

**Tuesday 10th October 2023, 5.30pm
Remote Online Meeting**

Members:

Dave Navarro – Foundation Governor/Chair of the Committee
Kate Bainbridge – Co-opted Governor/Mental Health Link Governor
Paddy Rowe – LA Governor
Nader Sheta – Foundation Governor/Chair of Governors
Keni Thomas – Foundation Governor
Chukwuweta Uraih – Foundation Governor
Graham Thompson – Principal
Sarah Medicoff – Foundation Governor

Apologies:

Michael Belfourd – Foundation Governor

Inn attendance:

Katy Townsend – Associate Director for Digital Innovation
Ms Karen Foan - Associate Principal
Clare Baskott - Clerk to Governors

Quorum: Three Governors and the Principal

Minutes

Item 1 Opening Prayer

The Chair of the Committee opened the meeting at 5:35pm
The Principal led the meeting in prayer.
Apologies were received from Michael Belfourd.

Item 2 To elect the Vice Chair of the Committee

Nader Sheta was elected as Vice Chair of the Committee with a two-year term of office.

Item 3 Declarations of interest – None

The Chair of the Committee informed the Clerk that he had an additional Declaration of Interest to add to the register. **Clerk to add to the Register. Action: Clerk.**

Item 4 Minutes of previous meeting, 13th June 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and will be added to GovernorHub for the Chair of the Committee to electronically sign. **Action: Clerk/Chair of the Committee.**

Item 5 Matters Arising for this meeting not on the agenda

None.

Item 6 Digital Learning Innovation Strategy: update and impact – Katy Townend - Associate Director for Digital Innovation

The Associate Director for Digital Innovation gave an overview of the Digital Learning Innovation Strategy. The college had recently purchased additional iPads and departmental device trolleys and was looking at innovative ways to use them. Feedback had been positive from both staff and students.

Heads of Departments were setting themselves digital target and teams were sharing details of innovative websites. The college was also looking at setting up an SFX App and streamlining digital processes. Fewer students were now able to purchase iPads due to the cost-of-living crisis.

Chukwuweta Uraih joined the meeting at 5:45pm.

Governor questions: Regarding the changes to KCSiE 2023 and filtering and responsibilities, how confident are you that you have oversight of this?

Response: We have the SmoothWall filtering system in place and monitoring is a key part of the college's safeguarding process. Purchased iPads are monitored on the system until students leave the college.

Governor question: Does the college have insurance for the devices and have there been any issues in the past?

Response: We have had occasional instances of devices being damaged. Our insurance covers broken screens and is also part of the procurement package. We also have wider college insurance.

A discussion took place about some schools being refused insurance due to the high number of claims. The Associate Director for Digital Innovation explained that fewer devices were being taken home to reduce this issue.

Governor question: Can students use the devices outside of the classroom e.g., in the library?

Response: Yes, but the devices are managed by us, so that we know where the devices are.

The Associate Director for Digital Innovation explained that students who were on a bursary were given personal devices. Other students were able to loan devices for £75, £50 of which was refundable when students left the college.

The Committee thanked the Associate Director for Digital Innovation for the update.

The Associate Director for Digital Innovation left the meeting at 5:49pm

Item 7 Quality of Provision (improvement and outcomes: Principal/Vice Principal) Outcomes 2023 [Results Commentary was circulated to all governors, 11th September 2023]

The Associated Principal (KF) gave an update on the headline data.

The achievement rate for 2022/23 was 89.2%, which was 3.2% above national for 2018/19. The college was awaiting some exam re-marks and the finalised achievement rate was expected to be 89-90%.

The Associate Principal gave an overview of achievement levels by groups as outlined in the report. There had been a dip in grades A* to E and A* to B. It was believed that some students had received slightly elevated Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) and had not actually been at the required level to have taken some A Levels, which had resulted in some students failing subjects.

The Associate Principal gave an overview of subjects and results as outlined in the report.

Governor question: You have identified Maths as an area of weakness – what can be done to make improvements?

Response: Our approach in the past has been that any students who join the college and who had not reached a GCSE grade four was to put them in for a re-sit. If they come in with a Grade 2, they would be better doing a full year before sitting the exam. This does not affect GCSE English in the same way. We are linking with the Collective Collective to discuss strategies, best practice and ways forward.

Governor question: With the students who were un-graded at A Level, were they on the wrong courses?

Response: There were several students accessing courses because of TAGs, which they ordinarily would not have been able to access - their grades were inflated due to TAGs. We did not alter our entry requirements and gave students the benefit because of the impact of Covid. However, we now realise that we should have reassessed our entry requirements. Also, we did not enter as many students into AS exams as we should have, to give us a better indication of their A Level results.

Governor question: What is the College's Fitness to Study policy?

Response: The Fitness to Study policy, is the colleges' policy for students who are not able to study e.g. due to mental health issues. If students have had extended periods of absence due to illness, the policy supports the college and students, so that students are not pressurised. It may result in student's not entering their final exams. The policy protects the college and students.

Governor question: Are the new attendance strategies having a positive impact?

Response: So far, attendance is good. We have adapted our existing attendance strategies. In the past, because we had attendance officers, there was a danger of Teachers not taking responsibility for attendance. This year; Teachers are responsible for targeting students with poor attendance with a new centralised system. Attendance Officers make the appointments with Heads of House, parents and students and it is already having a positive impact.

Governor question: Is there a link between ungraded results and attendance?

Response: We are going to look at the link between un-graded outcomes and attendance, to assess the impact. 90% of the cases poor attendance were part of the student's past education history. In the past students were referred to Recovery Education, but if they did not attend, this was not followed up. Our new process will pick up these issues.

The Committee thanked the Principal, Associate Principal and all staff for supporting the pupils and for the excellent results.

Item 7.2 College QuIP with summary of key emerging issues (*paper*)

The Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Associate Principal invited questions.

A discussion took place about the issue of some parents voicing concerns that T Levels would not allow students to progress to university. It was noted that many schools were often promoting negative messages about T Levels. The Principal reported that the College had been awarded a small budget from the DfE for marketing budget to promote T Levels and there will be a heavy presence on T Levels on the college's open day.

Governor question: Is there clear information on the website about T Levels?

Response: Yes, there is clear information on the website. The main issue is what schools are saying to students and parents about T Levels. We are now targeting students for T Levels who would have done A Levels in the past. The T Level standards is for students who have achieved a grade four or higher at English or Maths.

Inspection

The Principal reported that an Ofsted inspection was imminent, and the college was continuing to prepare for the inspection. A Safeguarding Audit had recently taken place.

College Collective and EQR update

The Principal reported the college was part of the College Collective, which was linked to the Association of Colleges. Senior staff in the Collective were trained to advise colleges in key areas of concern. The college had asked for support in GSE Maths, which was being led by the New City College. Suffolk New College will be leading Student Well-Being.

External Quality Review

Four member of staff were trained as External Quality Reviewers under the Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges programme.

The College had requested deep dives in Performing Arts and Sociology, both departments were strong and it was hoped that the review will assess the reasons why the departments were performing so well.

The Quality Morning was scheduled to take place on Friday 24th November 2023 from 9am – 1pm and all Governors were invited to attend. Clerk to send calendar invites.

Action: Clerk.

Item 8 The Student Experience: Principal/Vice Principal

The Student Experience report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Principal gave an overview of the report. The overall satisfaction rate was 80% for Year 13 and 86% Year 12. The Principal was meeting with Heads of Departments to discuss the outcomes and to assess strengths and weaknesses.

Governor question: Are there many subjects which students enjoy but which have lower results?

Response: Physics is one of those subjects, it is a small cohort but results were not strong. The Level Three IT had good results, but the student experience does not reflect that. It may be that we need to find ways to add variety to these subjects. We intend to set up focus groups to look at the issues.

The Principal reported that there had been a trend in the survey about Teachers not checking student's learning and understanding and this will be added to the Quality Improvement Plan.

Item 9 Staff Survey: Principal

The Staff Survey had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Principal gave an update. The college was pleased with the positive response and the survey had been benchmarked against other colleges and was in the higher percentiles. 96% of staff reported that they were proud to be a member of staff. Safeguarding and well-being were regarded as positive. The scores had improved in most areas. It was agreed that it was an excellent tool for recruiting new staff to the college.

Item 10 Governor College Engagement: Discussion and feedback on recent activity

It was agreed that the Chair of Governors will undertake a Science Link Governor visit. It was noted that Chukwuweta Uraih had declared an interest in the Business Link Governor role.

It was agreed that the Clerk will set up a file for Governor visit reports. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 11 Artificial Intelligence in education: Discussion

A discussion took place about Artificial intelligence in education and the benefits it could provide to assist Teachers were their workload. The Principal reported that the Headteacher at Epsom College was scheduled to talk about AI at a conference in November and the impact AI will have on staff and students in the future.

Item 12 Effectiveness of committee: online questionnaire / survey post-meeting for completion and return

Clerk to send out the online questionnaire. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 13 Risk Management: Have governors identified any new risks or modifications to existing risks on the register?

A discussion took place about the on-going national Teacher recruitment and retention crisis. It was agreed that this will be reviewed by the Audit Committee. Clerk to add to the agenda. **Action: Clerk.**

A discussion took place about ways to attract new candidates into the teaching profession. The Principal reported that the college paid for the Gold package on TES to ensure job adverts were more prominent in the listings to attract candidates.

It was agreed that the college should also highlight the staff survey and the well-being opportunities the college provides to potential staff.

Item 14 Any Other Business

The Chair of Governors and the Principal paid tribute to Paddy Rowe, whose term of office was due to expire on 20th November 2023, after twelve years' service. The Chair of Governors thanked Paddy for her immense contribution to the Governing Body.

Paddy Rowe paid tribute to the College and Governing Body and thanked the college and Governing Body for their support during her tenure.

Item 15 Dates of next meetings

- Tuesday 1st February 2024 at 5:30pm
- Tuesday 11th June 2024 at 5:30pm

The meeting closed at 7:02pm.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Actions:

1. The Chair of the Committee informed the Clerk that he had an additional Declaration of Interest to add to the register. **Clerk to add to the Register. Action: Clerk.**
2. The Quality Morning was scheduled to take place on Friday 24th November 2023 from 9am – 1pm and all Governors were invited to attend. Clerk to send calendar invites. **Action: Clerk.**
3. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and will be added to GovernorHub for the Chair of the Committee to electronically sign. **Action: Clerk/Chair of the Committee.**
4. It was agreed that the Clerk will set up a file for Governor visit reports. **Action: Clerk.**
5. **Effectiveness of committee: online questionnaire / survey post-meeting for completion and return**
Clerk to send out the online questionnaire. **Action: Clerk.**