

Priestley College

Minutes of the Priestley College Governing Body Meeting
held at 5.00pm on Thursday, 5 March 2015
in the Conference Room (P1.16)

PRESENT:	Mr R Haslam	Chair
	Mr D Cathie	Student Member
	Mr B Craven	Student Member
	Mr P Dyke	
	Mr J A Farquharson	
	Mr M W Grant	Principal
	Mrs K Hope	Staff Member
	Mr A Osborne	
	Mr M D Salmon	Staff Member
	Mrs B Scott-Herron	
	Mrs D Stead	
	Mrs S Yates	
	Mr P McMellon	Clerk to the Governing Body
Also in attendance:	Mrs J McCann	Vice Principal (Resources)
	Mr G Contos	Vice Principal (Curriculum & Standards)
	Mr D McGuire	Director of Finance
	Mr T Rawling	Chair of Sir John Deane's College

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Cannell, Mr G Hill, Mr J Monaghan, Mrs C Owen and Ms K Simcock.

Mr A Osborne (Parent Governor), Mrs B Scott-Herron and Mr G Contos were welcomed to their first meeting of the Governing Body.

The Chair explained that Mr T Rawlings (Chair of Sir John Deane's College) was in attendance as part of a 'chair peer assessment' arrangement involved the two Colleges and also Birkenhead Sixth Form College.

Finally, the Chair also congratulated Mr M W Grant at this, his first Governing Body meeting since becoming Principal of the College on 1 January 2015.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2014 were accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. TEACHING LEARNING & ASSESSMENT: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE SEMINAR - REVIEW

The Governing Body examined the report listing the various issues which had been identified at the Seminar (6/7 February 2015) in the course of Governor interaction with students and staff, including during lesson observations.

The Principal confirmed that the staff and students involved in the morning sessions (on campus) had all indicated their appreciation of the involvement and interest of Governors. He then reported on how the matters identified had subsequently been addressed by College Management.

Regarding the afternoon/morning sessions at The Cottons, these had served very effectively in providing a thorough review of the College's Mission and Vision and this would now allow progress in the production of the College's strategic planning documentation (along the new lines previously endorsed by the Governing Body). The Student Members had been particularly impressive in their contributions to the Seminar.

The feedback from individual Governors confirmed that the general format of the Seminar had been appropriate with the off-campus setting for the second part of the event being particularly conducive to strategic planning and development.

Finally, the Principal reminded all Governors of the standing invitation to visit and observe teaching in College. Mr P Dyke and Mr A Farquharson requested an opportunity to visit/observe.

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair included the following in his report:

(i) Peer Reviews – Role of Chair of Governing Body

The Chair advised that the presence of Mr T Rawling (Chair of Governors at Sir John Deane College) related to the peer reviewing arrangements which three local colleges (the other being Birkenhead Sixth Form College) had agreed to operate in order to identify opportunities for improved governance, including chairing practices. In due course, the Chair would attend meetings at the other colleges.

(ii) SFCA National Reception – Houses of Parliament

The Chair reported on his visit with the Principal to a sector reception at the Houses of Parliament on 24 February 2015. The event had provided an opportunity to contribute to the lobbying of Ministers/MPs on behalf of the sector/College, but had also been an extremely interesting occasion which allowed an opportunity to observe debate in the House of Lords and to meet The Viscount Jan Simon (a past acquaintance of the Chair).

(iii) AoC North West

The Chair reported that he had been re-elected to represent NW chairs of governing bodies. He also reported on forthcoming NW meetings and seminars and reminded Governors that there was a standing invitation for individual Governors to attend these events.

(iv) Former Principal (Michael Southworth)

Following the dinner in his honour at The Cottons, former Principal, Michael Southworth, had contacted the Chair to express his appreciation for the event and for the gift which he had received.

(v) College Mission and Vision

As mentioned by the Principal (item 5 above), further development of the College's Mission and Vision is now under way (following the input from Governors at the Annual Strategic Planning Seminar) and will be monitored by the Strategic Planning Committee

(vi) Target-setting - Principal

The Chair, together with the Vice Chair, had met with the Principal (11 February 2015) to agree targets for the remainder of the current year and for 2015/16. These would be further reviewing and reported on via Remuneration & H.R. Committee in the usual way.

(vii) Individual Reviews for Governors

Mr J Monaghan, as Chair of Governance & Search Committee, had undergone an individual review with the Chair (12 February 2015) as part of the pilot experiment in one-to-one annual reviews. The Chair reported that Mr Monaghan had subsequently confirmed that the experience had been both productive and otherwise very worthwhile.

The Chair advised that he proposed to proceed with the pilot experiment by arranging for the individual reviews of remaining Committee Chairs.

(vii) National Leaders of Governance

The Chair reported on progress with respect his status as a National Leader of Governance. He would attend for NLG training on 19 May 2015.

(viii) Electronic Meetings Documentation

The Chair asked all Governors to prepare to respond to a simple questionnaire (from the Clerk) on options for the provision of meetings documentation. The drive towards 'paperless meetings' continued, but clearer indications of personal preferences were needed so as to clarify a productive way forward.

(ix) New Website – Governance Section

Governors were asked to review the 'pen-picture' comments on the Governance page of the College's new website and to advise the Clerk of any changes required. It was also noted that photographs (for inclusion on the website) would be taken prior to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

Finally, the Chair thanked the College's Estates staff for their maintenance of a safe and navigable campus environment during the course of the ongoing buildings development upheaval.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented his report, which had been circulated with the Agenda, to the meeting.

(i) College Target-setting (2014-15)

College targets for the current year had been discussed at the recent Annual Seminar and also, in detail, at the Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting on 5 February 2015 (see Item 11(iv) below). The Principal now drew attention to the 'Qualification Success Rate Performance 2014 and Targets 2014/15' paper included in his report. He reminded Governors how the colour-coding and arrow-indicators worked and he also provided the general rationale in the identification of targets for the year viz., the drive for continuous improvement, benchmarked against the SFC sector performance data, via realistic targets which recognise factors affecting Priestley College. He then provided more detail for each of the 'Headline Success Rates' categories, culminating in the 'All' categories.

In noting Mrs D Stead's report on the Curriculum & Standards Committee's treatment of the data and proposed targets, particular note was made of the factors which lay behind the 'All 19+' data/target.

The Principal also commented in more detail on factors which affected student retention performance, including the offer of apprenticeships.

The Chair asked the Principal to confirm the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing performance against the targets and, in particular, the involvement of the Governing Body and the Curriculum & Standards Committee.

The Chair then asked the Governing Body to consider whether the College targets as now proposed (and as recommended by the Curriculum & Standards Committee following their detailed scrutiny of the data) should be approved.

RESOLVED : That the College Targets for 2014/15 as provided as an appendix to the Principal's Report are approved.

(ii) College Improvement Plan and Monitoring Report

The full Report had been included as an appendix to the Principal's Report.

The Principal commented on each section of the Report.

Mr G Contos (Vice Principal – Curriculum & Standards) advised on the role and contribution of external consultants, Lilac Sky. He reported that teaching staff had responded very positively to the remedial activities, including the involvement of external consultants, and he pointed to the progress in equality/diversity embedding and examination preparation.

The Plan/Report had been examined at the Curriculum & Standards Committee (see Item 11(iv) below). The use of 'RAG-rating' was helpful and the absence of any 'red' rating was reassuring.

RESOLVED : That the College Improvement Plan and Monitoring Report is received.

(iii) Other Matters

The Principal commented on the College's financial position as reported (and as confirmed in more detail in the Finance & General Purposes Committee report under Item 11 (v) below) and on the significant challenges which the College faced in its recruitment of students for September 2015. The position regarding the UTC was discussed. The general performance of local schools (in terms of GCSE A-C grades) was also recognised as a critical factor. In marketing terms, the College's latest student destinations booklet (included in the meeting papers) offered a very useful tool for attracting new students.

(iv) Adult and Community Learning

The Principal's report on developments in Warrington Borough following the Ofsted inspection of community learning was noted. The Principal advised the Governing Body on the outcomes and options following discussions with Borough Council officers and Warrington Collegiate. In then discussion possible changes to the College's involvement and role in this provision, a number of issues were identified as key to further/future involvement. Given that there had been no criticism of Priestley College's contribution to the actual delivery of adult and community learning (and bearing in mind the College's 'Outstanding' status), it was agreed that it was in the community's and College's interest that a direct contract (with SFA) role for the College should be established, but it was noted that such an outcome could not, at this point, be guaranteed. Thus, it was agreed that the Principal should investigate and discuss with the other parties the possibility of a direct contract arrangement which would put the College in a position to manage the quality of sub-contractors.

The Chair highlighted the need for financial viability (the administrative costs of the envisaged outcome were discussed) and for effective reputation protection.

It was agreed that the Principal should proceed with further discussions, reporting to the Strategic Planning Committee and the Finance & General Purposes Committee as necessary in the interim.

In thanking the Principal for this, his first Report, the Governing Body confirmed that the format, with its heavy emphasis on the core teaching and learning service, was most appropriate.

8. STUDENT MEMBERS' REPORT

Mr B Craven and Mr D Cathie included the following matters in their first report on the issues which were currently occupying the College Council and/or the Student Council:

- (i) Student transport to/from College. The involvement of students in recent group discussions with bus service providers was appreciated (The Principal advised that bus service representatives had been very impressed by the manner in which the feedback had been provided to them by the students). A number of ongoing issues had been aired and might now be addressed.
- (ii) The litter-picking initiative was being managed by College Council
- (iii) Various catering issues (including the 'halal only' practice of the current catering service provider) had been or would shortly be addressed
- (iv) Access to water at meal-tables (and for transporting away from the canteen areas) is under discussion
- (v) Promotion of the engagement of students in the political processes (including registering to vote, on campus hustings and a 'Question Time' event on 20 March 2015 at 2.00pm).
- (vi) Organisation of the annual Valedictory Dinner.

The Chair thanked the Student Members for their report.

In response to the Chair's invitation, Mr A Osborne (Parent Member) described the initial and ongoing experiences of his son as a first year student who commenced at College in September 2015.

9. NEW POLICY – SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED and/or DISABILITY (SEND)

Mrs D Stead presented the draft document following detailed consideration at the Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting on 5 February 2015.

The Principal reminded the Governing Body of the College's already impressive reputation for SEND provisions, and especially as regarded student advice and student progression. The recent legislation behind the new Policy would require further action/innovation, but, comparatively speaking, the College was well-placed to deliver those requirements.

It was noted that the Principal was currently the Governing Body nominee in the draft Policy. The SEND training/awareness expectations as applicable to all Governors were discussed and it was agreed that the on-line SEND training module (details in the agenda papers) was suitable for all individual Governors to use.

(Mr T Rawling commented on how the SEND duties would be addressed at Sir John Deane's College)

RESOLVED : That the SEND Policy is approved.

10. NEW CODE OF GOVERNANCE - UPDATE

The Governance & Search Committee's response (on behalf of the Governing Body) to the new Code consultation exercise was endorsed. The Committee's general treatment of the draft Code was also noted.

(Mr T Rawling commented on views and likely responses to the draft Code at Sir John Deane's College)

11. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(i) Strategic Planning Committee

Mrs R Haslam presented his report and the full report of the meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee on 12 January 2015.

He confirmed that, as anticipated by the Committee, revisions to the College's Mission and Vision were now under way. He also reminded the Governing Body that, at the recent Annual Governance

Seminar, there had been acceptance of the Principal's proposals to change the format, content and timing of production of the College's Strategic Plan and other related key documents.

He also asked the Principal to comment on his early experiences from his role on the SFCA's National Curriculum Forum.

RESOLVED : That the Report of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 12 January 2015 is accepted and that the decisions therein are endorsed.

(ii) Governance & Search Committee

The report from Mr J Monaghan, together with the full report of the Governance & Search Committee meeting on 3 February 2015, was presented.

The new Code had already been considered (Item 10 above). The position regarding new appointment(s) was noted.

The Committee's consideration of Ofsted Inspection preparedness was also noted. The Chair reported on messages from Birkenhead Sixth Form College where Ofsted has recently conducted a pilot 'no notice' inspection

RESOLVED: That the Report of the Governance & Search Committee meeting on 3 February 2015 is accepted.

(iii) Remuneration & H.R. Committee

Mr R Haslam presented his report and the full report of the meeting of the Remuneration & H.R. Committee on 3 February 2015.

He drew attention to the Committee's treatment of four key policies (Staff Grievance, Redundancy, Staff Severance and LGPS Pension Statements) and to the Committee's recommendation regarding new national pay-scales for teachers.

RESOLVED : That the Report of the Remuneration & H.R. Committee meeting on 3 February 2015 is accepted and that the recommendation/decisions therein, including the recommendation for the adoption and implementation of the new pay structure for teachers, are approved/endorsed.

(iv) Curriculum & Standards Committee

Mrs D Stead presented her report and the full report of the meetings of the Curriculum & Standards Committee on 5 February 2015. She drew attention to SEND Policy (Item 9 above) and the Bullying & Harassment Policy considerations. With regards to the latter Policy, it was agreed that a change to the title (to make clear that this is an '*anti*-bullying/harassment' policy) should be made. She also confirmed that the Committee had been very pleased to recommend the change to the SAR whereby the ICT Curriculum Area would be converted to Grade 1.

Regarding the QSR Report and the 2014/15 College targets (Success Rates / Retention / Achievement), Mrs Stead confirmed that this had been completed and confirmed by the Governing Body under Item 7(i) above).

RESOLVED : That the Report of the Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting on 5 February 2015 is accepted, and the decisions/recommendations therein are endorsed/approved.

(v) Finance & General Purposes Committee

The report from Mr A Cannell, together with the full report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 3 February 2015, was presented. Attention was drawn to the policies which the Committee had reviewed. It was also confirmed that the campus development project (BCIF 4) was proceeding in line with the budget.

Regarding the Mid-Year Budget Review, Mr D McGuire (Director of Finance) drew attention to the additional details which had been distributed with the agenda papers. He commented on the factors which lay behind the recommended changes to the original estimates. A year-end surplus of £227,000 (after depreciation but before FRS17 and assuming use of all Contingency) was a realistic expectation.

Finally, attention was drawn to the Period 6 Monthly Budget Report which had been circulated to all Governors.

RESOLVED : That the Report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 23 February 2015 is accepted and that the decisions and recommendations therein, including that relating to the Mid-Year Budget Review, are endorsed.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 4.30pm on Thursday, 14 May 2015.

PMcMellon
6 March 2015

Length of Meeting: 1 hr and 50 mins

Accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair

Signature

Date