MidKent College

Author: QTL Committee Chairman/Clerk/Principal
Recommended and agreed by the Governing Body: 14/12/16

Overall Effectiveness Grade: Requires Improvement

**Draft Governance
Self-Assessment Report
2015-16**

Context

This report addresses some of the key question on governance set out in the September 2015 Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and Further Education Inspectors Handbook (FEHB) used to inspect Colleges along with the self-assessment input from the sub-committees, together with the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges and self-assessment input from the sub-committees.

1.	**Overview** The Governing Body (GB) comprises 25 members, focused on ensuring the College is making progress towards achieving its strategic objectives. Membership includes two staff members, together with the Student Union President (Sabbatical Post) and Vice President. Membership has been extended in 2015/16 to increase the level of specialist Further Education experience. The board is passionate about education and good governance. The Governing Body formally sits five times a year. In addition to this Governors are highly involved in a wide range of activities within the college including: sub-committees which meet a minimum of 3 times a year and some as often as monthly in the case of quality, teaching and learning; a Strategic Governor/SLT Away Day which has a particular focus on long term strategic planning; regular scheduled governor training events; link visits, and a wide variety of events involving students. In addition to this, governors attend structured training prior to each GB meeting. Governors have reviewed their role and responsibilities and changed the format of the GB meetings in order to provide the Principal and senior staff with high levels of challenge and support to ensure the College improves whilst maintaining 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 College website and by request. Confidential	**Evidence and Source** Governing Body Minutes available on MidKent Website. Corporation and Committee meeting minutes

	minutes are annually reviewed by the Search & Governance Committee to determine whether they can be released as public documents. The Search & Governance Committee continues to focus on skills and qualities of Governors to ensure that the Governing Body has a good balance of skills needed to provide the appropriate strategic direction, support and challenge for the College. The GB complied with the Foundation Code of Governance (adopted 23 March 2012) and adopted the Audit & Accountability Annex to the Code on 11 June 2013. It also adopted the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges in July 2015 and continues to strive to comply fully with the Ten Principal Responsibilities of Good Governance set out within that document. The GB formally reviews its own performance annually in a workshop event let by the Chair of the Quality Teaching and Learning Committee (QTL), to provide independence from the Chairman of the GB. Prudent financial management and highly effective commercial diversification through which a third of the College income is generated, has enabled significant investment in the college for the benefit of the communities it serves. This has included buildings, resources and staff development to the benefit of students. The GB maintains its view that 3rd party income should be focussed on long-term capital and strategic improvements, and continues to invest in this area. However, in 2015/16 the GB also decided that the need to improve quality rapidly justified the use of 3rd party income and reserves for this purpose and this has enabled the college to focus energy on a wide range of quality improvement actions. Following the 2015 OFSTED inspection, the GB recognised it Required Improvement and as a result has made substantial changes over the last 12 months: • Quality, teaching, learning and outcome for students has been placed at the centre of the GB agendas and that of its subcommittees.	Minutes of GB, S&G and A&R. • GB minutes • Skills Matrix • Committee minutes • SU reports at GB

- The GB now has full visibility of both Key Performance Indicators and detailed data cube used by the Executive Team to review performance. It has a clear understanding of the criticality of Study Programs and receives KPIs related to each component element.
- Monthly Quality, Teaching & Learning monitoring calls have been put in place to assess progress against the Post Inspection Action Plan. These calls are recorded and available for review by other Governors unable to attend.
- All directorates have a proactive link governor.
- An English and maths board, chaired by one of the UK's leading experts and staffed by domain specialists has been put in place to provide independent advice, and this advice has been implemented.
- The training of governors has increased to five regular training sessions a year.
- 3rd party consultants have reviewed the quality inspection frameworks and ensure they remain current with the latest expectations of government.
- The level of external Further Education expertise on the GB has already been increased through the appointment of a nationally recognised expert in FE, and this continues to be a priority for search.
- Governors' class visits have been formalised and the feedback reports used to further triangulate the validity of leadership reports and data.
- The Student Union has put Quality Improvement at the centre of its agenda and has focussed on ensuring quality issues are highlighted.
- The Chair has encouraged a far greater level of scrutiny and challenge within the GB and subcommittees. She has invited relevant senior staff to attend and present to the Board on items of specific detail.

Despite strong leadership, a widening of skills and consistently high level of commitment, the GB recognises that it still Requires Improvement. The GB is not seeing the rate of quality improvement it would like to see and as a result it will remain unsatisfied with its own performance until the college is delivering Excellent Outcomes for its students.

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2	**Do governors demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all students can achieve and ensure high standards of provision and care for students? (CIF) In particular, do governors support and strengthen the provider leadership and contribute to shaping its strategic direction?**	
	The Governing Body are instrumental in setting the strategic priorities for the College. These are updated annually through the Governing Body strategic away day, and recorded within an annual statement of strategic priority. The first priority is provision of first-rate teaching and learning.	GB Away Day 12/2/16
3	**What strategic priority do governors give to the provision of English and mathematics to ensure that students improve their levels of skills in these subjects compared with their starting points?**	
	Following the 2015 OFSTED inspection, and the issuing of the revised Common Inspection Framework, the Governing Body and Senior Leadership recognised that it must radically improve its provision of English and maths. Having extensively researched best practices within successful FE Colleges, the college has subsequently: placed English and maths at the centre of the curriculum timetabling; employed more specialist teachers; and created specialist English and maths centres at the centre of the college facilities. To advise on best practise and to monitor implementation the Governing Body has appointed a specialist English and maths board which is also attended by a member of the GB. Furthermore, the GB has solicited continued support and challenge visits from the recently retired OFSTED lead inspector responsible for the last OFSTED review. Through 2016, despite material investments, it became clear that the progress on English and maths was not satisfactory. Furthermore, the principal reported severe difficulties in hiring due to a national shortage of quality staff. The GB approved hiring in a new leader for English and maths, increased levels of investment for recruitment and investigated the purchase of accommodation to increase the college's attractiveness. It has spent significant time with the college leadership to understand the root causes of poor performance and to understand national best practise.	GB Minutes QTL Minutes QTL Monitoring call recordings.

	Whilst the college has delivered absolute increase in the total number of students achieving A-C its percentage performance has declined. Furthermore, teaching staff significantly over-graded anticipated grades and as a result the college failed to predict the percentage decline accurately. The GB shares the college's disappointment in these results and continues to work with the leadership and external experts to prioritise improvement in 16/17.	
4	**How successfully are ambitions for the college's performance set, reviewed and communicated with staff, students, employers and other partners, and what impact has this had on the quality of provision and outcomes for all students?**	
	The Governing Body has set a clear target that the college must be judged at least Good within two years, with a clear expectation that it must strive for Outstanding outcomes for all students. To deliver this goal, the college has developed a clear college Improvement plan which can be monitored through its progress against a set of core and stretching Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) agreed with governors. These KPIs are monitored monthly through the QTL monitoring calls and presented at every Governing Body.

The college communicates with local employers through its engagement strategy and Campus Advisory Committees. Engagement is at strategic level with key local stakeholders, such as the local enterprise partnership (LEP), local authorities, MPs and local and regional business groups. | |
| 5 | **How well do Governors know the college and understand its strengths and weaknesses?** | |
| | The Governing Body's knowledge of the provider's strengths and weaknesses has been significantly strengthened by improving the triangulation of information from multiple sources:

• detailed Governing Body papers presented by the senior leadership team in Governing Body meetings and subsequent support and challenge of senior staff | GB and QTL minutes. |

- detailed sub-committee papers and subsequent support and challenge of staff members
- student union representation on Governing Body and sub-committees
- the annual student voice survey
- progress data provided on a monthly basis to the QTL Committee
- faculty knowledge though the faculty link governor scheme
- regular governor visits reports which are recorded and circulated
- feedback from the independent English and maths board
- written feedback and governor attendance of the Curriculum Performance Audits
- circulation of OFSTED and former OFSTED support and challenge visit reports

Despite this extensive range of data sources, and 3rd party expertise the Governing Body recognises that both the GB and Senior Management have imperfect quality data and the data is still not accurately predicting exam results in all areas. Addressing this will require an improvement in the ability of front-line teaching staff to predict grades and this will be a focus of staff development.

6	**How successfully do leaders, managers and governors secure and sustain improvements to teaching, learning and assessment through high quality professional development, including developing management and leadership capacity and robust performance management to tackle weaknesses and promote good practice across all types of provision?** **How do Governors challenge and hold senior leaders and managers to account for improving the quality of learning and the effectiveness of performance management systems?**	
	The GB support the college leadership to invest in high quality professional development. In 2015/16 this has focussed in particular in improving the quality of English and maths embedded by vocational teaching staff in core lessons. As identified in 5 above, the GB has increased its level of challenge and scrutiny as well as its involvement and level of support.	

7	**Do governors evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes through accurate and robust self-assessment which is rigorous and takes into account the views of students, employers and other stakeholders, and use the findings to develop capacity for sustainable improvement? (CIF)**	
	How successfully planned and managed learning programmes are, the curriculum and careers advice so that all students get a good start and are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment?	
	The College revised its self-assessment process for 2014/15 in the light of inspection findings from Ofsted in March 2015. A range of regular training sessions both external and internal help ensure Governors have a good understanding of self-assessment. Governors closely monitor KPIs, and dig deeply into the root cause of trends and data – supported as appropriate by independent external experts. The involvement of Student and Staff Governors in Committees and Governing Body meetings enables Governors to understand and challenge the experiences of student and staff at the College. Student representatives on the Governing Body are articulate and influential. Strong links have been established with key local stakeholders, both through regular engagement by senior staff and by the representation of staff, local employers, educators and local government on the GB. With the increased focus on study programmes in 2015/16 the amount of work experienced facilitated for students has been dramatically increased through the provision of specialised teams and the support of the GB. The GB recognises that the government currently chooses not to count the extensive employment experience of many MKC students from their part time jobs, nor does it fully recognise the employment within the college's own commercial facilities. Regardless of this, the GB believes that such employment materially increases the life chances and employment prospects of the college's students and as such seeks to encourage and support such employment so that all students get off to a good start.	

8	**How do governors ensure that learning programmes have suitable breadth, depth and relevance so that they meet any relevant statutory requirements, as well as the needs and interests of students and employers, nationally and in the local community? (CIF)** **How do leaders, managers and governors collaborate with employers and other partners to ensure that the range and content of the provision is aligned to local and regional priorities (CIF)**	
	The range of scope of provision is reviewed annually within the Quality, Teaching and Learning Committee which robustly challenges the senior leadership to demonstrate that the scope meets the needs of the community and employers. The college uses a wide range of labour market intelligence (LMI) to help determine the programmes offered for students. These broadly break into four areas: 1 - Identifying the needs of students, through market share and travel to learn analysis, alongside feedback from students and enrolment on particular programmes of study. 2 - Local and regional skills priorities. Using data that shows the current and future skills priorities as set out by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and local county and borough councils that the college covers to recognise the economic development needs and which types of provision need to align to these. A matrix is produced annually that shows which programmes meet these needs and those that do not require additional rationale and justification. 3 - Quality of provision. Looking at the historical performance of programmes and determining the need to specialise or continue is a much more recent and robust part of the decision making process. 4 – National government policy. Ensuring that programmes and courses offered also match any national priorities for delivery. This includes ensuring that employers are involved in offering and developing 16-19 study programmes to help improve the employability skills of students.	QTL Committee minutes

Business planning procedures take place each year as part of the colleges business planning cycle. These are reported at Governing Body, and also utilise the expertise of various Governors, and advisory committee members to help ensure the curriculum reflects local needs.	
Leaders and managers focus well on developing a curriculum that aligns to the employment needs in Medway and Kent. Senior leaders have developed strong links with a number of key partners in the complex regional landscape straddled by the college, including local councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Chambers of Commerce, and regional and local employers.	
Employers are increasingly involved in curriculum planning process; they provide valuable advice on curriculum design, and resources in many subjects, for example hairdressing, health care, hospitality, and performing arts. The Advisory committees, and wider engagement with employers help them to comment on the design of curriculum and the outputs in relation to skills of students entering the workplace.	
Faculty curriculum plans focus well on maximising students' opportunities to move straight into employment; further work is needed to assess the extent to which students' destinations at the end of their courses match their intentions at the start.	
The college engagement with local employers, and alignment to local and regional, is regularly presented in the Governing Body Principal's Report. This includes engagement at strategic level with key local stakeholders, such as the local enterprise partnership (LEP), local authorities, MPs and local and regional business groups.	
The Search & Governance Committee conduct an annual review of the skills audit to ensure that the skills and experience of Governors meets the requirements of the Board. As vacancies arise any skills gaps are addressed and taken into account when appointing new members. Governors currently represent local employers, (3) Local Government, (1) education (1). There is further representation of local employers on the advisory boards of each campus.	S&G Committee

9	**How effectively do leaders, managers and governors monitor the progress of groups of students so that none is disadvantaged or underachieves?**	
	Stretching targets for the progress of each learner are set within each students PLP (Personal Learning Plan), and this can be monitored by the student, the relevant member of teaching staff and by parents. This allows action to be taken at the learner level to ensure none is disadvantaged or underachieves. This data is rolled up into monthly data for each group of students which is monitored at a faculty level – and can be discussed with the relevant link governor. Summary data is then presented to the QTL and Governing Body. Managers leading on Diversity and Inclusion collect data on achievement of some of the equality act protected characteristics including race, disability and gender. This information is used to identify where there are disparities and set an agenda for action to deal with problem areas. The information is discussed at the D&I Committee where responsible managers and staff explain actions and can be challenged on areas for development. Arrangements are being put in place for this data and associated actions to be presented at Governing Body meetings.	D&I Committee minutes
10	**How effectively do leaders, managers and governors monitor the progression and destinations of their students (including whether students enter secure and sustained employment) and use this information to improve provision?**	
	In addition to monitoring students' progression on and between courses, the college completes a comprehensive destination survey each year. In 2015/16 the survey captured the actual destinations of students from 2014/15, 6 months after leaving the college. Of these, 92% had positive known destinations which is either counted as progression to the next level of study, progression to University, or progression into employment.	

11	**How do leaders, managers and governors:** • **Actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination and narrow any gaps in achievement between different groups of students? (CIF)** • **Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in education and training?** • **Work with other partners to widen participation and support students' progression to further learning and/or employment relevant to their personal circumstances? (NEETS) (FEHB)** • **Use the funding for students with high needs so that their individual learning programmes challenge them to develop their independence and prepare them for their future?** • **Prepare students for successful life in modern Britain and promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs?**	
	The HR Director presented the Diversity and Inclusion 2014/15 to the Governing Body at their meeting on 8 June 2016 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 and identify any gaps in achievement. This includes an annual report of disciplinary cases as well as regular visits to curriculum areas to talk about student behaviour. The Diversity & Inclusion Committee has a governor on the group. It highlights and identifies key performance of different groups and agrees strategies to further reduce these gaps. It also helps to recognise and embed equality & diversity into teaching, learning and assessment. The introduction of diversity champions, and a lead for equality & diversity working across college, has helped further promote this amongst staff and students.	

	The Diversity and Inclusion Committee makes real decisions that have a positive impact on students. Senior leadership and governor representation demonstrates commitment to the diversity aims of the college. Training has been identified and provided for staff and governors.		
12	**How do leaders, managers and governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements to protect young people and students meet all statutory and other government requirements, promote their welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism?**		
	Arrangements for safeguarding students are good. Staff are trained well to recognise most risks to students, and managers with specific responsibilities for keeping students safe are skilled and thorough in monitoring any problems. Links with external agencies are good. Security personnel, staff and students combine very effectively to provide a safe and welcoming environment for each other. Safeguarding leaders have developed plans to raise awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism through the Prevent agenda, and significant effort was extended in 2015/16 to ensure all governors, staff and students had comprehensive training on this subject. The Governing Body agreed the Safeguarding Policy in December 2014 and agreed it was fit for purpose. Safeguarding is a regular slot on the training cycle for Governors and updates are brought to the Board as required. We have a lead Governor on Safeguarding who has completed the necessary training and attends the internal Safeguarding meetings. The College runs regular training on the Safeguarding/PREVENT strategy and is a compulsory component of training for all staff.	GB PREVENT training given to governors on 23/3/16 by external consultants and 8/6/16 by internal staff.	

	Governors have received training, and updates on how the Prevent agenda is being developed at the college. Staff continue to be trained and supported to promote British values. 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. Governors received an overview of legislative change for young people with Special Education Needs (SEN) and Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD) and their implications and responsibilities for FE College including Governors.	GB PREVENT training given to governors on 23/3/16 by external consultants and 8/6/16 by internal staff.
13	**To what extent does the Governing Body comply with its requirement in the Foundation Code of Governance and the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges?**	
	The Governing Body complied with the Foundation Code of Governance (adopted 23 March 2012) and adopted the Audit & Accountability Annex to the Code on 11 June 2013. The Search & Governance Committee reviewed the new Code of Good Governance for English Colleges and went through the 'must' and 'should' items. They agreed an action plan and recommended adoption of the Code. The Governing Body adopted the Code in July 2015. Compliance with the code was reviewed by the Chairman of the QTL Committee in August 2016 The Remuneration Committee reviews the Clerk's salary along with the other SPH when considering the annual pay award. Governance is audited by the College's internal auditors as part of their cycle and is due in January 2017.	S&G Committee minutes Remuneration Committee 4/2/16

Governance Improvement Plan (GIP)

	Areas for Improvement	Target	Action	Action Owner	Completion Date
1.	Continue to strengthen rate of sustained improvement in quality of teaching and learning (QTL) & ensuring successful Ofsted Inspection	Progress to Good	a) Continue to push hard for improvement in MIS to allow accurate tracking of progress and outcomes for groups of leading b) Monitor specific improvement in 1st line teachers ability to accurate predict grades c) Maintain Monthly QTL progress calls to ensure continued focus. d) Reaffirm Governors commitment to each do 3 visits a year and ensure clear feedback is provided	Chair of QTL	Jan 2017 Through Period Through Period
2	Ensure Improvement of English and maths staffing and subsequent outcome for learners	Fully resourced and capable English and maths faculty	a) Maintain challenge on Senior Leadership to secure appropriate improvements b) Maintain support to leadership to ensure adequate funds available to secure and sustain the best staff nationally available c) Maintain support leadership to explore widest possible network to ensure staff training and development	Chair of GB	Through Period
3	Ensure Improvement of Building & Construction and subsequent outcome for learners	Exceed national average level of performance	a) Maintain challenge on Senior Leadership to secure appropriate improvements b) Maintain support to leadership to ensure adequate funds available to secure and sustain the best staff nationally available c) Maintain support leadership to explore widest possible network to ensure staff continuous training and development	Link Governor	Through Period

4.	Enhance the Further Education specific GB skills and experience	2 GB members with current FE Quality Improvement experience >4 GB members with accredited classroom inspection training.	a) Recruit two Governors with strong & current experience of FE Quality improvement to replace retiring governors b) Formally train QLT& Link governors in classroom inspection to allow and enhanced discussion with professional quality staff (NB We do not believe it appropriate for GB members to independently grade lessons)	Chair S&G Committee Asst Principal Quality	March 2017 June 2017
5.	Ensure all Governing Body members have completed appropriate vetting to ensure safeguarding	All GB members DBS checked. All GB members supervised by member of staff until DBS completed	a) Ensure all GB members DBS checked in a reasonable timeframe b) Clear policy in place to ensure GB members supervised on campus by member of staff until DBS completed	Principal	Jan 2017
6.	Ensure GB uses senior management time efficiently to ensure governance adds appropriate challenge & support whilst allowing leadership to drive sustained college improvement	All senior staff rate GB member an average of >7/10 for challenge, support and efficiency.	a) Chair, Principal & Clerk to ensure papers & data provided to GB are clear and allow governors to easily focus on the key issues. b) Chair & subcommittees to seek areas for improvement at end of each GB and subcommittee c) Clerk to poll senior staff for assessment of challenge, support & efficiency after each GB meeting. Feedback to be provided to Chair to address as appropriate	Clerk	June 2017