

Minutes of Meeting of the Personnel & Quality Assurance Committee of the Governing Body of Carmel College held on Tuesday, 24 February, 2009 at 5.30 pm

Present: Mr Peter Alcock (Chair)
Mrs Margaret Buckley
Dr John Humphreys
Mr Rob Peacock (Principal)
Mrs Helen Stevenson
Ms Esi Appiah-Anane (Student Governor)

In attendance: Mrs Moira Barton
Mr Nick Burnham

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

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Mike Nencini, Mr Karl Smith and Canon Leo Stoker.

3. **Minutes of the Meeting of 4 November 2008**

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly.

4. **Matters Arising**

Item 9 – Staff Development Report – The Clerk tabled the Report.

Item 14 – NUT Dispute – The Principal reported that the Industrial Action did not take place in the end; the voting swung towards no action and, taking into account the current economic situation, the Unions decided to yield.

5. **Quality Assurance Report**

This item was taken at the end of the meeting.

6. **Issues Arising from the Governors' Strategic Planning Day 2008: Procedures for Recruitment and Retention of Staff**

Governors noted the draft policy which has been designed to put into practice the College's Christian commitment to promoting equity, fairness, equality and diversity. The policy also fulfils the College's requirements under its Every Student Matters Policy and the regulations of the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Governors asked for an explanation as to the purpose of the ISA. The Vice Principal explained that the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), which is in addition to the CRB, was set up after the Ian Huntley affair and subsequent enquiry. The aim is to ensure an effective joined-up network for monitoring employees; anyone wishing to work with children will have to join the ISA at the beginning of their career. All employees presently in post will be registered and have their fees paid for them. The HR Manager added that everyone working in an educational environment has to go through the ISA process and that it will be illegal to employ someone without an ISA check. In response to Governors' enquiries, the HR Manager agreed to investigate how far this ruling applies i.e. Eucharistic in Parishes etc. The Vice Principal added that the College will be investigating whether their own invigilators will fall under this ruling.

Governors commend the Policy to the Board of Governors for approval subject to an amendment to 'Implications d) Risk Management' on the cover sheet which the Chair would like changed to:

"Failure to comply with these procedures could result in the appointment of inappropriate or unsuitable persons." The Clerk agreed to make the necessary changes.

7. Whole College Self Assessment Report (SAR)

The Vice Principal explained that the SAR had been scrutinised externally by Ofsted's Desk Research and the College had received a clean bill of health. The Ofsted report will be presented to Governors at the next meeting of this Committee.

Governors noted that one curriculum area had been graded 4 for the second year running but a number of long term actions had been put in place last year and progress would not yet have taken effect. The Vice Principal explained that the SAR document has to be uploaded onto the portal before the end of December.

Governors referred to Page 1 which made reference to *Progress made against PIs* and the A2 and AS Success Rates of 87% and 75% respectively and asked whether it would be possible to also show the previous years' success rate in order to demonstrate progress. The Vice Principal responded that this was a fair point, however, the very fact that the data falls under *Quality Improvements from previous SAR* shows that progress has been made.

**The Chair congratulated the College on their achievements.
The Committee noted the Report**

8. Internal Review Action Plans

The Vice Principal reminded Governors that the intention of carrying out Internal Reviews was to be supportive; indeed ten out of the twelve subjects reviewed so far have seen an increase in their value added score.

The two areas currently under review are Art and Performance Studies; it had been decided to continue reviewing Performance Studies in order to monitor its progress.

Governors viewed the Actions of the Art Internal Review and noted that all actions are either in place or in progress apart from Action 1 and 5 where more work was required.

The Student Governor referred to the Performance Studies Review and the statement therein which refers to a few students not possessing the appropriate entry requirements, in particular two students with Es in both English Language and English Literature and questioned the reasoning behind allowing access onto the course. The Vice Principal explained that in some circumstances if a student can demonstrate a skill or talent relating to their course choice and, in keeping with the ethos of the College for providing opportunities for individuals, then there is discrete admission. Governors noted that students are provided with additional support for the assessment element of the course.

Governors noted the content of the report.

9. Progress on Investors in People Action Plan

The Vice Principal was pleased to report that the College had taken action on every area of the Action Plan 2006. IIP will be reviewing the College's status as an IIP accredited organisation again in the summer. The Vice Principal was confident that changes have taken place since the last IIP report.

Governors asked about the current status of IIP accreditation. The Vice Principal responded that the College believed it was still an important award to have and that the College has always learnt something from the IIP process. It is also useful to have an external assessor to provide an outside view. Ofsted also look for IIP in an institution as an indicator. The Vice Principal added that an increasing number of institutions are achieving the award and the process has become much more rigorous as a result.

Governors noted the report.

10. Equality & Diversity Policy : Performance Indicators

Governors noted the six years of data collected by the College which demonstrates that the College is recruiting in line with current accepted good practice and that the pattern of appointments demonstrates that appointments are not awarded to a particular gender or particular ethnic group. The Vice Principal reported that the statistics had been presented to the College's Equality & Diversity Committee and they had found no causes for concern.

Governors noted the report.

11. Staffing Update

Governors noted the table indicating the posts filled and the start dates between 1 September 2008 and 31 January 2009.

Additional documentation gave data on Exit Destinations and Reasons for Leaving by Cleaning Staff, Invigilators, Support Staff and Teachers.

The HR Manager explained that there is an issue with encouraging Leavers to complete the Exit Interview Questionnaire despite arranging to assist Leavers

with this task. There did not appear to be any real concerns derived from those forms that had been fully completed and returned; indeed a positive picture is filtering through.

In respect of the non-completion of Exit Questionnaires, Governors noted that this is a cross-college issue. The Chair suggested whether employees should be allowed to leave officially unless all documentation is completed, indeed this may also be an effective solution in situations where staff had failed to complete staff development evaluations in that they are prevented on attending further courses or training. The Vice Principal felt that the onus should be on Line Managers to take responsibility for interviewing staff on exit, although it was recognised that in some situations employees may prefer to speak to a third party, however the College would be happy to explore these suggestions further.

Governors noted the report.

12. Absence Report

Governors noted the data showing the pattern of absence from 1 September 2008 to 31 January 2009 as compared to the same period last year and 2007-2008 as a whole.

Governors noted that absence is up slightly for teaching staff with one more member on Long Term absence. One member of the Support Staff who had been on Long Term absence had now returned on light duties. Cleaning staff absence was also high but this is being managed effectively. Although the 'flu epidemic had impacted on staff absence, the Chair did not consider the absence rate to be unusually high for the sector.

Governors noted the report.

13. Accident Report

Governors noted the data showing the accidents to staff and students in College since the 1st September. There appears to be fewer accidents to students than in the past. The Chair commented on the remarkable set of statistics and believed that the College was managing health and safety extremely well. The Principal added that in respect of health & safety within the new build, there were also no causes for concern.

Governors noted the report.

14. Any Other Business

None.

15. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 12 May, 2009

5. Quality Assurance Report

Issues arising from the Governors' Strategic Planning Day 2008:

a) Timetable Review and Contact Time

The Vice Principal presented the proposed changes to the 2009/10 timetable. Governors noted that the timetable is similar to the current one, the fundamental difference is that the Personal Tutor sessions go out into the columns whereas at present they are held at the same time four days a week. The main advantage of this is that it allows for full use of the new Personal Tutor suite in the new build (West Park Building). This new arrangement should not only aid communication but also allow for large group presentations e.g. talks by the Principal. The other key difference is the insertion of 5 minute travel time between the columns which will be key when the new build is complete. It was also proposed to remain with the common lunch period which will enable workshops, tutorials and enrichment activities to take place. The college day will also start 10 minutes later but the college transport arrangements will not be changed as it was thought that it would ensure better student punctuality to retain the bus timings.

Governors noted that although there were one or two minor issues arising from the proposed new timetable (e.g. impact of only seeing Personal Tutor group twice a week instead of four), the new timetable does allow for more flexible use of staffing resources. Alongside the new timetable the Vice Principal explained the proposed Contact Time examples devised to contribute to staff efficiency and effectiveness. The Contact Time examples all equate to the 23 hours 20 minutes contact time for staff, which is average for the sector, and would provide further staffing flexibility particularly in situations of under or over recruitment within curriculum areas. Governors noted that the staffing budget is 71% of the College budget.

Underlying any changes is the College's aim to ensure that Carmel's outstanding performance is maintained.

b) Internal Communication in the College

Governors noted the current formal communication network which operates via the internal meeting structure. In respect of informal communication, the Vice Principal reported that the College are currently carrying out a review of College Communication for reporting Easter 2009.

c) The Faculty Structure

The Principal explained that owing to the recent retirement of a Head of Faculty, the opportunity arose for the College to restructure the Faculties into more coherent subject grouping. It also enabled the College to invest in College staff with strong and informed knowledge and skills for the positions arising from the restructure and at less financial cost to the College. This opportunity led to the creation of a five Faculty structure: Science & Maths, Business & IT, Art, Social Science and a fifth faculty, which is yet to be named, but includes Modern Foreign Languages, the

English subjects, Media, Film, Performance and Dance and will, via the re-grouping, be managed by another Head of Faculty. The Principal invited suggestions from Governors for naming the latter Faculty.

The formation of a separate Art Faculty was a natural evolution bearing in mind the number and range of subjects within that area and that all the Art subjects will be delivered in one separate building. This Faculty will be headed by the present Head of Department.

Governors noted that the newly appointed Head of Faculty for Social Sciences is the current Head of Geography whose own subject area falls within that area. It was noted that Heads of Departments from other Faculty areas were invited to apply for the post if they felt that their subject could be transferrable e.g. Critical Thinking could logically move from Business & IT to Social Sciences.

The Chair expressed some concern that the post had not been advertised externally for two reasons: firstly the College has a predominantly white workforce and by not advertising externally applications from other ethnic groups are prevented from applying and secondly, the College cannot measure candidates against those externally available, even though the College may feel that they have appointed the best candidate for the post. The Principal and Vice Principal accepted the point made and explained that the reason for appointing internally for this particular post on this occasion was to demonstrate the College's opinion of the quality of its staff. Governors noted that similar, recent positions advertised externally have always resulted in the appointment of the internal candidate as internal candidates have been found to have the most appropriate knowledge and skills for the post. The Vice Principal agreed to seek legal advice as to whether all vacancies should be advertised externally or whether the College can choose to recruit internally if they felt it was in the College's best interest.

The Principal summarised his presentation by stating that the re-organisation of the Faculty structure has been a success and puts the College in a better position for moving forward in the future.

The Committee noted the Report

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm.

Signed on this day:

By the Chair: