

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 5.30pm**  
**Remote online meeting via Zoom**  
**Minutes**

**Present:**

Femi Adedeji– Parent Governor  
Chiweta Uraih – Foundation Governor  
Gabrielle Williams-Hamer – Co-opted Governor – Chair of the Committee

**In attendance:**

Clare Baskott – Clerk to the Governing Board  
Paul Goddard – Scrutton Bland for items 8 and 9  
Peter Mackereth - Partner, Buzzacott LLP, External Auditors for items 8 and 9  
Bethan Pritchard –Scrutton Bland for items 8 and 9  
Margaret Searle - Director of Finance and Resources  
Graham Thompson - Principal

**The reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.**  
**The meeting was quorate throughout.**

**Standing opening items:**

**Item 1 - Committee time with Auditors**  
Not required.

**Item 2 - Opening Prayer and welcome**  
The Principal opened the meeting in prayer at 5:33pm.

**Item 3 - Apologies for absence**  
None.

**Item 4 - Declarations of Interests**  
None.

**Item 5 - Minutes of meeting held on 13th February 2025, for review and approval**  
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved by the Committee.

**Item 6 - Matters arising, not covered by agenda items RM progress**  
The Principal reported that there was a road map in place for Cyber Security. Jisk will be facilitating the Cyber Essentials validation.

**Item 7 - Framework for auditors and reporting accountants of colleges**  
The Committee noted the above.

**Internal Audit**

### **Item 8 - Scrutton Bland: Presentation and review of Funding Assurance report and Learner Recruitment report**

Bethan Pritchard, Auditor from Scrutton Bland, gave an overview of the Learner Recruitment audit which had taken place in March and April 2025. The Auditor paid tribute to the Marketing and Student Recruitment Manager, for his contribution to the audit at the college. The Auditor noted that overall, the audit was good.

Two recommendations had been made:

- Improve the tracking system as there were no targets for the processes.
- Seek feedback about the open events.

A discussion took place about using the EBS system to track from start to finish. The auditor explained that this could only be done by implementing a new system; however, the return on investment would not be sensible.

### **Funding Assurance Report**

The Auditor gave an overview of the compliance audit which had taken a sample of learners to look at their ages, courses enrolled on, funding, withdrawals and achievement.

The Auditor explained that a rare issue had been noted during the audit. The qualifications of a learner who had fled the impact of war did not equate to a Maths and English GCSE. The learner should have been enrolled on a Maths and English course. However, there was no process in place to verify the qualifications. The auditors had suggested that in future if a similar situation was to occur, that learners are enrolled into Maths and English and processes are put in place to guide enrolment staff. The Committee agreed that this was a sensible solution.

The Principal reported that the college was receiving support from the FE Commissioners about enrolment to speed up the process between enrolment and the classroom. Some students apply to the college as early as October, and it was important to ensure they were getting sufficient information from the college. There is third-party software that could integrate with the EBS system which will be investigated.

### **Item 9 - Internal Audit Action Report The Auditor provided a summary of ongoing actions, noting that network configuration issues related back to Cyber Security matters.**

The Committee confirmed they were satisfied with the progress on cyber security actions. It was confirmed that for the upcoming year, audits would focus on GDPR and Annual Funding Audit.

### **Item 10 - To note that the Committee approved a four-day audit of GDPR by email, following the previous meeting for 2025-26**

The Committee noted the above.

**Governor question: Is there a timeline for the two audits?**

**Response: It will follow a similar schedule to last year.**

It was noted that the college was currently advertising for a new Data Protection Officer.

### **Item 11 - Regularity and Financial Statements Audits: Buzzcut**

Peter Mackeret, External Auditor, from Buzzcut gave an overview of the Audit plan for the year

ending 31st July 2025 and the Regularity Self-Assessment process. It was noted that this would be completed in the autumn term.

A discussion took place about the audit, which will take place on site and follow a similar timeframe to previous years.

The External Auditor explained that following discussions with management, the college's financial health was likely to be classified as 'Requires Improvement'. Any identified risks were standard. The External Auditor explained that the change of IT provision was unlikely to have been impacted these changes.

The Auditor confirmed that they were not aware of any fraud or fraud considerations. A discussion took place about fraud considerations. The Committee confirmed that they were not aware of any issues. The Committee were aware of the processes in place, which were outlined in the College's Whistleblowing Policy. This policy noted the delegation for any issues and/or concerns which were available to staff on the HR system. It was confirmed that there were no issues requiring investigation and the Committee was content to proceed.

Regarding sector developments, it was noted that the HAFE SORP webinar will be released on 19th May 2025. Auditor agreed to circulate this to governors. **Action: Auditor.**

**The Letter of Engagement was noted as signed.**

**The External and Internal Auditors left the meeting at 6:03pm.**

## **Risk**

### **Item 12 - Risk Register**

The Principal gave an overview of the key risks, controls and emerging risks in the streamlined Risk Register. The Principal explained that the order of the risks remained the same as at the last meeting. The biggest risk continued to be student recruitment, and the college had streamlined the mitigations. Recruitment remained a key priority.

A recent strategic planning day had focused on how to remain attractive in a competitive market. A key focus was to improve the conversion rate from applicant to enrolment, and to implement key strategies to ensure that students who enrolled remained at the college. The Principal emphasised that the college's primary purpose was for students to achieve good exam results.

### **IT Infrastructure**

Following some concerns, the college had transitioned to a managed service with the current providers RM, who uncovered issues with the existing network. Concerns over cyber security were being managed.

A discussion took place about the improvements being made to the college's IT system and cyber security to support staff and students.

**Governor question: What is the timeline for finishing the Cyber Accreditation?**

**Response: The accreditation is expected by the end of May/beginning of June. There is still work needed that is not critical for Cyber Essentials. The college is aware of the risks of not having an appropriate network. Servers had been allowed to reach end of life with no mitigations in place. The college is moving to a cloud system but will be keeping the existing**

**server. The email server will need to be changed in the summer. It was important that network functions remained operational for staff and students.**

Governors thanked the Principal for the update and noted their approval of the new Risk Register format.

The Principal gave an overview of the emerging risks.

**Governor question: What is the police liaison situation?**

**Response: Traditionally, all schools in London had a named liaison officer. However, the Met Police had changed this approach. There would still be a police presence and a named officer, but they will not be proactive. Officers are being enrolled into a 24-hour duty rota. The Principal is participating in a working group with other Principals and HTs.**

**Governor question: What strategies are you working on regarding recruitment, particularly in relation to student retention?**

**Response: Currently, the enrolment period lasts two weeks – starting at the end of August after GCSE results, it is a two-week process before students start attending college. The college is exploring ways to expedite this process. We are also reviewing the Student Induction process to improve retention. Feedback will be sought from students about induction to make improvements. Currently, induction is half a day, but the college is looking at something more substantial to engage students for longer. Student attrition is partly attributed to the induction experience, as well as their experience of lessons in the first few days. Assessment tests may discourage some students, so the college is looking at ways to make certain areas more welcoming.**

**Chiweta Uraih left the meeting at 6:21pm – the meeting remained quorate.**

**Item 13 - Board Assurance Framework: Confirmation that the committee was satisfied that the controls were adequate, and the cycle of assurance reviews was effective to give the appropriate assurance to the Governing Body.**

The Clerk and Chair of the Committee will review and streamline the Board Assurance Framework in line with the Risk Register. **Action: Clerk and Chair of the Committee.**

**Policies:**

**Item 14.1 - Whistleblowing Policy**

**The Committee approved the Whistleblowing Policy.**

**Item 14.2 - Anti-Fraud Policy The Committee approved the Anti-Fraud Policy.**

**It was agreed that Governors will undertake Anti-Fraud training. Action: Clerk to arrange.**

**Item 15 - Committee business:**

**Timetable of meetings for 2025-26**

**The Committee approved the timetable of meetings for 2025-26.**

**Item 16 - Review of effectiveness and membership The Clerk would circulate the review.**

**Action: Clerk.**

A discussion took place about the importance of adding more members to the committee.

**Standing closing items**

**Item 17- Any other business**

None.

**Item 18 - Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 11th November 2025 at 5:30pm via Zoom.

**The meeting closed in prayer at 6:37pm.**

**The minutes will be signed electronically, following approval by the Committee.**