Notes of the informal Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on Tuesday 19 November 2024 at 5pm via Teams

Present: Patrick Alcantara *(Foundation 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)*
      Peter Murphy *(Assistant Principal, Staffing & Catholic Ethos)*
      Kim Wallace *(Assistant Principal, Student Development)*
      Liz Walls *(Assistant Principal, Super Curriculum)*
      Ruth Potter *(Clerk)*

The Clerk confirmed that a quorum of four governors had not been achieved and hence the Committee meeting was not quorate. Those members present agreed to proceed informally with the meeting and refer any formal decision making to the full Governing Body.

Notes were taken of the informal meeting as a record of this discussion.

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
Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Carroll (Foundation Governor).

Mark Dawson and Leigh Rice did not attend the meeting.

1.3 Items to be included under urgent business
There were no items for submission under urgent business.

1.4 Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 21 May 2024
(previously circulated)
These were noted as an accurate record of the meeting. Formal approval of the minutes would be deferred to the next quorate meeting of the Committee.

ACTION – Next Committee agenda item – approval of draft minutes from 21 May 2024

1.5 **Matters arising from the minutes** *(previously circulated)*
Committee members noted the action log prepared by the clerk. The Principal updated members on the previous year's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and noted that the new Whole College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and QIP was under development. It was noted that many Governing Body members had acted as critical friends on departmental SAR panels.

2. **SAFEGUARDING**
2.1 **Safeguarding Termly Update** *(previously circulated)*
The Chair referred members to the comprehensive report prepared by the Assistant Principal (Student Support) and noted the increase in reported safeguarding incidents compared with the previous year. He invited the Assistant Principal to expand further on the background to this change. A range of factors were reported to have impacted the number of incidents: increase in student numbers, emphasis amongst staff of an open and positive safeguarding culture, as well as the introduction of a number of new categories. Specific reference was made to the incident categories showing the main increase in numbers and it was noted that many of these related to the new Lower Sixth cohort.

Discussion ensued on the crossover between the Pastoral and Safeguarding Teams and the Assistant Principal outlined the process of weekly Safeguarding Team meetings and daily monitoring of incidents, during which an assessment was made on all cases dealt with by the Pastoral Team.

The Assistant Principal updated members on recent 'online safety' staff training that had taken place. This had provided a useful update on the threats to young people whilst online and signposted staff to a range of excellent resources. In addition, she reported that she had recently reviewed the College's filtering and monitoring systems with the IT Manager and confirmed that these complied with the Department for Education's updated standards.

Sexual harassment student focus groups had taken place in October in single sex groups and participant responses had indicated that students felt safe in College. It was noted that the Assistant Principal had reviewed the College's approach to sexual harassment and violence and updated the action plan for the current academic year.

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

Q – Increase in number of students had impacted the number of incidents. Was the Safeguarding Team able to cope with this demand?
A – Yes. The Safeguarding Team structure was working well and able to respond to the demand. Continue to review and monitor volume of incidents and capacity to deal with these effectively.

Q – In terms of incidents in the category of 'bullying / friendship related issues', were any worrying trends observed?
A – Main worrying trend was in relation to social media and harmful online images; this was also a national trend. The Safeguarding Team had undertaken training on harmful sexual behaviour in order to keep knowledge and skills in this area up-to-date.

Q – Was counselling still offered to students via a mix of in-house face-to-face, online and external provision?
A – Yes. The recent rollout of the Student Assistance Programme had proved helpful as an additional resource and the first full data report on student engagement with this service would be available this month.

Members requested that the Student Assistance Programme usage data be included in the safeguarding report for the next Committee meeting.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her comprehensive report and members noted the content.

ACTION – Report Student Assistance Programme usage data at next Committee meeting

3.   **PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT**
3.1   **Level 3 Progress Report**
The Chair referred members to the report prepared by the Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality and Pastoral) which provided updated student progress data for Common Assessment Point (CAP) 1 and CAP 4.

A point of clarification was raised with reference to the variation in cohort numbers between CAP data. It was agreed that the Vice Principal would interrogate this further and report back to the Committee.

Additional governor comments and questions were invited.

Q – Was any link observed between student underperformance in certain cohorts and attendance?
A – Processes in place should attendance become a concern for an individual student. Collaborative working between teams across College to ensure that reasons for poor attendance or performance were explored and addressed. No issues with overall attendance which was currently at 95% and above the sector average.

Q – During September review and SAR meetings, was the last set of CAP data (CAP7) reviewed against final exam results?
A – Yes. All data reviewed. Strong correlation noted this year between CAP7 data for Year 13 and the final exam results.

Discussion ensued on the Cedar student information system. It was reported that this was now operating as expected and there was increased staff familiarity with the system. There remained an opportunity for further refinement of the back-end reporting, however the Vice Principal confirmed that an additional system was in development – Power BI – which would improve the reporting capacity across College.

Foundation Learning CAP report was highlighted and it was noted that 98% of the cohort was at expected progress.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her comprehensive report and members noted the content.

ACTION – Vice Principal to review cohort numbers for CAP2, CAP3 and CAP4 and report back on reasons for differential.

Lauren Boswell left the meeting at this point.

3.2   **HE Progress Report**
The Vice Principal provided a verbal update to members and explained that as Year Zero worked on a semester timetable, she was not yet in a position to report on formal assessments. Progress data for last year and associated metrics confirmed that most areas were at or above target.

Members were updated on the positive recruitment to Year Zero courses, this was above target despite operating in an increasingly competitive environment. Discussion ensued on the Academic Advisor programme in place which provided support to students. It was noted that the College was currently recruiting an additional Academic Advisor in order to respond to the increase in student numbers.

HE progress data for Semester 1 would be reported to the Committee at its next meeting.

Q – Progression for Year Zero into Higher Education stands at 64% for Science and Engineering which is a concern. Any impact on overall College progression data?
A – No. Year Zero not included in Level 3 data. Progression for Year Zero students remained an issue of concern and strengthening the Academic Advisor team was an action designed to address this.

3.3   **Interventions to Raise Achievement** *(previously circulated)*
The Vice Principal confirmed that following public examination results, all departments had conducted September reviews of performance. A number of departments had been identified for formal subject review: French, English Language, BTEC Performing Arts. CAP data would be analysed for these departments alongside student survey and focus group feedback. A range of quality improvement actions were reported for each subject and progress against these would be monitored closely and reported back to the Committee.

Discussion ensued on the CAP4 data that had been reported for each subject and the respective improvement actions. Key points included:

- English Language – change in exam board, review of exam scripts, benchmarking with other colleges
- French – staffing change
- BTEC Performing Arts – new Head of Department appointed from January 2025 and handover taking place during December 2024.

Members noted the report and associated improvement actions. An update on progress in these subjects would be provided at future Committee meetings.

4.   SKILLS AND CAREERS
4.1   **Student Destinations Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*
The Chair referred members to this report and acknowledged the excellent destinations data which included confirmed destinations for all but 17 students (98%). The Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) reported that destinations for a

further two students had been confirmed since the date of the report. Key highlights from the report included:

- 73.4% progression to higher education destinations, including Russell Group (25.9%) and Sutton 30 (29.7%)
- 4.5% progression to apprenticeships, including a number of highly competitive placements
- 10.7% progression directly to employment
- 95.4% progression of Foundation Learning students into education, employment or training.
- Review of HE destinations set against the priorities set out in Liverpool City Region's Local Skills Improvement Plan and the College's own skills priorities.
- Sixth Sense A Level destinations analysis – illustrated positive value-added outcomes for the College. Carmel was 7% above national benchmark for sixth form colleges in terms of students' progression to university, 6% above national benchmark for progression to a Sutton 30 institution. This was particularly positive performance given the deprivation indices of student postcodes.

The Skills and Careers Link Governor highlighted the excellent destinations for the Polar 1 cohort of students (those living in postcodes with the lowest progression to HE).

Discussion ensued on the accessibility of apprenticeship opportunities and the varying application processes compared to the single UCAS application for university admission. The Assistant Principal confirmed that individualised support was available via the Personal Achievement Tutors and Careers Team to students wishing to apply for apprenticeships.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal and all staff across the College involved in supporting students to these excellent destinations. Members noted the content of the report.

4.2 **Careers and Work Experience Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*
The Chair referred members to the report and noted that the College had achieved the Quality in Careers Standard. The Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) highlighted the following key points:
- Increased visibility of Careers Team displays across College
- Increase in self-referrals to the team
- Targeted support for disadvantaged cohorts of students
- Work experience placement data
- Gatsby careers benchmark

Members' comments and questions were invited:

Q – 403 work placements reported last year. Did this figure include the number reported for BTEC students?
A – Yes. It is the total number of placements known to the College, however there are also self-sourced placements that students do not notify College about.

Q – Do Foundation Learning students have access to the Work Experience Co-ordinator or are placements identified via the Foundation Learning staff?
A – All students have equal access to the specialist Work Experience Co-ordinator.

Discussion ensued regarding the data provided on enrichment placements and it was agreed that a further meeting would be scheduled for the Skills and Careers Link Governor to meet with the Assistant Principal to discuss how best to capture and present this data.

The Chair thanked the Careers and Work Experience staff for their work throughout the year. Members noted the content of the report.

ACTION – Skills and Careers Link Governor and Assistant Principal to review enrichment data

4.3   **Student Enrichment Programme Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*
The Chair referred members to the Student Enrichment Programme Annual Report for 2023-24. A range of enrichment opportunities – categorised as competitive, academic, wellbeing, or trip/visiting speaker – had been offered to students over the course of the year. Student participation data was provided with drill down detail on participation by disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged cohorts.

Members' comments and questions were invited.

Q – Were participation targets in place?
A – No. The intent here is for students to find an enrichment activity that is genuinely appealing and useful to them. In addition to the voluntary enrichment opportunities on offer, there are many subject-specific enrichment activities and trips taking place throughout the year. These opportunities are reported in subject SAR documents.

Q – Good range of enrichment activities noted for Foundation Learning students. Were there any opportunities for joined up activities with all Level 3 students?
A – Yes. These were facilitated where appropriate.

Discussion ensued on the growth of enrichment activities over the last year which reflected the breadth of student interests. The opportunity to use data to evidence the strategic targeting of activity to enhance social mobility was highlighted.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her report and members noted the content.

5.   STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER ANNUAL REPORTS
5.1   **Staff Performance Management Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*
The Chair referred members to the Staff Performance Management Annual Report and invited any comments or questions.

Q – How was assurance gained over the quality and parity of staff targets?
A – Random selection of targets reviewed at every level in order to gain assurance in this area. All targets should be in line with College priorities.

The Assistant Principal (Staffing and Catholic Ethos) highlighted the changes that were implemented last year in response to staff feedback, namely:
• separate performance management briefings for support staff and teaching staff to ensure that messages were tailored more effectively, and
• CPD opportunities for managers and appraisers on having courageous conversations.

Following a review of the impact of these actions, they had been continued in this year's performance management cycle.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for his report and members noted the content of the report.

5.2 **Staff Professional Development Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*
The Chair referred members to the Staff Professional Development Annual Report and invited the Assistant Principal (Staffing and Catholic Ethos) to highlight key points.

Continuing professional development (CPD) was taken very seriously in College and a keen focus was placed on the impact of these activities. CPD was organised by the College's two CPD co-ordinators to align with the College's strategic priorities.

The Principal and Vice Principal attended all SAR panel meetings across the whole College and reported that within each of these, every member of staff was able to talk confidently about their CPD and its impact on classroom practice and ultimately students.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal and members noted the content of the report.

5.3 **Staff Perceptions Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*
The Assistant Principal (Staffing and Catholic Ethos) presented this report and highlighted the following aspects:
- Return rate of 58% for annual survey (2023, 63%)
- Increase in satisfaction data in every category compared to 2023 survey
- Carmel Pulse feedback collected half-termly in addition to annual survey
- SLT analyse Carmel Pulse feedback and identify key themes
- 'You said, we did' reports back to staff to account for action taken in response to feedback
- Key themes highlighted in the report – positive feedback and areas for development.

Discussion ensued on the methods used to incentivise completion of the survey and on staff wellbeing and the range of initiatives in place to promote this.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal and members noted the content of the report.

5.4 **Student Voice Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*
The Chair referred members to the Student Voice Annual Report and acknowledged the excellent student perceptions data. The data comprised Student Perceptions on Courses (SPOCs) surveys undertaken in March 2024 to collate subject-specific data and the cross-College Student Voice annual survey undertaken in May 2024. It was noted that this year, two SPOCs would be undertaken in November and March in order to ensure timely evaluation and remedial action where appropriate.

Key points were highlighted as follows:
- 95% response rate

- 97% of students report being proud to be a student at Carmel College
- High levels of student satisfaction
- Range of excellent free text comments to support high satisfaction levels

Discussion ensued on one area for development highlighted in the cross-College Student Voice survey, namely 10:10 Ethics and Values sessions. The Assistant Principal (Student Development) referred to the work undertaken last year to drill down into the 10:10 Programme which resulted in the launch of a revised delivery model for 2024-25. The timetabling of the session had been split between the Personal Achievement Tutor and the Ethics and Values teacher with a greater focus on transferrable skills. Attendance data so far this year was showing a marked improvement. It was confirmed that in developing the revised Programme, the College had liaised closely with the Archdiocese and a Catholic Inspector to ensure that all the requirements of the Catholic inspection were met.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal and members noted the content of the report.

5.5 **Parent/Carer Voice Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*
The Chair referred members to the Parent/Carer Voice Annual Report which reported on the results of the annual survey undertaken in May 2024. The report compared responses against those from the previous year and it was noted that all scores were above 90% apart from one, and seven out of the nine questions had a score over 95%. This indicated an improvement in parent/carer satisfaction compared with 2023 when four out of the nine questions scored over 95%.

Whilst more survey responses had been submitted compared to the previous year, it was noted that this was still very low and members queried how participation could be increased. The Principal reflected on similar discussions at the North West Principals' Group and confirmed that this response rate was typical across the sector.

Discussion ensued on the system of virtual parents' consultations via School Cloud and – given the volume of consultations – the Principal confirmed this was the most effective way to manage the process. For parents of Foundation Learning students, it was confirmed that parents were invited into an informal coffee morning at the start of the year and again for the formal Education and Health Care Plan review meeting.

Members noted the report.

5.6 **Complaints Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*
The Chair referred members to the Complaints Annual Report which provided an anonymised overview of all formal complaints submitted between May 2023 and August 2024. The outcome of each complaint was recorded and no trends were noted.

Members noted the report.

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 Student Council had reviewed

the constitution with the support of the Student Council Tutor and confirmed that no amendments were proposed.

As a result, members confirmed the existing Student Council Constitution.

7. POLICIES

7.1 **Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Staff and Students** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the policy statement which had been reviewed in line with the policy review schedule and a number of minor amendments proposed in order to reflect current practice.

Members noted the proposed amendments. The policy statement would be referred directly to the full Governing Body for approval.

ACTION – FGB agenda item

7.2 **Menopause Support Policy** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair advised that the Menopause Support Policy was due for biennial review and referred members to the paper circulated. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had reviewed the policy with the input of the College's solicitors, and no amendments were proposed.

As a result, members confirmed the existing Menopause Support Policy.

8. COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS

8.1 **Review of Committee Cycle of Business and Terms of Reference** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk invited Committee members to review the cycle of business and confirm whether the move to three meetings a year, with just one Autumn Term meeting, should be adopted moving forwards. Members agreed that the new structure had certain advantages and should continue next year.

Discussion ensued on whether the Committee's consideration of the College's Student Voice Annual Report sat best in the Autumn or Summer Term. It was suggested to move it to the Summer Term cycle.

The Clerk invited members to conduct an annual review of the Committee's current Terms of Reference to determine whether these remained fit for purpose. No amendments were proposed.

ACTION – Cycle of business to include Student Voice Annual Report in Summer Term

8.2 **Review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2023-24 and approval of KPIs for 2024-25** *(previously circulated)*

The Committee was required to review its own performance annually and the Clerk presented an analysis of performance against agreed KPIs from the previous academic year. It was noted that all bar one KPI had been achieved.

The Clerk referred members to the draft KPIs for the year ahead which contained a number of minor amendments, largely to reflect the move to a three-meetings a year model. Following discussion, those members present were in support of these

amendments, however as the meeting was inquorate the final decision would be referred to the next Committee meeting.

ACTION – Next Committee meeting agenda item – KPIs 2024-25

8.3 **Review of Committee Skills Analysis and Training Plan** (previously circulated)
The Clerk presented an anonymised analysis of the 2024 skills audit responses for Quality and Standards Committee members. It was noted that the average score for all bar two questions was three or above. Reference was made to the need for effective succession planning for the leadership of this Committee.

The Clerk reminded members of the regular 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. In addition, she invited any member to contact her should they identify the need for additional Committee training or personal development to support their governance role.

9. OTHER MATTERS
9.1 **Governor training**
No training was reported.

9.2 **Urgent business**
None

9.3 **Date of next meeting**
Tuesday 4 March 2025 at 5pm

The Chair thanked those members present for their attendance and contribution. There being no further business to address, the Chair closed the informal meeting at 7pm

Signed by the Chair _____

On this day _____4 March 2025_____