

# Minutes of Meeting of the Personnel & Quality Assurance Committee of the Governing Body of Carmel College held on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup>. September, 2009 at 5.30 pm

**Present:** Mr Peter Alcock (Chair)  
Mrs Margaret Buckley  
Mr Liam Goulding  
Dr John Humphreys (Vice Chair)  
Mr Mike Nencini  
Mr Rob Peacock  
Mr Karl Smith

**In attendance:** Mrs Moira Barton (HR Manager)  
Mr Nick Burnham (Vice Principal)  
Mr John Perry (Clerk)  
Mrs Alison Fishwick (Minuting Clerk)

Mr Kieron Vesey, Head of Faculty for Agenda Item 5  
Mr Brian Coxhead, (Vice Chair of Governing Body), For Agenda Item 5

*Prior to the meeting, Governors toured the new West Park Building.*

*The Chair welcomed Liam Goulding, new Student Governor, to the meeting.*

## 1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Helen Stevenson.

## 3. Minutes of the Meeting of 12 May, 2009

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

## 4. Matters Arising

### Agenda Item 4 Matters Arising – Agenda Item 13 – Accident Report

Governors noted that a new form has been designed for the reporting of accidents and is accessible on-line; this appears to be working well.

### Agenda Item 7 – The Implications of Changes in Funding for the Curriculum and Staffing

Governors asked for clarification regarding the 'minute' on page 3 which states that Key Skills is to be replaced by Functional Skills. It was noted that this is a general statement regarding the future of Key Skills nationally; however in respect of students coming to Carmel it is expected that Functional Skills are already embedded in their Maths and English.

### Agenda Item 8 – Leadership and Management Course

The Vice Principal reported that the programme is due to re-start shortly after a very successful first year. There is however still some tension in respect of the application of the programme

and how the College would like the programme applied. The Vice Principal agreed to keep Governors up-to-date with developments.

### **Agenda Item 13 – Any Other Business – Human Influenza Pandemic**

Governors noted that the procedure was now in place.

## **5. Quality Assurance Report : Social Science**

The new Head of Faculty for Social Sciences, gave a presentation outlining how the faculty had evolved from the opportunities presented by the new build to restructure and redefine the faculty groupings. Governors noted how the new build has provided a revitalised student learning and staff working environments which in turn has enhanced the 'Team Ethos'. There are currently twenty members of teaching staff in the faculty which occupies over two floors of the West Park Building.

Governors noted the 2009 AS and A2 examination performances for the faculty, in particular the consistently high performing curriculum areas at AS and A2 in Geography, Law and Psychology along with year on year improvements in performance for AS Government & Politics, AS & A2 History and AS & A2 Philosophy & Religion.

At this point Governors were reminded of the ALPS scoring system: 2 = Outstanding, 3 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good and 5 = Satisfactory. Governors noted the high ALPS grades of the A2 results.

Governors asked for an explanation of the acronym EPQ as mentioned in the presentation. The Head of Faculty explained that it is an *Extended Project Qualification*, an additional programme for high achieving students to apply for where they can choose a topic to research and present, providing a similar experience to university study skills. The EPQ provides additional UCAS points and is equivalent to 'half an A Level'. The EPQ requires commitment from students but develops high level research skills, and both IT and Interpersonal skills. There are six members of staff involved in supporting the programme with 40 students already signed up for the November scheme.

In concluding the presentation, the Head of Faculty highlighted key challenges for the future; the ultimate vision for the whole area is to move to at least grade 3 ALPS.

In response to questions from Governors regarding student recruitment, it was reported that there were no recruitment concerns within History, student numbers had grown and there were three members of teaching staff in the Department.. There was more concern regarding recruitment to Geography. The reduction in Psychology reflects students dropping the subject at A2 when students go from a 4 to a 3 A Level programme.

The Chair enquired as to how the Head of Faculty ensures that all 20 members of staff share the 'vision'. He responded that Heads of Departments within the Faculty meet regularly in addition to the faculty as a whole meeting to brainstorm ideas. There are also opportunities to meet one-to-one both formally and informally.

The Chair thanked the Head of Faculty for his very informative presentation.

## **6. Student Perceptions Report**

The Vice Principal reported that the Student Perceptions survey was carried out on-line with 982 out of 1,500 students responding; this is a good sample. The analysis indicates very high levels of student satisfaction with the College as a whole. As external benchmarks are not available the report uses data from the previous year.

The Vice Principal drew Governors' attention to the high rating areas which included teaching, FE Sports Coordinator and the Library and the poor rating areas which included Open Forum, General Studies, Student Council and the Refectory. The evidence will be used to inform Departmental Self Assessment Reports.

In respect of Open Forum, the Principal explained that the examination aspect of the programme has now ceased although this has not been received well by the Diocese. However, the College now has purpose-built accommodation and an established team who are working closely together with the Manager to push the area forward. The College had felt that the assessment methodology for Open Forum did not engage the students intellectually but were keen to continue with delivering the programme as students need to think about moral, spiritual, ethical and political issues and the Instrument & Articles require the College to deliver some form of General RE.

The Vice Principal at this point explained to Governors the difference between General Studies and Open Forum. General Studies is offered at AS and A Level. The Upper Sixth enter for the AS in the January and if successful they enter for the A2 after Christmas. Examination results are just as good, if not better, delivered this way and the students achieve extra UCAS points.

The Chair commented on the high quality classroom accommodation in the new build and how well it has been received and wished to praise all those concerned in its implementation and upkeep. The Chair also wished to acknowledge and pay tribute to staff for the high performance rates for the College's teaching and learning.

#### **Governors noted the Report**

### **7. Staff Climate Survey**

The Vice Principal explained that the Survey could not be tabled as the data had to be sent back owing to some inaccuracies where data had been interpreted incorrectly. **It was agreed to bring the Survey to the next meeting in November.**

### **8. Examination Results 2009**

The Vice Principal was pleased to report on the very good examination results for 2009.

Results for AS had marginally improved and the A2 results had risen significantly. In terms of value added the whole College has now been placed in the top 10% for AS and A2 in Band 2.

The one disappointment relates to the GCSE results, the Vice Principal's 'gut' instinct was that a number of the students were recruited onto the GCSE programme with an applied science qualification and wished to investigate the make-up of this cohort further before drawing conclusions. The Principal added that the College needs to look at Level 2 provision for the future as they are not sure that GCSEs other than re-sit Maths and English are best for the students.

Governors enquired about the media's perception of results that A Levels must be getting easier. The Principal responded that one only needs to look at the comparators to see that Carmel College is still doing well compared to other schools. It is also worth noting that today's A Level examinations are different to the examinations of twenty years ago; today's exams test different skills, are more challenging and are certainly not getting easier year on year. The Vice Principal referred to the rigour of the quality assurance mechanisms in place which teaching staff engage in which impacts on student achievement.

Year 0 results are reported later within the Principal's Report to Governors received in October at the Full Governing Body meeting.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair wished to record congratulations to staff and students for the examination successes. The Clerk agreed to communicate this message on the Chair's behalf.

**Governors noted the Report**

## **9. Current Accommodation Arrangements**

The Principal informed Governors that the College has now taken possession of West Park Building and are absolutely delighted with it; feedback from both from both staff and students has been very positive. West Park has made a significant difference to the flexibility of timetable and space. Other changes:

- E Block is currently being used for storage.
- The Performance Studies and Dance Departments are awaiting their move to the new build due to be completed next July; they are currently using St. Monica's.
- The temporary accommodation previously used by the Art subjects has been removed.
- Build One which will house the new theatre and student services area is now underway and on target.
- Governors also noted that the C block is currently being used to house the staffroom, the temporary meeting room and other administrative functions.
- During the summer both D and F Block were refurbished.

Proposals for Phase 2 are still unclear and the Principal reported that there was nothing new to add at this stage.

**Governors noted the Principal's verbal update.**

## **10. Investors in People Assessment Visit, June 2009**

The Vice Principal reported that following interviews with 26 staff the Assessor was *"satisfied beyond any doubt that Carmel College continues to meet the requirements of Level 1 of the New Choices Framework"*.

Strengths included two way communication, consultation, interview processes, leadership and management development and a strong link between the strategic plan and learning. The Assessor also liked the Leadership and Management course. Future actions recommended include a review of the strategic plan, raising quality through staff development and developing communication.

Governors noted that IIP have tightened their structure since the last assessment visit.

The College did not want to create an IIP Action Plan but would rather add the actions with other surveys and absorb them within the Self Assessment Reports for development/action.

Discussion followed as to the costs of IIP and whether it was possible to 'do-it-yourself'. Governors learned that the IIP Assessment costs around £4K and although institutions can assess themselves it was felt that an external reviewer would make the more profound comments and observations. It is also something which Ofsted look for and it has somewhat become the norm to have IIP status. Governors suggested whether the cost and/or process could be shared with other colleges. The Vice Principal acknowledged this suggestion.

**Governors noted the contents of the report.**

## 11. Staffing Update

**Governors noted the contents of the report.** The HR Manager was pleased to add that the College have also taken on two apprentices, one lab technician and one HR administrator which bring the total number of Modern Apprentices on site to four.

## 12. Accident Report 2008-09

The report covered all reported accidents since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008. There were no particular trends or concerns.

**Governors noted the report.**

## 13. Absence Report 2008-09

The HR Manager reported that currently there is only one member of the teaching staff on long term sickness absence. There is an on-going issue with cleaning staff absence but this is being carefully managed.

The Chair commented that the College does very well to keep absence under control.

**Governors noted the report.**

## 14. Committee Performance Indicators 2009-10

Governors noted the recommendations and the contents of the report. The Clerk recommended integrating the Committee's review of policies and procedures as an annual review and part of a continuous process rather than on a less structured basis.

**The Chair requested that a list of policies and when they require reviewing be submitted for consideration by the Governors.**

**Governors noted the report and approved the Chair's request.**

## 15. Any Other Business

### (a) Future Quality Assurance Reports

Governors agreed to the programme of Quality Assurance reports as presented which covers the remaining four Faculty areas.

## 16. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 3 November, 2009 at 5.30 pm.

Signed by the Chair: .....

On this day: .....