



Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 4 March 2025 at 5pm via Teams

Present: Sarah Carroll (*Foundation Governor*)
Kevin Crooks (*Staff Governor*)
Janet Gater (*Principal*)
Kieran O'Sullivan (*Associate Member*)
Mick Martin (*Foundation Governor*) – Chair

In attendance: Lauren Boswell (*Assistant Principal, Student Support*)
Laura Forsyth (*Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral*)
Peter Murphy (*Assistant Principal, Staffing & Catholic Ethos*)
Carmen Nunez (*Dean of HE*)
Kim Wallace (*Assistant Principal, Student Development*)
Liz Walls (*Assistant Principal, Super Curriculum*)
Ruth Potter (*Clerk*)

The Chair opened the meeting in prayer and welcomed new Staff Governor, Kevin Crooks 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. The Clerk advised members that Kevin Crooks' wife was also a member of Carmel staff and indicated that any resultant conflict of interest would be managed in accordance with usual policy and procedure.

1.2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

- Patrick Alcantara

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 21 May 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 Notes of the informal meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee held on 19 November 2024 (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 the minutes** *(previously circulated)*

Committee members noted the action log prepared by the clerk.

1.7 **Committee KPIs 2024-25** *(previously circulated)*

Committee members **approved** the KPIs for 2024-25 following initial consideration at the meeting held on 19 November 1014 (item 8.2).

1.8 **Committee Risk Register** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair explained that in response to a recommendation arising out of the External Governance Review, an extract from the strategic risk register was included to provide assurance and oversight of the risks specific to Quality & Standards Committee. It was noted that the only significant risk related to the impending Level 3 reform. Contingent risks were also highlighted.

Resolved:

- **That the Committee Risk Register be received and noted.**

2. **SAFEGUARDING**

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

The Chair introduced this item by congratulating the Safeguarding Team on the positive safeguarding findings at the recent Ofsted inspection, acknowledging the continued efforts of staff in this crucial area. He proceeded to refer members to the report prepared by the Assistant Principal (Student Support) and invited comments and questions.

Q – Significant increase in domestic related issues which the report indicated was attributable to cultural differences. Was this the main source of incidents?

A – Yes, these were domestic related incidents that often arose as a result of generational tensions between parents and children. Small number of incidents had resulted in referrals to the local authority, but the team was keeping this area under review. Staff CPD planned for the year ahead to raise awareness in this area. A point of clarification was raised on the actual number of referrals made and the Assistant Principal confirmed it was only five so far this year.

The Assistant Principal outlined the extensive support and resources available to help students with potential triggers such as exam stress.

Reference was made to the Ofsted inspection and the actions taken as a result of feedback received during the visit. This related to the potential development of a secure thread on Cedar to facilitate the recording of sensitive pastoral information. This would assist with the team's daily management of incident reporting via CPOMS. Discussion ensued on the CPOMS incident data and the number of incidents per mental health tier compared with the same period last year. The Assistant Principal referred members to the introduction of the Student Assistance Programme and discussion ensued on the impact of this programme by reference to the usage data presented in the report. A range of interactions with the service had been evidenced, including counselling calls, live chat and video calls. This had provided additional back-up and support to the College's onsite Safeguarding and Counselling teams.

Q – New categories of safeguarding incidents noted within the report which should facilitate increased oversight. In terms of the new category on sexual harassment, were there any concerns for governors to be aware of?

A – No. This area was reported previously but as a sub-category, so decided to bring this to the forefront as a standalone category. No specific concerns to report. Indeed, student focus groups were held during the recent Ofsted inspection on this topic and no concerns were highlighted.

Following a governor question, clarification was provided on the 'Cause for Concern' and 'Communication' categories and the range of incidents that fell within these categories.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her comprehensive report.

Resolved:

- **That the Safeguarding Termly Report be received and noted.**

3. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

3.1 HE Progress Report (*previously circulated*)

The Chair referred members to the report provided by the Dean of HE and thanked her for attending the meeting to respond to any arising questions. Discussion ensued on the statistics for progression to Higher Education (HE) which remained a significant cause for concern. It was noted that this was in line with a worrying sector-wide trend for foundation year (year zero) degree programmes. Retention data had, however, shown significant improvement since the HE pastoral restructure. Semester 1 key performance data was considered for all programmes and it was noted that the health and veterinary programmes were performing particularly well.

Discussion ensued on the average module coursework scores and it was noted that the practical laboratory based subject scores had fallen over recent years. In order to counter this, plans were in development to include a specific scientific skills module into the Academic Advisor sessions.

Q – Had the reduction in coursework scores been a contributory factor to the reduction in progression to HE?

A – Yes. This was a factor, especially for practical assessments in science-based subjects.

Attendance data was highlighted and the strategies to improve attendance, especially amongst the Science and Engineering cohort, were highlighted. These included the introduction of a free bus bringing students from the university campus to College.

Recruitment data and enrolment targets for next year were highlighted.

The Chair thanked the Dean of HE for her comprehensive report.

Resolved:

- **That the HE Progress Report be received and noted.**

3.2 **Student progress report: Level 3 and Foundation Learning** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the comprehensive report prepared by the Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral). He invited the Vice Principal to highlight any significant concerns based on the latest Level 3 CAP2 (Year 12) and CAP5 (Year 13) data. The Vice Principal reminded members that these Common Assessment Points (CAPs) represented formal assessments within the cycle and, as this was the second year of using Cedar, a comparison with last year's data was now meaningful. No significant concerns had been identified from the data

Questions and comments on the Level 3 update were invited.

Q – Noted that females outperformed males across this latest CAP data. Was this performance expected to level out by the time of final exams?

A – Yes. Research and experience evidenced different patterns of achievement throughout the study programme for males and females. Female students often performed better during the course of the year, whilst male performance tended to peak in time for final exams. Notwithstanding this, all performance issues were reviewed regularly by the Academic Board and Achievement Board and follow-up actions fed through into the quality improvement process.

The Chair invited the Vice Principal to highlight the key points arising from the Foundation Learning progress review (CAP2). It was noted that most of the qualifications were graded pass or fail, and the vast majority of the cohort was at expected progress. An update was provided on the actions taken to address under performance for the small number of impacted students.

Discussion ensued on the work-related learning opportunities for Foundation Learning students and the Ofsted inspection feedback regarding this. The Vice Principal indicated that there were two strands to this: vocational learning and preparation for adulthood framework (including work experience and preparing for next steps). Reference was made to the full review of the internal and external work experience placements for Foundation Learning that would be conducted by the Assistant Principal (Student Support).

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her comprehensive report.

Resolved:

- **That the Student Progress Report be received and noted.**

3.3 **DfE Performance Data** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the Vice Principal's report containing the College's Level 3 performance data for A Level and Applied General Qualifications (AGQs) alongside local and national benchmark data. The College's excellent performance was noted; this compared very favourably with local colleges and also with Association of Catholic Sixth-Form Colleges (ACVIC).

Discussion ensued on the availability of this benchmarked performance data to the wider public and the College's use of this for marketing and liaison purposes. It was noted that HE institutions would review the data when undertaking recruitment activity; the College's performance demonstrated that its students were capable of accessing the most competitive of institutions.

Questions and comments were invited.

Q – Destinations data for disadvantaged students not in education or employment (NEET) for at least two terms after study is marginally less favourable than for non-disadvantaged students. Any insights into this?

A – First year this distinction has been seen, therefore not regarded as a trend. Local context in terms of levels of deprivation may be a factor when comparing NEET data with colleges with lower levels of deprivation. SLT was exploring data further to identify focus for activity in year ahead.

Discussion ensued on the inclusion of Foundation Learning student destinations within this data set and the relative levels of deprivation for this specific cohort.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her comprehensive report.

Resolved:

- **That the DfE performance data be received and noted.**

Carmen Nunez left the meeting at this point.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE

4.1 Quality Improvement Plan 2024-25: progress update (previously circulated)

The Chair referred members to the Principal's progress report and specifically the February 2025 progress update against all QIP actions. The Principal highlighted the improved attendance data for 10:10 Ethics and Values sessions and also confirmed that an additional Foundation Learning action point had been added to the QIP following the Ofsted inspection.

Progress against the newly added action point was highlighted and reference made to benchmarking visits to other colleges with Foundation Learning provision. Improvement activity would continue over the remainder of the year with the possibility of an external review by Natspec next year. Following a governor question, the Vice Principal explained that Natspec was a national organisation providing support to Further Education institutions with specialist provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Discussion ensued on the admissions process for Foundation Learning students and the impact on staff within the department since the Ofsted inspection.

The Chair thanked the Principal for her progress report.

Resolved:

- **That the QIP progress report be received and noted.**

5. CURRICULUM AND SKILLS

5.1 Curriculum Annual Review (previously circulated)

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) referred to the discussion that had taken place at the recent strategic planning day and confirmed that no change was planned to the College's A Level provision. Roll out would continue of A Level Classic Civilisation and BTEC Extended Diploma in Sport, and the College would continue to market the T Level in Early Years Education and Childcare. The impact of Level 3 reform was highlighted and Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) had been mapped against the BTECs due to be defunded in Wave 1 of the reforms. Final AAQ specification choices would be confirmed after Easter.

The Vice Principal confirmed that the College would continue to plan for further curriculum change as a result of the Curriculum and Assessment Review (the 'Francis Review'). Following a governor question, it was noted that the Francis report was anticipated any time from April.

Resolved:

- **That the Curriculum Annual Review be received and noted.**

5.2 10:10 Programme Annual Review *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the 10:10 Programme annual review and invited the Assistant Principal (Student Development) to highlight the key points. It was noted that the new timetable model for the Programme, facilitating weekly contact with Personal Achievement Tutors and General RE teachers, had resulted in improved student engagement and attendance and therefore no significant Programme changes were planned. There was, however, continuous development of the Programme content throughout the year in order to be responsive to emerging external and societal issues.

Discussion took place on the leadership and staffing structure for the Programme and – given the national shortage of specialist RE teachers – the continuous professional development opportunities for non-specialist teachers.

Q – When was the Archdiocese's Catholic inspection anticipated?

A – The College should be informed in July if it is due to be inspected in the next academic year.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her report and acknowledged the positive improvements achieved with regards to student engagement and attendance.

Resolved:

- **That the 10:10 Programme annual report be received and noted.**

5.3 Accountability Statement 2025-26 and Local Needs Duty *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the draft Accountability Statement 2025-26. The Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) confirmed that the document had been reviewed in conjunction with the updated DfE published guidance. She provided an overview of the suggested amendments and updated members on the meetings and discussions undertaken with the Skills and Careers Link Governor.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her update and, following final discussion, invited members to recommend the report to the Governing Body for approval.

Resolved:

- **That the Accountability Statement 2025-26 be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.**

ACTION – FGB agenda item

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 EDI Annual Report *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) annual report and highlighted the internal audit of EDI that had been conducted in January 2025 by the College's Internal Auditors. The overall outcome of the audit had been 'Strong' with just two low grade recommendations.

The Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) confirmed that in response to these recommendations, the EDI annual report also included a broader EDI strategy and more clearly defined action plan.

Discussion ensued on the range of activities across College to promote a strong culture of equality and inclusion and the positive feedback received during the Ofsted inspection. In particular, Carmel's Cultural Appreciation Day was viewed as particularly successful in terms of leading to the development of specific student-led societies. Members reflected on the welcoming and inclusive culture prevalent around College and the strong link to the College's ethos and mission statement.

Comments and questions were invited.

Q – What was the reporting mechanism to SLT on progress against EDI actions?

A – Termly progress reports to SLT on the targets contained within the action plan.

Q – How was the College's EDI Committee functioning?

A – The Committee met on a regular basis and membership included staff and students. Opportunities to enhance contributions and engagement were being explored.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for his update and, following final discussion, invited members to recommend the report to the Governing Body for approval.

Resolved:

- **That the EDI Strategy and Annual Report be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.**

ACTION – FGB agenda item

7. POLICIES

7.1 Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy *(previously circulated)*

It was noted that this new Policy had been developed in response to the duty to prevent sexual harassment which had come into force in October 2024. It was proposed that, in line with other staff policies, the policy be placed on a biennial review cycle and that future approvals be delegated to the Quality and Standards Committee.

Q – Note risk assessment form contained within Policy; how and when was it anticipated this would be used?

A – It was intended as a general College-wide risk assessment to support SLT oversight.

Resolved:

- **That the Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy be recommended to the Governing Body for approval with a biennial review cycle and future policy approval delegated to Quality and Standards Committee.**

ACTION – FGB agenda item

7.2 Use of Reasonable Force Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Student Support) confirmed that further advice on this policy had been sought since the papers had been circulated and it was recommended that, given the nature of the policy, the Governing Body should retain approval authority.

A point of clarification was raised with regard to the appeal process applicable for this policy and the Assistant Principal confirmed that the main College complaints procedure would apply.

Resolved:

- **That the Use of Reasonable Force Policy be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.**

ACTION – FGB agenda item

7.3 Dignity at Work Policy *(previously circulated)*

7.4 Staff Recruitment Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Chair noted that these policies had been presented for review in line with the policy review cycle, with only minor amendments proposed.

Resolved:

- **That the Dignity at Work Policy be approved.**
- **That the Staff Recruitment Policy be approved.**

8. OTHER MATTERS

8.1 Election of Quality & Standards Committee Vice Chair *(previously circulated)*

Due to the absence of a number of members, governors agreed that this item of business be deferred to the next Committee meeting.

ACTION – Next Quality & Standards Committee meeting agenda


8.2 Any other business

None

8.3 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 20 May 2025 at 5pm

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 20 May 2025