navarro referred to the intention to move to a live open day event in July and wondered whether it was planned for virtual events to continue in parallel. Mr Thompson confirmed that the positive experiences during lockdown would be carried forward into a hybrid mix of events and processes. He described the success of engaging with prospective students in a remote / virtual way citing, as an example, a greater number of completed telephone interviews compared to the previous face to face appointments system.

Ms Jones suggested that it would be useful if governors could know what placements the college was seeking as they may be able to help with finding them and expand the horizons of students by widening the avenues available to them through their own connections. Mr Thompson explained that the aim was to get all the vocational students out into the workplace and he would be pleased to consider any opportunities that could be available.

Mr Thompson thanked Ms Foan for driving forward the QuIP and said that it clearly showed the progress that was being made despite the challenging year.

Ms Rowe endorsed his thanks and confirmed that the format of the plan underpinned the committee's understanding and interpretation of the progress against improvements that had been identified.

- 6.2. **Impact of Covid-19:** Mr Thompson briefed the committee on the low incidence of infection amongst staff and students and confirmed that the college had participated in PCR surge testing in association with Wandsworth LA for the Beta variant. Ongoing twice weekly asymptomatic lateral flow self-tests were being taken by staff and students using kits distributed by the college and this would continue.

Ms Foan introduced the *SFX Centre Policy for A Levels and GCSE TAGs* which had been submitted to the joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and included in the papers for the meeting. She gave a brief summary of the TAG process for A Level and GCSE students. She also explained the similarity with the Q-TAG process for vocational subjects which would be moving to a holistic judgement this year rather than grading of each unit.

Assessment grading was currently taking place working towards a deadline of the end of the week. Ms Foan confirmed that ongoing conversations and training had supported all teachers to make sure the TAG process was fair and standardised across the college.

Mr Sheta observed the huge amount of extra work created by the assessments and asked Ms Foan how teachers were coping with the additional load. Ms Foan acknowledged that the teaching staff were very busy undertaking what would normally be the work of the exam board and paid examiners and explained how teachers were being supported. Mr Thompson added that the whole process would continue right the way through the summer because results days were earlier than usual in the holiday (A Levels on 10th August and GCSEs on 12th August). This would necessitate a need to have staff available to respond to appeals and also to start the enrolment process. Mr Thompson emphasised the priority focus on staff wellbeing

and giving as much support as possible.

Mr Navarro asked about the appeal process and who would consider an appeal in the first instance. Ms Foan outlined the procedure and policy and explained that it was hoped that quality assurance applied throughout would protect against mistakes / unfairness in the award of assessment grades. Evidence in support of the marks given had been retained. Mr Thompson added that care had been taken to apprise all students, and their parents, of which assignments had been used to inform their grades and students had signed to confirm their understanding.

Ms Rowe endorsed appreciation of what staff were doing compounded by the potential impact on their summer break.

- 6.3. **Learner Voice:** Ms Foan explained the online survey process which was in train for gathering opinion on aspects including lessons, feedback on progress, support for revision and exam preparation. Initial returns indicated that students were positive overall about their experience of SFX but there would be some areas of response to be followed up at class and college level and through focus groups.
- Ms Foan confirmed that the survey had been taken independently and was quantitative with comments. She said the questionnaire would be changed for year 12s to require rationale for strongly in agreement or disagreement responses. Mr Thompson said the return rate was good. Ms Ohiwerek expressed her support for the learner voice process and asking questions of the students.
- Mr Thompson confirmed that, as the survey process was not yet complete, he would provide a summary in his summer term report to all governors. Further review would be on the agenda for the autumn term meeting of this committee. The date of this summer term meeting of the committee would be moved to June next year to facilitate a fuller learner voice report.
- 6.4. **London Sixth Form Partnership:** Mr Thompson updated the committee on the current status and activity of the partnership. Ms Foan had joined the steering committee which was meeting regularly every six weeks. He said the college remained committed to the partnership although this enthusiasm was not shared by all other Principals and one SFC had left. He intended to discuss the future of the partnership at an upcoming meeting of London Principals and hoped it could be refreshed and reinvigorated. Mrs Lewis announced that a training event for student governors, funded by the partnership, would be going ahead in mid-June.
- Ms Rowe said that she had represented SFX at the Governance group and the meetings had provided a valuable forum in which to share experiences and practices.
- 6.5. **Ofsted inspections updates / plans:** Ms Foan introduced the Ofsted summary document which had been included in the papers for the meeting. She explained why the college would be likely to undergo a short inspection next time as outlined in her paper. She emphasised that the goal continued to be to move towards being judged to be “outstanding”. It was noted that the normal cycle of inspections was expected to resume in September 2021.
- Ms Foan highlighted a key change to the interval between inspections which, because of the impact of covid, would move from a five to a seven year routine cycle. She stressed that planning and preparation for the top judgements would be undertaken to achieve the best for students, not just for Ofsted.
- It was noted that Ofsted had introduced optional pilot on-site inspections to assess whether any tweaks were needed to the Education Inspection Framework (EIF). Ms Foan reported that initial feedback from the pilots was not indicating any significant change. The committee reflected on what could trigger a non-cyclical inspection visit.
- 6.6. **Catholic Schools’ inspections plan:** Mr Thompson introduced his update paper which had been included in the papers for the meeting and advised that the Bishops had agreed that the Catholic Schools’ Inspection framework would be operational from September 2022 preceded by a pilot programme from September 2021 in which the Archdiocese of Southwark (RCAOS) would fully participate. Indications that two of each level of provision in RCAOS would be selected for the pilot so the expectation was that SFX would be picked. Currently active recruitment of inspectors was underway. Mr Thompson explained the nine elements within three areas of judgement and discussed the grade descriptors that would be applied. He commented on the challenge of achieving outstanding for a SFC in eg Collective Worship.

Given the challenges, the aim would be to achieve a solid “good” judgement. There would be a focus on preparation. The expectation was that governors would be involved in the inspection.

7. **Curriculum Development:** Mr Thompson said that introduction of T Levels was the focus of curriculum development. He advised that overnight the Government published the *Skills and post-16 Education* Bill which led on from the FE White paper. SFX would be offering its first T Level course, Business Administration, in September 2022 and Ms Foan outlined the preparatory progress towards this including training for staff who would be managing the introduction. A confirmed course specification was awaited, and the committee discussed and accepted a decision taken not to run the non-qualification transition programme. Mr Thompson asserted that T Levels were employer-led with the ultimate outcome for students to be ready to go into the workplace and not necessarily progressing to Higher Education which is what most SFX students currently do. He reminded the committee that a bid had been submitted for capital funding to build a Business Hub to support delivery of the T Level in a purpose designed simulated workspace environment. It was noted that the college intended to expand the portfolio of T Levels by selecting those routes that would provide a good vocational experience for the students within the realistic practical boundaries of its facilities and resources. It was confirmed to Ms Rowe that the portfolio would include Health and Social Care and the creative industries.
8. **Governance:**
 - 8.1. **Link governors Protocol update:** An updated protocol had been included in the papers for the meeting. Ms Rowe noted it had not changed substantially and Mr Thompson introduced the changes as marked in red which updated and refreshed the content and added a section on covid with suggestions on how remote visits might look. It was noted that the windows for visits had been expanded so that there would now be three. For the benefit of new members, Ms Rowe outlined the scheme and how it had been launched but paused during the pandemic lockdowns. She emphasised the commitment to expanding it and that each governor was encouraged to link with a department. Ms Jones proposed that potential benefits should reflect how the link could be two-way with the governor suggesting ways in which they could use their experience / networks / expertise to give back and support the work of the department. **ACTION: Mr Thompson would adapt and incorporate that in the protocol.** Ms Rowe explained why windows were set for physical visits to make sure governors visits were not clashing with other ongoing processes and so that teaching staff knew their link governor would be likely to be dropping in. It was acknowledged that a hybrid approach of in-person and remote visits may have to continue. Ms Rowe emphasised the expectation that the post-visit template form (part of the protocol) be completed and returned as a record of the visit – the period for this had been extended to ten working days in the update. Mr Thompson added that feedback was important whether recorded or verbal but endorsed the need for a way of communicating it back promptly to encourage reflection. It was agreed that the template form was a useful rigour. **ACTION: Mrs Lewis to provide the form as a Google Form.** Mr Thompson highlighted an addition to the protocol which introduced liaison between the link governor and Ms Foan for a learning walk prior to connecting with the subject department Head. This was agreed to be a good extension to the scheme which would provide a general context. It was noted that the next window for link meetings would be June / July, but the committee agreed with Mr Thompson that for a variety of reasons continuation of the scheme should be deferred to resume in the autumn term, 2021. The student focus forums could be set up prior to the summer holiday if possible. **ACTION: The updated protocol would be tweaked as discussed and presented to the full Governing Body for approval.**
 - 8.2. **Link governors – follow up on visits, reports and planning:** There were no reports to be considered and planning had been covered in the previous item.
 - 8.3. **Committee Terms of Reference:** A draft update had been included in the papers for the meeting for routine review. The draft was agreed subject to the addition of Catholic Schools’

inspections at 3.10.

Revised draft to be recommended for approval to the full Governing Body on 6th July 2021 and immediate adoption.

- 8.4. **Governance Self-Assessment process & initial thoughts for focus morning (Sat 9th Oct 2021).**
A provisional programme was outlined to include the College Chaplain on Chaplaincy and Catholic Ethos to lead on to an opportunity for governors to consider progress towards refreshing / relaunching the EDI strategy. Mr Sheta proposed that time should be spent discussing academisation and revisiting the mission statement as well as the annual self-assessment of the effectiveness of governance. It was hoped that the morning could take place “in-person” followed by lunch.
- 8.5. **Governors’ Award to Students:** It was noted, in her absence, that Mrs Meier intended to propose that governors should sponsor an award for students and would present this for discussion. In principle her idea was readily supported.
9. **Effectiveness of committee:** Mrs Lewis would create and circulate an online questionnaire / survey post-meeting for completion and return.
10. **Risk Management:** No new risks or modifications to existing risks on the register were identified.
11. **Any Other Business:** Mr Sheta reflected on the current extra workload on teaching staff and it was agreed he would send a message of thanks on behalf of the Governing Body for Mr Thompson to pass on.
12. **Dates of meetings for 2020 – 2021:** Meeting dates were agreed:
Tuesday 12th October 2021
Tuesday 1st February 2022
Wednesday 15th June 2022

The meeting closed at 7.07pm

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____