

STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00pm on 31 October 2016

Present:	S Daley (Chair) J Winter	A Maltpress (Vice Chair) N Savvas	K Points
In Attendance:	R Carter, Chair C Higgins R Kirk, AP QI	K Golding C Shaw, VP S&LS J Bridges (Clerk)	K Heathcote L Johnson, VP C&Q

Members confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to the items of this agenda.

1 Election of Chair and a Vice Chair

The Corporation reviewed the appointments of Committee Chair and Vice Chairs at the 14 July 2016 meeting. S Daley remains Chair and A Maltpress as Vice Chair to the Standards and Excellence Committee. The Committee confirmed the appointments **proposed** by N Savvas and **seconded** by J Winter.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Gazzard, R Sadler and L Moody. Apologies for absence from non-committee members who were invited to attend the meeting included R Inman, C Higgins, S Clarke, S Howard, S Healey Pearce, D Wildridge and J Bloomfield.

3 Minutes of the meetings held on 14 June 2016

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record subject to amending the word 'update' to read 'updated' in the second paragraph of item 4 on page 1 of the minutes.

4 Matters Arising

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

The Committee was pleased to learn that the new 'Spotlights' process to replace the annual staff appraisal format has been rolled out. While it is not fully deployed electronically the new system will be used to measure performance, progress and individual targets throughout the year rather than the former ClearVision static approach that is only utilised and maintained once in the year. Currently 'Spotlights' is being completed offline using a Microsoft Word template but will eventually be moved onto an electronic process using Folio.

5 Committee Terms of Reference

Each Committee is asked at their first meeting in the academic year to review and approve its Terms of Reference. There were no proposed amendments to the terms. However the Chair challenged how the Committee could achieve the third bulleted point which outlines that in the context of the overall educational character and strategy determined by the Corporation, the Committee shall consider the breadth and scope, range, adequacy, quality and efficiency of the curriculum offer; the educational needs of the communities served and how these are reflected in key strategies; development of the curriculum/range of offer by the College; and determine and update relevant strategies. Members were in agreement that this work is all part of the Curriculum Strategy of the College and should feature as a substantive item at the Governors' Strategic Conference in January 2017 rather than remain as a requirement of the Committee under the

Action

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terms of reference. The Committee will monitor progress of the strategy as part of its ongoing responsibilities. The Clerk will remove the term from the document and add it to the agenda planning for the Conference.

6 National Student Survey Results and Analysis

At the last meeting the Committee asked for an IQR of HE and an update on the progress of the ISS survey as members were concerned about some low satisfaction rates. Since that time the NSS Survey results have been published and have picked up the same metrics and issues that fell out of the ISS. The Committee asked for assurance that the actions to improve the issues of the ISS and the NSS surveys would redress dissatisfaction and have a positive impact for the students on programme now.

The key outcomes from the analysis of the surveys is that there are four areas that need to be addressed across the HE provision; feedback on my course is prompt; feedback on my work has help me clarify things; I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies; and the library resources and services are good enough for my needs.

The Committee had been most concerned in the past with the poor survey results around prompt feedback to students. The Assistant Principal for Higher Education explained that some of this negative response was due to how the question has been asked in the survey and interpreted by students and it is recognised that more explanation to students is needed to ensure that they understand the range of formats feedback can take and can recognise it.

The Assistant Principal for Higher Education is developing an online progress monitoring system to ensure that student progress is being recorded and regularly monitored to ensure that students are being kept on programme, to task and up to speed with the course content. Feedback therefore would be given over the duration of the programme rather than just at the end of an assignment/module/course when there is little that the student can change or improve upon, which is the case currently.

An HE Student Voice forum will encourage students to get together to share their experiences, good or bad, and bring ideas for solution to the attention of the provision at the College.

HE Forum meetings for staff have been introduced on a monthly basis for the purpose of sharing best practice and updating. HE teaching staff take part in the College observation process and more is being put in place to support the outcomes of those observations; peer support and mentoring for example and proper assessment of the ability and skills of staff.

There appears to be a lack of understanding by students around library resources. The Committee questioned whether this low response area was about access to resources but the Assistant Principal for Higher Education confirmed that this was more about what a library is perceived to be by students. In reality students have access to a whole host of learning materials in support of their course but they do not necessarily recognise such resource in the sense that this is a 'library'. This will be picked up at induction and expectations met from the outset. It is also planned that feedback and library topics will be covered as part of the employability module of a course so that all students know what to expect from their programme, where to go, how to access things and in what format to expect particular communications and updates about their progress and/or their course.

The next report from the Assistant Principal for Higher Education will detail the progress made against the action plan of the combined ISS and NSS survey results.

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The Committee was made aware that there is a growing issue that staff and students feel disadvantaged in relation to the hub in Ipswich and the University of Suffolk at Bury St Edmunds needs to raise awareness of its unique selling points. In response we are now hosting themed HE nights in Edmunds Restaurant to encourage social activities among HE staff and students and working in collaboration with the University of Suffolk to provide a Student Union experience here at Bury St Edmunds. There is a need to get students to take responsibility and a proactive approach to enhancing what Bury St Edmunds has to offer; staff can support activities but the University experience is made by the students so the University of Suffolk Bury St Edmunds is working hard to change the mind set and deliver a better experience for the students here so that they don't feel valued as students of the University.

It was noted that a Task and Finish Group of Governors has been established for the purpose of supporting the growth of the HE provision. The group will focus its attention initially on completing the annual Quality Assurance Assessment Return to HEFCE by 1 December 2016 but will be looking at how to prepare and position the future strategic direction of HE provision.

The Committee was also informed that the former Director of HE, S Steeds, has moved onto a different role in College, Head of Management Information Systems and a new Head of Access and Combined Routes HE, T Locke, has been appointed.

7 2015/16 College Self Assessment Report

Validation of Gradings (Key judgements and sources of evidence):

Governors considered the validation of gradings throughout the SAR taking each chapter in turn to discuss and make comment upon. Governors are usually involved over the summer months in Sector Subject Area Self-Assessment Review meetings. However dates were not communicated this year and therefore the overview on page 12 of the SAR (item h) is to be amended to reflect the actual process this year.

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It was suggested that governors forward any comments around correction of grammar, spelling, typos or general observations for amendment in the document to the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality rather than raise them here at the meeting.

Members

Chapter 4 – Key Judgements by SSA

As detailed on pages 17 to 18. There were no objections raised to the key judgements assumed.

Chapter 6 – Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Pg 21)

This area has been graded overall as Outstanding (grade 1). The justification is that at inspection Ofsted commended senior leaders and governors on setting a clear strategic direction; the College remains financially stable; student recruitment continues to increase; there is evidenced continued improvement in student outcomes, significant achievement on the annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and student satisfaction is high. Governors asked that this section made reference to the systems that have been put in place and enhanced that now underpin the College's capacity to improve. This needs to be brought out as a strength and results of students needs to be at the forefront of this section,

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together with their satisfaction, progress and work with employers. All of this needs to reference the stringent KPIs that governors set and how this contributes as a whole College approach for the benefit of students.

There is a culture of excellence from governance right through to how the site is managed and kept clean which needs to be reflected in this section. The reference to Governors' First Hand week needs to be put into context as this is just one way among many in which governors contribute seamlessly to the college's leadership.

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The fourth bulleted point under the improvement areas is to be amended to reflect that the achievement rates on the resit GCSE maths already exceed National Rates. Governors also asked that the language of this section is reviewed as the five improvement points are more about adding icing to an already outstanding area and should not therefore undermine the grade 1 awarded. The reference to the Gateway Building and the Biomass Boiler in the third bulleted point on page 23 are to be removed as these improvements relate to previous years. Reference to the College's values (on page 13) are to be incorporated into this section also.

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Chapter 7 – Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Pg 24)

This area has been graded overall as Outstanding (grade 1). The justification is that at inspection Ofsted commended senior leaders, managers and governors for the strong focus on sustaining the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; introduction of a risk based approach to observations of Teaching and Learning and Learning Walks, focusing on providing Teaching and Learning Coaches to staff who most require support; 84% good or better teaching and learning grade profile; and they commended the College for the student wrap-around-support approach.

Governors asked that this section is rewritten to reflect the outstanding achievement of students, aspirations and their progression. It needs to echo that the quality of our teaching and learning is outstanding because student achievement is outstanding and this needs to feature in this section.

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Under the improvements section governors asked that the language of the first bulleted point is amended as it suggests that the College does not have a strategy for Teaching, Learning and Assessment when it does but still recognises that it needs to continue to be developed. The second bulleted point is also to be reviewed as it needs to talk more about enhancing the system rather than building on it. This is not just about a high number of outstanding lessons or teachers but more about a process that enables recognition of the areas to improve and provides the support and strategies to enable great teaching.

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It was noted that the first bulleted point at the top of page 26 is to be moved to Chapter 6 Effectiveness of Leadership and Management. Reference is to be made in the improvements section around the need for individualised targets for apprentices as this has been mentioned in the student outcomes section.

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Chapter 8 – Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare (Pg 26)

This area has been graded overall as Outstanding (grade 1). The justification is that attendance has increased across all age groups and subjects, including Maths and English; student behaviour is excellent and there is a high culture of respect; all students have received training in British Values and equality and diversity; and 97% positive destination sustained within 9 months of leaving.

Governors commented that they would like to see more figures expressed in this chapter. For example the third bulleted point should include a percentage figure rather than stating 'a considerable high proportion of learners'. Where there is reference to an improvement we need to quantify by how much i.e. by 5% compared with previous years. Expressions such as 'well above national average' or '10% above national rate' where it can be quantified are to be used. Governors also asked to express that our Safeguarding arrangements are Outstanding rather than effective.

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More reference is to be made in the chapter about our effective relationships with external agencies to support learners and we should place greater emphasis on the exceptional support that students do receive in addition to the wrap around support.

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The third bulleted point of the improvement areas is to be reviewed. Governors asked that this is expressed to read that this is about further developing the whole College approach in place for every learner. This actually is a strength not an improvement. Where possible we should be using data and statistics emphasizing outstanding student achievement. Governors asked that the statements in the SAR are not over cautious and the data hidden in the appended tables are drawn out to the text in the chapters.

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R Kirk joined the meeting at 5.10pm.

Chapter 9 – Outcomes for Learners (Pg 29)

This area has been graded overall as Outstanding (grade 1). The justification is that all results represent continued improvement on Achievement % year on year (except GCSE English which has declined on 2014/15); there are no achievement gaps within groups, classroom learning achievement for those in receipt of High Needs Funding is exceptionally high (96% against NR 82%); and the average grade has increased (value added) to Distinction.

The data table on page 64 (table 1.3) compares the results of West Suffolk College with those Colleges regionally. It was noted that table 1.1 (page 60) does not marry with the data represented in table 1.3 so the data of table 1.1. is to be revisited to ensure that all results have pulled through. The yellow column of the data table is to be removed from table 1.1 as it was noted that the measurement of retention, achievement and success have all changed and retention therefore does not need to be represented in this way. The 'Pass Rate' is now what 'Achievement' was and 'Achievement' is now 'Success'. The 'Pass %' of the 16-18 A/S Level in table 1.2 (bottom of page 60) is to be changed from 0% to 75%.

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Governors asked that the data is commended into the text of the chapters and more emphasis drawn out in the commentary of the three year upward trend of the outcomes for learners. More headlines are to be expressed in the text such as 'the College is the best in the country for x, y and z' or 'is in the top 5% of Colleges for' etc. Governors said that they would like to see more statistics represented in the text and comparisons drawn with previous years and/or with the sector. More value added data is to be included and some points, fourth bulleted point on page 29 for example, are more about the effectiveness of Leadership and Management than Outcomes for Learners.

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The statement about consistency of achievement across all groups by protected characteristics is to be added as a strength to this chapter and perhaps reference to specific improvements by Sector Subject Area should also be referenced; i.e. improved outcomes for learners in Business Management. Perhaps this is an

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area of strength to mention in the Effectiveness of Leadership and Management chapter. Governors asked that this chapter draws out the outstanding outcomes, highlights the data that underpins the judgement, talks about the distance travelled and makes use of comparative data and statements.

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Chapter 10 – Safeguarding (Pg 31)

This area has been graded overall as Outstanding (grade 1). The justification is that the College’s safeguarding arrangements are effective; 100% compliance with safeguarding training for staff and governors has been achieved; and the College has been awarded the Young Adult Carers Gold Award. Governors concurred that this chapter lacks substance and justification for the outstanding grade. Reference to Governor training and representation/Chair of the Safeguarding Board needs to be stated in the chapter. The Vice Principal Student and Learning Support was asked to overhaul this chapter.

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Chapter 11 – 16-19 Study Programmes (Pg 32)

This area had been graded overall as Outstanding (grade 1). The justification is that over 99.5% compliance has been achieved with condition of funding for Maths and English; results continue to improve (retention and pass rates); every student has participated in a significant amount of work (related) achievement; and all students are RAG rated and their progress is closely monitored.

Governors asked that more data from the tables appended to the SAR are brought to the forefront of the chapter. This chapter needs to reflect that the College has met and exceeded the expectations of the requirements for study programmes. The penultimate bulleted point of this chapter (page 34) is to be removed and the language of all other bulleted points to be checked and amended as appropriate using percentages and comparative data wherever possible. References that state ‘some’ are to be quantified or removed.

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Chapter 12 – Adult Learning Programme (Pg 35)

This area has been graded overall as Good (grade 2). The justification is that the College collaborates with JCP (Job Centre Plus) to provide bespoke unemployment training for the unemployed across the county; and ESOL enrolment and assessment processes need to improve in order to raise achievement.

The College enrolled over 400 adults on ESOL qualifications and overall achievement is around 76% against the national rate of 84%. The reason why achievement has not been outstanding is known and there is a need to refocus on the assessment and enrolment of ESOL adult learners to ensure that they are targeted at the correct level of EAL qualification to suit their needs and aspirations.

Governors commented that the typeface in this chapter needs to be consistent with the rest of the report. The penultimate statement on page 35 needs amendment as centres are not maintained in each town in Suffolk. Governors also asked that this chapter makes a statement about when we expect the areas for improvement to impact and move this provision to outstanding. More emphasis about how improvement will be made needs to be detailed in the chapter.

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Chapter 13 – Apprenticeships (Pg 37)

This area has been graded overall as Outstanding (grade 1). The justification is the high and increasing achievement rates of students; and the high levels of employer satisfaction.

Assessments are no longer front loaded which has positively impacted achievement and there is an improved student progress tracking system in place with the introduction and use of OneFile. Governors asked that this chapter includes reference to Maths and English and suggested that the fifth bulleted point (page 37) is reviewed as it makes reference to 'employers having exceedingly high expectations of each other' and it's unclear what is meant by this statement.

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Chapter 14 – Traineeships (Pg 39)

This area has been graded overall as Outstanding (grade 1). The justification is that achievement rates for work preparation and Maths and English are significantly above national rate; and the College holds excellent links with stakeholders, local and national employers.

Governors asked that this chapter quantifies the statistics of Maths and English and emphasizes the success nationally of the traineeship offer at the College. Achievement rates (85%) should also be drawn out in this section.

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Chapter 15 – High Needs Learners (Pg 41)

This area has been graded overall as Outstanding (grade 1). The justification is the excellent outcomes for learners with SEND, including positive progression; and the robust, person centred wrap-around-support provided to students.

Governors made the point that this chapter does not mention how the College identifies the needs of learners and utilises the funding effectively. There has been a big transition onto ECHPs for students and the College has been heralded as an exemplar in this process by the Local Authority. This chapter also needs to reference our relationship as a co-sponsor of the multi academy trust; SENDAT and perhaps there is a case to mention in Outcomes for Learners (chapter 9, page 29) about the achievement of the number of students with declared mental health issues.

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Chapter 3 – Grade Profile Summary (Pg 14)

The grade profile summary is proposed as grade 1 overall, grade 1 for 16-19 Study Programmes, grade 2 for Adult Learning Programmes, grade 1 for Apprenticeships, grade 1 for Traineeships and grade 1 for High Needs Funding.

Governors supported the grade profile recognising that the majority of core students achieved their qualification but not all adults did. Maths has moved to a strength for the College Looking back to a couple of years' ago the College was a grade 2 provider and now is a solid grade 1 albeit with recognition that there are still some areas for improvement. Results are evidence that the College can use to substantiate a confident grade 1 to Ofsted Inspectors. It was noted that the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality has invited inspectors back to the College for a best practice visit and there may be opportunity to suggest that they revisit their recent inspection judgement.

Chapter 16 – Completed Quality Improvement Plan 2015/16 (Pg 43)

Governors were satisfied that the Quality Improvement Plan for the 2015/16 academic year was complete.

Chapter 17 – Quality Improvement Plan for 2016/17 (Pg 50)

The 2016/17 plan derived from the SAR was agreed by governors. Progress against the plan will be monitored in year by the Standards and Excellence Committee.

Chapter 5 – Overall Effectiveness (Pg 19)

Governors supported the grade 1 overall effectiveness judgement.

8 Any other business

The Student Governor Election and Nomination process takes place over weeks commencing 14 and 21 November 2016. The successful candidate will be invited to attend the next meeting of this Committee before the Corporation approves their appointment at the meeting to be held in December 2016.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 29 November 2016 at 4.00pm. Room TG1.16

The meeting closed at 6.20pm