



Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 7 November 2023 at 5pm 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.

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 19 September 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 Matters arising from the minutes (*previously circulated*)

Committee members considered the action log prepared by the clerk. It was noted that 2023-24 enrichment participation data would be drilled down via specific student cohorts and this would be presented to governors with the next Student Enrichment annual report.

2. SAFEGUARDING

2.1 Safeguarding Termly Update *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Student Support) presented the Safeguarding termly update report. Key points highlighted included:

- Safeguarding leadership and governance – new Safeguarding Officer in place and weekly Safeguarding Team meetings held. Safeguarding Link Governor attends on termly basis. Wider Safeguarding Team meetings continue to be held every half term.
- Staff training – staff CPD for the first half term was reported, this included all staff training on Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Prevent and E-safety. Safeguarding newsletter circulated to all staff every half term to ensure awareness of relevant current issues. All Pastoral Team members have received DSL training.
- Safeguarding incidents – data relating to safeguarding incidents recorded on CPOMS from 1 September to 20 October 2023. The number of incidents was in line with last year, however there had been an increase in complexity which was reflective of the national position.
- Prevent – no referrals or Prevent related incidents during the period.
- Cyber bullying and e-safety – one incident reported during the period.
- Sexual harassment – number of incidents during the period reported.
- Mental health and wellbeing – number of incidents reported for each mental health tier and comparative data provided for previous year. Student focus groups were planned to gain greater insight into student voice in areas of mental health and sexual harassment.
- Counselling – update provided on 2023 outcomes and destination data for students who had accessed the counselling service.
- Looked after children, young carers and vulnerable students – student numbers reported. It was noted that the number of looked after children had increased for a second year running. Also reported was a higher number of students with an allocated Social Worker (in addition to looked after children). The Assistant Principal indicated that a watching brief would be kept on these numbers to determine whether a trend was starting to emerge.
- Annual local authority audit of safeguarding arrangements under section 157 of the Education Act 2022 was due to take place this term. The Assistant Principal would liaise with the Safeguarding Link Governor as required.

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

Q – With regard to the increase in complex cases, is there sufficient capacity and expertise within College to respond to this?

A – The College had put considerable investment into the Safeguarding Team this year as part of the disaggregation of Safeguarding and Pastoral. A new full-time Safeguarding Officer was in post and was supported by the Assistant Principal (Student Support). A watching brief would be kept on the situation as the year progressed.

The Chair noted that a report back to Committee on how the Safeguarding Team was dealing with the increased complex caseload would be helpful.

Q – Noted that the Assistant Principal had attended the Child Protection in Education conference recently – any issues that governors should be aware of?

A – Focus on filtering and monitoring activities and the cultural aspect of effective safeguarding.

Q – Reference within report to no home visits being required so far this year. What is the evidence to support efficacy of home visits when these have taken place in the past?

A – Positive impact in terms of assurance that student visited is safe. Not very many visits are conducted as often telephone contact with parents is sufficient.

Q – Would there be a knock-on impact in other areas of College (e.g. additional learning support, exams) of the reported increase in complex safeguarding cases?

A – Yes. This was anticipated and additional resource had been allocated to support this.

ACTION – Spring Term agenda item – report back on safeguarding complex caseload

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

Emma Smith left the meeting at this point.

3. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

3.1 Whole College Summary Including Specific Student Cohorts

The Chair noted that a report on Higher Education (HE) key performance indicators (KPIs) had been posted on GovernorHub prior to the meeting. It was observed that the usual whole college progress report had not been prepared and he invited the Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) to brief governors first on the HE outcomes report and then provide an update on recent issues with CEDAR.

HE report

The Vice Principal presented the HE KPI data for 2022-23 plus comparative data for 2021-22. It was explained that there were three strands to the College's HE year zero provision:

- Science and Engineering
- Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science
- Allied Health Professionals.

Performance against KPIs was considered for each strand and positive performance noted, particularly in the Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science strand. It was noted that the Dean of HE was pursuing quality improvement measures for Science and Engineering in conjunction with the University of Liverpool and an upwards performance trajectory was noted from the latest set of KPI data. It was reported that benchmarking data for the College's HE provision was not readily available, however discussion had taken place with the Office for Students (OfS) and there was confidence that Carmel's performance was good.

Governors' questions were invited.

Q – Science and Engineering performance is lower than other strands of HE provision: any potential impact on funding?

A – None. Funding is not linked to performance.

CEDAR update

The Vice Principal proceeded to update governors on some recent issues leading to the unavailability of the formal report on student progress via the Common Assessment Points (CAPs). It was explained that following the recent implementation of CEDAR, CAPs now replaced the previous MAPPs and usually at this point in the year there would be a report on CAP 1 (Lower Sixth) and CAP 4 (Upper Sixth). It was reported that currently the College was unable to pull the necessary reports from CEDAR; issues had arisen during the implementation phase of CEDAR which – in conjunction with internal MIS staffing shortages – had meant that the full functionality of CEDAR reporting was not yet operational. The Vice Principal updated governors on the measures in place to address this matter urgently via the utilisation of specialist input from another College alongside a permanent staff recruitment exercise. It was anticipated that the reporting function would be fully operational very soon and full reports would be provided to governors at the next meeting.

Governors' questions were invited.

Q – Despite difficulties with pulling the data off the system, can you confirm that all the processes behind the scenes are still happening across College?

A – Yes. Data is still being collected, it is just the overarching analysis that is temporarily impacted whilst these issues are being resolved.

Q – What is the longer-term plan for specialist support with the CEDAR system?

A – No plan to recruit in-house software developer, but as and when required would plan to buy in days of developer time.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and the verbal update provided by the Vice Principal.

4. SKILLS AND CAREERS

4.1 Student Destinations 2023 *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) presented this report and stressed the importance of this data for the College and its students. She indicated that the College was very proud of its students' destinations and highlighted the following points from the report:

- 97.8% of student destinations were known. Unknown destinations (17 students in total) were still being actively chased up.
- The percentage of students who had progressed to HE had increased to 75.6%, compared to 72.9% in 2022 and 73.4% in 2021.
- The combined percentage of students progressing to HE and Further Education (FE) had increased to 80.3%, compared to 78.2% in 2022 and 79.4% in 2021.
- Apprenticeships – uptake had decreased to 3.9% from 4.2% in 2022 and 3.7% in 2021.
- Employment – students who had progressed directly into employment had decreased slightly to 9.2% compared to 10% in 2022.
- The percentage of students who had progressed to universities: in the North West region; within the Russell Group; in the Sutton 30.
- The number of students who had progressed to Oxbridge universities.
- Review of HE destinations set against the priorities set out in Liverpool City Region's Local Skills Improvement Plan.

- Sixth Sense A Level destinations analysis – illustrated positive value-added outcomes for the College. Carmel was 8% above national benchmark for sixth form colleges in terms of students' progression to university, 8% above national benchmark for progression to a Sutton 30 institution. These figures were noted to be higher than in 2022, when they were 7% and 4% respectively. This was particularly positive performance given the deprivation indices of student postcodes.
- Destinations for Art Foundation students – 98% progression to HE and 2% directly into employment.
- Destinations for Foundation Learning students – 95.4% of students progressed onto education, employment or training.

Discussion ensued and governors' questions were invited.

Q – Note the mapping of student destinations against the skills agenda: what has been the impact of this?

A – Helps to identify patterns and trends. Clarifies areas of strength.

Q – Any upturn in local employers' attempts to recruit students onto apprenticeships?

A – No increase. College has solid links to providers of quality Level 3 apprenticeship opportunities and these links continue. Sometimes BTEC students are offered Level 2 apprenticeships by their placement providers due to local skills shortages. Always ensure students are given appropriate advice to enable them to pursue the best possible opportunity.

Q – In HE sector at the moment there appears to be a skills gap amongst students progressing from A Levels and how these students respond to degree level assessments. How does the College provide appropriate resources and support to specifically prepare students for their progression to HE?

A – Lots of preparation provided throughout the whole two years in College. HE partners visit to provide specific support and programmes for students in attempt to bridge this gap and give students confidence to progress to university (for example, Scholars' Programme). The Staff Governor proceeded to explain the key benefits of the Scholars' Programme and confirmed that application numbers were increasing: these students were provided with an excellent insight into university expectations.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Principal for her report and **noted** the excellent destinations to which Carmel students had progressed.

4.2 **Annual Accountability Statement** *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) presented her report which contained a progress update against the skills priorities identified in the College's 2023-24 Accountability Statement. A brief overview of progress against each of the ten priorities was reported.

It was reported that the new draft Accountability Statement for the 2024-25 academic year was under preparation in line with the College Self-Assessment Review (SAR) timeline. This would be presented to governors for feedback and approval in due course. The Assistant Principal also reported on the recent meeting that had taken place with the Skills and Careers Link Governor.

Q – Any plans to expand Engineering Level 3 provision next year?

A – Yes. Hope to expand as there had been good engagement from current student cohort.

Q – Digital skills: any plan for this provision to become compulsory?

A – No. Optional provision currently and intend for it to remain so to protect flexibility around student enrichment choices.

Discussion ensued on the College's contribution to the skills agenda and the self-assessment grading included in the Accountability Statement for 2023-24. At the time of submission, the College had self-assessed its contribution as 'Reasonable' however the Assistant Principal reported that SLT now believed there was a strong body of evidence to support a self-assessment of 'Good' when the next Accountability Statement was drafted.

Q – Was any additional/external assurance available to support the move to a Good self-assessment grade?

A – No specific external assurance, however working closely with Skills and Careers Link Governor who is also Chief Executive of St Helens Chamber and, as such, part of the Liverpool City Region Chambers of Commerce (the Employer Representative Body for the Local Skills Improvement Plan).

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and the progress update provided by the Assistant Principal.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

5.1 Quality Improvement Plan 2022-23: final progress report *(previously circulated)*

The Principal presented this report which was designed to close off reporting against the previous year's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and subsequent addendum. A progress update was provided in each area with a number of actions due to be carried over into the new academic year for continued progression. A new QIP would be finalised following completion of the College SAR process.

A discussion ensued, particularly with regard to academisation. The Principal updated governors on recent meetings with the Archdiocese of Liverpool and Department for Education officials. The Clerk reminded governors that a Board strategic session – covering academisation – had been scheduled in early December.

Governors' questions were invited.

Q – Marketing and liaison team structure changes: what impact has this had so far?

A – More strategic interactions with feeder schools, leading to real improvements in liaison activity.

Q – 10:10 attendance data; have strategies deployed to improve attendance worked so far this year?

A – Lower Sixth attendance data is positive. Upper Sixth attendance concerns remain.

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

6. STUDENT COUNCIL

6.1 Annual Review of Student Council Constitution *(previously circulated)*

The Chair advised that the Student Council Constitution was due for annual review and referred members to the paper circulated. The paper set out some proposed amendments as suggested by the Student Council at its recent meeting.

The Staff Governor (and Student Council Tutor) provided a brief overview of the proposed changes and the rationale for these. These included a change in terminology from 'BAME' representative to 'Multi-Cultural Engagement' representative and the inclusion of the College's new Sustainability Committee in the list of committees for which a Student Council member would serve as a student representative.

It was reported that there had been a positive level of debate and engagement by Student Council members when reviewing the Constitution and considering potential amendments.

In response to a governor question, it was confirmed that there had been strong interest in the Council from amongst the new cohort of Lower Sixth students with the highest ever number of potential applicants expressing an interest in the Lower Sixth representative role.

The Committee thanked the Staff Governor for his update and **recommended approval** of the revised Student Council Constitution to the full Governing Body.

ACTION – FGB agenda item

7. POLICIES

7.1 Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) presented this new policy for consideration and explained that it had been developed following a recommendation arising out of an internal audit. The Policy highlighted the College's overall support for staff with regards to mental health and wellbeing and was linked to a number of other more specific, supplemental policies. He confirmed that the Policy had been reviewed by the College's solicitors and trade union representatives who had raised no issues or concerns.

Discussion ensued and governors' questions included:

Q – Have managers had training on recognition and early identification of mental health issues?

A – Some staff had received mental health first aider training. HR Manager and Assistant Principal (Staffing) had also received appropriate training.

The Committee:

- **approved** the policy
- **agreed** to a biennial review cycle.

7.2 Staff Code of Conduct *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal explained that the Code of Conduct had been presented for review outside its usual cycle as amendments were required to clarify certain provisions regarding time keeping and directed time. These proposed amendments had been discussed with SLT and communicated to College union representatives.

Upon review, it had also been noted that reference to smoking areas within the College estate needed to be removed as smoking was now prohibited across the whole site.

The Committee **approved** the revised Staff Code of Conduct.

8. OTHER MATTERS

8.1 Governor training

No training was reported.

8.2 Any other business

None

8.3 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 5 March 2023 at 5pm

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 6.15pm.

Signed by the Chair



On this day _____ 5 March 2023 _____