

Minutes of KEVICC Standards Committee Meeting Tuesday 16th November 2021, 5.45pm



The meeting was held remotely, due to Coronavirus restrictions and Government advice

Present: Karen Sewell (KS - Chair), Jim Lodge (JL), Helen Beetham (HB), Laura Hetherington (LH), and Alan Salt (AS).

In attendance: Yvette Elliott, Clerk (YE), Deputy Principal Kirsty Matthews (KM), Assistant Principal Fay Crellan (FC), Assistant Principal Ben Cotton (BC), Assistant Principal Anne Law (AL), Associate Assistant Principal Natalie Clark (NC), Head of English Sophie Greig (SG) and Head of Science Stuart Ruffle (SR).

Ref.	FOCUS OF MEETING Holding the Principal to Account for the Educational Performance of the College and its Students	Actions
1	Welcome & Apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies, sanctioned by the Committee: James Hartridge (JH), Julian Carnell (JC) and Michael Young (MY). Absent without apology: None Declarations of interest: None 	
2	Minutes of the last meeting (15th June 2021) Minutes were approved and will be signed by the Chair as soon as possible.	KS
3	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update, save & upload ratified policies to College website – Done. 	
4	New curriculum Overview and update from Anne Law English and Science have done a huge amount of work to roll out the new curriculum. English is strong with a good level of consistency and this was externally reviewed over the last Summer Term by Tracy Hannon, Director of School Improvement at ESW. There are continual faculty reviews and ongoing assessment data, focusing on raising standards and our ability to articulate the intent of the new curriculum. A staff meeting last night, which included learning support assistants, demonstrated our 'critical eye' and although there are still some areas that need tweaking, AL was impressed with the standard of the curriculum in the majority of cases. <i>KS noted the strong cycle of continuous improvement which is clearly evident.</i> AL stated that there is the power to address disadvantage and a willingness among staff to continuously improve. <i>HB asked how staff maintain the energy and enthusiasm for continuous review after so much effort already in implementing a new curriculum?</i> AL is always mindful of the workload of staff, but Faculty Leaders are always reviewing and because so much has already been invested, staff are proud and want to perfect it. There is a lot of passion from staff. 2 Heads of Faculty giving updates on KS3 curriculum work: <i>Sophie Greig – Head of English</i>	

	<p>The meeting last night overran because of the enthusiasm from staff about their subjects. The English curriculum has been developed lesson by lesson, starting at a very basic level, by SG and Jacqueline Avis focusing on clear and expressive communication skills for life, in addition to curriculum aims. Text and schemes of work were considered, along with the order in which they should be taught. SG worked with primary curriculum leaders to determine key texts for KS3. There are very detailed and differentiated resources. Vocabulary elements have been introduced so that key words are revisited regularly and these will stretch and challenge students. Retrieval starters run through all schemes of work. The curriculum covers writing, poetry, journalism and 19th Century novels. There is no time in the curriculum for modern texts, but this is addressed during Tutor reading time, to engage pupils in reading for pleasure.</p> <p><i>KS asked if the new curriculum started this September?</i> SG stated that it started in September 2020, but there have been frustrating interruptions due to Covid-19. Work scrutiny is frequent and shows a more consistent picture than ever before. Work is not graded at KS3, but the focus is on quality of work.</p> <p><i>LH asked what the impact of the focus on communications skills and vocabulary is on other subjects?</i> SG I hoping that this is an area she can work on more to develop cross-curricular links through work scrutiny across different departments.</p> <p>Stuart Ruffle – Head of Science</p> <p>The science curriculum has changed a lot over time and a personalised, commercial curriculum has been adopted. This builds on the KS1 and 2 curriculum, to expand the depth and knowledge of students, for consistent delivery. Running centrally through the curriculum is skills, with our own set of objectives for assessment, including scientific vocabulary. Students join KEVICC from varied educational backgrounds with different levels of practical experience. The curriculum and its assessment has been developed to reduce dependency on prior knowledge. Teaching consistency is key and there are evident gaps. A series of booklets have been created to aspirationally target ability, with sets introduced in Year 8. This is an iterative process and the booklets will be reviewed and edited – these have helped to improve consistency and will set pupils up for KS4.</p> <p><i>KS asked if the booklets are just for Year 7 pupils?</i> SR stated that 16 out of 23 have been written so far to cover all of KS3. At KS4, one booklet wouldn't be flexible enough, so they move to exercise books at this point.</p> <p><i>KS noted that consistency and staff turnover issues have been acknowledged and asked if the booklets have been useful here?</i> SR stated that the booklets are good for use in school and for revision preparation.</p> <p><i>KS asked if SR has had a chance to assess yet?</i> SR has seen a significant improvement in the standard of books. Performance assessment is undertaken twice in Year y and this is externally moderated and marked. He thinks there is a good level of performance, but this will be validated at the end of the academic year.</p> <p><i>HB asked if academic rigour is being prioritised over physical practice?</i> SR confirmed that practicals occur every three lessons, but the style is more academically rigorous and they are less exploratory in style – the process followed is: prediction, experiment, recording, processing data, conclusion, evaluation.</p> <p><i>HB asked what scientific practices occur around ethos?</i> SR stated that pupils look at how scientists think and how this changes over time. The history and philosophy of science is covered.</p> <p><i>LH asked if there is an opportunity to bring scientists into college or a flexibility to focus on current scientific events?</i> SR stated that the Summer Term has some flexibility and a panel of scientists from the STEM Ambassadors</p>	
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	<p>Programme can be accessed, but this is in high demand and Covid-19 has stopped this more recently. Current and topical science can be covered, but mostly at KS4.</p> <p><i>KS asked if STEM subject teachers and careers are considered during curriculum development?</i> SR stated that this occurs more at KS4, such as Covid-19 and vaccinations being covered this year. Teachers have flexibility in their classes to talk about how & where science occurs in the real world.</p> <p><i>JL asked if students are aware that the Year 9 curriculum includes GCSE work?</i> SR stated that it is clear there are GCSE units, but it is taught in a KS3 style, such as using foundation tier activities. This has been designed to allow a smoother transition from KS3-4.</p> <p><i>Sophie and Stuart were thanked for their contributions and they left the meeting.</i></p>	
5	<p>Attendance (Fay Crellen)</p> <p>An honest evaluation is needed in order to improve attendance. We currently have 90.76% attendance, which is low but higher than Government predictions and other local schools. Persistent absence continues for 215 pupils. If Covid-19 absences are removed, attendance increases to 93.4%.</p> <p>There is a real push on tackling attendance this year now pupils have returned to full-time on-site schooling, particularly as we are seeing more absences as a result of Covid-cautiousness, where pupils would previously have been attending school. We have received poor support from the Education Welfare Service over the last 5 years, but finally have support now and in the first 2 weeks there has been real progress. This has caused some upset among parents, but KEVICC has a duty of care for all pupils. Despite an increase in the number of positive Covid-19 cases this term, attendance levels are sustained, so our effort is paying off and a prediction of 90-91% attendance at the end of the year feels realistic.</p> <p><i>JL noted that Year 8 absences are highest and asked if this is the result of Covid-19?</i> FC confirmed that the number of positive cases in this year group resulted in Public Health England advice to test all pupils – this caused some alarm and many pupils were kept off school whilst waiting for their PCR results – this has resulted in lots of catch-up work and lost learning.</p> <p><i>JL noted the absence gap for disadvantaged is growing and asked if this is due to Covid-19?</i> FC stated that it is not unique to Covid-19, but 60% of this cohort have had positive cases and therefore at least 10 days off school. Often these pupils have less support at home too, so they are already the most vulnerable to lost learning.</p> <p><i>JL asked if the same pattern can be seen at other schools?</i> FC stated that this is harder to know, but there is a definite pattern of SEND and SEHM need (mainly anxiety). There is not the support from external agencies to quickly deal with these needs, which necessarily results in flexi-schooling being adopted.</p> <p><i>JL asked if girls have suffered poorer attendance than boys?</i> FC confirmed that they have and this has largely been due to mental health issues, including waiting from CAMHS support – letters home from school about absence will only exacerbate these problems, so flexible timetables and key workers have been put in place.</p> <p><i>KS asked what is happening with catch-up work?</i> FC stated that Tier 1 & 2 work is available on the college website and Google Classrooms is used much more by many teachers, but not all are putting work online. There is an awareness that some pupils may choose to work from home if this became too easy but that they must be marked as absent, even if accessing work, when they are not on-site. Follow-up assessments are carried out when pupils return to school.</p>	

6	<p>Covid Catch-up (Anne Law) £60,000 was received last year for catch-up premium, but many interventions were disrupted by lockdowns. The strategies chosen for spending were evidence-led and recommended, to give the best chance of improving outcomes. Year 7,8&9 literacy interventions for reading comprehension have resulted in fantastic impact for some pupils, including our most vulnerable, during lockdown. Year 7&8 numeracy intervention started in the Summer Term for specific students and the quality was high, with students engaging well. Year 9 also had a bespoke intervention programme in the Summer Term. My Tutor sessions, largely in maths, run for 15 weeks and the increase in grades means this intervention will be continued. A Year 10 programme spanned over 2 academic years due to Covid disruptions and whilst there is still work to be done here, a real impact can be seen and the final impact will be reported at the next Standards Committee meeting. The cost of GL tests has been covered and again, data will be shared in the Spring. Pastoral support has been funded, including Kathy Rablah's wellbeing coaching which included high achieving students with exam anxiety. The impact of this is harder to judge, but pupils are engaging and this will be funded next year too. John Gayle's one-to-one mentoring for children in care is a high value support to the pastoral team, although costs have increased due to Government rule changes around self-employed persons. The Covid Recovery Fund will be used to provide My Tutor, Year 7&8 numeracy and literacy interventions, Pastoral support and online resources. <i>KS asked AL to seek a measure of impact for the work of Kathy and John due to the cost of these interventions.</i></p>	<p>Agenda</p> <p>AL</p>
7	<p>Behaviour (Kirsty Matthews) The past 2 years have become more effective where multiple behavioural needs exist and we can demonstrate our strength through the pastoral review. We have been working on consistency of school uniform (including consultation on this), consistency of practice regarding policy and principles (thanks to Ben & Natalie for leading on this), a pastoral handbook for processes and procedures, low-level disruptive behaviours (including staff support and monitoring) and developing capacity for a personalised learning centre. Our next focus is on whole school behaviour culture. Behaviour data must be viewed as subjective, but Fixed Term Exclusions (FTEs) have not changed much over the last 2 years. <i>KS asked for an explanation of the difference in male and female praise point quantities.</i> KM stated that the profile of boys is causing some concern, so Heads of House are looking at the cause of these differences, but it could be to do with how boys express their difficulties Vs girls. The PLC Manager is undertaking lesson observations where multiple negative Class Chart points are seen and relational plans are being drawn up to turn negative situations positive. Positive reinforcement is seen to be twice as powerful as negative, but it can be hard for teachers to use this in challenging situations. <i>LH asked how school-wide the message is following Ofsted's report on sexual harassment, particularly in light of such regular use of certain language by young people?</i> KM confirmed that this is not only addressed during PSHE, but it crosses different parts of the college approach. There is a societal issue of misogyny and this is being addressed in a multi-faceted way, including through safeguarding training, modelled examples of scenarios, a new tag in CPOMs for peer-on-peer abuse, the role of the Tutor in cultivating positive relationships, maximising the number of Duty Staff and education of young people. However, this is a shared responsibility between school, parents and the wider community. Parental uptake has been quite low to date when invitations to participate are shared.</p>	

	<p><i>LH asked if parents have been reached out to on this issue?</i> KM stated that they have not on this specific issue, but the topic has been raised before.</p> <p><i>HB invited Governors to consider pupil social media policies, to specifically look at the boundaries between on-line and in-person lives. The school support for mental health was also praised as extraordinary, when external resources are over-stretched.</i></p> <p>JL informed Governors that bullying was discussed during a Safeguarding visit today & the level of tolerance is extremely low, with incidents being well recorded. Responses are firm, but supportive and restorative. The number of behaviour incidents is lower this year than last, which is very positive.</p>	
8	<p>Quality of Learning & Teaching (Ben Cotton and Natalie Clark)</p> <p>The faculty quality assurance process has been tightened up and looks at how well the curriculum is being implemented. Parent/carer surveys are being conducted and the responses are strong to date. Student Voice is well attended by Governors and impactful data is being gathered.</p> <p>Lesson visits are being divided into segments – culture (routines), curriculum, assessment & feedback, modelling & scaffolding. Feedback is given to Middle Leaders to encourage change and this is targeted for each faculty to pick out strengths and best practice and sharpen focus on Rosenshine principles. Walk through feedback is always discussed at faculty meetings.</p> <p><i>KS asked if every department sees all feedback or just its own?</i> BC confirmed that everyone sees it and this is intentional so that everyone can learn from each other. NC added that staff are encouraged to go and view best practice across the school. There is a heightened accountability this year and science still has the most work to do, with staffing turnover presenting a challenge, but plans are in place to mitigate the impacts of this. Short-term turbulence is expected, but will be managed.</p> <p><i>JL asked what support is put in place when staff don't meet expectations?</i> AS stated that the college works very hard to balance expectations and the drive to improve standards.</p> <p>BC stated that staff are directed to CPL and a co-learning week is planned to encourage reflection, which is moderated, and this will be shared with all.</p> <p><i>HB asked who specialist leaders in education are appointed by?</i> BC stated that these have previously come as Teaching Schools Alliance colleagues, although external work has largely ceased – this still exists as a watermark for practice in the classroom.</p> <p><i>JL asked if teachers are still personally credited for their positive work in reviews following learning walks?</i> BC confirmed that they are and also that he continues to check through line managers to support progress and he will not shy away from holding high standards, to ensure quality of education for pupils.</p>	
9	<p>Safeguarding (Kirsty Matthews)</p> <p>A Safeguarding policy amendment will come to Governors for ratification at the December FGB following Babcock updates.</p> <p>JL & GH met with KM for a Safeguarding Visit today and a report will follow from these Governors.</p>	<p>Policy – Dec FGB</p> <p>JL/GH</p>
10	<p>Governor Links</p> <p>This is to become a standing agenda item, to look at upcoming events and Governors can advise on which they will participate in.</p> <p>KS invited Governors to make some commitments for the Spring Term:</p>	<p>Agenda</p>

