



GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 19 December 2017

Present:	Mr S Holderness (<i>in the chair</i>)	Vice-Chair of Governors
	Mr J Bagley	Principal
	Ms N Cuffy	Governor
	Ms S Gannon	Staff Governor
	Mr H Hadani	Governor
	Ms P Hamer	Staff Governor
	Ms J Rossa	Governor
	Mr H Solanki	Parent Governor
	Mr R Wood	Governor
In Attendance:	Mr H Ravat	Vice-Principal Resources
	Mr R Mansfield	Clerk

Ref.		Action
B/17/74	<p>Item 1 – Attendance and Membership Matters:</p> <p><i>1.1 Apologies for Absence</i> Apologies for absence were received from John Kirk, Margo Moore, Ozlinah Moyo and Alishah Touseef. The meeting was declared quorate. John Kirk had sent a message of best wishes for the coming festive season and thanks to everyone for their contributions during a challenging year. Steve Holderness took the chair.</p> <p><i>1.2 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items</i> Patsy Hamer declared an interest in agenda item 6.2.</p> <p><i>1.3 Governor Vacancies and Appointments</i> Robert Mansfield reported that the Search & Remuneration Committee had met immediately prior to the meeting of the Board. The term of office of Harnish Hadani was due to expire at the end of the month. Given in particular his excellent contribution as Chair of the Audit Committee, the Search & Remuneration Committee had had no hesitation in recommending that he should be appointed for a further</p>	

term. Harnish Hadani had indicated that he was willing to continue his service as a governor.

The meeting unanimously reappointed Harnish Hadani to serve as a College Governor for a further period of four years, ending 31 December 2022.

B/17/75 Item 2 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising:

2.1 Minutes of Meeting on 23 November 2017

The minutes of the meeting on 23 November 2017 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by Steve Holderness.

2.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Actions specified in the minutes were reviewed; all had been taken as required or were in hand.

B/17/76 Item 3 – Principal's Report:

James Bagley presented an oral report supported by slides, comprising an overview of progress aligned with the Common Inspection Framework.

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

He outlined continuing action to develop himself as Principal and excellence in middle managers. Quality Monitoring Meetings were almost completed. Marina Gaze would visit in January to validate the Self-Assessment Report and assist with preparation for inspection.

Outcomes for Learners

The Standards & Quality Committee would receive data from Key Assessment Point 2 at its next meeting. BTEC mark books had now been entered into Cedar. The timetable for A2 mock examinations had been completed.

Teaching Learning and Assessment

James Bagley presented an overview of recent and ongoing action to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Evidence of improvement in all areas except one (for which there were particular reasons) between Key Assessment Points 1 and 2 suggested that the action was having a positive impact.

There was then a considerable discussion on this section of the report, during which College leadership was challenged on several issues. Jackie Rossa said that much of what was reported appeared positive, but clearer evidence of impact on processes was required. Steve Holderness wanted to know how many teachers were struggling to cope with the changes

required. James Bagley said that most instances of difficulty had now been effectively addressed. Steve Holderness wanted to understand the focus of interventions such as learning walks. Jackie Rossa wanted to know the nature of the support provided to teaching staff. James Bagley described the range of interventions and methods of gathering intelligence, which in turn led to feedback and action planning and monitoring. Steve Holderness asked how staff were responding to this. James Bagley described the College as being 'on a journey', with staff now appearing to be more open. Sarah Gannon stressed the importance of positive feedback, as opposed to 'naming and shaming'. Jackie Rossa said that feedback should focus on learners and the impact on them of teachers' actions. James Bagley stressed that a triangulated approach was being used, drawing on data, observations, and the views of students and Heads of Department etc.

Jackie Rossa asked whether the College was alert to anomalies and stressed the importance of developing wider skills in learners, not just the ability to pass examinations. James Bagley said that data at the five assessment points now built up a comprehensive picture of each student's journey. Ralph Wood said he had been pleased to hear how College values had been a focus of one of the learning walks.

Ralph Wood asked for clarification of staff reactions. Sarah Gannon said that staff had been taken by surprise that a RAG rating system had been used for lesson observations and that this had adversely affected morale. She said that reassurance had been subsequently provided and grievances had been aired. However she felt that the lesson observation policy needed further reconsideration to make it more supportive.

Ralph Wood said that an appropriate balance was necessary between accountability and support. Sarah Gannon saw the priority as boosting confidence and morale. Steve Holderness asked how the difficulty described might have been avoided. Sarah Gannon said she was not advocating a softer touch. The coincident timing of lesson observations and the OfSTED Monitoring Visit had been unhelpful as the required lesson planning had greatly added to teachers' workloads. James Bagley noted that evidence of planning was absolutely critical, irrespective for visits by OfSTED. Jackie Rossa agreed and said that well-planned lessons should not require huge amounts of paperwork. She asked whether staff were spending time on planning lessons or on writing lesson plans, as a 'cut and paste' approach should often be possible for parts at least of the latter. Staff needed to focus on the right things. James Bagley said he made no apology for stating that

remaining a Grade 4 college was not an option. Jackie Rossa challenged whether staff properly understood how much paperwork was expected of them in planning lessons. Nelista Cuffy said that what was needed was a clear understanding of the basics, rather than detailed prescription. OfSTED needed to see evidence of progress by the College. Sarah Gannon said that the initial question had been about the lesson observation process. Many of the earlier problems had been resolved, and the situation was better now. The approach taken in the current year had been different. There had been a fear of 'grading by colours'. Nelista Cuffy said that clear communication about such matters was critical. Jackie Rossa asked whether this fear persisted. James Bagley said that the College had received prior feedback from Marina Gaze and the matter had been discussed in advance with Heads of Department, some of whom (but not all) had communicated well to their teams. There would be no further use of RAG rating. Steve Holderness expressed some concern because he found RAG rating easy to understand and governors needed a clear portrayal of 'how things were going in the classroom'. Jackie Rossa advised the meeting that 'home grown systems' were likely to attract the attention of OfSTED, which might then seek to test them. Steve Holderness repeated that governors needed to know where there were problems and how extensive these were. James Bagley said that the College's external advisors had over recent months validated and always confirmed the College's assessments. Sarah Gannon said that staff needed to know that the RAG ratings had been abandoned. James Bagley said that a paper on this had recently gone through the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee. If the paper was not public knowledge he asked Sarah Gannon to let him know. He thanked Sarah Gannon for her frankness in the discussion.

SG

16-19 Study Programmes

James Bagley described further recent progress in respect of gifted and talented provision and work experience. The results of an audit of work experience, to be undertaken in December 2017, would be brought to the next meeting of the Standards & Quality Committee.

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

Student attendance was continuing to run at 93% (an improvement of seven percentage points year-on-year), despite the adverse effects of recent weather and the high volume of unauthorized absences for family reasons. Sarah

Gannon said that the clarity of the guidance on how to respond to such requests had been welcomed. James Bagley assured the meeting that his own response was invariably a strong letter advising why such absences were detrimental. He then outlined plans for student surveys, celebration assemblies, safeguarding and Prevent.

Provision for High Needs Learners

The College had 62 students with an Education, Health & Care Plan. An action plan was in place following visits to study best practice in local specialist schools. Better integrated support and improved monitoring had been implemented.

Traineeships

Action to improve traineeships had included arranging early visits from providers and increasing work experience hours. The planning and scrutiny of work had also been strengthened.

The meeting received the Principal's Report.

B/17/77

Item 4 – Curriculum and Quality Issues:

4.1 Whole College Self-Assessment Report

James Bagley presented the College Self-Assessment Report. This was to be externally validated during Marina Gaze's next visit to the College in January 2018.

The meeting received the Self-Assessment Report.

4.2 Notes of the Performance Improvement Group 12 December 2017

In the absence of John Kirk, Robert Mansfield presented the notes of the meeting of the Performance Improvement Group on 12 December 2017. At that meeting it had been agreed, with the full support of Lisa Hawes, to 'sign off' the Post-Inspection Action Plan and to monitor progress henceforward against the Self-Assessment Report Action Plan. The Performance Improvement Group had now stood down until such time as the Standards & Quality Committee should define a fresh remit.

The meeting received the notes of the Performance Improvement Group.

B/17/78

Item 5 – Student Issues:

5.1 Minutes of the Student Affairs Committee 27 November 2017

In the absence of the Student Governors, Robert Mansfield presented the minutes of the meeting of the Student Affairs Committee on 27 November 2017. There had been lively

discussion of the topics prioritized by the Student Executive Team in advance of the meeting: enrolment, early teaching and learning experience, the social calendar and the canteen. Ralph Wood asked how news of James Bagley's appointment as Principal had been communicated to students, as it had been stated that some students were unaware of this. James Bagley listed the media used and said that he had invited suggestions on how this could have been handled better. No suggestions had yet been received. Jackie Rossa asked for clarification of the reference to late feedback from teachers. James Bagley said that the comment was specific to one student in one area. Jackie Rossa asked for clarification of the reference to a shortage of computers. Patsy Hamer said that in the current year such comments generally referred to a shortage of laptops that students could take round the College for the whole day. Robert Mansfield said that the particular instance in the minutes appeared to be an impromptu comment from one of the student representatives, who had been advised in the first instance to take this up with his teacher. This issue had not been included on the list previously identified by students. Jackie Rossa said that she found such impromptu comments often to be the most revealing. In the absence of the Student Governors it was agreed that it was hard to substantiate or move forward the issues recorded in the minutes.

The meeting received the minutes of the Student Affairs Committee.

B/17/79

Item 6 – Estates, Finance and Staffing Issues:

6.1 Minutes of Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee 5 December 2017

Robert Mansfield explained that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee on 5 December 2017 mirrored those of the Audit Committee on the same date. The latter appeared as agenda item 8.1.

The meeting received the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee.

6.2 Support Staff National Pay Settlement

(Patsy Hamer took no part in the discussion of this item.)

Hamid Ravat presented a letter setting out details of the national pay settlement for support staff for 2017/2018. National pay settlements were followed by about 90% of colleges, exceptions being often on the grounds of affordability. The increase agreed was within the College's budget. Steve Holderness then proposed and Ralph Wood seconded the adoption of the national pay settlement for

support staff. This was approved. It was also agreed that the Chair and/or Vice-Chair should take Chair's action regarding the adoption of the national pay settlement for teachers, as it was understood that consultation on a national award of similar size was expected shortly to be concluded. Hamid Ravat advised the meeting that some colleges had for financial reasons not allowed progression payments in the current year.

The meeting unanimously approved (with staff governors abstaining) the adoption of the national pay settlement for support staff and authorized Chair's action in respect of the national settlement for teachers, once agreed.

B/17/80

Item 7 – Marketing Issues:

There was nothing to report pending completion of a combined Admissions and Marketing Plan for 2017/2018.

B/17/81

Item 8 – Governance Issues:

8.1 Minutes of the Audit Committee 5 December 2017

Harnish Hadani presented the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee on 5 December 2017. This had been a joint meeting with the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. The main items of business had been the Annual Report & Accounts for 2016/2017 and the management report of the financial statements and regularity auditors. The Committee had also considered the latest version of the risk register. These items constituted the next agenda items. All had been commended to the Board for appropriate action.

The meeting received the minutes of the Audit Committee.

8.2 Annual Report and Accounts 2016/2017

Hamid Ravat presented the Annual Report and Accounts for 2016/2017. The auditors had issued an unqualified report. The statement of comprehensive income was therefore in line with the previous draft accounts, as the auditors had made no adjustments, and showed a book profit on the sale of the Blackbird Road Land. The balance sheet remained strong. The year end cash position was £2.7 million after a net outflow of about £100K over the year. He agreed with Steve Holderness that there had been a substantial rise in staff costs, mainly as a result of uncontrolled growth. Steve Holderness emphasized the importance of achieving savings in order to meet the reduction in funding of £1.5 million expected in 2018/2019. Nelista Cuffy then proposed and Harnish Hadani seconded the approval of the Annual Report and Accounts.

The meeting unanimously approved the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/2018.

8.3 Letters of Representation

Hamid Ravat reported that the two matters outstanding in the auditors' management report at the time of the joint meeting on 5 December 2017 of the Audit Committee and the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee had subsequently been resolved. The management letters were therefore ready for signature by Steve Holderness, in the absence of John Kirk. The report described unadjusted items, which were below the threshold of materiality. These had been thoroughly scrutinised on 5 December 2017. The auditors had raised no issues of propriety or regularity. Ralph Wood congratulated Hamid Ravat and the Finance team on another clean set of accounts. Harnish Hadani then proposed and Patsy Hamer seconded the approval of the letters of representation.

The meeting unanimously approved the signing of the letters of representation.

8.4 Risk Register

Robert Mansfield presented the list of risks in the risk register with the highest residual scores. The profile of these risks was little changed from previous reports, although the scores for some had been increased in the light of the College's circumstances. Ralph Wood asked for clarification of the risk of further decline in student numbers. Hamid Ravat said that the situation would probably start to become clearer from January 2018. The College expected numbers to grow at a controlled pace over the next few years to around 1,500. The demographic outlook would soon also become favourable. James Bagley said that at the recent Open Day attendance had reduced but the learners attending had shown much more commitment to the College. In response to a question from Steve Holderness he advised the meeting that there had been some evidence of negativity as a result of the OfSTED Inspection Report, but strong approval of the action being taken by the College. There had also been evidence of concern about joining colleges in the course of merging.

The meeting received the risk register.

B/17/82

Item 9 – Dates and Times of Next Meetings:

The dates and times of the next meetings were confirmed as:

- Saturday 20 January 2018 at 9.00 a.m. at the College (training session)
- Thursday 8 March 2018 at 5.30 p.m. at the College (Board meeting).

B/17/83 | **Item 10 – Any Other Business:**

There was no other business. Steve Holderness thanked everyone for their contributions and wished them well for Christmas and the New Year.

Staff Governors then left the meeting, which remained quorate, prior to consideration of a confidential matter considered by the Search & Remuneration Committee. The discussion is recorded separately in a confidential minute ref. B/17/84 (Conf.)