

# ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE



WEDNESDAY 16 JANUARY 2013

GATESHEAD COLLEGE

**Report:** Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14  
November 2012

**Author:** Clerk

**Action:** Approve

**Status:** Open

**Present:** David Mitchell (Chair)  
Gail Etherington  
Darren Heathcote  
Vivien Shipley  
Allan Steele  
Mark Taylor

**In attendance:** Tracy Ashcroft  
Joanne Dodson  
Judith Doyle  
John Gray  
Sally Hargreaves  
Gwyneth Jones  
Kevin Marston  
Kevin Mott  
Tim Poolan  
Andrew Robson  
Clare Sample

## 1. Welcome/Apologies

David Mitchell welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Keith Cann Evans, Tom Cantwell, Brian Rapkin and Richard Thorold. Allan Steele was not present at the beginning of the meeting.

The Chair explained the purpose and the importance of this meeting. He indicated that the recent Ofsted inspection had concluded that: "Lack of rigour in the moderation of the judgements in the self-assessment report has resulted in the college significantly over-grading most areas of provision". There was now a need to be rigorous and realistic and focus on improving outcomes for students. He acknowledged the hard work that had gone into putting the report together and informed staff that the governors appreciated all their hard work.

The Chair invited members to declare any interests on any item on the agenda. No interests were declared at this stage in the meeting; however, members noted that should the direction of debate on any item result in a potential conflict of interest, this should be indicated during the meeting. Members were also reminded to advise the Clerk of any changes to be made to declaration of interests.

## **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2012**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2012 were accepted as a correct record.

## **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising which were not substantive items on the agenda.

The Chair advised the Committee that the Post Inspection Action Plan had been taken to the Board for approval. An update on the progress of the Post Inspection Action Plan would be provided at the next Academic Standards Committee meeting in January 2013.

## **4. Self Assessment Report 2011/2012**

### **Background, overview and context of the Self Assessment Report**

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality, Judith Doyle (JD) introduced a report which gave the background, overview and context of the Self Assessment Report. She acknowledged that the College had overstated its performance in 2010/2011 and therefore the process had been thorough and rigorous this year. This had resulted in a document which was more detailed and lengthy for 2011/2012.

The document contained data focused analysis and the framework had been reviewed. The document contained analysis and challenge based on data and outcomes for learners. Colleagues had looked at each other's reports so the document had gone through a number of stages.

The Principal had been unable to attend this meeting but JD advised that they had both had gone through the report in great detail; challenging the grades and he was comfortable with the Self Assessment Report. She acknowledged that it had been a disappointing year and the document was an indication of how seriously the College had taken the Ofsted comments. JD explained that in an attempt to support the process of not overstating achievement, she had included the grades criteria from the Ofsted handbook. Copies of the grades criteria were circulated at the meeting.

JD explained that she had met with the Chair a couple of weeks ago to agree the areas to be presented to the Committee at the meeting. The members were reminded that all the grades needed to be approved before the December Board meeting.

### **Subject Sector Area Reports**

#### **SSA 1: Health, Public Services and Care**

The Head of Group, Sport & Development, Sally Hargreaves (SH) gave a presentation proposing:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 3)
- Outcomes for learners (Grade 3)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 3).

The Chair commented that this department had been consistently around grade 3 and enquired what the prognosis was for improvement. SH replied that actions had been put in place and Tim Poolan advised that this area had been looked at and some programmes

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had been removed leading to a much smaller, tighter provision this year. A governor referred to the data provided in the SAR as she did not understand how they had come to their decisions. SH replied that some grades were inconsistent and not enough evaluation had been done. Andrew Robson advised that due to the inconsistencies they had brought in a new process and some course leaders had coped better than others. The analysis did not just rely on the grades provided by the course leaders.

### *Allan Steele joined the meeting*

JD advised that they had attempted to demonstrate the process. A governor replied that the information was inadequate and the final SAR would need to record outcomes of the moderation. She then enquired about value added and asked whether the only indicator was ALPS. SH replied that they had used a calculator within the ILP and tutors had put in their target grades. The governor commented that there was no comparison against the national average within the report and this would be useful for the future. She indicated that governors needed to be shown progress on literacy and numeracy. SH acknowledged that there were some inconsistencies and that she needed to address this as a priority. She advised that they now had a new process in place to monitor progress.

A governor indicated that in relation to the Action Plan it would be helpful to look back at the Ofsted plan. Andrew Robson advised that a robust quality improvement plan would follow this report.

The Committee agreed that the grades for SSA 1 should remain as:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 3)
- Outcomes for learners (Grade 3)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 3)

### **SSA 5: Construction, Planning and the Built Environment**

The Head of Group, Engineering & the Built Environment, Tracy Ashcroft (TA) gave a presentation proposing:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 3)
- Outcomes for learners (Grade 3)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 3)

The Chair commented that the grade last year had been a 2 but this year a 3 was being proposed. TA replied that they were currently overhauling the process; she felt that a 3 was a realistic judgement for now and was confident that the mark would improve next year.

A governor commented that the grades had been all over the place in previous years and this was a concern for him. Another governor indicated that she had done her own grading of this area and felt it would be helpful to have three years' worth of data. In her opinion six out of 14 long courses were grade 4 (inadequate) which was a real worry. She said that the action plan was good but it needed to reflect the grade. Attendance was an issue - at 83% it was below satisfactory and on some courses it was very poor; punctuality and standards of work had not been mentioned in the report. Only two teaching observations had been done last year and she enquired why this was the case. TA explained that they were due to be observed in term 3 but the arrival of Ofsted had delayed this process. A lot of learning walks had taken place this academic year which

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were very good but they had not been recorded in this particular report. The governor requested the outcome of the learning walks for the next meeting and TA replied that she could add in attendance targets and punctuality. The governor explained that she was not convinced that teaching deserved a grade 3. TA replied that she was confident of improvement for example, in the long plumbing course they hit 64% but this year the in year retention is 79%. The governor responded that teaching could not be satisfactory when six courses were inadequate; there was poor tracking and attendance. She referred to the descriptions in the Ofsted report. The Chair advised that a grade 3 was no longer termed as satisfactory, it was now 'requires improvement' and he was happy with the grade. He felt assured by TA that she knew what improvements were required.

A governor enquired whether there was any additional evidence. TA replied that there was not as she had frozen the data for the report on 2 October 2012 but since then there had been big improvements. The inadequate courses were quite specific and they have had a complete overhaul.

The Chair enquired whether attendance was on the action plan and TA replied that punctuality and attendance could be added. A governor expressed the view that the report was candid but that it did not stack up as a grade 3 and advised that governors needed to be reassured.

The Chair acknowledged that not enough evidence had been provided and therefore the area was more like a grade 4. JD indicated that the evidence was borderline and accepted that the area could be a Grade 4. In an effort to be clear and open she suggested that they give feedback that it was almost a Grade 4 but due to the work that had been done it is only just a Grade 3 but this information must be fed back to the team. TA agreed and indicated that she had a month by month RQI and could report this to the Board at any time.

The governors agreed that despite these comments Outcomes for learners needed to be changed to grade 4 whilst Leadership and Management and Teaching and Learning should remain as grade 3. This was accepted by TA.

JD indicated that an update on improvements in this area should be brought to the next Academic Standards Committee meeting in January 2013.

The Committee agreed that the grades for SSA 5 should be:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 3)
- Outcomes for learners (Grade 4)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 3).

### **SSA 6: Information and Communication Technology**

The Head of Group, Business & Technology, Kevin Marston (KM) gave a presentation proposing:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 2)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 2)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 2)

The Chair commented that six months ago Ofsted had assessed the department as a grade 3 and enquired why KM thought it should now be a grade 2. KM replied that Ofsted

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had used the previous year's data but they had not considered the in year data and there had been an improving trend across long programmes.

A governor indicated that the report was well written and easy to follow. However, she said that they should be cautious not to overestimate the improvement as there was still quite a lot of inadequate provision. KM accepted that there was some really good practice and some average practice.

A governor referred to the attendance (85%) as being satisfactory which was acknowledged in the report. A governor agreed with the proposed individual grades of 2, 3, and 2 but advised that because Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment was only a 3 then, in her view, the grade for Overall Effectiveness should only be a 3. She advised that it was important to follow the established methodology of grading.

The Chair commented that because leadership was strong surely this was important enough. He suggested using the report as a management tool and that they did not need to be tied to the Ofsted rules.

Another governor enquired about the improvement plan and how fast this was happening. KM explained that ECDL programmes had been a major issue as many learners had only come for a small part of the programme but this had now changed as Gateshead Council were now running some courses.

The Committee agreed that the grades for SSA 6 would remain as;

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 2)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 2)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 2)

### **SSA 8: Sport, Leisure and Recreation**

The Head of Group, Sport & Development, Sally Hargreaves (SH) gave a presentation proposing:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 2)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 3)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 1)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 1)

SH outlined a very positive picture and emphasised that learners were equipped with many industry specific qualifications which had helped them to get into university and to gain employment. During the Ofsted inspection nine tutors had been observed and Ofsted had agreed with the high level of teaching.

The Chair advised that last year the grade for Overall Effectiveness had been a 1. SH replied that they had looked more closely at individual courses and identified pockets of problems. The teaching is outstanding and the staff are on board with this, and she thought the prognosis was very positive.

A governor commented that this was a clear example of where some overall grade 1s could mask the individual scores, the 16-18 provision was clearly better than the adult provision. Gym instructor courses had changed from full cost to SFA funding and this had not worked.

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Another governor enquired whether Premier Global was a franchise position and SH confirmed that it was. The governor then asked if the franchised courses were better and SH replied that the success rate was 94% but that franchised courses were predominantly short and very short. Andrew Robson confirmed that a lot of short and very short 19+ courses were largely franchise and that the figures had improved with a success rate of 97%. He explained that they had very robust evidence due to teaching observations and that this had been supported by Ofsted. The governor replied that an outstanding profile and teachers with excellent industry experience did not necessarily equate to outstanding teaching.

TA advised that she had been the link manager during the Ofsted inspection. Ofsted could clearly see the improvements that had taken place over a period of time. The Ofsted inspector referred to the 'obsession with data management' and that this had caused significant improvements over the two years. The teaching staff had worked very hard and it would take time for the outcomes to catch up.

A governor indicated that until the outcomes for learners caught up then the teaching could not be graded as 1. JD accepted this point but highlighted that there was no doubt that the work taking place in this area was excellent. Another governor advised that she could still not accept grade 1 for leadership and management if the outcomes were not in place.

The Committee agreed that the overall grade for SSA 8.1 would remain at 2 with 3 for outcomes and changed both teaching to 2 and leadership and management to 2:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 2)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 3)
- Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 2)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 2)

The Chair advised SH that if there was additional evidence this would need to be incorporated into the document although the Committee would not need to see this again. He emphasised that only a summary of the report would be taken to the December Board meeting.

### **SSA 15 Business, Administration and Law**

The Head of Group, Business & Technology, Kevin Marston (KM) gave a presentation proposing:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 4)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 4)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 3)

KM recognised that the achievements were mainly below national average. The majority of adult programmes were made up of professional qualifications. Over 1,300 enrolments were on short courses and were delivered by partnerships and these continued to be successful. Staff observations had improved over the previous year. The learner voice survey stated that teaching was good but that there was inconsistent use of SMART targets and tracking. There were areas of good practice on NVQ programmes which had lead to good success rates. There had been inadequate reporting for leadership and management and management of programmes had been weak. Improvements have been disadvantaged due to inadequate control.

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The Chair thanked KM for a very honest and critical appraisal and enquired what the future held for this area. JD replied that it was different now as there had been significant changes made in how and what was delivered. A new Curriculum Manager had been appointed with a clear brief on where the area had to go. They were already implementing performance management, withdrawing some qualifications and including some other professional qualifications. The main focus for the Curriculum Manager is robust intervention. The Chair advised that the Committee would take a closer look at this area at the January meeting and KM agreed.

When asked what was at the heart of the problem, KM replied that it had been a combination of factors including a series of long term sickness with key staff including the course leader. The AAT course required a depth of knowledge in accounting. Mistakes had been made with agency staff and some learners had removed themselves from the programme. The governor replied that with this in mind he thought teaching and learning should be graded as grade 4 and this was supported by another governor.

KM explained that they had completely changed the delivery model. A governor highlighted that it was not only AAT that was underperforming and therefore teaching and learning could not be a grade 3. She indicated that she found it difficult to understand how the leadership and management situation had existed in the first place or how it had been allowed to continue.

The Committee agreed that the overall grade for SSA 15 would remain at 4 with 4 for outcomes and changed both teaching and learning to 4 and leadership and management to 4.

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 4)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 4)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 4)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 4)

### **Apprenticeship programmes**

Head of Apprenticeships, Joanne Dodson (JD) gave a presentation proposing:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 1)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 1)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 1)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 1)

JD advised that the department mainly delivered 12 to 24 month level 2 apprenticeships and that they had been graded as outstanding by Ofsted. Employers speak very highly of the College's flexibility to fit their requirements. The College also promotes a culture of employability.

A governor enquired what was meant by the term outstanding achievement and timely. JD responded that achievement is the number of learners who achieve the full framework in each year (must achieve in all eight areas). Timely is about the planned duration of a programme. They judged how long it would take a typical learner to complete the programme e.g. engineering would be four years. The figure is how many learners achieve their apprenticeship within the planned end date.

The governor indicated that it was not clear from the report and that it should be overall and timely success rates as in the data tables. JD replied that she had used the terminology which Ofsted had used. The governor disagreed with this comment but

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indicated that she now understood what the figures meant. She commented that a lot of data had slipped from 2010/2011 and that she was not convinced that this department was still outstanding. She acknowledged that it clearly had been outstanding in the past but there had been a significant decline in overall and timely success rates; it presented a good picture but not an outstanding one.

The Chair enquired whether the governor was challenging the outcomes figure only and another governor indicated that he agreed that it was hard to justify that outcomes should stay as a grade 1. The Chair agreed with this comment.

A governor advised that there was a problem with leadership and management. She felt that the report was persuasive but there was a lot of narrative which was lacking in evidence in terms of data. She did not feel she had seen enough evidence to understand how the grades had been reached. The Chair suggested that comments regarding the drop in performance needed to be included in section 6 of the report.

The governor mentioned that both areas which had been inspected were graded as 2. She could find no reference in the text to acknowledge that improvements were being made and this gave the impression that it was not being taken seriously enough. For outstanding provision it was a bit thin; it had maintained a high quality since it was last inspected so it was to be commended.

The Committee agreed that the overall grade for Apprenticeships Programmes should be changed to a 2; outcomes should also be changed to a 2 and teaching and leadership and management should both remain as 1.

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 2)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 2)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 1)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 1)

### **Work based learning programmes**

The Head of Department: National Business Development & Curriculum, Kevin Mott (KM) gave a presentation proposing:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 1)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 2)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 1)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 1)

In relation to leadership and management this had been graded outstanding by Ofsted in May. The department promoted a continuous improvement culture and it demonstrated best practice for monitoring of sub contracted provision.

The Chair commented that this area had received good feedback from Ofsted and enquired whether governors agreed. A governor noted that KM had been very honest in the report which was excellent but commented that he had mentioned that teaching observations had only just been introduced. JD advised that this was not something new it was just that a specialist team, reporting directly to Andrew Robson, was now in place to do this.

A governor indicated that this report was less clear and that outcomes were definitely a grade 2. KM replied that a lot of the factors were external and beyond their control such as the Japanese tsunami and subcontractors failing to deliver. The governor enquired



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how the tsunami had impacted on retail and KM explained how the tsunami had hit wider than just the engineering provision. The governors sympathised and thought it was difficult to judge when something was beyond your control.

The Committee agreed that the overall grade should be changed to a 2. KM accepted this as he had originally pitched it at a 2. He indicated that they classed themselves as an employer responsive provision e.g. they can support Nissan at the drop of a hat but after a tsunami there was very little they could do. He accepted that more detail needed to be added to the narrative, to reflect the reasoning.

The Committee agreed that the grades for Work based learning were:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 2)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 2)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 1)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 1)

### **Subject Sector Areas without presentations**

The Chair enquired whether there were any areas of concern about departments where no presentation had taken place.

A governor indicated that she was concerned with SSA 9: Arts, Media and Publishing as she thought the outcomes were inadequate. The proposal is for:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 3)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 3)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 3)

The governor thought that Outcomes for Learners should be (Grade 4).

Andrew Robson acknowledged that this was an underperforming area. There was a new management team, the problem areas were quite specific and well identified and that was what had swayed them to a grade 3. The governor responded that there were too many courses below the national average and thought that if outcomes for learners was grade 4 then teaching and learning should also be grade 4. She indicated that she was happy to discuss this outside of the meeting and JD replied that she would appreciate a discussion with her about this area.

The Committee agreed that the grades for SSA 9 should be:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 3)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 4)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 3)

The governor advised that she would need a report on this area. Qualifications were fundamental and this was her area of expertise. She indicated that the CRE grades needed to be put right. Andrew Robson agreed with this comment and advised that new course leaders were now in post.

The Chair thanked all of the course leaders for their work and for taking the comments professionally.

## **College overall grades**

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality, Judith Doyle (JD) presented a summary of the report proposing the following grades:

- Overall Effectiveness (Good Grade 2)
- Outcomes for Learners (Good Grade 2)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Good Grade 2)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Good Grade 2)

JD advised that whilst this was not an inspection process they still relied on the inspection criteria. At least 3% of the improvement was in the long course provision. Long level 3 is taking the College to a national rate and over 50% of the 16-18 provision is at long level 3. In addition, a number of other outcome indicators have increased although not quite as fast. In 2011/2012 more learners had achieved outcomes and had progressed into higher education or found employment. There were examples of high quality teaching, learning and assessment which had contributed to standards being raised for learners. She thought that since the Ofsted report the College was now a good Grade 2.

A governor commented that progress had not been well evidenced in the report. Attendance was satisfactory and so was punctuality. A lot of work would need to be done this year to put forward a persuasive picture but at the moment the report read as 'satisfactory'. She acknowledged improvements in leadership and management but said that the success rates are only in line with the national rates. She proposed that the grade for outcomes for learners was a 3 and not a 2 and the Committee agreed with this.

JD indicated that one of the criteria for grading 'good' is about closing the gap and she said that she had done that. She felt this was highly significant and that it was hard for the College to accept a grade 3 in this area. The governor replied that in her opinion Ofsted had been kind to the College when they had given the grades that they did. She suggested that the report needed to contain a lot more analysis.

The proposed grade for teaching and learning was 2. JD indicated that there were issues around the inspection of numeracy and literacy in how to monitor progress and also about outcomes. The inspection team had agreed with her observation grades of good or better. In terms of the learner experience, learners say that they have an enjoyable and enthusiastic experience. However, JD accepted that due to the previous comments made by members that it was likely that this score would now need to change to grade 3. In her opinion she thought that teaching was at least good.

The governor commented that Ofsted's comments regarding the observation of lessons should be treated with caution as they really only indicated that the college were good at carrying out observations, not necessarily that the teaching was good. She indicated that Ofsted had graded the College as a 3 for teaching in May 2012 and there had been no time to improve since then. She warned that by grading as a 2 it could give the message that the College had not accepted the Ofsted judgement. In her opinion the College should be a 3 for teaching and learning. The new framework put a higher priority on performance management of teaching and that had been an issue for the College.

Another governor agreed with the point about lack of time to improve and that not enough had been done to demonstrate the higher grade. JD accepted these comments and advised that she had graded teaching and learning as a 2 on the basis that she felt the outcomes for learners were a 2. The Committee agreed that teaching and learning should be grade 3.

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The proposed grade for leadership and management was 2. JD indicated that there had been significant leadership and management activity. Intervention strategies had been radical and they had appointed staff who were responsible for retention, there were weekly performance meetings and this had brought improved results. A governor said that she was happy to accept this but there needed to be more at the beginning of the report to support this. The Chair commented that he had taken a lot of confidence from what the staff had said. The Committee agree that, because two of the grades had changed to grade 3, overall effectiveness also needed to be changed to grade 3.

The College Overall grades were:

- Overall Effectiveness (Grade 3)
- Outcomes for Learners (Grade 3)
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Grade 3)
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (Grade 2)

### **Safeguarding**

JD advised that the College continued to grade Safeguarding separately and so this was a separate process. She asked if the Committee could agree that safeguarding was still Outstanding Grade 1 as Ofsted had said and the Committee agreed with this grading.

The Chair acknowledged that it had been a tough and challenging process. He thanked staff for the way they had presented their reports and for their acceptance of challenges to the grades. He explained that a summary of the report would be presented to the December Board meeting and a full report would be amended in due course.

The Chair confirmed the issues for discussion at the Academic Standards Committee in January 2012:

- Progress on the Post Inspection Action Plan
- A further report on SSA 15: Business, Administration and Law
- A further report from SSA 5: Construction, Planning and the Built Environment
- An update report on SSA 9: Arts, Media and Publishing

JD explained that the College was no longer required to publish the Self Assessment Report on the provider gateway. However, for best practice she proposed to the Board that the College should continue to publish it. A governor suggested that work needed to be done to the report and that it could not be published as it was. Another governor confirmed that the Board would make a decision on this by which point the report would be in its finalised form.

A governor indicated that she would be happy to look at the revised copy of the report if anyone would like her to do so.

**RESOLVED to note the report, approve the grades as discussed and recommend those grades to the Board**

## **5. Any Other Business**

There were no items for discussion.

**6. Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 16 January 2013 at 4.00pm.