

**Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting STC20.3 held Thursday 4 March 2021
Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge**

Present: John Godwood (committee Chair), Paul Andrew, Yolanda Botham (Principal), Colin Greenhalgh, Paula Heaney, Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas, Jenny O'Hare, Olivia Palo (part meeting) and Owen Shield

In attendance: Steve Dann (VP), Harriet Riches (Asst Principal), and Chris Childs (AVP)

Clerk: Anne-Marie Diaper

Ref **Actions:**

STC20.3.1 Apologies for Absence

None. *The Clerk lost access to the video-conference at 4.33pm.*

STC20.3.2 Declarations of Interest

None

STC20.2.3 Request for any other business

None

STC20.3.4 Minutes of Standards committee STC20.2 Thursday 26 November 2020

These were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

STC20.3.5 Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda

The committee Chair congratulated Jenny O'Hare on her appointment as Safeguarding Governor.

The committee Chair gave an update on the College self-assessment report (SAR). The Vice-Principal (VP) had sent the draft SAR to representatives of the Standards Committee at the end of the autumn term as arranged. The SAR had then been discussed at a scrutiny meeting between the Principal, Vice-Principal, Chair of the Corporation and Chair of Standards. It had been agreed at that meeting, in the light of the College's current strong focus on providing high quality education throughout the pandemic, to focus on developing the 2020/21 SAR rather than spend more time refining the 2019/20 SAR, and this discussion had been taken forward.

STC20.3.6 Awarding grades in summer 2021

The Clerk re-joined the VC at 4.40pm.

The VP briefed the committee on the college's plans based on DfE policy. He noted that detailed planning relied on further guidance from the awarding bodies, which was still awaited.

A Governor asked about the appeals process to which the VP explained guidance had not yet been published but that appeals, after exhausting the College's processes, would go to the exam boards. He went on to say that equity, standards, and quality of evidence would be taken into account when awarding grades etc.

Governors then asked when students would know what they are going to be assessed on, how that would occur and when, and the evidence base. The VP advised that assessment was to continue next term, but more on this would be known perhaps after Easter, when guidance is published, at which point there would be likely to be clarity on what more needed to be done on key assessments and controls. He reported that the College would be briefing students and parents in the week following this meeting.

Olivia Palo lost access to the VC at 4.48pm.

STC20.3.7 Students' progress

The VP reported on data for Year 1 progress with the overall conclusion of good progress from assessments, with good attendance and retention. With vulnerable students well supported, he reported there were no indicators that group was dropping behind. Year 2 progress grades were being analysed using a mixture of assessments.

There was a Governor question about a statement in the report about progress of students with higher prior attainment and what evidence there was to support that statement. Evidence included data from progress in 2 key assessments, and feedback from the scholars group. A Governor commented about data showing good and improving retention, and there was a question about what was known about leavers' destinations.

STC20.3.8 Quality of teaching & learning

The VP commented that the paper aimed to give the committee a flavour of the quality of teaching and learning and explained that the paper included a range of colleagues' candid comments on the strengths/weaknesses etc.

A Governor asked about remote observations of teaching and learning to inform quality and she raised the issue of cameras, which the meeting agreed was a national and international issue. The meeting went on to discuss engagement, polls, chat, and other ways of testing students' learning from remote lessons.

Ref**Actions:**

A Governor wished to explore the role of Progress Coaches and the consistency of approach across the team and therefore the equality of student experience. The Assistant Principal (AP) was reviewing Progress Coaches' workloads and processes in order to further improve their effectiveness.

The meeting concluded that much work was ongoing to make lessons as engaging as possible and data showed that teachers were communicating well with students and parents.

STC20.3.9 Stakeholder reports

The Principal advised that the main input to the meeting on stakeholders was part of the Quality Strategy paper, and further feedback was available in the 'background information' on portal. There was nothing more to pick up in this item.

STC20.3.10 UCAS 2019 entry and 2020 applications

The AP reported. The paper aimed to present key data of most interest to the committee and to demonstrate differences across years.

The committee asked to explore a little on destinations and the relationships with different universities, and on the proportion of unconditional offers.

A Governor asked about the obvious upward trend of applications, acceptances and rate. The managers explained that misconceptions were being broken down about courses available at University other than degree routes.

STC20.3.11 Safeguarding update

The AP reported that she had followed the usual style of report. She had included a few updates since the last meeting, and the report included approaches taken during lockdown and some ALPS scores. There were no comments on the report. The AP noted that she would be keen to receive feedback on what the committee would like to see included in the report.

The newly appointed Safeguarding Governor had recently completed some training and would soon be meeting with the College DSL.

STC20.3.12 Quality Strategy update

The Principal presented the Quality Strategy advising that the blue sections were recent updates; she asked if Governors had any questions on these.

A Governor had read a great deal of positive information including the parental engagement strategy, information on communications with students and parents, and on measures to support staff with remote teaching.

The managers talked about more student representation on a range of issues including teaching & learning. A series of student focus groups was planned. A Governor commented that she felt she had gained a better understanding of what it was like to be a student at LRSFC this year than last year, partly due to students attending Corporation meetings but also through survey information shared with the committee. The Principal explained that multiple platforms for engaging were being explored, especially systematic tools which seemed most effective.

This section of the meeting closed with a discussion about staff sickness absence rates, which had reduced drastically in lockdown. The managers explained this was due to a range of factors but there was a sense that staff were still attending work and lessons remotely from home where otherwise they may have reported sick had they had to travel into College/work.

STC20.3.13 Committee review of policies and procedures

SEND and Academic support policy: The AP presented this policy for committee approval. The policy included updates on the SEND Code of Practice 2020, and a joined up approach to communications.

The committee Chair commented that overall he felt the policy was overall comprehensive and coherent, including the Governors' role set out in section 4.5. To reflect what Governors currently do, he proposed that something should be added to this section around Governors monitoring the impact of the policy.

Subject to the proposed amendment outlined above, the committee approved the SEND and Academic Support policy.

Fitness to Study policy: The AP presented the policy for committee approval. The committee commented that the policy as presented for approval was considerably different to the previous version. Specialist advice had been sought when developing the policy. The AP explained that the policy aimed to clarify the process and make a commitment to supporting students. She went on to say that she hoped the policy now had a better fit with other relevant policies like 'progression' and 'disciplinary' where there was a need to be able to distinguish between them when supporting students and when treating students equitably.

Ref**Actions:**

The committee highlighted some amendments necessary to better align the main text and the appendices and tables, but commented the policy was overall much improved.

Subject to the further amendments discussed, the committee approved the Fitness to Study policy.

Colin Greenhalgh left the VC at 6.06pm

STC20.3.14 Governance improvement plan (GIP) 2020-21

The Clerk had added comments in the GIP at relevant places for committee consideration/discussion. There were no comments on the GIP until section 4. In terms of reports, a Governor commented that good succinct reports had been included in the main reading for this meeting. Governors were keen for additional background information to continue to be sifted out separately and for the papers to continue presenting key information.

The Governors discussed how the GIP would develop in the current year. The Principal reminded the committee that the newly appointed AP was responsible for work on student experience, behaviour, attitudes and development. Work to develop the Quality Cycle strands of teaching and learning, and guidance and careers was ongoing, to support progress monitoring for both College and Corporation. **The committee agreed that additional text would be added to the GIP for reporting to Board.**

STC20.3.15 Risk

The Clerk had pulled out of the Risk Register into one report all the risks associated with the work of the committee. The committee was content that the business of the committee was sufficiently discussing relevant risks across the year. There were no further comments on the report.

STC20.3.16 Any other business

None. The AP, AVP and staff and student Governors left the meeting at 6.30pm.

STC20.3.13 Date of next meeting

STC20.4 Thursday 6 May 2021, 4.30pm