



**ST MARY'S COLLEGE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE QUALITY COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH JULY 2020 AT 4PM VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE**

Present: Mrs A Francis (19/20 Committee Chair) (AMF)
Mrs E. Best (Interim Principal) (EB)
Ms P. Lightbown (Staff Governor) (PL)
Mr P. Moore (PM)

In attendance: Mrs L. Farnhill (Clerk to the Board)

Staff: Max Makda (MM)
Howard Best (HB)

Apologies: Mr C. Beesley (CB)

The meeting was opened at 4pm by Committee Chair Anne-Marie Francis who welcomed members and attendees and confirmed that there were no issues with any video and audio settings.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Details of the apologies detailed above were given and accepted.

Item 1 – Resolved: Apologies were accepted.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Interim Principal declared a personal interest with her husband being the Director of Curriculum, Howard Best.

Item 2 – Resolved: Members noted the interests declared.

ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE QUALITY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting were reviewed for accuracy and content. The Committee clarified that there were no matters arising within the meeting that were not already detailed on the minutes or to be dealt with in agenda. The minutes were approved to be signed as a true record of the meeting at the next face to face meeting.

EB outlined outcomes of actions and matters arising:

Policies – EB advised that her PA will manage the review of policies and the cycle of business, having already started working on the drafts; however progress halted due to CV19 and College closure. This work was now resuming and policies would begin to be presented for review and approval.

Safeguarding – The clerk confirmed that Foundation Governor Mike Wright had been appointed as the safeguarding link and had been in contact with KS.

Equality and Diversity Action Plan - KS stated that this has been reviewed and is in progress; this will be maintained as an **action** and will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Committee.

Attendance Data– MM confirmed that data was included against the target actions in the new report to be discussed today.

Progress reports – MM confirmed that starts and cohort data was included to highlight issues of low numbers.

Careers policy – EB confirmed that due to the pandemic, following the review by AMF this was presented to MC for approval as Chairs action during the College Closure whilst meetings were postponed, this had been the only thing holding back the GATSBY award which has now been given.

UCAS applications - MM confirmed that DS was no longer looking at them alone, with a team to support her with this arranged and managed by KS as Director of students. MM provided details of the UCAS progress made which included all personal statements completed; indicating that by September there would be a robust and efficient system, all being completed online.

HE – PL confirmed that national average information on progression data will be included in the report which is deferred to September due to the deferral of results.

HE retention - PL confirmed that the retention data affects Liverpool Hope and not SMC

Item 3 – Approved: The minutes were approved by the Committee to be signed by the Committee Chair at the next face to face meeting.

ITEM 4 - STUDENT NUMBERS, RETENTION AND PERFORMANCE (INCLUDING CENTRE ASSESSED AND CALCULATED GRADES (PREDICTED OUTCOMES))

Attendance - MM gave an overview of the data within the report which provided data up to college closure on March 20th, highlighting the positivity in meeting the 16-18 target, with explanations for areas below target, including the art faculty which had low student numbers. MM highlighted that for 19 plus students the target of 93% had not been met, achieving attendance rates of 91%, again impacted by low student numbers with a cohort of 9. MM highlighted that attendance for Indian and Pakistani students was positive and above the target set without notable differences in the data for this academic year.

Retention – MM stated that retention data was broadly positive, which college wide was 88%, 0.5% above the national average for the previous year. MM highlighted the concerns relating to the cohort of level 2 learners on GCSE and vocational courses. MM informed the Committee that close analysis of the data showed that not all learners had not left College, at level 2, 17 were included in the retention data, 15 left 2 had not. For level 3, there were 55 learners included in the retention data, whereas only 22 left, with others having transferred course or restarted year 12, which was also reflected in the analysis of the diploma students. MM added that analysis of students that had

left detailed some excluded due to behaviour or attendance, noting that this year had seen a difficult cohort with multiple issues not seen in previous years.

MM worked through the ethnic breakdown from the report, noting that there had been minimal changes since the report in February and invited questions or comments from the Committee, with none received.

In year performance – MM advised the Committee that following internal exams the full follow up process could not be carried out in line with the intended process due to the College closure, providing detail of the alternative online follow up with health check 2 conducted by Howard and his team through online methods with support for staff and students in using the online platforms. MM confirmed that the subjects in blue were reflected in the CAG's noting the positive vocational alps scores, with no subjects scoring less than 6, having built on the principles and processes introduced the precious year

Estimated Grades – A Levels – MM stated that the results detailed were the provisional CAG's, which had followed a robust process, with the guidance broken down and followed meticulously. MM provided the Committee with a detailed summary of the process followed, including collating staff data including justifications for grades presented, which including analysis of pre-existing marks, homework, classwork and bookwork. The data had been uploaded onto a central spread sheet which was taken through quality assurance, with deep analysis of the data, mapped against 3 year trends to ensure there was confidence that the subjects were moving in right direction with positive and accurate reflections of the achievement expected having taken each and every grade through a standard process. MM highlighted that most subjects were now in black or red, however maths remained a concern, although has shown some improvement.

Estimated Grades - Vocational subjects HB advised the Committee that vocational subjects followed a similar process, however BTEC subjects did not have external exams. HB outlined the process which included collating unit grades for completed units, followed by a process for estimating the grades for incomplete units which was used to calculate a final grade, These grades were also taken through a rigorous process of justification, cross checking and alignment which resulted in grades being moved both up and down. HB advised the Committee that the college had confidence that the results were accurate; however moderation and modification information from the exam board was not yet available despite completing the process in mid-June.

MM concluded by making the Committee aware that the results reflected a 100% pass rate as students were looked at positively and realistically, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to progress forward, based on the assumption that all students would attempt to pass, so suggests a 100% pass rate. MM invited questions, with a **governor asking** where students would have achieved a U grade, were these grades not calculated or assessed, or were they withdrawn ahead of internal CAG's being calculated, with MM confirming that the College did not remove any students at the point of calculating the CAG's, stating that there were no students that were expected to achieve a U grade, looking positively at the CAGs with the knowledge that every student had the opportunity to pass and was effectively supported. MM added that the support processes in place meant staff had the confidence that students would pass, stating that in the previous year there had been some U grades but following this, processes were tightened with the introduction of the quality improvement measures outlined to the committee, Ofsted and ESFA, all of which had been complimentary of the systems introduced, giving confidence that they would improve grades. MM concluded by confirming any issues with the exam board bringing grades down, would be strongly contended by the College, to protect the CAGs awarded.

A governor commented that as governors they were not in a position to challenge CAGs, but knowing that there was the opportunity to withdraw students in March, they wanted to clarify if this had been done, with MM assuring the Committee that staff did not feel the need to do this as they believed in their support processes and any students that had left had done so ahead of March.

EB added that over the course of the two years that the cohort had been enrolled, processes had been more robust, assessing that they were on the right programme of study at end of year 1, with many moved to a different programme of study, with interventions in place for those considered to be falling behind, therefore there was assurance that the learners were on right course and were all expected to pass. EB reiterated that for the CAGs, they had been through every single student, looking at the range of input, with open dialogue with teaching staff, who in turn provided answers and rationale which was recorded in the spread sheet. EB concluded that she felt assured by their process but remained aware of the statistical model.

MM added that a comparison to the previous year would provide unfair results, and remained hopeful that a three year view would be taken, providing a more positive reflection, advising that processes were already in place if there were any issues with the results, with staff training for staff working on results day, finishing by informing the Committee that he had already begun working on the next stage of the process, looking at the SAR based on the results, having been on a webinar to support the SAR process.

Members thanked staff for their work and **commented that** the level of information provided indicated a process that was thorough and fair, with EB adding thanks to Chair, AMF who had supported the entire process through a series of virtual meetings, resulting in staff feeling supported by the Board. AMF added that it had been an affirming time, seeing how well the staff understood their learners. **A governor asked if** the results were mapped against university offers, with MM informing the Committee that this information had been prepared, with those at risk of failing to secure an offer highlighted for support.

Item 4- Resolved: The Committee noted the detail of the report with thanks to staff for their efforts.

ITEM 5 – QIP PROGRESS

MM indicated that the QIP progress was impacted by the inability to complete the actions planned for the spring and summers term due to the closure of the College, however, assured the Committee that many processes were still followed through with CPD surveys and training through zoom and loom every Friday.

MM provided details of how student progress would be monitored, with the year 12 internal exams unable to be taken due to the College closure rescheduled for the end of September, adding that this would provide time for staff to assess the work completed from March to the end of summer to ascertain knowledge gaps. MM confirmed that the suggested time table structure was a positive step towards safely reintroducing face to face support, as the curriculum support had halted with the college closure, however, adding that all vulnerable and at risk learners were fully supported with some maintaining some face to face contact with the support team alongside continued subject teacher support through email.

MM provided detail of the quality support and oversight provided during the closure, which involved a weekly quality report collated from information fed in from subject teachers including details of how active staff had been, details of work set providing a full record of delivery throughout the

closure, evident of how hard staff had worked in the difficult circumstances and showed a range of activities and delivery styles.

MM provided an overview of deep dives progress, with 29 out of 34 completed ahead of the closure with the 5 not completed being HoF or members of the SLT where there were no concerns as their professional standards meant that their practice was expected to be good. MM stated that the process had been positive and provided insight for areas for improvement, including making marking and assessment more consistent with all now recorded in the same format. MM stated that whilst the process had been thorough, there was a short turnaround, making it difficult to get the detail and be fair to the staff, therefore more time has been planned in for this in the schedule for 20/21.

MM advised the Committee that the program of inset continued but with training taking place weekly online by LW, sent as an email in addition to staff using their time to attend webinars, as well as data conferencing with HOF's looking at alps and cedar with CNMC which looked at how to stretch and use that information and improve practice with the knowledge being embedded into next year's calendar.

MM advised of the activities that could not be completed, including a benchmarking system from York University and maths inset, both to be rebooked for the next academic year. Also deferred was the staff voice survey, which would be unduly influenced by the circumstances of the pandemic, commenting that with the focus of the new EIF in this area, staff wellbeing and workload needs to be addressed.

MM stated that retention data across all three terms was more positive, tracked monthly until lockdown, and to be resumed, with issues at all levels being addressed.

MM concluded the QIP progress review by taking pride in informing the Committee that under intent 9, destinations data and improvements in progression, the College had achieved all 8 Gatsby benchmarks.

A governor commented that they were pleased with the level of data populated; expressing thanks to MM and his team, stating that whilst the committee was in a position to ask challenging questions, MM had given the right information to allow the Committee to support and challenge, resulting in feeling no need to ask additional questions

Item 5 – Resolved: The governors noted the details of the progress against the QIP

ITEM 6 - REOPENING OF THE COLLEGE

HB advised the Committee that the curriculum delivery plan had been updated following the distribution of the papers.

HB detailed the proactive processes used to ensure the time tables reflected all possible scenarios to reduce the time needed to adapt to changing situations if there is the need to increase or reduce face to face contact or provide enhanced social distancing measures. The guidance released on July 2nd suggested full classes and year group bubbles are now acceptable therefore the PowerPoint was updated to reflect this. Time tables incorporated feedback and concerns from staff from the previous years' time table model, although would be unlikely that the initial intended model could be implemented due to the need to look at a blended learning approach to minimise risks to staff and students. HB confirmed that staff were issued both the standard timetable and one reflecting the social distancing model, with staff welcoming the approach and the timely information.

HB described each of the timetable models and advised the Committee of the benefits and drawbacks of each, advising that the preference for both meeting full guided learning hours with minimum risks was the 5 day whole group model, a blended programme with 3 hours of face to face learning, followed by one and a half hours of online learning in the afternoon. This blended method was to be supported by training and inset by the in house champion AK to prepare staff for online delivery. HB invited questions with a member asking how the timetable would be communicated to students. EB advised that staff already have their time tables and once the model is confirmed and the risk assessment relating to it signed off by the local authority, information would be cascaded to students. EB informed the committee that the letters and packs to go to current and new students were prepared, with current students kept informed throughout, aware that the risk assessment was due to be signed off in the next week and that this would enable them to have a confirmed timetable.

EB reassured the Committee that many hours had been taken to read through the guidance, ensuring all aspects were covered, concluding that the chosen model allows consistent bubbles, limits learners and staff contact with consistent groups, with year groups separated through utilising different entrances and exits, alternate break locations and toilets with staggered breaks. EB provided details of the other models considered and drawbacks, informing the Committee of communications with other local providers and their proposed approaches, highlighting how the SMC model gives additional face to face contact compared to other Colleges, ensuring full guided learning hours are met without increased mixing.

A member asked if the model could shift to full online delivery in the event of another lockdown, with EB confirming that if the local authority suggest the need to increase social distancing, the model can switch into the XY model, which will increase consistency in bubbles, and if there was a full lockdown, a 5 day online model can be introduced however, the intention is for the 5 day model to be introduced with staff onsite 9am until 4pm, to deliver face to face and online lessons to ensure that support is available **with a governor suggesting** that this was reassuring.

HB advised the Committee that following the updated guidance, consideration had been given for reintroducing full days in College, however, there remained a number of challenges that were difficult to overcome as outlined in slide 10, in particular the availability of transport resulting in students needing to be onsite until 4pm. This resulted in unsupervised time periods as well as catering issues, overcome by schools suggesting packed lunches, which would be less popular for College age students. HB advised that there had been no guidance for Colleges on managing free time and concluded that the benefits of full days did not outweigh the risks; therefore the decision was made to continue to air on the side of caution. **In response to a governor question**, HB advised that the unions had been engaged in discussions, however, a full union response had not yet been made available due to it being a developing situation, with their opinion being that the new guidance did not synchronise with society as a whole, with the suggestion that the virus could be airborne, increasing the risk and supporting the decision to remain cautious.

A member asked if the timetable model was for Committee approval, stating that the understanding was that it was for insight and understanding, **commenting that** based on the information available they were in support of the proposed model, with EB thanking the Committee for their support and confirming that it was for insight and support and not approval, **with further governor comments** that the College's size was beneficial in being able to be more agile in changing at pace.

Gratitude was expressed to HB from EB who advised that there had been 3 versions of every single staff time table, all received well in advance to ensure staff were kept fully updated and could plan

and prepare for the new term, with **a request for thanks to** be passed on to staff on behalf of the Board.

A governor asked if there were plans to redo the staff survey for the reopening of college, with EB explaining that following the June reopening, the HR manager had picked up on the previous results and had a one to one conversation with every member of staff relating to how they are feeling about returning to college.

Item 6.1 – Resolved: Governors noted the information provided and supported the College's decision to utilise the 5 day blended time table model.

ITEM 6.2 - STUDENT EXPERIENCE

HB highlighted the information in the presentation relating to student progress and support as well as the new processes that had been introduced, inviting EB to expand on the detail relating to transition and enrolment. EB advised that along with marketing manager EP, they had worked closely with BwD schools through weekly transition and strategic group meetings, resulting in 1131 hits on the 'Out of the Blocks' information page. EB provided detail of the virtual platform which included a welcome from the Principal, tours, staff and subject information, extending to hosting a virtual new student day on 1st July which had been successful, with a strike rate higher than with face to face events. **A governor commented** that this was a positive move in an increasingly digital world, and with the students making a conscious choice to participate, was a strong indicator of their interest in coming to SMC. EB added marketing campaigns continued, which included 'your place is secure', which included telephoning every applicant to assure them that their place remained secure, as well as the 'stay safe stay local' campaign, highlighting the reasons to stay local and the benefits of the small college, all which will be followed up with online enrolment to help reach the student number target.

EB detailed the new year 12 online process enrolment, which had been designed in house, as a secure and bespoke system, enabling pod teams to work together to progress students through enrolment with a saving of £12,000.

HB confirmed that following the online enrolment, the next step in the new student experience would be the induction, which would follow the timetable method, with students in College in the morning, receiving essential information, heavily focused on health and safety and prioritising how to access the online learning materials, followed by a carousel of meet the teacher classes online in the afternoon, with year 12's coming in on 1st September, followed by the year 13's on the 2nd, with lessons commencing for both year groups on the 3rd.

HB stated that the planning had been meticulous and hoped that the new style of delivery, with extended time for each subject meant teachers needed to be creative to add variety to their lessons to maintain interest and momentum, fully supported by the inset program. HB clarified that the online delivery would be live lessons and not distance learning, conducted through Microsoft Teams and supported by Pearltrees as a storage bank of additional resources for consistency, with DILA's set on a regular basis. This continued the strong emphasis on independent learning, which had begun to be embedded through the QIP processes already introduced. HB concluded by providing details of the subject support programme in place to help students struggling with topics, with 90 minutes per week inbuilt to teachers time tabled contact time, which was flexible and enhanced the teaching and learning.

A member asked what the plans for those in digital poverty were, including those with a home environment not conducive to learning, either without the technology or an inappropriate environment without a quiet or appropriate space to learn, with EB confirming that all platforms were compatible with mobile phones. Furthermore, laptops would be provided where possible to those in need of facilities outside of their time in College, which had also been done for all existing learners ahead of College closure in March, with additional laptops purchased with the bursary funding and a further College Collaboration bid, which if successful would provide further IT equipment. EB also confirmed that the level 1 provision had been adapted for accessibility, with no online learning with lessons continuing through face to face delivery, with a classroom support assistant.

A governor commented that they were satisfied that the College was evidencing that they were taking into consideration students circumstances and preventing students being disadvantaged, thanking EB and her team for all of the work that has been put in, taking in all individual needs, making it right for each and every one of the learners.

Item 6.2 – Resolved: The Committee noted the details of the report.

ITEM 7 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No items were raised under any other business and the meeting closed at 5.25 with the Cahir thanking members and attendees for their time, highlighting that the Committee was looking forward to celebrating with the College team in August.

Actions, Matters Arising and Deferred Items

Item 3 – E&D action plan/ strategy - KS to review the progress columns and feed back to the next meeting including review dates and actions (carried forward) (KS)

Item 3 – HE outcomes data to include national average information (PL)

Item 4 – thanks to staff from the Board for their efforts and transparency in the CAGs process (MM)

Item 6.2 – thank to all the SLT for all they have done throughout the closure an in planning to reopen (EB)