

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 4 December 2019 in the Conference Room at the College.

Members present:

Richard Ainscough (F)
Charu Ainscough
Nick Burnham
Amy Baines
Ashley Gomes
Bernadette Davies (F)
Osama Harhor
Peter Halpin (F)
Nigel James
Bill Noblett (F)
Adrian Metcalf (F)
Helen Seechurn (F) – by phone
Peter Towers (F)
Canon Scott Tanner (F)
Andrew Wygladala (F)

Officers in attendance:

Vicky Bryant, VP – Teaching, Learning and Staffing
Bob Deed, Clerk
Katie O'Reilly, VP- Finance and Resources
Paul Vaughan, Deputy Principal

MINUTES

1 Opening prayer

The meeting commenced with the opening prayer.

An Eternal Rest was said for Sean Haslegrave, who was a college counsellor and football coach. The Principal described the contribution of Sean to the College after an illustrious football career.

2 Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chair welcomed Bernadette Davies as a Foundation Governor.

The Chair noted apologies from Bob Eastwood and Barbara Smith.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest. Nigel James noted his entry in the Register of Interests.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 October 2019 were accepted as a correct record subject to a correction of a typo.

5 Matters arising

There were no matters arising not dealt with on the agenda.

6 OFSTED and the new Inspection Framework

The Vice Principal – Teaching, Learning and Staffing outlined the context of the new Education Inspection Framework with its greater focus on Quality of Education with less concentration on data, particularly in-year data.

The Vice Principal set out what the College had been doing:

- Reviewing the Curriculum Intent
- Reviewing entry criteria
- Updating the Self Assessment Review template
- Addressing on destination data including long-term sustainable destinations
- Enhancing the focus on teaching and learning
- Attending relevant training events/worked with other colleges

There was a discussion about the value of College Assessment Points for students. The student governors said that the CAPS were useful in helping them to monitor their own progress.

The Vice Principal noted the planned activities:

- Head of Department training on 'Outstanding Lessons'
- Working on compliance for Careers with all the GATSBY benchmarks
- Looking at amending questions for SPOCS and the Staff Survey
- Training for Governors

The Vice Principal noted that the College's performance compared well with other colleges including those recently graded Outstanding.

The Chair of the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee noted that the data held on CEDAR for safeguarding and other support would be viewed positively by Ofsted inspectors.

The parent governor updated governors on what he knew of recent Ofsted inspections at colleges. He noted the focus on curriculum intent.

The Chair asked whether the College would need to change reporting. The Principal said that generally the current reporting framework was balanced, proportionate and effective but said that it would inevitably evolve.

7 RE and Chaplaincy Report

The Principal noted that the College was planning to develop the Chaplaincy Committee into a Catholic Life group to expand its scope and reach.

The Principal outlined recent activities including the Rome visit for Cardinal Newman's canonisation and the Newman Day.

There was a discussion about the Fridays for the Future. The student governors said that the day's activities on issues of climate change were well-supported by students.

A governor asked if the College could keep governors informed of events so that they could participate. The Principal agreed that these events would be included.

8 Termly performance dashboard

The Principal introduced the termly performance dashboard. He reminded governors that this had been introduced the previous year as a recommendation of the governance assurance review.

The Principal noted the ALPS3 for both A Levels and BTEC reflected being in the top 10% of colleges and schools. This was below the previous ALPS2 for A Levels but the College was performing much better than national trends which had been affected by issues with Maths in particular.

The Principal noted the good HR measures. A governor agreed that the measures were showing a positive trend. The Chair noted the outcomes of the staff surveys.

9 Correspondence from the Education and Skills Funding Agency

The Chair noted the College's Outstanding financial health although pressures were increasing. The precarious finances of so many FE and sixth form colleges were noted as well as the fact that several weaker colleges had been merged.

A governor asked about the lower cash reserves in the 2019 financial plan. The Vice Principal Finance and Resources noted that the plan had included a significant College cash contribution to the "in-grounds" new build then being proposed. While the College was still investing in the Carr Street building, the cash requirements were substantially lower.

10 Governance SAR

The Chair introduced the Governance SAR. He noted that information on events was now being circulated regularly.

A governor suggested that there was a need to demonstrate involvement in challenging financial and non-financial information beyond minutes. The Clerk agreed to re-visit the wording.

The Chair noted the actions in progressing items on the governance Quality Improvement Plan.

The Governing Body approved the Governance SAR with amendments to be made to the evidence column.

11 Draft Strategic Plan

The Principal presented the draft Strategic Plan. He noted the work on Strategic Aims following feedback at the SLT/Governors' conference.

A governor asked about the College's role in ensuring the success of the Maths School. The Principal noted that the focus of the Strategic Plan aim was on the College's role in supporting the set-up of the Maths School.

A governor asked for clarification of the constitutional status of the Maths School. The Principal confirmed that the College was not an Academy Trust corporate member but did have a role in appointing members.

The implications of the Maths School for the College's financial results and academic performance was raised. The Principal said that these would be reported on to governors later in the year.

The Chair suggested that the Mission Statement element should be updated to reflect the recent Papal encyclical on the environment.

The Governing Body approved the Missions Statement be revised to reflect the encyclical Laudato Si.

The Chair asked that the Strategic Plan make clear the priority attached to maintaining compliance with the covenants in the College's loan agreement with Lloyds Bank.

A governor asked about financial planning for the Strategic Plan period. The Vice Principal Finance and Resources noted that the financial planning cycle was set by the ESFA and the Strategic Plan had slipped out-of-line. However, she noted that the financial plan was currently being re-visited as a result of the ESFA's requirement that all colleges submit the new financial plan in February 2020.

The Governing Body approved the Strategic Plan subject to being:

- **revised to include compliance with the loan covenant; and**
- **brought back with the new Financial Model at the February Governing Body meeting.**

12 Principal's report

The Principal thanked governors for their support during the SAR process.

The Principal said that the two recent Open Days were successful with changes to the promotion of HE* as well as excellent weather. He said that this may be contributing to very healthy application numbers.

The Principal noted that the College would benefit from a 4.7% increase in the National Funding Rate in 2020/21 as well as other funding changes. However, he said that much of this funding increase would be absorbed by cost pressures.

[Canon Tanner left the meeting.]

13 Risk management: update report

The Vice Principal introduced the risk management update. She noted that there had been a comprehensive review with some risks re-scored and re-worded. She noted that new risks for the Maths School and Maths Hub would be added before the next termly update.

The Chair asked the Vice Principal to outline the College's role in the Maths Hub with the Our Lady's High School. She set out the Maths Hub's remit in central Lancashire. She noted that she was the joint senior lead with the Deputy Principal. She suggested that governors receive further detail.

A governor asked about the risk to BTECs. The Principal said that the College was keeping a watching brief. There was some risk to BTECs, particularly extended diplomas.

14 Audit Committee Annual Report

The Chair of the Audit Committee introduced the annual report and highlighted the overall conclusion.

The Chair noted the positive audit opinions.

The Chair asked about the recent issues with the quality of service from the external auditors. The Committee chair said that the Committee would be considering these issues and the appointment of the external auditors.

15 Financial statements

The Clerk as Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the covering paper which set out the College's overall performance over time. The Chair noted the role of Formula Protection and the benefit of scale economies. The Chair noted the importance of growth and Principal

The Governing Body approved the draft Annual Report and Accounts, approved the letter of representation and noted the external Audit Completion Report.

16 College finance report

The Vice Principal presented the October finance report. She noted the cost savings and additional income which was being forecast which offset much of the extra pension provision. As a consequence the forecast cash-based surplus measure EBITDA was higher even though the forecast operating surplus was lower.

The Vice Principal noted that the finance report assumed a 2% pay rise although negotiations continued with uncertainty around their outcome.

A governor asked about the implications of the proposed £30,000 starting salary for school teachers. The Principal said that the SLT had discussed the implications for sixth form colleges.

A governor asked about LGPS contributions. The Clerk as Vice Principal Finance and Resources said that the College had just received details of the March 2019 funding valuation including the proposed employer contribution rates and deficit reduction payments. There were no significant changes. The College may seek to lower its cash contributions by pre-paying at least the deficit reduction payments.

17 Property strategy update

The Vice Principal updated the Governing Body on progress with Carr Street: asbestos removal was complete with demolition planned for January 2020.

The College was planning for at least ten classrooms, open IT space, offices and meeting space.

[The Deputy Principal left the meeting.]

A governor asked about the practicality of the current timeline. The Vice Principal said that the College was progressing matters but recognised that there was a risk. There would be limited inconvenience if there was some slippage.

[Nigel James left the meeting.]

In response to a query from a governor, the Vice Principal set out the work that was being done on preparing for T Levels including recruitment.

18 Property strategy decision

The Vice Principal introduced the paper and outlined the work being progressed.

The Vice Principal said that a two storey building with four classrooms and open learning space would allow all the art subjects to be co-located. The Principal highlighted the benefits of the College's art provision being housed in one building.

The Governing Body approved the submission of the CIF application, subject to the Chair's review of the final draft and analysis of the financial feasibility.

- **A £1m to £1.6m new build application including a £350k College contribution involving the use of cash reserves.**
- **The £100k to £250k refurbishment of current Art Foundation area of the St Bede's building fully funded by college.**

19 Admissions Policy

The Principal noted that the admission policy was reviewed annually and that the draft, which had already been considered but the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee, included no major changes.

The Governing Body approved the draft Admission Policy.

20 Audit Committee minutes

The Chair of Audit Committee noted that the main items of the meeting had already been considered by the Governing Body meeting.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Audit Committee minutes and agree the recommendations contained.

21 Finance and Resources Committee minutes

The Chair as Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee noted the items already discussed.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Finance and Resources Committee minutes and agree the recommendations contained.

22 Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee minutes

The Chair of the Committee said that the wording around increased entry requirements in the confidential minutes was being re-visited to better reflect what was said at the meeting. Otherwise no issues required highlighting.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee minutes and agree the recommendations contained including the increased pay costs associated with the Real Living Wage.

23 Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential

There were no items were deemed to be Confidential.

24 Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Governing body was the extra meeting arranged for 26 February 2020.