

Minutes of Meeting of the Personnel & Quality Assurance Committee of the Governing Body of Carmel College held on Tuesday, 12 May, 2009 at 5.30 pm

Present: Mr Peter Alcock (Chair)
Mrs Margaret Buckley
Dr John Humphreys
Mr Mike Nencini
Mr Rob Peacock

In attendance: Mrs Moira Barton, *HR Director*
Mr Nick Burnham, *Vice Principal*
Mrs Carole Williams, *Deputising for the Staff Governor*
Ms Marie Gettings *Assistant Principal Student Services*
Ms Jenny Collis *Equality & Diversity Facilitator*

Mrs Alison Fishwick (*Acting Clerk*)

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Esi Appiah-Anane, Karl Smith, Helen Stevenson and Canon Leo Stoker.

3. **Minutes of the Meeting of 24th February, 2009**

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

4. **Matters Arising**

Agenda Item 5 – Quality Assurance Report

The Principal reported that the name for the new Faculty encompassing French, German, Spanish, English Language, English Literature and Combined, Media Studies and Film Studies, Music and Music Technology, Performance Studies and Dance will be known as the *Faculty for Culture and Communication*.

Agenda Item 6 – Issues Arising from the Governors' Strategic Planning Day 2008 : Procedures for Recruitment and Retention of Staff

Governors noted that registration of staff under the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) has been put back to July 2010. Any new staff from 2010 will need to be registered by the ISA; all existing staff will need to be registered within five years.

Agenda Item 13 – Accident Report

The Governors' representative on the Health & Safety Committee referred to the matter raised at a recent meeting regarding under-reporting of student accidents by students. A new reporting form has been introduced but it is too early to register any impact. **The Governors expressed their full support for the work carried out by the College site staff in respect of health and safety matters.**

5. Quality Assurance Report : Equality and Diversity

The Assistant Principal Student Services, and the E & D Facilitator, gave a presentation to Governors on Carmel's approach to Equality and Diversity.

The Chair asked what key issues are faced by the College. The Assistant Principal responded that the biggest challenge was being prepared for fast moving changes and being able to keep abreast of developments and legal requirements. A particular area of impact will be on Learner Support; the trend being the acknowledgement of the range of Learner Support needs.

Governors asked how the College identifies students in the minority groups who have underachieved. The Vice Principal responded that the *Equality & Diversity Impact Measures* (EDIMs) will enable the College to identify individuals adding that by gender girls out-perform the boys although the gap at Carmel is not as wide as the national average. Governors noted that it is more difficult to identify by ethnic grouping as there are so few from this group at Carmel, it is thought that the Focus Groups carried out are more informative in determining the experiences of the ethnic minorities. Governors referred to the wider group of girls out-performing boys and how this would be analysed. The Vice Principal responded that analysis at subject level will be picked up via the College's quality assurance procedures, although it is worth noting that some subjects recruit more males than females and vice versa and the aim was to try and level out the imbalance as best as you can. Equality & Diversity is also incorporated into Schemes of Work and is also a key question during Self Assessment i.e. "How well are all students guided and supported?"

The Chair commented that the biggest challenge is the external perception of Equality and Diversity at Carmel. At this juncture the Principal gave an example and reminded Governors of the communication from the Equality and Human Rights Commission in respect of unlawful further and higher education course admission criteria in respect of vocational courses.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal and the Equality & Diversity Coordinator for the very interesting presentation. The Principal in turn thanked the Coordinator for all her hard work in Equality & Diversity.

6. January 2009 Modular Results

The Vice Principal presented the results explaining that it is difficult year on year to compare like for like, even more so this year with the introduction of new AS modular exams. However, all the Head of Faculties have reported their delight at the results; overall performance in the January modules has been very encouraging, despite a slight fall however in achievement at A2 level in January for the second year running.

Governors noted the six subjects that saw a significant increase in their performance compared to last year and the subjects which saw a decrease. The latter were generally the larger subject areas. Governors enquired whether the reasons for the slippage. The Vice Principal responded that it may be the same students each time or it may be there is a sense of relaxation amongst the students. The Deputising Staff Governor supported this comment by explaining how in her own subject area interviews which took place after the results came out revealed that students were feeling a little complacent prior to the January modules particularly after enjoying excellent AS results. These students have now realised that they need to work hard at achieving higher grades in their re-sits.

Governors noted the contents of the report.

7. The Implications of Changes in Funding for the Curriculum and Staffing

Governors noted the contents of the Principal's report which gave the background surrounding the "final" allocation received in April. This allocation confirmed the expected fall in funding associated with the LSC reducing the college Standard Learner Number but also included the unexpected cut in student numbers which has affected all 16-18 providers nationally. Governors noted that since the recent Budget funds have been released which have now reversed the situation. At a recent meeting with the LSC this reversal had been confirmed and, in addition, the possibility of the College taking on additional learners was discussed. The College had indicated that an additional 28 students could be recruited and adverts for appropriate staffing have been placed. It is hoped that the LSC will be able to confirm the additional student numbers by the end of May.

Governors were reminded that the reduction in SLN was caused by the withdrawal of funding for General RE and how, despite agreement with the LSC to the contrary, funding for this year was based on last year's data; almost certainly this will affect funding for the next two years. Although in the short term the college financial position has improved it is expected that over the medium term the college will face further reductions in funding.

This reduction in SLNs means that the College does not now receive funding for the level 2 ICT Key Skills provided in the lower sixth and the religious education Open Forum course. Governors noted that Key Skills is to be replaced by Functional Skills in 2010.

In response to the situation CMT have reviewed the curriculum and staffing and **the following decisions were approved:**

- a. **Changes to the timetable to enable more flexibility in staffing.**
- b. **Open Forum to revert back to the NABS accredited course. This will save approximately £50k in exam fees but more importantly will allow the Open Forum to teach an educationally more appropriate course.**
- c. **The College to cease the provision of Key Skills from September 2009. The removal of this course will not significantly impact on students. More students than ever are arriving at the college with a L2 ICT qualification. The course is not popular with students and its removal will not impact on progression to HE. Ending in 2010 will allow the redeployment of teaching and administration staff, lower college management costs and remove exam fees.**

Mrs Margaret Buckley gave her apologies and left the meeting at this point.

Governors noted the contents of the report.

8. Leadership and Management Course : Update

The Vice Principal gave an update on the programme reporting that the College has six members of staff on the programme and feedback to date has been extremely positive. Governors noted that the consortium of colleges is currently working towards accrediting the programme through Liverpool John Moores University. This may make the programme too generic; the hope is that the University will be able to adjust the model accordingly. The Principal added that he sees the programme developing further in the future for middle managers.

The Chair commented that it is the responsibility of the Catholic colleges concerned to ensure that they are creating a course to develop managers for the whole Catholic community and therefore it is important the course is accredited nationally. Governors were reminded that there are only 16 Catholic sixth form colleges nationally but that informal recognition of the programme has already filtered through. The programme has produced projects which have been beneficial to the institution, for example, one member of staff has carried out an investigation of the different International Baccalaureates; a very practical project.

Governors noted the contents of the report.

9. Staff Recruitment Procedures

The Vice Principal reported that the College sought legal advice and consulted with ACAS regarding when a post should be advertised externally.

Governors approved the decision that all senior posts should be advertised externally. The College defines these posts currently as Assistant Principal, Director of Resources, Vice Principal and Principal. Senior Post Holders are posts whose Terms and Conditions are directly determined by the Governing Body (i.e. the Principal, Vice Principal and Director of Resources) but the College also agreed to advertise Assistant Principals as senior posts. The Chair asked therefore that the word “should” be replaced by the word “must”.

Governors approved the decision that Head of Faculty posts will usually be advertised externally. Under extenuating circumstances it may be necessary to advertise these posts internally in such cases the Chair of Personnel and Quality Assurance Committee will be consulted before the process begins.

Governors approved the decision that Head of subject/support staff management posts may be externally advertised though this will depend upon the following factors:

- I. The existence of a substantial teaching/support position alongside it.**
- II. The skills and attributes of existing members of the department.**
- III. The time in the year vacancy occurs.**
- IV. The costs of external recruitment.**

10. Staffing Update

Recruitment to-date has been pleasing with a number of very good candidates attracted. Governors noted that there are four teaching posts currently advertised for Biology, Chemistry, English and Business. The standard and number of applications to-date has not been encouraging; only four applications for the Chemistry post.

The Chair suggested whether staff leaving the College should also receive a letter of thanks from the Chair of Governors. The Principal agreed to speak to the Chair.

Governors noted the contents of the report.

11. Absence Report

There were no concerns reported.

One member of the Teaching staff retired on ill-health, the second person is agreeing a return to work which means that there will be no members of the teaching staff on long term absence. There is also one member of the cleaning staff on long term absence. The rise in cleaning staff absence generally is being managed.

Governors noted the contents of the report.

12. Accident Report

There were no underlying causes for concern reported.

Governors noted that all site staff receive manual handling training. This includes temporary staff the College employ in the summer.

In respect of the incident with the hand dryer, the Principal reported that the hand dryer has been isolated and that the Estates Manager has arranged for all the hand dryers in College to be checked.

Governors noted the contents of the report.

13. Any Other Business

Human Influenza Pandemic – This was tabled.

The Vice Principal explained that a number of minor amendments had been made to the document. The Chair agreed that the Committee will take the document away to read and would direct any comments to the Principal within the next ten days.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm.

Signed by the Chair:

On this Day: