

Minutes of Meeting of the Personnel & Quality Assurance Committee of the Governing Body of Carmel College held on Tuesday, 3 November, 2009 at 5.30 pm

Present: Mr Peter Alcock (Chair)
Mrs Margaret Buckley
Mr Liam Goulding (Student Governor)
Dr John Humphreys
Mr Mike Nencini
Mr Rob Peacock
Mrs Helen Stevenson

In attendance: Mrs Moira Barton (HR Manager)
Mr Nick Burnham (Vice Principal)

Mr John Perry (Clerk)
Mrs Alison Fishwick (Minuting Clerk)

Mr Paul Vaughan (Head of Maths. & Science Faculty) for Item 5

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Margaret Buckley and Karl Smith.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of 15 September, 2009

The Minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

Agenda Item 6 - Student Perceptions Report

The Chair wished to clarify his comments as minuted in the final paragraph. The Chair explained that the examination results achieved by the students this year are a tribute to everybody at Carmel, from the cleaning staff to the Principal, particularly when considering the challenges faced by the College at the beginning of the last academic year, especially with the building of the Notre Dame Centre for Art and Design and the necessity for mobile accommodation. It was, he commented, a credit to everyone concerned that this disruption was managed in such a way so as not to impact negatively on examination results and the learning experience.

Agenda Item 11 - Staffing Update

Governors noted that the HR department have been unsuccessful in appointing a Modern Apprentice for the HR role and therefore the post of HR Administrator has gone to advertisement. The HR Manager explained that the Modern Apprenticeship scheme does not cater for HR administration per se but is directed towards a general administrative programme. To-date 200 applications have been sent out with 103 returns - this is an excellent response. The College currently has three Modern Apprentices at Carmel, one of whom is a Lab Technician and an ex Carmel student.

Agenda Item 14 - Committee Performance Indicators 2009-10

As requested at the last meeting, a list of staffing policies was tabled detailing those policies which will require both reviewing and approval by the Personnel & Quality Assurance Governing Body Governors.

5. Quality Assurance Report: Science and Maths

The Head of Faculty for Science and Maths presented an overview of the work of the Faculty to Governors. The Faculty incorporates 7 departments with 30 academic tutors and 6 support staff. The presentation included details of AS and A2 examination results, Level 2, 3 and 4 enrolments and a summary of the key strengths.

The presentation concluded with 'Key Challenges and Targets' for the area with an emphasis on one key target which expressed the Faculty's commitment to aim for 10% of students achieving the new A* grade at A2.

Governors questioned how the 'ethos' of the Faculty was measured? The Head of Faculty referred to the one-to-one workshops offered, the enrichment activities that take place, the faculty trips, the challenges posed, both internally and nationally. Focus groups speak of the approachability of staff and staff "going the extra mile".

Governors also noted that, in addition to whole Faculty meetings, Heads of Departments within the Faculty hold their own regular monthly meetings; indeed the Faculty as a whole also meet socially outside College hours. The new building (West Park) has allowed greater flexibility to hold regular meetings and the opportunity to develop peer observations across departments.

Governors enquired about subject content overlap and how this was managed. It was reported that students studying Maths and Physics are covering Mechanics 1 from both subject angles and in order to avoid confusion this is co-ordinated through the students studying this unit at the same time.

The Chair thanked the Head of Faculty adding that the presentations are very useful in helping Governors understand some of the challenges faced by the College.

6. Value Added Report 2008-09

This report was tabled and the Vice Principal took Governors through key elements of the report. The Vice Principal was pleased to report that the College in value added terms is once again 'outstanding' and that, although the benchmarks have changed, i.e. the scores in the top 10% have been ratcheted up, Carmel still remains in the top 10%.

Governors noted the rise in the proportion of students entering Carmel with higher than average GCSE grades and that this trend has been maintained with proportionally more upper sixth leavers in the higher band, it was a similar story at AS. This has followed the raising of the St. Helens GCSE performance, the raised entry criteria for non-partner schools and the launch of the Gifted and Talented programme.

Governors questioned whether those students with high GCSE results also have the ability to study at A Level. The Principal responded that it has always been the case that there will be some students not equipped for independent study, indeed it is a question also raised by Universities when students progress from Advanced to Higher Education, it is however very difficult to measure.

The Vice Principal referred to the subject of Biology which has a disproportionate number of students below their MEG and this will be investigated further.

Governors noted that at A2, value has been added to all bands except the bottom two and this is because the students are not as busy; these students are on the Intermediate programme. The Vice Principal explained that this cohort of students are studying a mixed programme of Level 3 and GCSE and that it is something the College will need to review.

Governors noted the report.

7. September Reviews

The Principal presented the 2009 September Reviews Report.

Governors noted that the College always looks at performance on a three year basis. Both the Principal and Vice Principal meet with those subject areas requiring internal support on a monthly basis ensuring that actions agreed are in place. In response to Governors, the Principal reported that Departments respond very well to the support offered and the evidence from last year shows that it has helped subject areas along. The process is about "What can we do to improve things". An Action Plan is formed from the Internal Support meetings and this is presented to this Committee.

In respect of German, internal support continues and the Head of Department has been put in touch with high performing German Departments at other schools.

Governors noted that the subjects in the Art Department have been divided up and this will help to grade the individual art subjects more precisely during the self-assessment process.

Governors enquired about the current status of Open Forum and how the Archdiocese has viewed the situation. The Principal responded that he has spoken at length to the Archdiocese and they now fully understand the position the College is placed in.

Governors noted the Report.

8. Staff Climate Survey

The Vice Principal presented the report to Governors which summarised the results of the Staff Climate Survey undertaken in May based on the returns from 120 staff. Governors noted that Page 3 was omitted which showed a graph ranking responses with other institutions.

The Vice Principal reported that overall the picture is very positive; the responses are good with responses to 13 of the 20 questions showing either an increase in score or remaining at 2008 levels. No statements received a response below 3.5.

Governors noted that the results of the Staff Climate Survey along with the results from the Investors in People are included in the self assessment review.

Governors had a general discussion surrounding some of the key points arising from the survey. The College was congratulated however on undertaking a survey voluntarily and it was generally acknowledged that although overall the results were positive, differences in opinion are to be expected, particularly with such a large workforce.

Governors noted the Report.

9. Staff Development Report 2008-09

The Vice Principal took Governors through the report. Governors noted that the *Pro development* computer software used for recording and returning information is to be replaced with a computer integrated HR package (CINTRA). This will enable on-line staff development evaluations which will be simple to complete and ensure a greater return. The Chair strongly recommended that staff not completing evaluation forms should not be allowed to attend another event and referred to the return of 184 out of 1095 staff who attended events as unacceptable. This was reinforced by a number of governors. The Vice Principal responded that part of the problem is that the evaluation form is not generic and staff are less inclined to fill it in, however, the Vice Principal agreed to pursue this proposal alongside a review of the evaluation form.

In respect of *Development of Talent*, the Vice Principal reported on the success of the Leadership and Management course for Middle Managers aspiring to Senior Management. All staff involved had been very positive about the programme. The cost of the course is £5000 and the Vice Principal commented that the programme is probably not sustainable as a proportion of the budget and the College is currently investigating an alternative to reduce the cost. Accreditation has been approved for this course

and is equivalent to 60 CATS points and will lead to a Certificate in Catholic Leadership and Management course with the option of moving on to a Masters course. In response to a Governor's query, the Vice Principal agreed to check with the Author the wording "*College has made the decision not to fund anyone seeking accreditation and that must be a decision that lies with the individual manager*" as some clarity was required as to the meaning of this sentence.

Governors noted the report.

10. Staff Development Programme and Budget 2009-10

The Vice Principal reported that the budget for this year has been trimmed. All individual training is identified via Performance Management interviews. The Vice Principal referred to the trialling of a new staff training room in West Park which is available for training sessions. With the introduction of the new timetable structure sessions can be offered four to five times a week. The sessions operating so far in this way have been well attended and appear to be more productive than whole college sessions.

Governors noted the report.

11. Accident Report

Governors noted the accident report. The Principal explained that the incident relating to the Injured Person running up the stairs and slipping was as a result of the IP concerned choosing to exercise in their own time unsupervised.

There are no underlying concerns.

Governors noted the report.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 23 February, 2010 at 5.30 pm

Signed by the Chair

On this day