

## **CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE**

### **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

A meeting of the Board of Governors of the College was held at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 2 October 2019 in the Conference Room at the College.

#### **Members present:**

Richard Ainscough (F)  
Len Hampson, Vice Chair (F)  
Charu Ainscough  
Nick Burnham  
Amy Baines  
Bob Eastwood  
Osama Harhor  
Nigel James  
Adrian Metcalf (F)  
Helen Seechurn (F)  
Barbara Smith  
Peter Towers (F)  
Canon Scott Tanner (F)  
Andrew Wygladala (F)

#### **Officers in attendance:**

Vicky Bryant, VP – Teaching, Learning and Staffing  
Bob Deed, Clerk  
Kelly Illingworth-Turner, Assistant Principal Students  
Paul Vaughan, Deputy Principal

## **MINUTES**

### **1 Opening prayer**

The meeting commenced with the opening prayer.

An Eternal Rest was said for a student who tragically died in September.

### **2 Welcome, introductions and apologies**

The Chair noted apologies from Ashley Gomes, Helen Seechurn and Peter Halpin.

The Chair noted the inclusion of the document detailing College events planned for the year.

### **3 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 21 June 2019 were accepted as a correct record.

## **5 Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising not covered by agenda items.

## **6 No item**

The Clerk noted that there was no agenda item numbered 6.

## **7 Principal's update**

The Principal noted the excellent examination results in August 2019. He noted some initial disappointment with high grades but the College was affected by a national fall in high grades, particularly related to Maths with the Edexcel examination board.

The Principal noted the issues with exam boards and the work being undertaken by the Vice Principal who has been challenging the boards.

The College was ALPS 3 and hence expected a strong result in the Department for Education's Level 3 Value Added measure. The Principal noted that the College had received data from the Department for Education which showed the average A Level points per student had risen while average GCSE points for the cohort were slightly lower.

The Principal noted the statistics showing BTEC performance being outstanding and in the top 10% nationally.

The Principal noted that both Maths and English GCSE results were excellent. He said that both departments deserve recognition for enabling students who have previously failed at this level to succeed.

The Principal noted that student recruitment has been strong with growth although slightly lower than the planned numbers based on demography. He said more work was progressing on this. He also noted that there were more students who had fallen out of funding due to second chances being offered. This was in accordance with the College's values and ethos.

The Principal noted that numbers from partner schools was strong.

The Principal outlined a proposed change in entry grades following the change in the GCSE gradings and the reform of A Levels with linearity. He noted that recently subject grades had been increased in recent years. With the proposed changes, students will be able to access certain A levels with a profile below five grade 5's but only certain A level subjects and as part of a mixed programme of BTEC and A level study.

The Chair asked about mixed programmes and higher education. The Principal outlined how universities viewed mixed programmes.

The Principal noted the 4.7% increase in the National Funding Rate and the extension of the Teachers' Pension Grant. He also noted current cost pressures including from national pay negotiations.

The Principal noted the new collaboration with Our Lady's Catholic High School in the Abacus North West Maths Hub - a Department for Education hub jointly led by the College and the School.

The Principal updated the work on the Lancaster University School of Mathematics and the previous week's Project Steering Group.

## **8 Safeguarding Annual Report**

The Assistant Principal Students presented the report. She highlighted the positive assurance review in the summer with its set of useful recommendations.

The AP Students noted the work done by the Link Governor for Safeguarding which had been engaging with the APs Students as well as interviewed during the assurance review.

The AP Students pointed out that the data in the report included figures for both students and CEDAR logs so a particular incident could result in multiple logs.

The issue of mental health in the data was noted. The AP Students said that there was work ongoing on this including the new Mental Health Strategy, additional and flexible staffing for counselling, Health and Wellbeing champions.

A governor asked about comparative data on safeguarding. The Principal agreed that this would be worth exploring but noted the challenges of consistency in definitions and categorisations.

The all-staff briefings on the College Safeguarding Policy were a new development to support the dissemination of the College Policy. The AP Student said that this had been well received with positive feedback in the session evaluations.

The Principal noted the hard work and professionalism of the AP Students and the pastoral team. Safeguarding Link Governor noted that the consultant had stressed the importance of challenge and scrutiny by governors.

The Chair asked about the proposed frequency of such assurance reviews. The Principal said that a triennial frequency appeared to be appropriate and this had been applied by the College.

The Safeguarding Link Governor noted his own attendance at the recent Safeguarding staff-development session.

A governor observed the challenging student welfare issues which the College had to deal with.

The Chair thanked the AP Students for the annual report and the Link Governor for his report.

## **9 Governance**

The Clerk outlined the proposed process for appointing co-opted governors.

**The Governing Body resolved to agree the proposed Committee membership and Link Governors.**

**The Governing Body resolved that the Chair should nominate another governor to the Audit Committee if there was a risk with quoracy.**

The Chair noted that Bernadette Davies (previously Woods) had been a governor at the College previously. Her background was in the legal progression and in Higher Education governance.

**The Governing Body resolved that Bernadette Davies be recommended to the Diocese as a suitable candidate to be a Foundation Governor subject to an interview with governors including the Chair.**

The Chair noted the remaining one Foundation Governors position. He suggested that experience or background in finance would be useful given the financial challenges facing colleges.

**The Governing Body resolved to adopt the revised set of terms of reference including the changes to the remit of the Finance & Resources Committee.**

The Chair noted the sector average of 80% for governor attendance. He would be seeking to improve upon the last 12 months' attendance levels. The Chair also explained that one case of low Governor attendance was due to changed personal circumstances which would not continue beyond the end of the current calendar year.

## **10 Briefing on the insolvency regime**

The Clerk presented the briefing paper on the college insolvency regime introduced by the Technical and Further Education Act 2017. He outlined the clarification of the law, the new arrangements for a special Educational Administration and the potential liabilities for governors where colleges traded wrongfully or fraudulently. Also noted the implications for colleges' relationships with lenders and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The Clerk noted guidance which indicated that governors acting in good faith and responsibly with appropriate professional advice should not fear having to bear college liabilities. He specifically highlighted the Department for Education's guidance for governors including the section on "key points on financial management and governance". College management had set out its responses to each of these points in the appendix to the briefing document.

## **11 Finance Update**

The Clerk as Vice Principal presented the Finance Update showing the expected outturn for 2018/20 based on the draft accounts. He noted that the outturn would have been close to the forecast in the summer but the College had been hit by higher than expected pension provision charges, principally "past service costs" due to the McCloud legal case affecting the LGPS.

A governor asked why the College's EBITDA measure of surplus was expected to be lower than budget. The Clerk said that this was due to the significant summer works and IT spend approved by governors at the Governing Body meetings in March and June.

## **12 Property strategy update**

The Principal said that the College had received disappointing news from the Growth Deal Board which had declined to approve the Business Case for an In Grounds building due to the LEP's focus on deliverability within tight timescales. He noted that the issue of timescales had grown in salience later in the process.

The Principal noted the attempts by the College to work with the Department for Education officials to combine funding streams but this proved unsuccessful.

The Chair expressed the Governing Body's thanks to the Vice Principal Finance and Resources for the significant work she had put into preparing and submitting the funding applications.

### **13 Governance & Search Committee minutes**

The Chair as Chair of the Governance & Search Committee presented the minutes of the Governance & Search Committee meeting. He noted that most items had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

The Chair noted that the governance SAR would be subject to external validation by Rob Peacock, a former sixth form college principal.

The Chair suggested that the full Governing Body should receive a briefing session on the new Ofsted inspection framework.

**The Governing Body resolved to accept the Governance and Search Committee minutes and agree the recommendations contained.**

### **14 Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential**

There were no items were deemed to be Confidential.

The Clerk noted that the Confidential minutes from the meeting on 21 June 2019 were no longer sensitive as the In-Ground scheme had not received funding.

**The Governing Body resolved to make publicly available the Confidential minutes of the meeting on 21 June 2019**

### **15 Date and time of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Governing body was scheduled for 4 December 2019.