



Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 19 September 2023 at 5.30pm via Teams

Present: Patrick Alcantara (*Foundation Governor*)
Sarah Carroll (*Foundation Governor*)
Mark Dawson (*Parent Governor*)
Janet Gater (*Principal*)
Sam Johnstone (*Staff Governor*)
Mick Martin (*Foundation Governor*) – Chair
Leigh Rice (*Associate Member*)
Harrison Zysiak Tobin (*Student Governor*)

In attendance: Laura Forsyth (*Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral*)
Peter Murphy (*Assistant Principal, Staffing & Catholic Ethos*)
Emma Smith (*Assistant Principal, Student Support*)
Liz Walls (*Assistant Principal, Super Curriculum*)
Ruth Potter (*Clerk*)

The Chair opened the meeting in prayer and welcomed Harrison Zysiak Tobin to the Committee.

1. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 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 declarations were made in addition to those already recorded on the Register of Interests.

1.2 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence had been received and the meeting was declared quorate.

1.3 Items to be included under any other business

There were no items for submission under any other business.

1.4 Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 7 March 2023 (previously circulated)

The minutes were **approved** and would be signed in accordance with Article 12 (3) of the Articles of Government. The publication of the minutes was authorised in accordance with Article 13 of the Articles of Government.

1.5 Notes of the informal meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee held on 13 June 2023 (previously circulated)

The notes of this informal and inquorate meeting were **approved** and would be signed in accordance with Article 12 (3) of the Articles of Government. The publication of the notes was authorised in accordance with Article 13 of the Articles of Government.

1.6 **Matters arising from minutes** (*previously circulated*)

Committee members considered the action log prepared by the clerk. It was noted that the team structure diagrams for the Safeguarding Team and the Pastoral Team had been uploaded to GovernorHub.

Patrick Alcantara joined the meeting at this point and the Chair welcomed him to the Committee.

2. SAFEGUARDING

2.1 **Safeguarding Annual Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal (Student Support) presented the Safeguarding Annual Report for the academic year 2022-23. Key points highlighted included:

- Safeguarding and Prevent incidents – data relating to safeguarding incidents recorded on CPOMS during 2022-23 compared with the previous year. A significant increase in cases was reported with a rise in complex cases, SEND students, mental health and wellbeing issues, and low-level bullying cases. One Prevent referral had been made.

Q – Are bullying incidents broken down by type, for example, trans, racist etc.?

A – Yes, drill down data is available. Staff training is then focussed on specific areas as required.

Q – Is this data tracked year on year in order to assess impact of training?

A – This analysis will be done in future.

Q – Any issues with data from new Lower Sixth cohort?

A – No. Full data transfer from feeder schools including CPOMS data.

- Staff changes – safeguarding function and pastoral function had been decoupled and two separate teams formed. Safeguarding Team was now supported by full-time Safeguarding Officer.
- Staff training – range of CPD training opportunities for staff throughout the year, including full staff training on updated Keeping Children Safe in Education, Prevent and e-safety. Safeguarding newsletter issued every half term to all staff.
- E-safety – weekly reports sent out from IT department to Pastoral Team to ensure timely identification of potential safeguarding concerns.
- Sexual harassment and misogyny – covered in 10:10 sessions with students and also included in staff training.
- Mental health and wellbeing – variety of support offered within College and more promotional work to be done to ensure wider awareness. Overview of counselling service data provided for the year.

Q – Is new Safeguarding Team structure sufficient to deal with increasing student need?

A – Yes. The new structure is proving adequate so far. Will continue to monitor workload pressures via weekly team meetings.

Q – Student voice – how is this used to directly impact safeguarding procedures?

A – Student focus groups held on mental health and wellbeing, sexual harassment and misogyny. Feedback used to develop systems.

- Vulnerable students – summer 2023 outcomes for vulnerable students were analysed and noted to be very positive. Outcomes data for students who accessed the counselling service was also excellent.

Looking forward to the year ahead, the Assistant Principal confirmed that key actions would be centred around:

- sexual harassment and misogyny
- mental health and wellbeing
- Prevent
- e-safety filtering and monitoring
- hiring facilities audit.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her report and extended the Committee's appreciation to all staff in the Safeguarding and Pastoral teams for their commitment to students throughout the year. Any further comments and questions from governors were invited.

Q – Does the College receive intelligence from external agencies on emerging issues and trends to look out for?

A – Yes. Assistant Principal sits on Safeguarding Forum in St Helens which provides an opportunity to discuss wider issues. Also, local Prevent Officer delivers staff training each year which includes local contextual update.

Governors discussed the positive outcomes for vulnerable students and indicated that destinations data for this cohort would be useful in order to assess positive progression.

The Committee **recommended approval** of the Annual Safeguarding Report to the Full Governing Body.

**ACTION – (a) Student destinations report to include data on vulnerable students – Committee Autumn Term 2 agenda
(b) FGB agenda – Annual Safeguarding Report**

3. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

3.1 Examination Results 2023 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) presented her report and reminded governors that Ofqual had advised a return to pre-pandemic grading for the 2023 examination series and, as such, grades would be closer to 2019 benchmarks. A further dip was expected next year to mark the full return to 2019 boundaries. The following key points were highlighted:

- A Level results had exceeded national averages (and were above 2019 results) across all grade bands. There had been a national decline in high grades, however this had not been the case at Carmel.
- BTEC results – 100% pass rate, but national decline in top grades was mirrored at Carmel.
- ALPS data had been re-benched in late August and the full provider report was not yet available. Interim data, however, reported A Level at Grade 3 (Excellent) and BTEC at Grade 2 (Outstanding).

- Sixth Sense exam performance analysis confirmed that the College's value-added (VA) score was excellent and represented an increase on both 2022 and 2019 scores.
- Sixth Sense cohort analysis – headline data by gender, ethnicity, prior attainment, socio-economic group and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) confirmed all students achieved better than the sector average.
- Level 3 VA data due to be released by Department for Education (DfE) in January and was expected to be broadly in line with Sixth Sense reports.
- Positive results reported for UAL Diploma, Art Foundation, GCSE English, GCSE Maths (including functional skills) and Foundation Learning (ASDAN and BTEC provision).
- Successful outcomes relating to departments previously identified as strategic priorities.
- High performing departments.
- Priorities for 2023-24: continued strategic focus on high volume subjects and improving performance in certain under performing subjects. All subjects would be scrutinised during the September review process, following which those identified for specific intervention would be finally confirmed.

The report was discussed in detail, with numerous questions being raised by governors and responded to by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). These included:

Q – Was there an overall ALPS Level 3 grade?

A – No. A Level and BTEC separate grades only.

Q – High volume subject with sustained ALPS 5. Any concerns regarding this subject given high volume of students?

A – No. Subject was on cusp of ALPS 4 and positive progress within ALPS 5 grade band had been noted. No serious issues reported.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her excellent, comprehensive report and expressed the governors' appreciation to all staff for their commitment and hard work leading to this excellent set of results. He noted that September reviews were underway and reports arising out of these – crystallising strategic priority areas – would be presented at the next Committee meeting.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE ANNUAL REPORTS 2022-23

4.1 Performance Management Annual Report (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) outlined the College's performance management model and explained how this was aligned to the College's strategic priorities so that individual objectives supported overarching strategic aims. He reported that the performance management process had been reviewed during the year and whilst the process itself was strong, the quality and impact of implementation was lacking in certain areas. As a result, a number of actions had been identified to address the issues as follows:

- separate performance management briefings for support staff and teaching staff to ensure that messages were tailored more effectively whilst maintaining the overarching link back to the College's strategic priorities
- training for managers and appraisers on having courageous conversations
- standardised departmental targets
- increased quality assurance of targets to ensure appropriate objective setting.

Recommended areas of critical focus for 2023-24 performance management were noted.

Governors' questions were invited on the report.

Q – Any correlation between lower performing departments in summer examination results and lower quality performance management targets?

A – When review was undertaken, examination results were not known and no subsequent analysis has been conducted. For teaching staff, issue with targets was more commonly spread.

Q – Any need for external input to help shape the support staff process?

A – Did use an external consultant a few years ago to help design the current process. Have recently undertaken some benchmarking of the process with other colleges. Would look at further external support if necessary, but believe first step should be to tighten up current process and ensure more effective implementation.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for his report and noted that the impact of the proposed actions would be reviewed at the end of the academic year.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

4.2 **Staff Professional Development Annual Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) presented this report and highlighted the following aspects:

- Full programme of staff professional development activities for the past academic year listed in report.
- Protected staff CPD slot built into College calendar reflected importance placed on professional development.
- VLE site to store all CPD material and act as useful repository for staff.
- Areas of strategic focus for professional development activities included: leadership development; quality of teaching and learning; support staff development; statutory CPD requirements.
- Reinstated half-termly support staff meetings at which there would be an opportunity to discuss CPD.
- Investment in Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) middle leadership training programme.

Governors' questions on the full report were invited.

Q – Any correlation between underperformance in subject areas and lack of engagement in CPD?

A – No.

Q – Risk/implications assessment on the report cover sheet indicated an underspend against the original budget allocation last year. Were CPD requests declined?

A – Provided the CPD was focussed on key priorities and development areas, it would not be declined. Some savings had arisen as a result of online delivery. However, this year's budget would include significant investment in middle leadership development.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and thanked the Assistant Principal for his presentation.

4.3 **Staff Perceptions Annual Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) presented this report and highlighted the following aspects:

- Overall strong staff perceptions, however marginal drop in satisfaction rates since 2021-22.
- Return rate of 63%.
- Key themes highlighted in the report – positive feedback and areas for development.
- Key actions to address issues raised included planned return of support staff meetings, introduction of employee assistance programme, and more frequent Carmel 'pulse' surveys.
- 'You said, we did' updates to be reported back to staff following pulse surveys.
- Activity planned to improve visibility and communication between SLT and staff.

The report was discussed in detail with numerous questions raised by governors and responded to by SLT. These included:

Q – Lower score for statement in relation to staff promotions being linked to performance – this had been recurring theme year on year. Were unsuccessful applicants given quality feedback?

A – Yes. Feedback provided – honest and respectful conversations held.

Q – Recurring lower scores in certain other areas, indicating clear staff perception on these statements. Can more be done to improve in these areas?

A – Perception around staff communications impacted by online staff briefings. Full staff face-to-face weekly briefings in place since January 2023 and these had helped to re-establish a stronger sense of community. Plan to build on this throughout the year.

Q – What were the trends over time with regard to survey response rate? What was done to improve the level of staff response?

A – Response rate had remained static with approximately two-thirds of staff completing the survey. Time given to complete survey and numerous reminders sent.

Q – Carmel pulse surveys – was it the intention that these would be more qualitative in nature?

A – Yes. Hope to gain more qualitative insights via these shorter surveys.

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

4.4 **Student Voice Annual Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) presented this report and explained that it was made up of evidence from the annual student perception survey, student voice subject surveys and a number of other methods by which students were involved in, and fed back their views on, College life.

The Vice Principal reported that following the implementation of a new student management information system, Cedar, it was hoped that more regular student pulse surveys could be conducted.

An overview of the data relating to pastoral student voice (conducted April 2023) and curriculum/subject student voice (conducted February-March 2023) was presented to the Committee and areas for focus were highlighted. An action plan had been prepared in response to the pastoral student voice survey for implementation by the Pastoral Team. With regards to the curriculum/subject student voice data, Curriculum Leads would be conducting additional student focus groups where required and all Heads of Departments would incorporate any resultant improvement actions in their departmental self-assessment report (SAR) and quality improvement plan (QIP).

The Vice Principal reported that student voice data was also triangulated against other sources of evidence (for example, examination results and value-added data) in order to identify areas requiring further scrutiny as part of the quality assurance process.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her comprehensive report and invited governors' comments and questions.

Q – Student perception survey completion rate low at 24%. What was the trend over time and what steps would be taken to improve the return rate?

A – Timing of survey (in lead up to formal exams) had an adverse impact on completion rate. Students were given time in PAT tutorials to complete the survey, but the timing of the survey in the academic year required review.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

4.5 **Parent Voice Annual Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal presented this report and highlighted the following aspects:

- Parent View survey took place in May 2023 and comparative data used in the report referred back to 2021 results when the last Parent View survey took place. In 2022, no survey was conducted due to IT issues following the cyber-attack.
- Completion rate low – timing of survey would be reviewed as it was felt to take place too late in the year to influence in-year improvement.
- Broadly positive results but slight decline noted in some areas since 2021.
- All scores were greater than 90% apart from one.
- Key themes and concerns were identified and the resultant action plan reported.
- Key issue arising from the survey centred on communication with parents; actions identified to improve this.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her report and emphasised the importance of strong, collaborative relationships with parents that supported student progression.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

4.6 **Complaints Annual Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) presented this anonymised report which provided information relating to the formal complaints received during the 2022-23 academic year. It was reported that the complaints had been thoroughly investigated by an independent, external investigating officer and been found to be unsubstantiated.

A discussion ensued on the complaints process and the point at which an initial query or concern would be recorded as a formal complaint. It was explained by SLT that if an initial query or concern was not satisfactorily resolved, it would be escalated to the next stage and formally recorded. Informal conversations with a parent or student would also be noted on the student information management system.

The Committee **noted** the report.

5. EMPLOYABILITY

5.1 Work Experience Annual Report *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) presented this report and confirmed that it provided an update to the Careers Annual Report presented to governors in the Summer Term. She highlighted the following points:

- Over 400 students had undertaken meaningful work experience placements during 2022-23, representing an increase on 2019 (pre-pandemic) numbers.
- Work experience placements included: volunteering, enrichment placements, enrichment programmes and the required components of BTEC courses.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her report and reflected on the importance of work experience opportunities for students. Discussion ensued on the availability of good quality work experience placements and the Assistant Principal confirmed that the Work Experience Co-ordinator, alongside teaching staff, was adept at responding to students' aspirations when identifying a suitable placement. In addition, skills stakeholders were involved in each curriculum area and provided an ever-growing network of links that also proved beneficial.

Q – Did each area have to identify an employer stakeholder and a HE stakeholder?

A – Yes, this was the standard expectation, however in practice many departments had more stakeholders and some others were shared across areas.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

6. CURRICULUM

6.1 Annual Review of 10:10 Programme *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Student Support) presented this annual review of the College's 10:10 Programme and highlighted the following aspects:

- 10:10 Programme was the delivery model for the College's general RE and pastoral study programme.
- Changes in leadership and staffing of the 10:10 programme during the year.
- Changes to the content and delivery of the Programme implemented following student voice survey conducted in June 2022.
- Best practice benchmarking had also taken place with other similar colleges to explore opportunities for improvement.
- Deep dive review in General RE undertaken in April 2023 (reported at previous meeting).
- Further refresh of 10:10 provision for the current year – this would be subject to regular review to ensure improved student experience.
- Leadership of this area was now under the remit of the Assistant Principal (Pastoral).

Governors reflected on the discussions that had taken place throughout the course of year on the challenges linked to the 10:10 programme. The impact of the current

refresh on student engagement and attendance would be closely monitored and reported back to the Committee.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the Assistant Principal's report.

6.2 **Annual Review of Student Enrichment** (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) presented an annual review of student enrichment activities that had taken place in the previous academic year. It was noted that a full programme of activities had offered students a wide range of opportunities in the following enrichment categories: competitive, wellbeing, academic, trip/visiting speaker. The Programme had been designed with the skills agenda in mind so as to help students to develop key skills.

It was reported that all students were encouraged to participate in sustained enrichment activities that would strengthen their overall progression and achievement. The Programme was linked to the High Achievers Programme and opportunities were provided for these (and all) students to encourage high aspirations.

The College's delivery of the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) was also reported alongside some of the destinations for last year's Upper Sixth cohort.

Student participation data was reported for all enrichment activities and it was highlighted that 45% of students achieving three A*-A grades had attended a sustained enrichment programme in Upper Sixth.

A discussion ensued and governors' comments and questions were invited.

Q – Was participation data available for disadvantaged and vulnerable student cohorts?

A – This was tracked manually, but intend to use Cedar software functionality to provide more detailed drill down of attendance data moving forwards.

Q – Was there equity between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students in terms of participation data?

A – Need to scrutinise data further in order to provide a substantive response to this question with respect to enrichment participation, but in terms of student outcomes there was certainly equity between all cohorts.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her detailed report and the Committee **noted** its contents.

ACTION – Enrichment participation data to be drilled down further to illustrate engagement amongst disadvantaged student cohorts.

7. **POLICIES**

7.1 **Exclusion Policy** (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal (Student Support) presented this policy which was due for triennial review.

The Committee **recommended approval** of the policy to the full Governing Body.

ACTION – FGB agenda item

7.2 **Stress Prevention and Management Policy** *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) presented this policy for biennial review and confirmed that the College's solicitors had confirmed the policy was satisfactory.

The Committee **approved** the policy.

8. **COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS**

8.1 **Quality and Standards Committee Cycle of Business** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the Committee cycle of business which had been previously circulated. The Clerk highlighted that the review of Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policies had historically sat with this Committee, however it was suggested that these reviews would sit more appropriately with the Audit Committee given its wider assurance function. It was noted that this change had no impact on the Committee's terms of reference. Committee members agreed to the proposed change and the Clerk undertook to update the Audit Committee at its meeting the following week.

**ACTION – (a) Consult Audit Committee regarding Data Protection and Freedom of Information assurance cycle
(b) Update Committee cycle of business accordingly**

8.2 **Quality and Standards Committee Terms of Reference** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk invited Committee members to conduct an annual review of the current Terms of Reference to determine whether these remained fit for purpose.

Discussion ensued on the quorum requirements given the issue with an inquorate meeting in the Summer Term. Since then, the membership of the Committee had been strengthened and hence members determined that the quorum remained proportionate and achievable.

The Committee **noted** the Terms of Reference and **confirmed** that no changes were required.

8.3 **Review of Committee's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2022-23** *(enclosure)*

The Clerk advised governors that the Committee was required to review its own performance annually and presented an analysis of performance against agreed KPIs from the previous academic year.

It was noted that all KPIs had been met with the exception of KPI 1 and KPI 2 which had been partially achieved. Discussion ensued on the reasons for partial achievement and the action required to address these areas in the year ahead.

Governors **noted** and **agreed** the analysis report on KPIs for 2022-23.

8.4 **Approval of Committee's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2023-24** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk referred members to the draft KPIs for the year ahead and invited any comments. Proposed revisions were highlighted.

The Committee **approved** the key performance indicators for 2023-24.

- 8.5 **Review of Committee skills analysis and training plan** *(previously circulated)*
The Clerk referred members to the anonymised analysis of the collective 2023 skills audit responses for Quality and Standards Committee members. Whilst it was noted that three areas had scored two or below, it was expected that expertise in these areas would strengthen over the coming year as the experience of members increased. In the meantime, members were invited to consider the training and development opportunities available via the Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) governance webinar programme and the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Governance Development Programme.

Governors noted that the SFCA governance webinar the previous week entitled 'What governors need to understand about the 2023 results' had been very useful and recommended it to those who had recently joined the Committee.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and **agreed** to review the training and development opportunities available and access these as required.

9. OTHER MATTERS

9.1 Governor training

Governors reported attendance at the recent SFCA governance webinar on 2023 results.

9.2 Any other business

None

9.3 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 7 November 2023

The Chair indicated that a survey would be conducted to seek members' feedback on the start time for meetings. An earlier start time may be preferable given that meetings were mostly held online.

ACTION – Clerk and Chair to canvass views on alternative time slot for Committee meetings.

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 7.30pm.

Signed by the Chair _____ 

On this day _____ 7 November 2023 _____