

CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS – GOVERNANCE AND SEARCH COMMITTEE

A meeting of the above Committee was held at 2.00p.m. on Wednesday 29 January 2020 in the Principal's Office at the College.

Members present:

Richard Ainscough, Chair (F)
Nick Burnham, Principal
Len Hampson (F)
Adrian Metcalf (F)
Helen Seechurn (F)

Officers in attendance:

Bob Deed, Clerk

MINUTES

1 Opening prayer

The meeting commenced with a prayer.

2 Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Clerk noted apologies from Peter Halpin.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no interests which required declaring.

4 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 18 September 2019 were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair (file copy entered).

5 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

6 Principal's update

The Principal updated the Committee on the Ofsted dashboard and Department for Education performance tables.

The Principal noted that the College was the top performing sixth form college in the north west. He explained the context to the data.

The Principal noted that linear A Levels had affected and polarised performance in sixth form colleges. This issue had implications for subject entry requirements. The performance of local colleges was discussed.

The Chair asked if linearity had affected the ability of College to intervene at the end of Year 12. The Principal said that the College could still provide support and identify, where appropriate, alternative courses.

A Committee member asked about the performance of the curriculum area noted by Ofsted in its dashboard. The Principal confirmed that the College had identified the issues through ALPS. He noted that the subject was being supported and challenged.

The progress of the T Levels Building was noted with the Carr Street building being demolished in February. The Principal noted the latest cost estimates which would be presented to the next full Governing Body meeting.

The Principal updated the Committee on progress of the Maths School with sites being reviewed.

The Principal noted the healthy financial situation with a projected surplus and cash-generation in 2019/20. He also observed that applications were healthy for 2020/21 as the result of a variety of factors including rising demography and successful Open Days.

7 Risk register: termly update

The Clerk noted the governance risks which were added to the risk register and the inclusion of the senior management turnover risk since the last Committee meeting.

8 Governance SAR – revised version following December 2019 Governing Body

The Clerk noted that the Governance SAR was the version considered by the December 2019 Governing Body but had been revised following discussion at the meeting about the need for a wider range of evidence.

A Committee member asked whether the governors needed more opportunities to experience College life beyond data. He noted what Ofsted would expect of schools.

The Deputy Committee Chair noted the governors' involvement in Self-Assessment Review panels as a key means of verifying what governors were told as well as understanding the College and its performance.

The Principal noted that the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee was receiving the SPOCS student satisfaction results later in the afternoon which was another means of triangulation.

A Committee member noted the important role of the critical friend in the Self-Assessment Review panels.

The Deputy Committee Chair observed that Ofsted were interested in key criteria for Outstanding being met: results and other data. He noted that governors also had immediate and full information on student satisfaction, exam results, etc as well as the involvement of Link Governors in College.

The Principal did note that the focus of Ofsted inspection had broadened beyond student achievement. He said that the College was working on this. He also said that College management planned to bring the Curriculum Intent statement to either the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee or the full Governing Body in the summer.

The Principal suggested that there could be a return to having curriculum presentations to the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee. The Chair of the Committee proposed that he and the Deputy Chair should participate in the Self-Assessment Review panel process for areas with particular challenges.

9 Section 48 inspection

The Principal updated governors on how religious ethos would be inspected. It was unlikely that there would be such an inspection in the current year but the College was working on preparedness. The Principal noted that the changes had included the Chaplaincy Committee being developed into a Newman Life Committee. He said that the Chaplaincy Link Governor had been invited to the Committee meeting but, on that occasion, he had a prior commitment.

The Principal noted both the importance of the 5% curriculum threshold for Religious Education and the issues around calculating This percentage. He said that he believed that the College's RE programme compared favourably with similar institutions.

The Chair asked if the College had assessed itself against the likely religious inspection criteria. The Principal said that this had been done.

The Principal said that the report should have highlighted how students were accessing the Quiet Mind sessions.

A Committee member asked about students of other faiths. The Principal noted that all students were expected to participate but he said that the sessions were designed to be inclusive. He said that the RE sessions included the Roman Catholic position as well as debate about alternatives.

The Deputy Chair of the Committee said that he would expect that the inspectors would want to see benchmarks of progress, which would be external assessment. The Principal was concerned that external assessment would forfeit student buy-in.

10 Governance assurance review: action plan and progress report

The Clerk introduced the action plan and progress report which showed how the College was at the end of the long process of implementing the assurance review recommendations from Joanne Dean.

The Chair noted that the College would need to consider whether it would be beneficial to consider external validation in the near future. The discussion at the Governance Self Assessment Review panel was noted.

11 Governors and Committees

The Clerk introduced the paper which included the end of terms of office for current governors.

The Deputy Chair of the Committee asked about the Foundation Governor vacancy. The Chair mentioned that he had discussed the vacancy with a senior local member of clergy. He also said that a priority was to consider the need for specific skills e.g. financial expertise was addressed.

There was a discussion about the appropriate approach to the Foundation Governor vacancy.

The Chair said that he would be speaking to Bob Eastwood about being re-appointed as a Foundation governor.

The Clerk noted the vacancy for a parent governor with the next item dealing with this issue. He also informed the Committee that the Student Union had matters in hand for their election of student governors.

12 Governing Body – Recruitment and Renewal

The Clerk introduced the paper and noted that the main change was in relation to the appointment of parent governors. He said that the parent governor elections in recent years had been marked by low turnout. The effort taken to publicise the last parent governor election was noted. While the College had benefited from the skills and experience of the current and previous parent governors, there was a risk that interest groups or unrepresentative individuals might use parent governor elections.

The Clerk confirmed that the College's Instrument and Articles allowed an appointment process rather than requiring an election as school regulations demand.

The Committee discussed the possibility that potential suitable candidates for the Foundation and co-opted governor vacancies might be identified through the appointment process for the parent governor position.

The Committee resolved to:

- **Recommend the policy on Governing Body Recruitment and Renewal to the Governing Body.**
- **Agree the proposed approach to the appointment of a parent governor in the spring.**

13 Update on Governor Training and Development

The Clerk introduced the paper on Governor Training and Development including a draft governor survey to be circulated before the summer conference, which would be two years after the previous survey.

The Clerk said that he had summarised Governor Training and Development activities during 2018/19 in the report although the amount of detail was limited as governors had not been reminded or required to log their own individual courses, conferences and other activities with Principalship. He proposed to include a report on the Committee's termly agendas and collate information on individual governor activities.

The Clerk said that he intended to review the wording of the draft governor survey. It was suggested that organisational change be added to the survey. The Chair suggested that the survey questions reflect the skills that the Committee sees as being important for Governors.

The Committee suggested an appropriate definition of disability be included in the governor survey to ensure that it was an accurate reflection of the Governing Body's diversity.

The Committee agreed to a governor survey being undertaken in the late spring.

12 Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential

There were no items deemed to be Confidential.

13 Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee is on 20 May 2020.