

CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS – QUALITY, CURRICULUM AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

A meeting of the above Committee will be held at **4.00 p.m.** on **Wednesday 3 February 2021** on Microsoft Teams.

Members present:

Adrian Metcalf (F), Chair
Nick Burnham, Principal
Charu Ainscough
Amy Baines
Claire Batson
Sue Davies
Barbara Smith
Canon Tanner (F)
Peter Towers (F)
Andrew Wygladala (F)

Officers in attendance:

Bob Deed, Clerk
Paul Vaughan, Deputy Principal
Vicky Bryant, Vice Principal
Emma Duxbury, HR Manager

Other governors in attendance:

Richard Ainscough (F)

MINUTES

1. Opening prayer

The meeting commenced with a prayer.

2. Welcome, introductions and apologies

There were no apologies to note.

The Chair welcomed Clare Batson to the meeting as a co-opted member of the Committee. He noted that Clare had been appointed after being interviewed by the Chair of the Governing Body and the Committee Chair. He said that she brought experience and expertise as Deputy Head at Parklands High School.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 4 November 2020 were agreed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising not covered by agenda items.

6. Presentation on counselling at the College

The Support Staff Governor delivered a presentation in her role as the College Counsellor. She outlined the structure of the Counselling Team and the support which they offered. She said that this support was flexed as required by the circumstances and the needs of individual students.

The College Counsellor said that the Counselling Team had been busy throughout the pandemic including the two site closures. When the College site closed in March 2020, the Team moved smoothly to remote sessions via Microsoft Teams. She said that since then students have had sessions via Teams video calls, voice calls or chat. She said that after the pandemic, the Counselling Team will be able to offer face-to-face sessions but continue to give students the option to continue sessions over teams if they wish. She explained that the Counselling Team have undertaken an 80-hour training course on counselling online. She said that videos explaining and advertising the service for new and current students have been shared on the College website and through Newman Beginnings.

The College Counsellor said that counselling is one element of support on offer to students. She also highlighted:

- One-to-one sessions with Achievement Tutors.
- Vulnerable students being contacted regularly.
- Health and Wellbeing team offer appointments on teams to support students who are dealing with difficult circumstances.

The Counselling Team have regular meetings and peer supervision to discuss cases, best practice and make any changes to the service that may be needed. She noted that all teams work closely together.

The Chair of the Governing Body asked triage and prioritisation. The College Counsellor said that triage at the moment is basically done by the Achievement tutors and urgent cases would be flagged and prioritised.

7. Update on teaching, learning and student support during the Lockdown

The Principal said that the move to online in Lockdown 3 was seamless. He observed that the blended timetable was a success as it had had inbuilt flexibility. He said that 5-10 students were coming into College with appropriate permissions and oversight in addition to a small group of Foundation Learning students. He said that there was a rota for a College Leadership Team presence and there were some support staff working onsite on a distanced basis.

The Principal updated the Committee on the lateral flow testing. He said that it was working well but raised concerns about scalability and mass testing if this was a requirement.

The Principal said that online teaching was particularly intense and hard work for staff. He said College management were aware of this and seeking to provide support and flexibility. For example, teaching staff were not being asked to undertake interviews for applicants this term – applicants were being offered a conditional place and College managers were having interviews where applicants had requested one.

The Principal outlined the College's views on the Ofqual's exams consultation which ended on the previous Friday. He was concerned about inconsistencies in the proposals. However, he noted that the College had handled the pandemic well so he expected that the College's grades would be comparable to previous years.

The Parent Governor said that the College had done a superb job. She said that staff were reassuring and responding to student concerns. She also said that online Parents' Evening was an excellent innovation. She noted the concerns in the universities sector about the Ofqual proposals, particularly around the arrangements for results.

The Chair of the Governing Body asked the Parent Governor about universities assessing applicants other than through exams or CAGS. She said that universities continued to focus on UCAS rather than other mechanisms.

The co-opted Committee member said that her daughter missed College but found the teaching and support excellent.

The Chair asked the Principal about how the College anticipated re-opening. The Principal said that he expected the blended timetable would be necessary. He said that the College would carefully review Department for Education advice as well as responding to the concerns and views of staff and unions.

8. Risk register

The Chair asked if safeguarding risks had been affected by the pandemic and site closure. The Principal said that there was a list of vulnerable students and arrangements for checking on student welfare. He said that the patterns had changed – fewer issues with behaviour but more concerns about mental health.

The Link Governor for Safeguarding said that the College's safeguarding mechanisms remained in place – the Assistant Principals Students (AP Students), the Achievement Tutors and other pastoral staff. He said that he liaised with the AP Students. He noted that there was less peer-referrals of issues.

The Principal noted the Pastoral team has been reinforced to ensure students were effectively supported during the pandemic.

A governor asked about the reference to the "BWW". The Principal said that this was the Big White Wall which operates as a safe community to support the mental health of young people on a 24/7 basis.

A governor asked about Covid infection rates and those among BAME students. The Principal said that Covid infection and self-isolation this was affecting BAME and disadvantaged student. He said that he was encouraging reporting by students during lockdown in case it could be used in determining assessed grades.

A governor asked about particular needs of students. The Principal said that the College was helping with exceptional needs such as data allowances and transport costs. He said that the College had about 200 laptops with students with IT access issues. Since last week there were arrangements for the Department for Education to supply a further 200 laptops.

A member asked about staff absence with stress issues. The Principal said that staff were working hard and tired at the end of autumn term. But staff absence was low. He noted that two or three staff were struggling. The HR Manager highlighted the flexibility offered to staff which helped them cope in difficult times.

9. R.E. and Chaplaincy: update report

The RE Link Governor noted the Governors' thanks for the excellent RE and Chaplaincy Report. He noted the extensive work and highlighted the twice-weekly Liturgies and the food parcel collections. He applauded the CD of Christmas Carols circulated to the local community.

The RE Link Governor highlighted the positive student feedback on online RE.

10. Human resources updates

The HR Manager introduced her report. She noted a slight increase in staff turnover due to a larger number of leavers in August 2020 compared to the previous year - 16 compared with 10 in August 2019. Turnover remained below the Association of Colleges' average.

The HR Manager highlighted that staff absence was lower than the last three years and compared well with the AOC and SFCA benchmarks. She also said that the recruitment targets had been met.

A member asked about recruitment and concerns over teacher training during the pandemic. The Principal said that this was a challenge and that the College was expecting to recruit teachers in a number of areas as student numbers rose.

11. Gender Pay Gap report

The HR Manager outlined the key message in the Gender Pay Gap report. She said that the College had a smaller median pay gap than comparable large sixth form colleges. She noted that the mean pay gap was above the average for this peer group but noted that the mean pay gap was distorted by factors such as whether invigilators were paid in the month of March or not. She also observed that the mean pay gap was affected by the fact that the in-house cleaning staff (who are paid in excess of the National Living Wage) are predominantly female.

The HR manager said that the College treated equality issues seriously and had policies in place to ensure equality and diversity were promoted. The Principal said that the College was particularly proud of being a family-friendly employer - this removed obstacles to the progression of female staff.

A governor thanked the HR Manager for her clear reports. The Chair concurred.

12. Consultative staffing mechanisms

The Principal said that the Joint Committee with the union representatives had not met recently. However, he was liaising closely with the unions, particularly over the Covid-related matters including the risk assessment.

13. Update on quality assurance and improvement

The Deputy Principal outlined the performance at the CAP1 and CAP4 assessment points in November and their role in Quality Assurance. He also updated the Committee on the SPOCS student survey on each of their subjects. This year for the first time the College asked questions on their remote learning experience.

The Deputy Principal outlined the contents of the Common Data Sheet. He said that a full set will be uploaded to Teams for governors as soon as possible. The Principal said that he was conscious that the pandemic might make governors feel distanced from the Quality Assurance process so the Common Data Sheets were a means of governors being able to drill-down on performance in particular subjects.

The Deputy Principal outlined the basis of the ALPS value added scoring. The Principal noted that the GCSE CAGS might distort the ALPS scores and the Target Grades.

[Peter Towers left the meeting]

The Chair asked about support for specific departments. The Deputy Principal said that support continued to be provided during the pandemic including with online learning.

The Chair asked about the areas of growth. The Deputy Principal noted the recent growth in subjects including Psychology, Sociology and Criminology, Business Studies and Economics.

14. Feedback from Link Governors

The Chair noted the feedback from the Safeguarding and RE Link Governors earlier in the meeting.

The Chair asked about Higher Education. The Principal said that High Education was a great success. The Vice Principal noted the high number of applications for 2021/22 which suggested 80. She said the Chair, as HE Link Governor, would be invited to the Higher Education Self Assessment panel in the near future.

The Careers Link Governor said that the Careers Service was continuing to support students throughout the pandemic. He noted forthcoming events:

- Apprenticeships Week
- Options at 18 assembly
- The Virtual careers event for Year 12 students and parents.

15. Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential

No items were deemed to be confidential.

16. Date and time of the next meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 20 May 2021.