



Confirmed Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 18 May 2021 at 5.30 pm via Teams

Present: Mike Hill (*Principal*)
Oliver Maddock (*until 6.45pm*)
Michael Martin (*Chair*)
Paul Rooney (*from 6.05pm*)

Apologies: Kay Arrowsmith
David Lawson
Thomas Mitchell

In attendance: Karl Smith (*Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality*)
Michelle Williams (*Vice Principal, Strategy and Resources*)
Ruth Potter (*Clerk*)

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and it was opened in prayer.

1. ELECTION

1.1 Election of Chair from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2023

The only nomination for the role of Chair was for Mick Martin. Given that the meeting was not yet quorate, it was **agreed** to refer this decision to FGB on 29 June 2021.

ACTION – Clerk to add to FGB agenda on 29 June 2021.

1.2 Election of Vice Chair from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2023

No nominations for this role were received and it was noted that the current Vice Chair was not present at the meeting. It was **agreed** to defer this election to the next meeting of the Committee on 21 September 2021.

ACTION – Clerk to add to next Committee agenda on 21 September 2021.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Attendees were invited to declare whether they had any direct or indirect personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in any matter which formed part of the agenda for this meeting or was likely to be discussed at this meeting. No new interests were declared other than those which were already recorded on the College's register of interests.

The declarations of interest were **noted** by the Committee.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3.1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted for Kay Arrowsmith, Thomas Mitchell and David Lawson. The Chair advised that Paul Rooney would be joining the

meeting at 6pm. Oliver Maddock advised that he would have to leave the meeting at 6.45pm.

It was noted that the Committee meeting would not be quorate until Paul Rooney joined at 6pm. It was decided to proceed with the meeting but defer all decision making until quoracy was achieved.

4. ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 4.1 The Principal had submitted one item of any other business – Proposed change to holiday pattern October 2021. It was agreed that this item would be raised under agenda item 11, Curriculum.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2021 (previously circulated)

- 5.1 **To approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting held on 9 March 2021**

The following amendments to the draft minutes were agreed:

Page 1 – Paul Mooney (PM) should read Paul Rooney (PR). Initials PM to be replaced by PR throughout the minutes.

Page 2 – 7.1 Governor question to be clarified as follows ‘There doesn’t appear to be any evaluation of student participation *in assessment*.’

Page 3 – 7.1 MATT9 should read MAPP9.

Subject to these amendments, the minutes were **approved** and would be signed in accordance with Clause 12 (3) of the Instrument and Articles of Government.

The publication of the minutes was authorised in accordance with Clause 13 of the Instrument and Articles of Government.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 6.1 **To consider any matters arising from the minutes (previously circulated)**
Minute 9 – Equality and Diversity Policy

The clerk highlighted that this policy had been approved by the Committee at its meeting on 9 March 2021, however the policy had not subsequently appeared before FGB for final approval. It was **agreed** that the policy would be put on the FGB agenda for 29 June 2021.

ACTION – Clerk to add Equality and Diversity Policy to June FGB Agenda.

The Chair indicated that it would be useful to have an updated policy review schedule with appropriate approval limits defined and review timescales clarified. The clerk confirmed that she had been working on this and it was **agreed** that this would be finalised and presented to the next Committee meeting.

ACTION – Clerk to update policy review schedule and add to next Committee meeting agenda.

7. SAFEGUARDING

- 7.1 **Termly Update (previously circulated)**

The Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) presented the safeguarding termly update. The following aspects of the report were highlighted:

- Training – there was a lot of training taking place, much of it led by St Helens Local Authority. For example, this week the whole pastoral team would be accessing sessions on safeguarding and prevent.
- Attendance – it was reported that the College was monitoring attendance more closely in line with the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Students who were absent for more than one week without reason were being contacted and, if no response received, an escalation process was followed which could result in a home visit.
- Neglect Strategy for St Helens – this continues to be a focus for the St Helens Safeguarding Board and the College's Art Department had been involved with the Board in producing promotional material for the strategy.
- Local drugs use – the College had received some reports from the local neighbourhood of possible drugs use in the community. Contact had been made with St Helens Local Authority and YPDAAT and they had undertaken to send people out to patrol the area and speak to young people as necessary.
- National Ofsted inquiry regarding 'Everyone's Invited' platform – it was reported that the Safeguarding Team had conducted an internal review and only one peer-on-peer incident was recorded and this was investigated thoroughly at the time. The College had not been named on the platform.
- Mental health and wellbeing – a lot of work had taken place around this in connection with Mental Health Awareness Week. Counselling was going well and the Pastoral Team was becoming more adept at recognising whether a student required signposting or a full counselling referral.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her comprehensive report and extended the Committee's appreciation to all the Safeguarding Team for their work. Governor questions were invited.

Q – What involvement since the start of lockdown has the Safeguarding Link Governor had?

A – As the Safeguarding Link Governor, the Chair responded that under the exceptional circumstances of Covid-19 and, given that there had been comprehensive termly reporting into this Committee on safeguarding issues, he had not seen the need to attend the usual Safeguarding Meetings. However, he would be attending the next scheduled meeting in June and would thereafter attend these on a termly basis.

Q – Regarding student attendance data, no regular report was submitted to governors and a query was raised regarding whether this was required, or indeed, desirable.

A – The Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) indicated that it would not be a problem to report this as all the data was available. The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) reported that attendance was very strong across all cohorts and was not an issue for the College. The Chair suggested that the regular assessment and performance monitoring of students is linked to this point as any dips would be considered in the context of attendance. The Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) outlined the escalation process followed

by the Personal Achievement Tutors and the trigger points at which attendance would be flagged and actioned.

The Principal explained that if attendance had been flagged as an area of concern by the College's SAR or Ofsted, then reporting to governors would be required. He reiterated that the process for escalation was very thorough and implementation of actions monitored by management. In addition, parents were able to monitor attendance of their children via the parent system. The Principal further clarified that in post-16 education there was no formal target or requirement to monitor attendance as there was for schools.

Q – Did the ESFA funding agreement set out any requirements for attendance monitoring?

A – The Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) clarified that there was no such clause within the agreement.

The Chair summarised that there was a robust process in place for the College to monitor student attendance and deal with any arising issues. It was suggested, however, that the clerk would check the position in relation to any legal requirements.

ACTION – Clerk to check legal requirements on reporting of student attendance figures to governors.

Q – In relation to the report on drug use, is there any suggestion that drugs are being used during the College day?

A – Residential reports suggest that there may be some drug dealing taking place, mainly in the parks. The Principal and Estates staff were present on the gate every day and in the past drugs sniffer dogs have been used. More recently, Merseyside Police had deployed plain clothed detectives in the area. A full drugs search took place in the College about 18 months ago and this did not yield any findings. The Principal put this issue in further context by clarifying that approximately only three reports from the College's neighbours had been received in the last three months.

Q – Reference to mental health as key risk in the report; is this fed through to the risk register?

A – The Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) confirmed that it did feature in the general risk register but the College's risk management process was altered some time ago in order to focus on key strategic priorities. It is these key strategic risks that are reported to governors. The Chair indicated that if there were significant issues around student mental health this would no doubt impact upon retention figures which was one of the areas reported to governors.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the Safeguarding Termly Report and thanked the Safeguarding Team for the work they were doing.

8. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

8.1 Whole College Summary including specific student cohorts (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) referred the Committee to the most recent monitoring achievement and progress point (MAPP 8) in respect of the Upper Sixth year group. The Committee was informed of the:

- percentage of students who had progressed 'at or above' expected progress.
- percentage of students who had underperformed in two or more subjects
- percentage of students who had underperformed in three or more subjects.

The Vice Principal reported that this was solid progress especially given the context of the last year.

The Committee was then referred to the most recent monitoring achievement and progress point (MAPP 3) in respect of the Lower Sixth year group. The Committee was again informed of the:

- percentage of students who had progressed 'at or above' expected progress.
- percentage of students who had underperformed in two or more subjects
- percentage of students who had underperformed in three or more subjects.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) advised that this was an excellent report for the Lower Sixth cohort and testament to their eagerness to learn.

Q – Is there confidence around the accuracy of this report given the impact of lockdown?

A – The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) assured the Committee of the report's accuracy. The MAPP system was fully embedded within the College, in its sixth year of operation, and hence there was full understanding of and confidence in the reported data. The system continues to be reviewed annually as part of the College's commitment to continuous improvement.

Q – What adjustments have been made given lockdown and loss of learning?

A – The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) reported that the College's movement to a blended learning model had gone smoothly and as such a high level of confidence in this reporting system remained.

The Principal clarified that the students did not suffer any significant loss of learning but rather a shift in the delivery model for that learning. He reported that the average 17 year-old was estimated to be two months behind, but at Carmel the estimate was more like two weeks behind. Assessments had continued as normally as possible, at the same points during the year albeit with a different methodology due to the need for home learning. Appropriate measures had been taken to ensure that assessments sat whilst students were at home were done so in a controlled manner thus mitigating the risk of malpractice. Benchmarking with other colleges had also taken place

throughout the year to ensure that Carmel practice in this area was as good as it could be.

Paul Rooney joined the meeting at this point (6.05pm) whereupon the meeting became quorate.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and thanked the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) for his presentation.

9. QUALITY ASSURANCE

9.1 Quality Assurance Update 2020-21 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented his report and highlighted the following aspects:

- All quality assurance activities had continued as normal insofar as it was physically possible. Learning walks, for example, had not been possible due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- Self-assessment reports completed virtually.
- Interventions to raise achievement – put on hold given work on Centre Assessed Grades. Inappropriate to make judgements on individual departments without any performance data. SAR determined that priority focus should, however, be placed on high volume departments.
- Lesson observations – schedule developed to focus on observations of new staff to Carmel in order to provide assurance over quality of teaching.
- Learning walks – did not take place due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- September review – all meetings took place virtually.
- Performance management – completed.
- Student voice – Committee had previously received a report on Upper Sixth focus groups regarding blended learning and timetable. Lower Sixth pupil voice and pastoral student voice surveys both due to be issued.
- Parent voice – due to be issued.
- It is anticipated that the usual quality assurance process will commence from the new academic year.
- Due to Teacher Assessed Grades in the summer, there would be another consecutive year without examination data.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and recorded its appreciation to the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality).

10. TEACHER ASSESSED GRADES 2021

10.1 Centre Policy for Determining Teacher Assessed Grades 2021 *(enclosure)*

The Chair reported that this policy document was not for governor approval but had been presented to the Committee for information. It was a comprehensive operational document that the College was required to adopt setting out the College's approach to the determination of teacher assessed grades for summer 2021.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) referred to the College's policy document and highlighted the following aspects:

- This document had been submitted to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) as required.
- All staff had read and understood this document and confirmed the same to CMT. Staff training had been supported by a video presentation.
- Twelve appendices had been added to give the Carmel narrative.
- Large amount of hard work from staff and students had been going into this and there had, undoubtedly, been pressure on both to ensure that the most professional approach is taken.

The Chair noted the enormous pressure on staff and students which would no doubt translate into pressure on staff-student relationships. Therefore, a comprehensive and clear document such as this was essential in order to facilitate swift resolution of any issues. Governor questions were invited.

Q – How is the pressure impacting staff?

A – The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) responded that the timetable in place to free up staff time on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons had assisted in terms of facilitating assessments, marking and moderation. The last assessment week was almost over and staff were feeling the pressure to do the best possible job for the students.

Q – What about pressure on CMT?

A – It had been a lot of work for the senior management team and this would continue through the summer in order to facilitate results and appeals.

The Principal indicated he was aware of the pressure and was trying to identify opportunities for CMT to rejuvenate where possible. He reported that a piece of work with another college was about to take place to explore flexible and agile working.

Q – The policy document was extremely lengthy; would there be an opportunity to learn lessons from this process in order to become more LEAN in future?

A – The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) indicated that this document did not lend itself to a slimmed down process as the College needed to fulfil exam board requirements and ensure that a comprehensive and clear appeals process was in place.

The Principal outlined the timescales and processes for submitting student assessment data.

The Committee acknowledged the relentless pressure that had been put upon staff across all areas and indicated that governors needed to keep an eye on this.

Q – The Chair queried whether governors would have an input into the post-TAG consultation process?

A – The Principal reported that a consultation was about to take place on the 2022 examination process and he would send details of this to governors.

ACTION – Principal to share details of 2022 examinations process consultation document with governors.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and policy document and expressed its thanks to the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) and all staff for their work in this area.

11. CURRICULUM

11.1 2021-22 Curriculum *(previously circulated)*

The Principal reported that there were no proposed changes to the College's curriculum offer from September 2021. There had been a high level of applications this year and, as such, the curriculum offer to students was felt to be strong.

The College was getting ready to deliver two T Levels in 2022. The Principal reported that the College would now be the only provider in the borough to deliver T Levels following the exit of another college. Promotional activity was already taking place amongst Y10 and Y11 students.

11.2 Proposed change to holiday pattern October 2021

The Principal referenced the request from governors at the last FGB to consider ways in which staff workload could be alleviated. He reported that consideration had been given to getting students to start the academic year earlier in September and this would potentially mean that the October half term break could be extended to give staff an extra two days, students would get an extra day. This proposal would acknowledge the extra work staff would be required to undertake during the summer holidays and facilitate a longer autumn break to allow for holidays away. It was proposed that support staff would be allocated an extra two days holiday for the next academic year. The Principal indicated that he intended to take these proposals to the next FGB for consideration and approval by governors and invited the Committee's comments.

Q – The Chair asked whether this was likely to cause any issues in relation to external agency requirements.

A – The Principal confirmed that the only anticipated issue may be in connection with any re-takes of examinations in the Autumn Term. It was likely that these would be either side of the October half-term holiday, but a contingency plan to open up College on one of the days may be necessary.

The Committee **noted** the Principal's proposal and **agreed** that this should be referred to FGB on 29 June 2021 for consideration and approval.

ACTION – Principal to prepare paper for FGB on 29 June 2021 and clerk to put on agenda.

The Committee decided to consider item 14 of the agenda next so that approval of policy documents could be determined whilst the meeting remained quorate, as it was anticipated that one governor would need to leave the meeting early.

14. POLICIES

14.1 Data Protection Policy

The Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) presented this policy on behalf of the Assistant Principal. She reported that the policy had been updated as follows:

- To take account of the impact of Brexit.
- Appendix in relation to personal data held by college – certain categories of data had been added to this list in order that the policy accurately reflected College practice.

Governor questions were invited.

Q – In relation to the list of key nominated data protection staff, who takes responsibility for governor data?

A – The Principal indicated that the College had to have one nominated Data Protection Officer and they took overall responsibility for all data, including governor data. This could be considered further as part of the governance review.

The Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) further clarified the purpose of the table within the policy, 3.4 Key nominated data protection staff.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the revised policy and **recommended** it for approval to FGB.

ACTION – Clerk to add Data Protection Policy to next FGB agenda on 29 June 2021.

14.2 Professional Development Policy

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented this policy on behalf of the Assistant Principal. He reported that no changes were proposed to the policy.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the policy and **recommended** it for approval to FGB.

ACTION – Clerk to add Professional Development Policy to next FGB agenda on 29 June 2021.

14.3 Safeguarding Policy

The Chair and Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) reported that the Safeguarding Team had requested that consideration of this policy be deferred from this Committee meeting and presented to FGB in June 2021 for the following reasons:

- Significant changes to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* document were anticipated and the team was awaiting further guidance and training on this.
- An external review of the Safeguarding Policy was planned.
- A forensic overhaul of the policy had been planned for the second week in June.

The Chair reported that, as Safeguarding Link Governor, he would be attending a College Safeguarding meeting in June to discuss further.

It was noted that this policy could not be deferred to the next Committee meeting as the revised document had to be in place for the start of the academic year.

The Committee **noted** the circumstances leading to the deferral of this policy review and **agreed** that it should be placed before FGB on 29 June 2021.

ACTION – Clerk to add Safeguarding Policy to next FGB agenda on 29 June 2021.

Oliver Maddock left the meeting at 6.45pm at which point the meeting became inquorate.

12. EMPLOYABILITY

12.1 Work experience annual report

The Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) presented the update report prepared by the Assistant Principal. The following points were highlighted:

- Covid-19 pandemic had severely curtailed work experience activities during the last year.
- Virtual work experience opportunities had been explored to mitigate the impact of this.
- Resumption of usual work experience activities was now taking place and Work Experience Co-ordinator was able to go out to risk-assess placements.
- Significant consideration had been given to developing placements for T Levels from 2022.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and thanked the Assistant Principal for its preparation.

The Committee was asked to consider moving consideration of the Work Experience Annual Report to its first meeting of the Autumn Term as this would allow for a more timely overview of the previous academic year.

The Committee **noted** this request and **agreed** that its cycle of business should be amended accordingly. It further **agreed** that the next full Work Experience annual report should be presented to the Committee in September 2022 but it should still be included in the September 2021 meeting agenda for a brief update.

ACTION – Clerk to update Committee’s cycle of business accordingly and ensure Work Experience Annual Report features on the agenda for the first meeting of the Autumn Term.

12.2 **Careers Guidance and Gatsby Career Benchmarks**

The Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) presented the update report prepared by the Assistant Principal. The following points were highlighted:

- Matrix accreditation had been achieved following a successful inspection.
- The College was performing well against the majority of the Gatsby benchmarks. Benchmark 6 – ensuring work placements for all students – was the aim which had been historically challenging to achieve, particularly during the past year.

Q – Was there any flexibility within Benchmark 6 to acknowledge the part-time work of some students?

A – The Vice Principal clarified that the benchmark stated the experience must be in addition to any part-time work the students already undertook.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and thanked the Assistant Principal for its preparation.

13. **STUDENT COUNCIL**

13.1 **Student Council Constitution**

The Chair reported that there was a query regarding the latest version of the Student Council Constitution and all parties needed to meet to agree a way forward.

The Principal reported that a new Student Council Tutor had taken up post recently and the new Student Council members were in the process of being elected. Once in place, it was suggested that a meeting be arranged to discuss this matter and it was proposed that the Chair of Search Committee be invited to attend.

Q – How can the College provide practical support to further encourage and strengthen Student Council participation over the coming academic year?

A – The Principal reported that he had already met with the new Student Council Tutor to discuss strategies around this.

ACTION – Principal to arrange meeting with Student Council Tutor, Student Council representative and Chair of Search Committee to consider Constitution.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The only item of any other business was dealt with under item 11.2.

16. **DATE AND METHOD OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 21 September 2021 at 5.30pm

The Chair invited the Committee's opinion on whether it should continue with virtual meetings or revert to face-to-face from September (should the circumstances allow).

A discussion ensued during which the following points were highlighted:

- As a Catholic College we need to retain our focus on the whole person and, as such, opportunities to meet and engage should not be excluded.
- Environmental impact associated with unnecessary travel to and from meetings.
- Visible governance agenda which supports governors' physical presence within the College building.
- Other colleges seemed to be considering a model whereby FGB met face-to-face and committees met virtually.

The clerk referred to a document entitled 'GB Virtual Meetings Policy' which had been approved by governors at the FGB meeting in May 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was suggested that – a year on – it may be timely to review this policy and consider how the board wished to move forward, taking account of any lessons learned.

The Committee **agreed** that the GB Virtual Meetings Policy should be reviewed and presented to FGB on 29 June 2021 for consideration.

ACTION – Clerk to add GB Virtual Meetings Policy to FGB agenda on 29 June 2021.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution at the meeting. There being no further business to address, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.05pm.

Signed by the Chair *Ollie Maddock*

On this day 10/10/2021