MidKent College

Author: Clerk & Acting Principal
Recommended and agreed by the Governing Body:

Overall Effectiveness Grade   1

**Governance
Self-Assessment Report
2013-14**

Approved by GB 17/12/14

Context

This report addresses some of the key question on governance set out in the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and Inspectors Handbook used to inspect Colleges along with the self-assessment input from the sub-committees.

				Evidence and Source
Overview The Governing Body (GB) comprises 22 members. Membership includes two staff members, together with the Student Union President (Sabbatical Post) and Vice President. The skills matrix and experience of the Board is a real strength and it strives to maintain this with the support of the Search & Governance (S&G) Committee.				

	MALE %	FEMALE %	% of which are BAME
GB members	57	43	10
MKC Group Employees (inc MKCTS)	49	51	3.6
Learner Population	55	45	10
Local Community (of working age)	49	51	Total 10.2
Medway			8.4
Maidstone			5.9

The board meets five times a year and is focused on ensuring the College is making progress towards achieving its strategic objectives. Members also attend a Strategic Governor/SLT Away Day which has a particular focus on long term strategic planning. Governors have a clear view of their role and responsibilities and provide the Principal and senior staff with good levels of challenge and support to ensure the College improves and has a positive impact on the communities it serves. They make informed and transparent decisions with all minutes and papers (unless they are deemed confidential) available to the public on the	Search & Governance Committee meeting minutes

	College website and by request. Confidential minutes are annually reviewed by the Search & Governance Committee to consider if they can be released as public documents.	
	The Governing Body comply with the Foundation Code of Governance (adopted 23 March 2012) and adopted the Audit & Accountability Annex to the Code on 11 June 2013. They are either compliant or working towards being compliant with all of the requirements.	Minutes of GB and A&R.
	Strengths and Areas for Improvement: Strengths - Strong strategic Governance that helps to provide a clear and strong strategic direction for the College. - Outstanding Financial Management and Control ensuring the College provides stakeholders with excellent value for money. - Excellent range and expertise of board members that helps to provide good challenge and support to the Principal and senior staff. - A strong and supportive Committee structure and membership that underpins the effectiveness of the Governing Body and helps to ensure good overall effectiveness of the College. - Good engagement with students through Student Union President attendance at all committees and Governing Body meetings to help ensure that student views are considered and acted upon. - Open and transparent culture between Governors and the Senior Team. - Effective use of key performance indicators and papers that enable Governors to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the College and further improve the quality of teaching and learning for students. - Good attendance and involvement of Governors in GIV (Governor Informal Visits) and Link Schemes these support the Governors understanding of the Colleges strengths and weaknesses and to help participate in self-assessment. - Regular and topical training sessions that help keep Governors informed and up to date - Excellent induction and mentoring of new Governors to help ensure consistency.	**• GB minutes** **• Skills Matrix** **• Committee mins** **• SU reports at GB**

3

Areas for Improvement

- Refine the number of items and papers by improving the use of summary sheets to enable more discussion at meetings.
- Improve the communication of Governing Body decisions and actions to staff through the Staff Governors.
- Encourage wider participation in the Governor Informal Visits Scheme (GIV) and Link Governor Scheme to further help to triangulate information presented by the College senior staff.
- Ensure all training for E&D and Safeguarding is completed by Governors.

1	**"Leaders and managers demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all students can achieve, and attain high standards of quality and performance."** Where there is a governing body inspectors will consider their effectiveness, including how well they:	
1.1	**Know the provider and understand its strengths and weaknesses though appropriate involvement in self-assessment** The involvement of Student and Staff Governors in Committees and Governing Body meetings enables Governors to understand and challenge the strengths and weaknesses of the College. Membership of the Quality, Teaching & Learning Committee ensures there is regular, and thorough scrutiny of the quality of teaching, learning & assessment. The production of accurate and timely data and reports provide Governors with the right information to help them recognise strengths and weaknesses of the College.	

4

	A range of training sessions both external and internal help ensure Governors have a good understanding of self-assessment. For examples Governor training around Inspection and self-assessment was held in November 2013 and July 2014 and external events such as the Teaching, Learning & assessment – The Role of Governors in Monitoring Quality and College Governance leadership is being developed. The Governor Informal Visits (GIV) scheme provides an opportunity to engage with students and learn about their experience but also see the impact of decisions made by Governors on students. The Governor link scheme also provide opportunities to enable Governors to ask challenging questions to senior managers. All Committees undertake self-assessment at the end of each year which feeds into the Governance Self-Assessment Report. The Quality Department conduct three surveys a year; Induction (September), Teaching & Learning (March) and end of year (June). The outcomes of these are reported through the Quality Teaching and Learning Committee (QTL) on which the Governors with special responsibility for Quality (Andy Start and Mike Dowden) sit. The QTL meets once a term to monitor the quality assurance of the procedures. The findings of the QTL are reported to the Governing Body. The SU President presents a Student Union report at each Governing Body meeting. The College Self-Assessment report is presented to the Governing Body annually in December and the College Observation report annually in July. In between these two meetings the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) scorecard and Principal's report is presented at every meeting to monitor the College's performance. This enables members to make informed decisions.	Mike Dowden 24/2/14 & Michael Blanning attended 27/9/14

5

1.2	**Support and strengthen the provider's leadership and contribute to shaping its strategic direction**	
	The expertise and skills of Governors enables them to provide sufficient input into shaping the Colleges strategic direction and to support the Senior Leadership.	
	The Governing Body is good at making key strategic decisions that help shape the future of the College for example, 'pay more expect more' in order to secure the best teaching staff for students; the change to Principal/CEO role to ensure stability and the approval of the Medway and Maidstone developments to provide students the best facilities. They received a report explaining the financial pressures facing the FE Sector from the CEO on 4 June 2014. This information informed their strategic thinking for the next three years.	GB minutes and papers (4/6/14)
	The College's Strategic Priorities and Mission was reviewed in 2012/13 with the Advisory Committees contributing to this process through a series of workshops to ensure that stakeholders and learners were involved in their production. The Governing Body are instrumental in setting the strategic priorities the first of which is to provide first rate teaching. The sessions at the Away Day on February 2014 were centred on the review of the Strategic Priorities and consequently amended.	
	The Governing Body agree and set stretching targets for the College. They provide challenge and an external perspective at each Governing Body meeting.	
1.3	**Provide challenge and hold the accountable officer and other senior managers to account for improving quality of learning and the effectiveness of performance management systems:**	
	Detailed questioning at Committees and full Governing Body of senior managers helps to ensure that the quality of learning improves.	GB minutes
	The production of accurate and timely data and reports provides Governors with the right information to help them recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the College. This includes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that allow Governors to check what is being said by senior managers.	KPIs at every GB meeting

6

	The Governor link schemes also provide opportunities to enable Governors to ask challenging questions to senior managers. Members of the of the College's Talent Development Scheme for staff regularly attend GB to observe the challenge and accountability of Governors and the senior team.		
1.4	**Governors have the skills and experience to fulfil their duties and to ask challenging questions to raise or maintain high standards and secure positive outcomes for students:** The Search & Governance Committee conduct an annual review of the skills audit to ensure that the skills and experience of Governors is that which is required by the Board. Skills range from financial management to engineering. As vacancies arise any skills gaps are addressed and taken into account when appointing new members. All College Faculties have been allocated a Link Governor. As part of the scheme they engage with students and are available to contribute to the Faculty self-assessment. This scheme helps members understand more at grass-roots level and informs challenging questions to senior managers at Board meetings. To strengthen this in 2012/13 a Governor Informal visits (GIV) scheme was introduced. The GIV scheme provides an opportunity to engage with students and learn about their experience and to see the impact of decisions made by Governors on students. These are reported to the QTL Committee. Governors received a training session from members of the Student Voice and Youth Work team on 26 March 2014 to enable them to further understand the issues faced by the student body. The Governing Body has been further strengthened with the appointment of two new Governors specifically to add scrutiny to the QTL Committee.	S&G minutes	

Updated 3/12/14

2	**Leaders and managers actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination, and narrow the achievement gap.** To make this judgement, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which and take into account:	
2.1	**Training in equality and diversity is effective and governors understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity.** The HR Director presents the E&D Annual Report to the Governing Body to bring them up to date and ensure they were aware of their roles and responsibilities. This is also included in the induction pack for new Governors. The high quality of papers produced enables Governors to understand their roles and responsibilities.	GB minutes 26/3/14
2.2	whether effective action is taken to ensure that the ethnic profile of governors broadly reflects that of the learner population The Search & Governance Committee monitor the ethnic profile of members within their monitoring remit and by advertising with the Governors One Stop Shop (GOSS) the Committee works hard to reach candidates from all backgrounds. Equal Opportunities data is collected from all Governing Body members to allow for comparisons to College Group employees and local community as well as other Boards.	S&G Committee minutes and papers
2.3	**The arrangements for reporting on the promotion of equality and diversity to governors** The production of accurate and timely data and reports provide Governors with the right information to help them recognise strengths and weaknesses of the College. The high standard of papers produced allows Governors to understand these fully.	KPIs GB minutes 26/3/14

	The HR Director presented the E&D Annual report to the Governing Body at their meeting on 26 March 2014 to bring them up to date and ensure they were aware of their roles and responsibilities. This is also included in the induction pack for new Governors. The high quality of papers produced enables Governors to understand their roles and responsibilities.	
2.4	**The effectiveness of arrangements to protect students from bullying, harassment and discrimination, including training for governors on equality and diversity** The high standard of papers produced allows Governors to understand these arrangements. This includes an annual report of disciplinary cases as well as regular visits to curriculum areas to talk about student behaviour.	
3	**Leaders and managers safeguard all students.** To make this judgement, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:	
3.1	**Governors receive appropriate training on safeguarding, which is updated regularly** The Assistant Principal for Student Support presented a Safeguarding Report to Governors on 18 December 2013 regarding the main activities during the previous year. Safeguarding is a regular slot on the training cycle for Governors and updates are brought to the Board as required. The appointment of a new Safeguarding Governor was recommended at S&G on September 2013 and the appointment approved at Governing Body meeting on 16 October 2013. All staff for whom it is required to have that required to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check have been checked or are awaiting confirmation from the DBS office, with risk assessments having been carried out. The HR department monitor compliance. AOC advise that Colleges are not eligible to request barring information for Governors as under the new definition they are not considered as working in regulated activity.	GB minutes 18/12/13 S&G 17/9/13 GB 16/10/13

Updated 3/12/14

3.2.	**Governors fulfil legislative requirements, such as those for disability, safeguarding, and health and safety** Governors received an overview of legislative change for LLDD/SEN and their implications and responsibilities for FE College including Governors following the changes to Part 3 of the Children's and Families Act.	GB meeting 16/7/14
4	**To what extent do the GB Committees support and feed information to the Board:** The GB has the following Committees:-	
4.1	<u>Audit & Risk Committee</u> The management of strategic risk remains a real strength of the Audit & Risk Committee. Strategic Risk owners are invited to the meetings to present a 'deep dive' report regarding their risk. Following the Committee self-assessment the deep dive content has been strengthened to increase management focus and committee understanding. The full review of the risk register has resulted in the register becoming more embedded with owners and strong links to the Strategic Priorities. Regular closed sessions with internal and external auditors report an excellent relationship with the College Management Team. The following Deep Dives were presented in 2013/14:- • 17 September 2013 – Interim report on HE Development • 26 November 2013 – English & Maths • 25 February 2014 – Apprenticeships • 10 June 2014 – Benchmarking Exercise with Canterbury College	A&R Committee Minutes

10

4.2	Finance & General Purposes (F&GP)	F&GP Committee minutes
	F&GP closely scrutinise the management accounts at every meeting. A key activity in this year has been the continue monitoring of the redevelopment of the Maidstone Campus and considering projects through MKC Aspire Ltd. After self-assessing against their terms of reference in this year the F&GP Committee made improvements to their responsibilities to including HR and addressed the balance of their remit. The standing items continue to provide valuable information to the Committee and a summary of the Partnership Contacts is regularly presented to the Governing Body.	
	During their self-assessment of 2013/14 the Committee identified two strengths and two areas for improvement which they have actioned.	
4.3	Search & Governance Committee (S&G)	S&G Committee minutes
	The Committee have continued to recruit well to any vacancies this year and this has addressed the balance of skills and gender on the Board. The Governing Body has been further strengthened with the appointment of two new Governors specifically to add scrutiny of teaching and learning. The Search & Governance Committee continue to monitor attendance of individual members and at Committee level and the Chairman takes actions as required. They also monitor the training and events attended by members. With the much broader remit the Committee continues to consider any governance issues and policy as required. During this year the Committee have agreed with the Board a process to evaluate new and existing Governors as well as the Chairman to strengthen the Boards self-assessment. They have also taken advice and reviewed and amended the Instrument and Articles and Standing Orders in line with the new management structure. The Committee have recommended, and had agreed by the Board, policies as required including Mentoring and Succession Planning.	

11

4.4	**Quality, Teaching and Learning** During this year the Quality Development Panel (QDP) became a full Governing Body Committee called Quality, Teaching and Learning (QTL). On the recommendation of the S&G the Board agreed that the work of the QDP was so important that they wanted it reported directly to the full Governing Body and not through the Principal's report as in previous years. The QDP welcomed this decision and at each meeting the QTL receive reports on Student Voice; review of success rates and courses; the College SAR and IP; HE update; MKCTS update; feedback for Governors informal visits plus a regular update from the VP on T&L including observations. Two members of the Board with quality expertise sit on the Committee along with members of staff including the Vice Principal and Assistant Principal for Quality. The Governing Body continue to receive items from the Assistant Principal of Quality on the College SAR in December and the College Observation Report & Staff Survey in July.	QTL Committee minutes GB minutes
4.5	**Advisory Committees** These Committees were set up to gain the feedback of local community members, stakeholders and employers. They continue to be fundamental in the review of the College's Strategic Priorities. Both Committees conducted a review of the work they had carried out in 2013/14 and agreed their objectives for the year centred on employability. Their strength has been focusing on issues local to their campus and gaining the views and experience of local stakeholders. Although not an official Committee of the Governing Body, this forum has become increasingly important to the Board and College as a link to the community that the College serves. Key priorities for the community and the College are brought together at these meetings and actioned as required.	Medway and Maidstone Advisory Committee minutes

4.6	<u>Mid Kent College Training Services (MKCTS)</u> In January 2009, the College was contracted to provide artisan, technical and professional training in construction and engineering at the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME). It formed a wholly owned subsidiary company (MKCTS) which employs approximately 200 staff. The strong Board of MKCTS meets six times per year to oversee the strategic management of the contract on behalf of the GB with particular emphasis on current performance, improved teaching, an enhanced training environment, and future development and diversification. The Board also monitors risk, health and safety, and financial performance at every meeting, and has an annual away day to discuss the more strategic and longer-term issues. The MKCTS Board report at every Governing Body meeting.	MKCTS Board Minutes and reports to every GB meeting.
5	**To what extent does the Governing Body comply with its requirement in the Foundation Code of Governance?**	
5.1	The Governing Body adopted the Foundation Code on 28 March 2012. To comply with the Code the Governing Body must fulfil all the requirements as defined in the Code as their 'role'. The College complies with the requirements of the Code. The Clerk monitors the Code and the Search & Governance Committee periodically review any outstanding actions. The Code is seen as good practice and the Board continues to achieve all that it includes. The Audit and Accountability Annex of the Code was adopted at the 17 July 2013 Governing Body meeting and the College is either compliant or working towards being compliant with all of the requirements.	GB and S&G Committee Minutes
5.2	Work effectively, including having a systematic approach to meeting statutory duties and approving and monitoring priorities that are focused on improving teaching, learning and assessment The Quality, Teaching and learning Committee monitor the drive for improving teaching, learning and assessment.	QTL Committee Minutes

Updated 3/12/14

	The Governor Link Scheme and Governor Informal Visits continue to provide Governors with the opportunity to engage with students. Link Governors meet with the Head of Faculty, staff and students to support and advise the curriculum area. For example, the Link Governor of Creative and Visual Arts, who is the Deputy Director at the National Portrait Gallery, was the special guest and judge of the Art Exhibition.	

Corine Burkin - Clerk to the Governing Body – October 2014

Governance Improvement Plan (GIP)

	Area for Improvement	Target	Action	Action Owner	Completion date
1	Refine the number of items and papers by improving the use of summary sheets to enable more discussion at meetings.	Smarter documents to enable more discussion at meetings	Improve the quality of the summary sheets to help Governors to focus more clearly ion the key issues and to guide decision making. Reduce the number of items on the agenda and shorten the length of reports to 3 pages were possible.	S&G Committee to review. Exec Group to own	Test with the December/March GB papers and review in May 2015
2	Improve the communication of Governing Body decisions and actions to staff through the Staff Governors	Ensure staff are aware of GB and their impact	Summarise Governing Body decisions and communicate to staff through the Staff Governors.	Sue Flipping	December 2014
3	Encourage wider participation in the Governor Informal Visits Scheme (GIV) and Link Governor Scheme to further help to triangulate information presented by the College senior staff.		Make the expectation clearer regarding commitment and relationship with the Faculty Director re GIV and Link Scheme. All GB members are expected to complete at least one GIV this academic year.	Corine Burkin	Ongoing