



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

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

In attendance: Laura Forsyth (*Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral*)
Michelle Williams (*Vice Principal, Finance, Resources & Systems*)
Peter Murphy (*Assistant Principal, Staffing & Catholic Ethos*)
Kim Wallace (*Assistant Principal, Student Development*)
Liz Walls (*Assistant Principal, Super Curriculum*)
Carmen Nunez (*Dean of HE*)
Lauren Boswell (*Assistant Principal designate, Student Support*)
Graeme Slater (*Foundation Governor & EDI Link Governor*)
Ruth Potter (*Clerk*)

The Chair opened the meeting in prayer and welcomed new Associate Member, Kieran O’Sullivan, 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. Kieran O’Sullivan reminded members of his role at the University of Liverpool specifically with regard to item 3.3.

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 November 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 noted the action log prepared by the clerk.

Action 1 – Foundation Learning report – item 3.3 on agenda

Action 2 – Safeguarding report: update on complex caseload – item 2.1 on agenda.

Action 3 – complete.

2. SAFEGUARDING

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

The Chair explained that the Assistant Principal (Student Support) – who fulfilled the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – was currently absent from College. He invited the Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) to present this report and update members on interim arrangements.

The Vice Principal reported that the Assistant Principal was due to leave College after Easter and, following a recruitment process, Lauren Boswell had been appointed to the role and would take up post after the Easter holidays. She was due to undertake DSL training the following week and, in the meantime, the Vice Principal had been covering the DSL role on an interim basis. The Vice Principal confirmed that she had previously fulfilled this role and was fully trained. As such, she reassured governors that interim arrangements were working well. Governors were referred to the Safeguarding Termly Report and the following key points were highlighted:

- Safeguarding incidents – data relating to safeguarding incidents recorded on CPOMS was noted. Notable rise in incidents related to eating disorders was highlighted alongside the advice, guidance and support available to students.
- Safeguarding leadership and governance – new Assistant Principal and DSL arrangements highlighted and associated training and transition arrangements reported.
- Mental health and wellbeing – number of incidents reported for each mental health tier and comparative data provided for previous year. Increase in mental health tier 0 incidents noted compared to previous year. Capacity within expanded Safeguarding Team and Pastoral Team to manage current workload.

Numerous questions were raised by governors and responded to by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). These included:

Q – With regard to interim DSL cover provided by Vice Principal, was this manageable given other areas of responsibility?

A – Yes. As it was for a short period it was manageable alongside existing workload.

Q – Note increase in number of safeguarding incidents across a range of areas. Was there sufficient capacity within the Safeguarding Team to cope with this demand?

A – Yes. Structure changed this year to increase capacity. New Safeguarding Officer in post. Increase in incidents may correlate to increase in student numbers this year, but further investigation of data required to determine potential link.

Q – Any additional support required for staff involved in dealing with Safeguarding incidents?

A – Vice Principal will continue to mentor new Assistant Principal once she takes up post to provide further support. Weekly monitoring of incidents to ensure sufficient

capacity and support in place. External supervision available if required. With regard to Counselling service, plan to increase the range of support and offer online support options 24 hours a day as well as maintaining traditional face-to-face service in College.

Q – Given increase in eating disorder incidents, has there been an impact on the 10:10 personal development curriculum delivered to students?

A – Yes. Included in 10:10 programme as part of health and wellbeing element. Exploring work with external agencies to bring in further expertise as part of development of the programme.

Q – Impact on general staff given increase in cases linked to general student wellbeing?

A – In process of sourcing training to support general staff in balancing academic requirements with student wellbeing.

Discussion ensued on the data reported which, whilst highlighting total incidents, did not detail how many students these related to. It was noted that multiple incidents may have been recorded for individual students. Governors requested that the next Safeguarding Report confirm number of incidents as well as student numbers.

ACTION – Next Safeguarding Report to include student numbers as well as overall incident numbers

The Committee thanked the Safeguarding Team for the work they were doing and **noted** the contents of the termly Safeguarding Report. The Chair recorded the Committee's appreciation to the outgoing Assistant Principal and DSL for her work at the College.

3. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

3.1 DfE Performance Data *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) referred members to the new Department for Education (DfE) guidance on 16-18 accountability and performance measures and confirmed that these measures included:

- Average Point Score (APS)
- Average Grade
- Best 3 A Levels
- Retention.

The Vice Principal presented the College's Level 3 performance data for A Level and Applied General Qualifications (AGQs) alongside local and national benchmark data and the College's positive performance was noted. Performance of disadvantaged students was noted to be an area of particular strength.

With regard to student destinations data for 2020 leavers, 80% of all students had progressed to degree-level Higher Education (HE) and 79% of disadvantaged students. Data for 2021 leavers was also highlighted: 91% of students had progressed to education or employment which compared favourably to both the local authority and national averages. Of the 2021 leavers, it was reported that 7% were recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET), which tracked at significantly lower than local and national averages. The Vice Principal updated

governors on the latest destinations data for this cohort and reported that NEET numbers had reduced further.

The College's retention rate of 88% was highlighted and – whilst there had been a dip compared to the previous year – this was noted to be in line with the national average of 88.3%.

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

Q – What date range was considered for student destinations data?

A – Leavers from 2020 and 2021 as must be two years of sustained education and/or employment, hence more recent leavers not included.

Q – Small gap noted between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students progressing to top third HE institutions and Russell Group institutions. Did this continue in the 2022 data or has that gap closed?

A – Gap had closed in 2022 destinations data.

Governors **noted** the report.

3.2 **Level 3 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 (CAP1 and CAP2) and Upper Sixth (CAP4 and CAP5). She provided an overview of the new tracking and monitoring system since the implementation of CEDAR and confirmed that CAPs were associated with a common, formal assessment of all students, whereas the previous monitoring system (MAPP) was not. As a result, it was explained that a marginal dip in performance compared to the previous year was not unexpected.

The Vice Principal presented the CAP data and highlighted the number and percentage of students within each cohort that were performing:

- at or above expected progress
- above in two or more subjects
- below in one or more subjects
- below in two or more subjects
- below in three or more subjects.

Data was broken down to identify performance of specific cohorts including: looked after children, young carers, high achievers, bursary students, free meals students, SEND students and learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD).

The Vice Principal reported that CAP data was used to inform intervention activities and explained the type and level of intervention that took place to support student achievement. Dips in performance in some vulnerable cohorts were highlighted and it was confirmed that these were being investigated thoroughly with the relevant teams to ensure appropriate wrap-around support was in place for students.

Q – Any correlation between vulnerable cohort underperformance and safeguarding incidents?

A – Data not yet interrogated to this level.

Q – Any trends arisen in terms of specific subjects where students were underperforming?

A – No. Underperformance was at a low level and scattered across a variety of subject areas.

Q – What was the extent of CEDAR reporting functionality with regard to over-achieving students?

A – CEDAR reports available on students who were performing above expectation in two or more subjects. Reporting functionality on CEDAR subject to ongoing refinement with the support of an external consultant.

Q – Difference between male and female progress in latest data: any concerns or issues identified?

A – Usually find that male and female performance data evens out as approach exams. This is the usual trajectory.

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

3.3 **HE progress report** (*previously circulated*)

The Dean of Higher Education (HE) presented this report which highlighted KPI performance across the three main degree programmes:

- Science and Engineering
- Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science
- Allied Health Professions and Nursing.

The report also set out a refreshed formal mechanism for reporting into the Committee on HE attainment data, with a recommendation that formal reports be presented twice a year in Autumn Term 2 and Spring Term.

The Chair thanked the Dean of HE for her comprehensive report and reflected on the excellent progression rate of students accessing Year 0 degree programmes through to graduation. Governors' questions and comments were invited.

Q – Retention data for Science and Engineering programme was low. How did this compare with sector benchmarks?

A – Latest available benchmark data highlighted; College data compared favourably with this.

Discussion ensued on HE performance data and proposed reporting mechanism. It was noted that student numbers and budgetary implications were reported to Finance and Resources Committee.

The Dean of HE confirmed that the College was inspected by the University of Liverpool every five years in what was termed an 'institutional review'. The last such review took place in 2022 and resulted in a positive report. It was noted that the College's provision was key to the University's widening participation agenda.

The Committee:

- **noted** the report
- **agreed** the new reporting mechanism.

ACTION – Updated cycle of business to reflect agreed reporting mechanism

3.4 **Foundation Learning progress report** *(previously circulated)*

The incoming Assistant Principal (Student Support) presented this report and confirmed the training she had arranged in preparation for taking up her new role, which included oversight of Foundation Learning.

Priorities for the Foundation Learning department were reported as:

- attendance
- retention
- implementation of new monitoring and tracking system, SOLAR
- continued focus on quality of teaching and learning.

A number of activities were planned to help support achievement of these priorities, including an SLT-led deep dive of the Foundation Learning department, learning walks conducted by an external advisor, and a departmental quality assurance day led by the incoming Assistant Principal.

Governors' comments and questions were invited on the report.

Q – Were all students given the same assessment on entry to the department to determine qualification pathway?

A – Detailed assessment completed on individual basis and student mapped to most appropriate course.

Discussion ensued on the range of qualifications and courses available to Foundation Learning students and how their progress was monitored and tracked. The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) explained that CAP data would be available for Foundation Learning students undertaking formal qualifications and, in future, a separate CAP data report would be produced for Foundation Learning alongside a progress report on other courses developing soft skills.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her report and governors requested an update on the outcome of the deep dive review at the next meeting.

ACTION – Update on Foundation Learning deep dive review.

4. **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

4.1 **Quality Improvement Plan 2023-24: progress update** *(previously circulated)*

The Principal referred governors to her report and specifically the January 2024 progress update against all QIP actions. Three key areas were highlighted:

Student attendance at 10:10 ethics and values programme

Attendance had increased for Lower Sixth students and, whilst this remained lower than attendance data for formal subjects, comparison was favourable with other Catholic colleges delivering a similar programme. Concerns remained, however, with regard to Upper Sixth attendance and actions to improve this continued.

Academisation

A full progress report would be presented at the next full Governing Body meeting.

Curriculum and Level 3 Reform

Uncertainty remained around Level 3 Reform and the potential impact of a general election. The Principal reported that the College had tentative plans in place should the reforms be implemented.

Overall, the Principal reported on pleasing progress against the QIP actions and invited governors' comments and questions on the report.

Q – Staff recruitment and retention remains a key sector issue. What was Carmel's current position?

A – Carmel Pulse survey just completed and staff feedback was generally positive. Turnover of teaching staff remained low, however concern remained with recruitment to key STEM subjects and Computer Science. Main area of staff turnover was within Pastoral Team, however this was felt to be in line with experience in other colleges.

Q – Were virtual 10:10 tutorials feasible to improve attendance?

A – Committed to face-to-face delivery of programme but reviewing timetabling options. Visiting other colleges to learn from good practice and plan for revised programme from September 2024.

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

Carmen Nunez, Kim Wallace and Lauren Boswell left the meeting at this point.

4.2 **Lesson observations and learning walks** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) presented this report and outlined the approach to learning observations which took the form of formal lesson observations and learning walks. It was noted that 69 observations had taken place to date this academic year and all of these had met expectations. Three key recommendations arising from this activity were highlighted within the report.

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

Q – Was the College's approach sufficiently challenging given that all observations had met expectations?

A – Yes. These were general observations and did not cover any underperforming subject areas. Separate report on observations of underperforming subjects would be prepared.

The Committee **noted** the report and recommendations therein.

5. **SKILLS AND CAREERS**

5.1 **Accountability Statement 2024-25 and Local Needs Duty** *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) presented this report which contained the draft Accountability Statement 2024-25. She highlighted the following points:

- Final approved Statement must be submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 30 June 2024.
- New DfE guidance published in December 2023 had been considered when developing the statement.
- Summative statement on Governing Body's statutory Local Needs Duty included in document.
- Statement reflected the skills priorities set out in the Liverpool City Region Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) published in summer 2023.

- Participation in LSIP conferences and events and collaboration with other local providers had informed the draft statement.
- Skills & Careers Link Governor had worked closely with College staff to develop the draft statement.

The document outlined three key objectives, mapped these against local, regional and national skills needs and confirmed how Carmel's provision would make a contribution in these areas. Partnership working with other local providers had taken place to ensure that skills needs were covered across the area.

As a result of this activity, it was reported that the College made a strong contribution to the local, regional and national skills needs and the key objectives represented the priority actions identified to further strengthen this contribution.

Discussion ensued on the content of the statement and governors' questions were invited.

Q – T Level provision referenced in the statement. Given previous difficulties in recruiting sufficient numbers for viable course, what was the level of confidence around this aspect of planned provision?

A – Application numbers were strong so far and subject to close monitoring. Marketing and liaison activity had been enhanced. New T Level course on offer had been successfully launched in other colleges, hence greater level of confidence that Carmel's course would prove viable.

Following final discussion, the Committee **recommended approval** to the full Governing Body of the Annual Accountability Statement 2024-25.

ACTION – FGB agenda item

Liz Walls left the meeting at this point.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Annual Report and Plan (previously circulated)

The Chair welcomed Graeme Slater to the Committee meeting and explained that he had attended in his role as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Link Governor.

The Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) presented the documents and confirmed that the EDI Policy had been separated from the Annual Report and Plan and now operated as a standalone document. Reference was made to the ongoing work to improve the content and presentation of the report. He confirmed that the College had taken advice on the documents from both its solicitors and an external EDI consultant.

The following points in the annual report and plan were highlighted:

- Student performance data by protected characteristic
- Staff data by protected characteristic
- Governing Body data by protected characteristic.

No key areas of concern were raised with regard to performance data for A Level and BTEC students and the latest six dimensions report confirmed that equality of results across cohorts was a strength. The Assistant Principal reported on his

review of the available EDI data across all College provision and highlighted future plans to improve drill down data for Foundation Learning and HE students.

Whole college EDI priorities had been identified and were flagged to Committee members. Of particular note were:

- Implementation of new applicant tracking system to support with staff recruitment and selection process – this would help support collation of EDI data at key stages of the recruitment process.
- Development of EDI data analysis in Foundation Learning and HE.
- Appointment of new EDI co-ordinator and review of EDI Committee and champions model.
- Continued celebration of EDI across College through themed events and activities.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for his report and invited governors' comments and questions.

The EDI Link Governor reflected on the valuable input of the outgoing EDI co-ordinator over a number of years and extended governors' appreciation for her work. Efforts to continually improve the reporting in this area would remain important and greater rigour in the data would help to drive this forward.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Principal for his report and **recommended approval** of the EDI Policy and EDI Annual Report and Plan to the full Governing Body.

ACTION – FGB agenda item – EDI Policy and EDI Annual Report and Plan

Graeme Slater left the meeting at this point.

7. POLICIES

7.1 Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression (previously circulated)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) presented this new policy for consideration and explained that it had been developed by the outgoing Assistant Principal (Student Support) using a sector-specific legal template.

Following discussion, the Committee **recommended approval** of the policy to the full Governing Body.

ACTION – FGB agenda item – Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression

7.2 Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy (previously circulated)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & System) presented this policy which had been reviewed in accordance with the policy review cycle. No significant amendments were proposed.

Discussion ensued regarding the provisions set out at clauses 10.2 and 10.3 and how parental rights to withdraw their child from sex education would operate in practice in a post-16 institution. Amendment was required to ensure these two clauses provided greater clarity.

It was **agreed** that the necessary revisions would be made and the updated Policy would be presented to the full Governing Body for approval in order to avoid further delay.

**ACTION – (a) Amend clauses 10.2 and 10.3 to clarify College position
(b) FGB agenda item – RSHE Policy**

- 7.3 **Redundancy Policy** (*previously circulated*)
- 7.4 **Disciplinary Policy** (*previously circulated*)
- 7.5 **Grievance Policy** (*previously circulated*)
- 7.6 **Performance Management Policy** (*previously circulated*)
- 7.7 **Capability Policy** (*previously circulated*)
- 7.8 **Flexible Working Policy** (*previously circulated*)

The Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) presented the HR policies set out at items 7.3 to 7.8 which had been reviewed in accordance with the policy review cycle. The College's solicitors had also reviewed the documentation to ensure legal compliance.

The main amendment proposed was to item 7.8, the Flexible Working Policy, which had been updated to reflect recent legal changes.

Discussion ensued and it was noted that clause 6.5(b) used the terminology 'customer demand' when more appropriate wording would be 'college or student demand'.

The Committee:

- **recommended approval** to the full Governing Body of the Redundancy Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Grievance Policy (items 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5)
- **approved** the Performance Management Policy and Capability Policy (items 7.6 and 7.7)
- **approved subject to amendment** to clause 6.5(b) the Flexible Working Policy (item 7.8)

**ACTION – (a) FGB agenda item – Redundancy Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Grievance Policy
(b) Flexible Working Policy – amend wording at clause 6.5(b)**

7.9 **IT and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy** (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) presented this policy which had been reviewed in line with the policy review cycle. The main change to the policy was to add an appendix setting out guidance to students on the use of artificial intelligence (AI). The Vice Principal reported that the policy was based on a JISC template. However, further information was being developed following significant guidance issued recently by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Discussion ensued on the software packages available to review students' submitted work for AI issues and the Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) confirmed that the Achievement Board was due to consider the potential benefits and resultant implications for assessment.

The committee **approved** the IT and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy.

8. OTHER MATTERS

8.1 Governor training

Patrick Alcantara had attended the ETF Governance Development Programme's Quality and Curriculum regional governance conference at the end of January. Governors were reminded to notify the Clerk of any additional training and development activities they had undertaken so that the governor training log could be accurately maintained.

8.2 Any other business

None

8.3 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 21 May 2024 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 7pm.

Signed by the Chair _____  _____

On this day _____ 21 May 2024 _____