



Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 at 5pm via Teams

Present: Patrick Alcantara (*Foundation Governor*)
Sarah Carroll (*Foundation Governor*)
Mark Dawson (*Parent Governor*)
Janet Gater (*Principal*)
Mick Martin (*Foundation Governor*) – Chair
Kieran O’Sullivan (*Associate Member*)

In attendance: Laura Forsyth (*Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral*)
Lauren Boswell (*Assistant Principal, Student Support*)
Kim Wallace (*Assistant Principal, Student Development*)
Liz Walls (*Assistant Principal, Super Curriculum*)
Paul Foy (*Foundation Governor*) – observer
Ruth Potter (*Clerk*)

The Chair opened the meeting in prayer and offered up special intentions to all Upper Sixth students during the exam period. He also welcomed new Foundation Governor, Paul Foy (known as Brother Ben), who was attending the meeting as an observer as part of his induction programme.

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. Brother Ben advised those present of his governor role at Holy Cross Primary School and also as representative on the St Helens Schools’ Forum.

1.2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

- Sam Johnstone
- Leigh Rice
- Harrison Zysiak Tobin

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 5 March 2024 (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 noted the action log prepared by the clerk. All actions had been completed or were on the agenda for discussion.

2. SAFEGUARDING

2.1 Safeguarding Termly Report (previously circulated)

The Chair referred members to the comprehensive report prepared by the Assistant Principal (Student Support) and noted that the data on safeguarding incidents had been expanded as requested to report on number of students as well as number of incidents. Discussion ensued on the safeguarding incident data for May 2024 and the comparison with data for May 2023. The Chair noted the increase in incidents across the majority of categories and invited the Assistant Principal's comments. It was explained that there had been a drive to increase both student and staff awareness of potential types of incidents which had most likely impacted on reporting. In addition, it was noted that the expertise and capacity of the Safeguarding Team had increased this year. As a result, the Assistant Principal reassured governors that the increase in incidents was not reflective of a major concern regarding student welfare or wellbeing.

Sarah Carroll joined the meeting at this point.

Governors' comments and questions on the report were invited. These included:

Q – Had student voice been captured to ascertain how students felt?

A – Student focus groups had been held and student feedback indicated that students felt safe in College and believed any incidents were dealt with promptly. A cross-college student survey was underway and would delve further into this area.

The Principal reported back on recent results from the annual parent/carer survey which confirmed that 98% of parents reported that their child felt safe in college. Full reports on both student and parent perceptions would be presented to governors in the Autumn Term in line with the usual cycle of business.

Q – What was the impact on staff of this increase in incidents? Was there sufficient capacity to deal with these?

A – Dedicated Safeguarding Officer fields all incidents as they arise with the support of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Assistant DSL. Valuable support was also received from the Pastoral Team who were on the front line with students. The team was coping effectively with the increased demand.

Q – Tier 3 referrals (the most serious mental health incidents) had increased from 20 to 55; any insights into this increase?

A – There had been a recent full staff briefing provided by the DSL on the tier system which had resulted in greater confidence amongst staff to make appropriate referrals. Often Tier 3 referrals involved support from external agencies. Increase in mental health concerns was a national issue post-pandemic and had been the subject of a number of studies, all highlighting a range of possible causes for the upsurge.

Further discussion ensued on the increase in incidents compared to 2023 and the Assistant Principal reported that there was a keen focus on student mental health and wellbeing across College. Most recently this had been evident through the successful implementation of the Student Assistance Programme (providing all

students with access to a 24/7 wellbeing helpline and app) as well as a range of events and activities to celebrate mental health awareness week.

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

3. SKILLS & CAREERS

3.1 Careers and Gatsby Report *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the report prepared by the Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) and, in the first instance, invited the Assistant Principal to report back on the Ofsted research visit conducted the previous week.

It was confirmed that the College had volunteered to participate in an Ofsted research project focussed on careers education, information, advice and guidance. This visit had taken place on 15 May and had been a useful experience with a specific focus on careers support for disadvantaged students. Whilst the visit would not result in any formal, written feedback for the College specifically, there would be generic report on findings from all the research visits to support sector best practice in this area.

The Assistant Principal also referred governors to the assessment visit expected in June 2024 with regard to the Quality in Careers Standard. It was reported that the College's Careers Team was fully prepared for the formal accreditation process.

The new Skills and Careers Link Governor reported back on his recent visit to the College during which he had visited the Careers Team and had the opportunity to discuss a number of key areas.

Discussion took place on the most effective business cycle for consideration of the annual reports on careers and work experience. The Assistant Principal recommended that a combined annual report be presented to the Committee in the Autumn Term as this timeline would allow for a comprehensive analysis of all work experience placements conducted in the previous academic year.

Governors' questions and comments on the Careers and Gatsby Report were invited.

Q – Gatsby benchmark 6, experience of workplaces: the report referenced challenges in meeting this benchmark. Further context to add?

A – Aim was to move towards more impactful work-related learning opportunities. For example, live briefs from a College stakeholder provided students with real life work experience that was more engaging and meaningful than some of the more traditional work/office placements.

Q – Had the closure of St Helens Chamber impacted the College's provision in any way?

A – Main impact was related to work with the Chamber on the Liverpool City Region Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The College was being supported by the Liverpool Chamber until the new employer responsible body was confirmed.

The Committee:

- **noted** the report

- **agreed** the new reporting cycle for a combined Careers and Work Experience Annual Report.

**ACTION – (a) Report back on new arrangements for Liverpool City Region LSIP employer responsible body
(b) Update cycle of business**

4. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

4.1 16-19 progress report *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) presented this report which included Common Assessment Point (CAP) data for students in Lower Sixth (CAP3) and Upper Sixth (CAP6). Marginal improvements in performance between CAP2 and CAP3 data (Lower Sixth) and CAP5 and CAP6 data (Upper Sixth) were noted. It was explained that the CAP6 data related to formal mock exams for Upper Sixth students.

The Vice Principal confirmed that the CAP data was used to inform intervention activities. Data was interrogated for specific vulnerable cohorts and individual students identified for targeted intervention and support. No subject trends had been identified.

Following discussion, governors' comments and questions were invited. These included:

Q – Had the final Upper Sixth assessment (CAP7) taken place yet?

A – Yes. Initial analysis suggested performance was as expected.

Q – Was CEDAR fully functioning now?

A – Yes. New MIS team had made significant improvements. Still scope to explore additional functionality, but fundamentally content with the system now.

Q – Underperformance amongst vulnerable cohorts – what action had been taken to address this?

A – Individualised programme of intervention targeted at each of these students, led by the Pastoral Director with the aim of removing any barriers to learning.

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

4.2 HE progress report *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Quality, Curriculum & Pastoral) referred members to the Higher Education (HE) progress report prepared by the Dean of HE. Reference was made to the retention cause for concern which had led to the restructure of the HE pastoral system with the support of an HE Assessment Officer. It was noted that the retention rate had significantly improved since this intervention.

Discussion ensued on the Liverpool Scholars' Programme which was a widening participation scheme offered by the University of Liverpool. It was noted that the University was due to increase the number of offers under the Liverpool Scholars' scheme in the coming academic year.

Q – Update on the University of Liverpool bus service tender?

A – The service had gone out to tender but the outcome was not yet known.

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

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

5.1 Quality Improvement Plan 2023-24 – update report *(previously circulated)*

The Principal referred governors to her report and specifically the May 2024 progress update against all QIP actions. Attention was focussed on the main area still requiring improvement; student attendance at Ethics and Values sessions. The Principal provided an overview of how the current 10:10 Ethics and Values Programme was structured based on a fortnightly cycle alternating between RE and Personal Achievement Tutor (PAT) sessions. A model of combined weekly RE and PAT sessions had been trialled and was due to be implemented next academic year in order to secure further improvements in this area.

A brief update on the position with academisation was provided. It was noted that the Department for Education (DfE) had confirmed that the College's loan was a significant barrier to academisation.

Overall, the Chair noted positive progress against the QIP actions and invited governors' comments and questions on the report.

Q – Would there be any impact on the number of RE hours delivered to students under the proposed combined delivery model for 10:10 Ethics and Values?

A – No. Main impact would be to spread hours out across more sessions.

Q – Was there an opportunity to engage the Student Council in improving student attendance at 10:10 Ethics and Values sessions?

A – This could be explored. Students needed to understand the additional skills they would gain from attendance at the sessions and targeted communication had already been issued to parents to highlight the importance of attendance.

The Committee thanked the Principal for her progress report and requested an update on the impact of the restructured 10:10 Ethics and Values Programme.

ACTION – Update report on restructured 10:10 Ethics and Values Programme

5.2 Foundation Learning Deep Dive Report *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the comprehensive report and invited the Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) to highlight key points and arising actions from the recent deep dive into Foundation Learning.

The Vice Principal reminded governors that at the time of the last Ofsted inspection in 2019, Foundation Learning provision was judged to be 'good' rather than 'outstanding'. Given the College's ambition for these students, work had been ongoing since then to ensure the best possible provision. Most recently, a deep dive had taken place with the support of an external consultant and former Ofsted inspector. Key outcomes were reported and improvements were noted in a number of areas including:

- teaching and learning
- setting, recording and tracking targets
- soft skill development.

A small number of ongoing actions had been identified to ensure sustained improvement and the Vice Principal reported that a clear culture of ambition and

aspiration was evident for all Foundation Learning students. Specific examples of student achievement and progression were highlighted.

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

6. POLICIES

6.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Student Support) presented this policy which had been reviewed in accordance with the policy review cycle. The DfE had confirmed that Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024 would undergo technical changes only before final publication in September 2024, therefore no significant amendments were proposed. More substantive changes to KCSIE were expected in 2025.

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

ACTION – FGB agenda item – Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

6.2 Low Level Concerns Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Student Support) presented this policy which had been reviewed in accordance with the policy review cycle. Amendments had been proposed in line with a template policy from School Bus. It was noted that the policy had been reviewed by the College's solicitors.

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

ACTION – FGB agenda item – Low Level Concerns Policy

6.3 Special Educational Needs Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Student Support) presented this policy which had been reviewed in accordance with the policy review cycle. Amendments had been proposed in line with a template policy from School Bus and the Assistant Principal provided an overview of two new sections within the policy entitled 'Safeguarding' and 'SEND Support'.

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

ACTION – FGB agenda item – Special Educational Needs Policy

6.4 Strategies for Success Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Student Development) presented this new policy, based on a previous internal document, and explained that its aim was to clearly establish the College's standards and expectations of students. The policy included the updated disciplinary procedure which had been amended to align with the tracking and monitoring systems in CEDAR. This ensured that parental involvement was secured at an earlier stage in the process.

The Assistant Principal referred members to section 8 'Disciplinary Procedure and Exclusion Policy'. She recommended that the Exclusion Policy (which had been included in full) be removed from this document and reference simply made to the College's standalone Exclusion Policy. Governors agreed that this amendment was advisable in order to avoid any potential confusion between the two documents.

The Committee **recommended approval subject to amendment** to section 8 of the policy to the full Governing Body.

ACTION – (a) Strategies for Success Policy – amend section 8 to remove Exclusion Policy and make reference to separate, standalone policy document
(b) FGB agenda item – Strategies for Success Policy

6.5 **Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy** (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) presented this policy which had been reviewed in accordance with the policy review cycle. Only one minor amendment was proposed.

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

ACTION – FGB agenda item – Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy

6.6 **Bereavement Policy** (*previously circulated*)

The Principal presented this policy which had been reviewed in line with the policy review cycle. Minor amendments had been made to role titles and reference had been included to the Employee Assistance Programme and Student Assistance Programme. The policy had been reviewed by the College's solicitors.

The Committee **approved** the Bereavement Policy.

7. OTHER MATTERS

7.1 **Governor training**

No training was reported.

7.2 **Any other business**


None

7.3 **Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 5pm

The Clerk reminded members that the first full Governing Body meeting of the new academic year would take place on Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 6pm at which a full report on summer examination results would be presented.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution at the meeting. There being no further Part 1 business to address, the Chair closed the meeting at 6.20pm.

Signed by the Chair _____ 

On this day _____ 19 November 2024 _____