

Minutes of a meeting of the Search and Governance Committee held on Tuesday, 10th October 2017 at 4.30pm in FO27 of the College.

Present: Norma Boyes (Chair); Mark Stanger; Les Agnew; Chris Nattress
Also present: Jane Murray (Clerk)

10/17 Minutes

Agreed – that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 6th July 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

11/17 Declarations of Interest

Norma Boyes – in her re-appointment
Les Agnew – in his re-appointment

12/17 Search and Governance Annual Report

A comprehensive annual report had been tabled by the Clerk, which covered attendance; skills' mix; vacancies; skills/governance audit; training plan; standing orders and governance action plan; and terms of office due to expire

During a comprehensive discussion of the terms of office of governors, Norma Boyes and Les Agnew withdrew during discussion of their individual re-appointments:

The following would be recommended for re-appointment:

Norma Boyes withdrew

- Norma Boyes;

Norma Boyes returned

Les Agnew withdrew

- Les Agnew to 31 July 2019 (when it was anticipated that another Sellafeld appointment would be made, owing to Les's commitment to NCfN);

Les Agnew returned

- Dr Robin Talbot;
- John Dunn (on expiry of the first year of office)

The Clerk was asked to speak to Joe Holliday, who was a long-standing governor, about future intentions. The Committee acknowledged that his commitment over many years should be commended and they would want to recognise this in some way.

There was no appetite by the Committee to reconsider the size of the Board, which they felt gave the Board a breadth of skills and experience on which to draw and which was evident from the Skills' mix analysis.

Attendance was up on previous years, at 87% for all and 80% for the Board. Overall attendance benchmark compiled by the clerks' network stood at 80%. Individual attendance figures are published in the financial statements.

The skills and governance survey for 2016-17 was noted. It was agreed by the Committee that there was nothing of concern arising from the survey.

Training activity was discussed and noted.

In respect of the Standing Orders, there were some minor changes to the Governance Strategy to more expressly reflect the emphasis on technical and vocational education; a change to the student governors' appointment process (following intended changes to learner engagement) and an addition to delegations to the Principal, to introduce a threshold below which the Principal could continue to agree settlements (provoked by changes to the regularity audit).

The Principal requested to raise a confidential issue.

13/17 Confidential Session

Agreed – to move into confidential session.

A confidential issue was raised and discussed.

14/17 Open Session

To re-open the session

15/17 Governance Self-assessment

It had been suggested and agreed that self-assessment of governance be carried out by the Committee this year and put forward for recommendation to the Board, where there would be an opportunity for debate for all Governors.

The scorecard that had been used in previous years was used again, the results of which are attached for reference.

On this occasion, it was felt that the recommendation that the Committee would wish to make was 'outstanding'. The previous year, there had been several ambers and downward trends. This year, the scorecard was almost all green and the trend upwards. It was felt that while Governors themselves had graded finance as satisfactory, this was in the context of £3.4m in reserves.

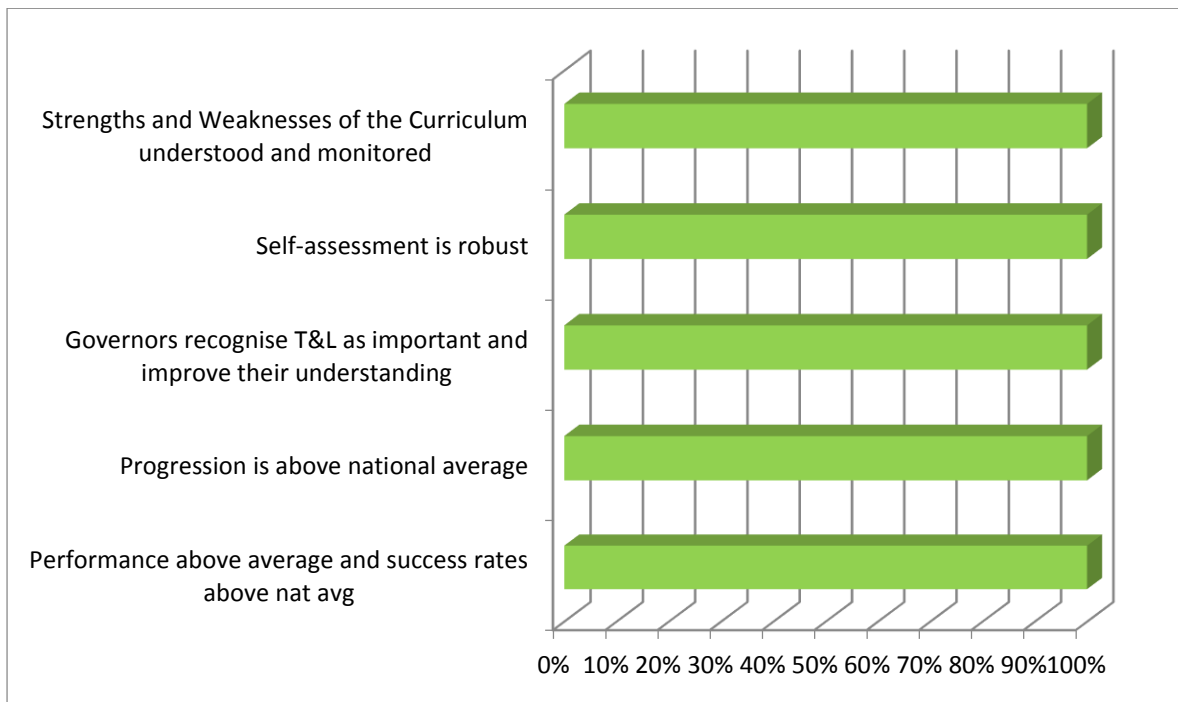
Agreed – that the self-assessment grading of 'outstanding' be put forward to the Board for agreement.

The meeting closed at 4.25 pm.

Notes of Self-assessment

The process, using a balanced scorecard, was outlined by the Clerk. The format had been received with interest by other clerks. Governors were asked to RAG rate a number of questions and took into account the outcome of the Ofsted inspection in reaching their conclusions:

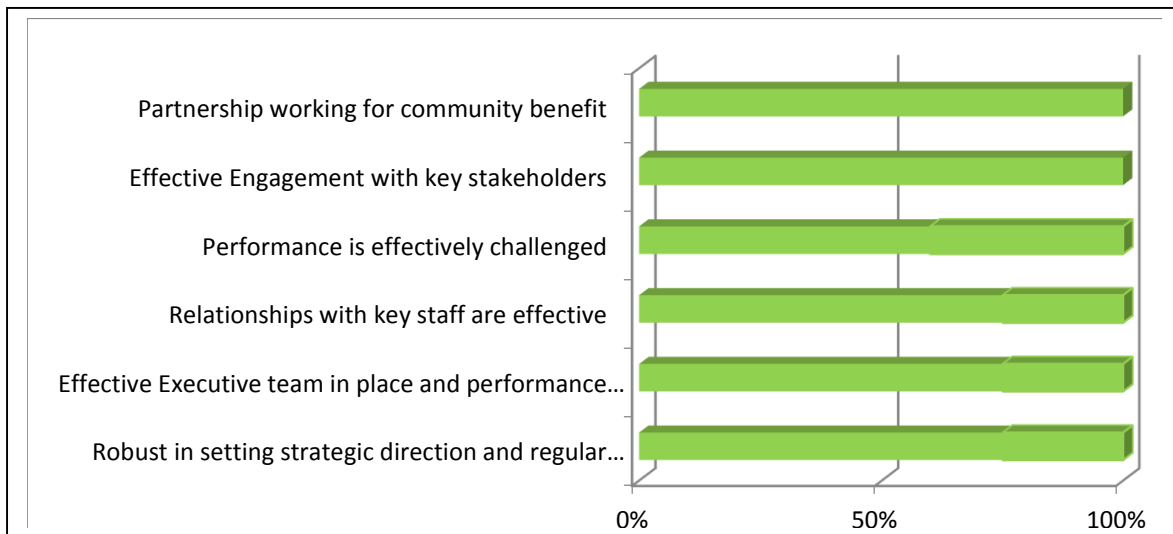
Teaching and Learning/Outcomes for Learners



There is regular reporting to the Board with respect to curriculum performance, complemented by KPIs. Those present were happy to accept that self-assessment is robust as there had been external validation of the process and governors had taken part in the process. Results were looking much stronger and above average in most instances.

Governors do take opportunity to improve their understanding of Teaching and Learning and Quality Working Group has been established.

Leadership



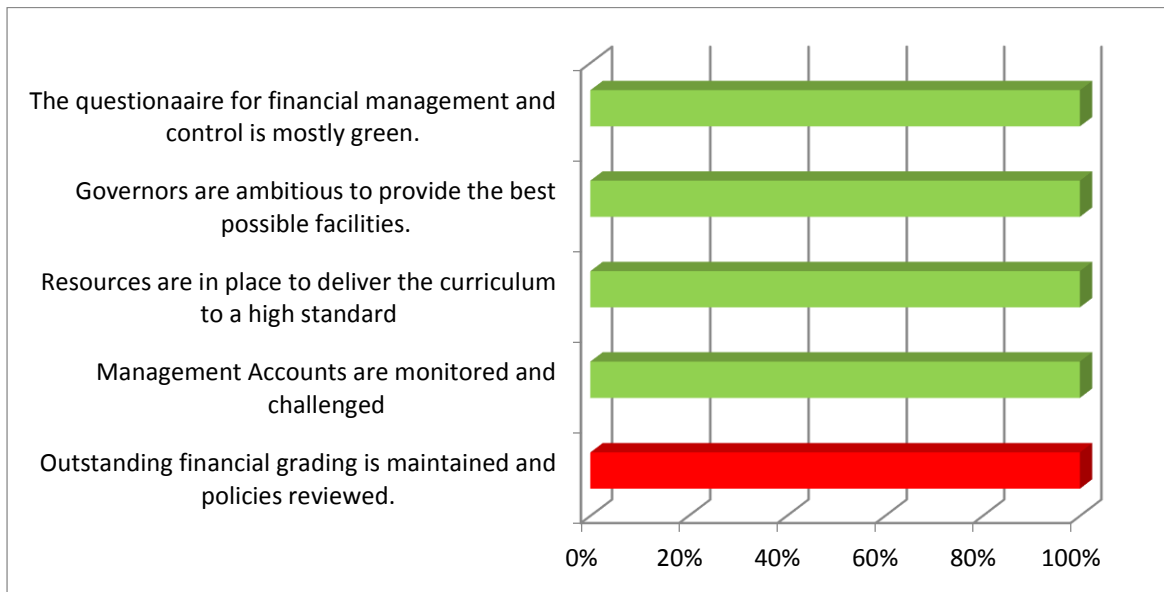
There had been strategic planning sessions and refresh of the strategic plan. Minutes demonstrated effective challenge and the College enjoyed good feedback from parents, employers and learners. Effective partnership through engagement with LEP; CONE; NCfN etc

Governance



Attendance, the only amber form the previous year, was noted as above available benchmarking. This satisfied the only recommendation arising from an otherwise positive governance audit report in the previous year.

Finance and Resources



Governors felt that they had invested in quality in the past year, which had had an impact on the financial grading. However, this was against a back drop of over £3.4m in reserves. The Finance and Corporate Working Group would be considering how to meet financial plan targets for this year.