



St Helens College

ST HELENS COLLEGE CORPORATION

**MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE HELD AT
1.00 pm on MONDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2016
IN THE BOARD ROOM, TOWN CENTRE CAMPUS**

MINUTES

MEMBERSHIP:

- * Mrs E Brocklehurst (**Chair**)
- * Dr J Burford
- * Mr N Gribben
- * Mrs S Jee
- * Mr J Middlehurst
- * Mr P Round

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr B Dean, Deputy Principal (Curriculum and Excellence)
Mrs V Roberts, Vice Principal
Mrs C Lascelles, Director of Contracts and Data Analysis
Mr M Hodgetts, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Manager (for Minute Number 870 only)
Mrs J Brothwood, Head of English and maths (for Minute Numbers 870 and 871 only)
Mrs J Greenhalgh, 'A' level Manager (for Minute Number 872 only)
Mr M Kelly, Head of Department, Business and Professional (for Minute Number 974.1 only)
Mrs C Jones, Clerk to the Corporation

Minute 870 was taken as the first item with the details recorded within agenda order

865 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest notified.

866 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness were received from Dr J Burford.

867 NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business notified.

868 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2016

The Minutes of the above meeting were **agreed** and signed as a correct record, subject to the following adjustment:

Minute 855 p2 – English and maths: progress report: to delete the reference to elaboration being required and also the (?) at the end of the action assigned to this minute.

869 MATTERS ARISING

a Minute 855 p2/3 – English and maths: progress report

The Principal's action to raise concession arrangements with the AoC will be progressed separately.

ACTION: Principal: previously identified action

870 TEACHING AND LEARNING OBSERVATION PROFILE: PROGRESS REPORT

Mr M Hodgetts, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Manager, had been invited to today's meeting to provide an update on the observation profile and the impact of marginal gains.

The Committee was reminded that the target for 'outstanding' observations for 2015/16 was 40%. The process of marginal gains was introduced in March 2015 with staff participating through a variety of mechanisms, with the details presented to Governors.

27 of staff who have participated in this process have improved their grades from 'Good' to Outstanding'. Progress over time has proved positive which involves students having their first piece of assessed work and three weeks' of classroom work present in every session. Following a question from the Committee, it was confirmed that 39% of observations are currently graded as Grade 1 'Outstanding'. Following a question from the Committee, it was confirmed that there are no identified trend areas of lower grades and Governors were assured that all staff who are graded 3 or below are assigned with an individual action plan.

The Committee asked about the responses received from students, and it was confirmed that the perception is that there is evidence of improvements coming through the student surveys. The next report on the student-College partnership is to be presented at the next Corporation meeting. Student feedback is also collected as part of the observation process, and modular evaluations are also undertaken which could be further improved. Governors asked that the spoke of the marginal gains wheel be further examined to be less qualitative and more quantitative if possible. The Deputy Principal added that the observation process is externally moderated and that some further OFSTED external work is planned.

The Teaching, Learning observation profile progress report was accepted by the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

Mr M Hodgetts left the meeting at this point and was thanked for his presentation

871 ENGLISH AND MATHS: PROGRESS REPORT

Mrs J Brothwood, the Head of English and maths, had been invited to attend today's meeting to provide a progress report relating to English and maths. This included presentation of the updated action plan which was now reviewed by the Committee.

It was reported that there was significant staff sickness being experienced in maths with temporary staffing arrangements being put in place.

The Committee asked about the change in the start numbers as identified in the report, and the factors that can change the start numbers from month to month were requested as a future report to provide assurances about potential student drop-out rates.

ACTION: Nick Gribben, Vice Principal, to oversee an analysis of the monthly variation in start numbers for English and maths

The Audit Committee Chair reported that the condition of funding was the subject of an internal audit report presented at today's earlier held meeting of the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee had been notified of the potential financial impact of students who did not attend English and maths as part of their vocational programme, which, in accordance with the condition of funding requirements, involves the loss of funding for the whole programme and not just for the English and maths elements.

The Committee asked about the observation process for English and maths, and whether a higher focus should be made on English and maths. Assurances were given that English and maths staff have been included within the process. The Head of English and maths reported that although English has improved, there is further work to do in maths. Both areas have been recently strengthened with two additional managers, one for English and one for Maths, However, it was acknowledged that staffing for these two areas remains a continuous challenge. Controlled assessments were currently underway and the mock GCSE results were currently being analysed with HoDs. The mock examination results will be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

ACTION: Nick Gribben, Vice Principal, to present the mock GCSE results at the next meeting

The Head of English and maths reported that many strategies are under development to improve attendance with good practice from the sector identified.

The English and maths action plan and progress report was accepted by the Standards and Curriculum Committee, with the revised format commended by Governors.

Mrs J Brothwood left the meeting at this point and was thanked for her presentation

872 'A LEVEL ACADEMY: PROGRESS REPORT

Mrs J Greenhalgh, the 'A' Level Academy Manager, had been invited to attend today's meeting to provide a progress report relating to the 'A' Level Academy.

Team meetings are being held on a weekly basis and these are progressing well, and provides an opportunity to drill-down into attendance, causes for concern and positive stories. Overall attendance still does not meet expectations which was currently reported at 93.5%. Retention is currently reported at 93.8%. of the 15 staff who teach in the academy, 12 staff have been observed with 6 grade 1s and 6 grade 2s achieved. Students are receiving their UCAS offers with the details summarised.

The mock examination results from October 2015 were outlined. The national rates for achievements and higher grades will be obtained. Second line marking is in place which is generally a positive picture. The results inform the tracking process and all work is assessed as compared to ALPS grades. Governors asked whether any students would exceed their ALPS grades, and it was confirmed that there is also an aspirational target grade in place for students. The February mock examinations will be scrutinised to ensure confidence around the summer examinations and to provide more accurate projections.

Work experience is planned for the pupils post-examination period for 3 days.

Applications are behind the same time last year but the numbers of offers made has increased this year. The presentation concluded with some highlights, which includes guest speakers, successful trips and positive feedback from some moderation visits.

The 'A' Level Academy progress report was accepted by the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

Mrs J Greenhalgh left the meeting at this point and was thanked for her presentation

873 14-16 ACADEMY: PROGRESS REPORT

This presentation was deferred to the next meeting.

The Principal reported that the headteacher had recently provided a positive update to SLT, with the current predicted grades summarised. There will be a year-end awards celebration, to build on the 6 weekly celebration events. The Governors will be invited to the year-end presentation evening.

874 CURRICULUM AREAS PERFORMING LESS THAN 'GOOD'

874.1 Business and Professional Studies

Mr M Kelly, the Head of Department for Business and Professional Studies had been invited to today's meeting to present an action plan to support an improvement strategy for the Department, which followed a self-assessed grade 3 based upon the 2014/15 outcomes. Each action contained within the plan was summarised for the Committee, which included action to address those courses with five or more enrolments where success rates were below benchmark, with the plan endorsed by Governors as presented.

The Business and Professional Studies action plan was accepted by the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

Mr M Kelly left the meeting at this point and was thanked for his report.

Mrs C Lascelles also left the meeting at this point

875 CORRELATION BETWEEN REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT T,L&A AND PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Mr B Dean, Deputy Principal, presented a report which provided some details to evidence the correlation between requires improvement teaching, learning and assessment and programme performance.

An exercise is underway to include a three-year profile of those staff who had been judged as a grade 3 or 4 lesson observation. The task is difficult in some cases to link to a particular course as it may be taught by a team of staff. Governors were assured that all staff who are graded 3 or below are given an individual action plan.

Following some early analysis, it was perceived that there was not an immediate correlation between the two principles of requires improvement T,L&A and programme performance. The Principal added that the grading should not be based purely on the classroom observation process, as the work undertaken to support students outside of the classroom was just as important. It was agreed that this analysis would continue through the weekly one-to-one meetings with the Deputy Principal and the T,L&A Manager. The importance of learning walks was also emphasised, with short graded learning walks of 3 x 15 minutes rather than 1 x 45 minute graded observation advocated, as based on the OFSTED model, which are no longer graded. Further enhancements to the observation model are in progress.

The report was accepted by the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

876 CURRICULUM PROGRESSION PLANS

Mr N Gribben, Vice Principal, presented 5 curriculum progression plans, which resulted from a planning day held with Heads of Department in November 2016. The plans were linked to the market analysis provided in the Strategic Plan. The exercise had identified gaps in College provision, which would be addressed wherever possible.

The curriculum progression plans were accepted by the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

877 HIGHER EDUCATION

Mrs V Roberts, Vice Principal, presented a report which provided an update on progress towards the Higher Education Strategy.

An increased focus on internal progression has resulted in an increase in internal applications. Planning of the marketing for 2017 starts has now begun with the publication of the 2017 prospectus.

Bursaries to the value of £300 were given to all new full-time students in 2015/16. This will be increased in 2016/17, in line with the agreed increase in full-time fees. Fees and bursaries for 2017/18 will need to be agreed this term in order that an Access Agreement can be submitted to The Office for Fair Access in April.

New consumer legislation was having an impact on information provision, terms and conditions, and complaint handling for all Higher Education providers. Following guidance from the Competition & Markets Authority, the Head of Marketing has produced an action plan to ensure timely compliance with the new legislation.

This matter was discussed by the Committee in detail, which also relates to all College programmes, with SLT requested to review this issue in more detail and to include the auditors in a review within the 2016/17 internal plan.

ACTION: Principal to oversee a review of the impact of the new consumer legislation on the College's information

The Higher Education report was accepted by the Standards and Curriculum Committee with support given by Governors to continue with an increased focus on HE development, recruitment and enhancements in student communication, support, resources and facilities.

Mrs S Jee left the meeting at this point

878 PREVENT

Mr B Dean, Deputy Principal, reported that a focus is being made on embedding the Prevent agenda with students so that they are more fully aware of this important aspect of Safeguarding. This includes maintaining a detailed register of guest speakers visiting the College. Following a question from the Committee, it was confirmed that no guest speakers can visit to speak to students without a member of College staff being in attendance.

The report was accepted by the Standards and Curriculum Committee as presented.

879 URGENT BUSINESS (AS NOTIFIED UNDER MINUTE NUMBER 867 ABOVE)

There were no items of urgent business notified.

880 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: 1.00 pm on Monday 18 April 2016.

KEY OUTCOMES:

TEACHING AND LEARNING OBSERVATION PROFILE: PROGRESS REPORT: The Standards and Curriculum Committee continues to closely monitor teaching and learning observation profile and the impact of Marginal Gains.

ENGLISH AND MATHS REPORT: The Standards and Curriculum Committee continues to closely monitor the progress of English and maths and has requested regular progress reports.

'A' LEVEL ACADEMY: PROGRESS REPORT: The Standards and Curriculum Committee continues to closely monitor the progress of the 'A' Level Academy.

HIGHER EDUCATION: The Standards and Curriculum Committee received a HE progress report, with support given by the Governors to continue with an increased focus on HE development, recruitment and enhancements in student communication, support, resources and facilities.