

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 4 November 2020** on Microsoft Teams.

Members present:

Adrian Metcalf (F), Chair
Nick Burnham, Principal
Charu Ainscough
Amy Baines
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

Apologies from Peter Halpin were noted.

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 20 May 2020 were agreed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising not covered by agenda items.

6. QA after Centre Assessed Grades

The Deputy Principal set out the current plans for exams to be “3 weeks later”. He noted that the exam period has gone from 6 weeks to 3 weeks which actually increases the pressure as students as they will have less of a gap between their exams.

The Deputy Principal stressed the need to plan for all eventualities. He suggested that CAGs may be possible or likely. He noted that our Teacher Expected Grades (TEGs) are going to face more scrutiny than ever and may be used to justify CAGs.

The Deputy Principal noted the key question of how our students this year compared to other students across the country this year. He said that exam boards will probably have to lower grade boundaries to ensure the same grades as usual are awarded throughout the country. Therefore, the College will have to review and adjust our grade boundaries for our College Assessment Point (CAP) exams. He explained the careful scrutiny of Teacher Expected Grades.

The Deputy Principal outlined the changes to the Quality Assurance cycle this year and highlighted the increase importance of the SPOCS student satisfaction survey in the cycle.

The Chair asked about the role of CAPS. The Deputy Principal confirmed that CAPS were embedded in the College. He agreed that these provided infrastructure for CAGS.

The Principal said that the College’s CAGS process was robust. He noted that some students were unhappy in the summer. This meant that the Clerk had to manage these complaints and appeals.

The Principal noted the regional and social inequalities seen in how COVID19 was disrupting education. He noted that the Sixth Form Colleges Association was campaigning for changes in the government’s position.

The Committee Chair asked about the universities were responding to the situation. The Principal said that universities were likely to be flexible but there remained the regional and social inequality and unfairness of exams during the pandemic.

The Committee Chair asked about how consistency in CAGS. The Deputy Principal said that there was rigorous moderation with a stress on consistency. The Principal noted the Ofqual guidance did have implications for subjects which would have seen higher grades than in past years,

7. Risk register

The Clerk noted that the risk register had not yet been subject to the normal refresh.

The Principal noted that there were rising numbers of cases and self-isolating staff and students over the course of the half term. He noted that this may have implications for the College’s blended model of teaching and learning.

The Principal noted the positive feedback from unions on the College's blended model.

The HR Manager said that three members of staff were seriously clinically vulnerable. The College was arranging for such staff to work at home. The College was being supportive of those who were anxious but not shielding.

The Principal said that the College was constantly reviewing its position on masks in classrooms. This was not required at the moment although teachers could insist.

The Chair asked about the College's readiness for going online. The Principal said that the College could switch the timetable easily to online.

A governor asked about the timetabled delivery on-site. The Principal said that each year came in for two days a week with lessons for all their subjects. This was then supplemented with two days of classes online with one day of Curriculum Plus support being timetabled.

8. R.E. and Chaplaincy: update report

The RE Link Governor updated the Committee on the online RE delivery. He noted that this was going well. He also highlighted the twice weekly online Liturgies.

The Principal said that the Liturgies were going well. He said that it is had not been possible to have Mass in College given distancing requirements.

The Chair asked about the plans for Section 48 inspections. The Principal noted that the Diocese had said that frameworks were being put into place but he did not anticipate any inspections before Easter.

9. Human resources updates

The HR Manager introduced her report. She explained that due to the pandemic and site closure the decision was made not to undertake the annual staff survey this year. Instead, the funds normally used for the survey were re-directed and used to provide an Employee Assistance Programme offering staff access to counselling, online CBT and financial and legal advice for a period of one year.

The HR Manager outlined how recruitment had been handled during the pandemic with online interviews using Microsoft Teams. She noted the trends over the year with more females appointed but fewer disabled candidates. There appeared to be no particular reason for these changes - the small numbers meant that it was difficult to draw meaningful conclusions. She confirmed that the College remained part of the Disability Confident scheme. Ethnicity and age categories were in line with the previous years.

The Committee Chair asked if there were signs that older staff were staying on due to the rise in retirement age. The HR Manager said that there was limited evidence of this. The Principal said that some staff may have left in the past through the College's generous Voluntary Redundancy rounds but he noted that these rounds were unlikely in the future.

A governor thanked the HR Manager for the useful and detailed analysis.

The HR Manager introduced the Staff Equality and Diversity Report and outlined the changes to the College's data collection. The HR Manager said that fairness and equity were key themes for the College's promotion and appointment processes. She said that there had been training on unconscious bias and that the College was looking at further training sessions for staff on these themes.

A governor asked about the lower rate on response on sexuality. The HR Manager said that candidates may feel uncomfortable responding on these matters.

10. Consultative staffing mechanisms

The Deputy Principal said that liaison with unions was ongoing and positive. He said that the Principal had been meeting with all the unions.

The Principal noted the cooperative attitude of the unions at the College.

11. Complaints report 2019/20

The Clerk presented the report on complaints during the year. He noted that the number of complaints had significantly reduced. He suggested that the spring lockdown was probably part of the explanation as there were fewer students on and around the College site. He noted that only one complaint related to online teaching and learning.

12. Equality and Diversity

The Vice Principal introduced the report on the equality and diversity

A governor praised the Equality and Diversity newsletter which showed the work which carried on during the site closure. She noted the wide range of activities by the Equality and Diversity team.

13. Higher Education update

The Committee Chair asked about the graduation normally held in the autumn. The Vice Principal said that the ceremony had been postponed rather than cancelled.

The Vice Principal updated the Committee on Higher Education enrolment. She said that the College now has 68 Higher Education students. This provision was continuing with on-site provision for new students.

The Principal said that Higher Education provision was a great success for the College.

The Chair noted the recommendation from Middlesex University for the Committee to include someone with recent Higher Education experience. The Clerk said this would be addressed when governor vacancies were dealt with.

14. Policy review: curriculum and quality

The Clerk said that there were no substantial changes to the Admissions Policy. He highlighted the main proposed change being the inclusion of a note warning that non-UK students from the EU/EEA countries might not be eligible for funding, particularly those arriving after the transition period ends on 31 December 2020. He said that there continued to be uncertainty about government policy on this.

The Committee resolved to recommend the draft revised Admission Policy to the Governing Body.

15. Feedback from Link Governors

The Chair noted the earlier feedback from the Lead Governor for Equality and Diversity.

The Safeguarding Link Governor noted the annual report on safeguarding presented to the last Governing Body meeting. He said that he was looking beyond the data to key questions:

- Do we have a policy?
- Is it understood and applied?
- Is the policy effective?
- Is the policy subject to oversight?

The Safeguarding Link Governor believes, after applying an evidence-based approach, that the answer is yes to all those questions.

The Careers Link Governor said that the work of Careers was progressing well online. He said that the Careers Manager was finding higher levels of engagement. He said that UCAS applications were being chased and reviewed. He noted that employability events had migrated online. He said that following his recent meeting with Careers he was confident in their excellent work.

The Principal noted the recent accreditation for the Careers team.

16. Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential

No items were deemed to be confidential.

17. Date and time of the next meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 3 February 2021.