



STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting on Monday 3 April 2017

Present:	Mr J Kirk (<i>Chair</i>)	Chair of Governors
	Ms S Gannon	Staff Governor
	Mr R Ladwa	Student Representative
	Mr M Mistry	Student Representative
	Ms E Pabari	Student Representative
	Ms H Shah	Student Representative
	Mr M Sim	Principal
	Mr K Siniara	Student Representative
	Mr H Solanki	Parent Governor
	Ms A Touseef	Student Governor
	Ms E Ward	Student Executive Team Lead
In Attendance:	Mr R Mansfield	Clerk

Ref.		Action
L/17/07	<p>Item 1 – Apologies for Absence: Apologies for absence were received from Agnese Arhipova, Savannah Kacha, Jasleen Kaur, Simone Kaur, Charlene Kumalo, Seema Ugharadar and Emma Wardle-Foottit. The meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
L/17/08	<p>Item 2 – Declaration of Interests in Agenda Items: There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.</p>	
L/17/09	<p>Item 3 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising: The minutes of the meeting on 20 February 2017 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Kirk. There were no matters arising.</p>	
L/17/10	<p>Item 4 – Issues of Current Interest or Concern: <i>Principal's attendance proposal</i> Reece Ladwa said that he understood that Martin Sim planned to introduce a weekly raffle for two £25 vouchers among students with high attendance, and asked whether this was compliant with the College's budget. Martin Sim said that the potential cost for the remainder of the current academic year was £600, a sum well within what the College could afford. Reece Ladwa said that he was happy with the scheme if it raised student attendance. Martin Sim said that there was serious concern about irregular attenders, given the strong correlation between poor attendance and poor results. He thought that in the next year he would deploy a variety of</p>	

approaches. He believed that a mix of 'carrot and stick' should be used. Poor attendance could not be ignored because it sent the wrong message to other students, and he would pursue persistent offenders with vigour. He was interested in other ideas that students might have for improving attendance, such as the proposal to offer discounts to good attenders for an end-of-year outing.

Reece Ladka asked whether Martin Sim had predicted the impact of the weekly raffle in advance. Martin Sim replied that he expected differing responses from different groups. He urged members to visit the government website setting out best practice in managing punctuality and attendance. This featured similar approaches. He was optimistic that the College's attendance could be raised above 90%, sufficient to satisfy OfSTED, although he recognised that this fell short of governors' aspiration of 95%.

Liz Ward asked students what they felt might have been done better at induction to communicate the College's message more strongly. Alishah Touseef said that emphasising the consequences, such as the fact that attendance data were reported to universities, would have most impact. Martin Sim agreed and said that decisive early action was also needed. The College appeared to have allowed a culture to develop where policies, though in themselves sound, were not observed. Harshad Solanki urged that good attendance should be applauded. Martin Sim agreed and said that he had been surprised by the number of students with high attendance.

Alishah Touseef asked how OfSTED would be likely to react to the raffle scheme. Martin Sim said that this was not an issue as the arrangement was in line with published good practice. OfSTED would expect the College to be trying out new strategies.

John Kirk said that the number of students with high attendance was far too low and had to be addressed. He agreed that it was important to promote what was good. Martin Sim said that the raffle fell far short of paying students to attend, although the Education Maintenance Allowance had shown that this could be effective, albeit it had proved too expensive.

Kieran Siniara said that timetabling difficulties and changes early in the academic year had not helped to sustain attendance. Martin Sim said that timetables were frequently quoted by students as an excuse. However he accepted that the College's timetable had not worked well for all students. He urged caution about reliance on workshops as these did not always deliver results or prove suitable for all students. He understood that there were gaps in some students' timetables – though insignificant in comparison to those likely to be encountered at university – that had tended to create impressions of overcrowding. He would look to reduce such gaps next year. He favoured planned study days supported by

an effective tutorial system to guide students in their use of study time.

Replacement for Naz Leivas-Mistry

Kieran Siniara said that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had been weakened by the departure of Naz Leivas-Mistry, rather than strengthened, as required by OfSTED. Martin Sim said that Naz Leivas-Mistry would not be replaced. John Kirk explained that OfSTED required the skill set of the SLT to be strengthened, hence the appointment of Martin Sim, a highly experienced Principal. The Education Funding Agency was satisfied with the changes made to date. John Kirk said that the SLT had not been working effectively. Martin Sim said that in the face of continuing budget cuts structures needed to be clear and to release as much resource as possible to the front line. James Bagley was now Vice-Principal, Curriculum and Quality, and the two Directors of Study had been re-designated Assistant Principals. Martin Sim believed also that leadership had to start in the classroom with teachers and students; he was confident that staff had the ability to deliver quality. John Kirk said that the College's external advisors shared this confidence. The Board was currently satisfied with the working of the SLT.

Principal's view on more laptops / iPADS

Mohit Mistry said that the increase in the number of students had given rise to a shortage of laptops and computers. A recent survey, from which he handed the individual responses to Martin Sim, had shown that students wanted more study space and more laptops. Martin Sim said that the College had only very recently received its funding allocations for next year. Consideration was being given to the curriculum offer and the size and profile of the student intake for the next year. There was to be no new capital funding provision within the next two years. The College would take into account external benchmarks in considering future action on computers. His first impression was that the College's current provision was slightly low.

Reece Ladwa said that he had heard that all old computers were to be replaced in the summer and asked for confirmation of this. Martin Sim said he was not yet fully conversant with the College's computer replacement policy, but in the end the matter would come down to budgetary choices to be approved by the Board. The College would also have to consider the condition and capacity of its IT infrastructure (cabling, switches etc). He advised Alishah Touseef that any reduction in student numbers would affect the College's funding in 2018/2019 rather than 2017/2018 because 16-18 funding was lagged by one year.

Exam leave during exam time

Eashani Pabari asked Martin Sim for his views on examination leave. Martin Sim said that he believed strongly in study leave,

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but the matter needed to be discussed with teachers. The College's approach probably needed to be varied to reflect the needs of different levels and groups. He had no intention of introducing major changes at this point in the academic year as it would be unfair to do so. Eashani Pabari clarified her question as relating to time off on days partly taken up by examinations. Martin Sim said that he understood that this was appropriate for some subjects, but not all.

Harshad Solanki asked various questions about the speed with which internal examinations and coursework were graded.

Martin Sim said that the Grade Book contained 'currently working at' (CWA) rather than predicted grades, as requested by governors. At the end of the year a separate grade was produced by teachers, indicative of the student's progress.

Sarah Gannon said that teachers worked to a policy of turning round coursework within 10 days. Martin Sim said that the

College marking system was now working effectively. Student representatives confirmed that they knew their CWA grades and what was required of them by the time of their examinations.

John Kirk said that the problem that governors had lacked information on students' grades was now being addressed. Martin Sim said that it was critical to assess grades at the correct standard, and that the College probably

needed to review its approach to standardisation. Sarah Gannon said that continuing changes to examination

syllabuses added to the difficulties.

SET survey responses and additional comments

Eashani Pabari reported that the SET's survey on the end-of-year event had been extended to 22 April. The response rate had reached about 25% and the most popular option so far was, by a small margin, an outing. She asked whether the College would be willing to subsidise the cost of the outing for high attenders. Liz Ward said that the likely total cost per head was about £25. Martin Sim requested proper estimates of the likely cost, but said he was favourably inclined towards this proposal.

Mexican themed day in the canteen

Alishah Touseef reported on a recent Mexican themed day in the canteen. Students had assisted in the cooking and serving of the food. The event had been reasonably well supported, and the Canteen Manager had been happy with the outcome. Experience had shown that more planning was needed for such events.

L/17/11

Item 5 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Given the difficulties experienced in previous years in trying to arrange meetings in the summer term, there were no plans to hold further meetings of the Committee in the current academic year.

L/17/12 Item 6 – Any Other Business:

Martin Sim made the following points:

- He would be happy to attend part of the meetings of the SET, if invited to do so. John Kirk made a similar offer
- He had received complaints from Tesco about student behaviour, and would appreciate the support of the SET in encouraging students to behave more responsibly
- He was also concerned about the level of litter dropped outside the College by students, and again wished to develop an ethos of being 'good neighbours'.

John Kirk thanked all participants for their attendance and contributions. An effective student voice was essential to the health of the College.