



# Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 6pm in the College Conference Room

<b>Present:</b>	Patrick Alcantara	Foundation Governor
	Sarah Carroll	Foundation Governor ( <i>via Teams</i> )
	Mark Dawson	Parent Governor
	Brother Ben	Foundation Governor
	Janet Gater	Principal
	Mick Martin	Foundation Governor
	Andrew Rannard	Foundation Governor
	Graeme Slater	Foundation Governor
	Alyssa Snowden Leak	Student Governor
	Helen Stevenson (Chair)	Foundation Governor

**In attendance:** Michelle Williams (*Vice Principal, Finance, Resources & Systems*)  
Laura Forsyth (*Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral*)  
Lauren Boswell (*Assistant Principal, Student Support*)  
Peter Murphy (*Assistant Principal, Staffing & Catholic Ethos*)  
Kim Wallace (*Assistant Principal, Student Development*)  
Liz Walls (*Assistant Principal, Super Curriculum*)  
Amelia Southward (*prospective Co-opted Governor*)  
Ruth Potter (*Clerk to Governors*)

## PART 1

*The Chair of Governors welcomed new Student Governor, Alyssa Snowden Leak, to the meeting. Brother Ben was invited to open the meeting with the College prayer.*

### 1. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

#### 1.1 Declarations of interest

Governors were invited to declare whether they had any direct or indirect personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in any matter which formed part of the agenda for this meeting or was likely to be discussed at the meeting. No interests were declared other than those that were already recorded on the College's register of interests.

#### 1.2 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received and accepted from the following board members:

- John Fogarty – Foundation Governor
- Sue Jarvis – Co-opted Governor
- Andrew Jones – Co-opted Governor

The meeting was quorate.

#### 1.3 Items to be included under urgent business

There were no items submitted for consideration as urgent business.

1.4 **Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 8 July 2024** *(previously circulated)*

The minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting held on 8 July 2024 were (a) approved and the Chair authorised to sign them in accordance with Article 12(3) of the Articles of Government and (b) publication was authorised in accordance with Article 13.

1.5 **Matters arising from the minutes** *(previously circulated)*

Governors noted the action log prepared by the Clerk.

**2. SAFEGUARDING**

2.1 **Safeguarding Annual Report** *(previously circulated)*

The Assistant Principal (Student Support) and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) referred governors to her annual report for academic year 2023-24 and highlighted the following key points:

- changes to CPOMS categories mid-year had affected like for like comparison within the report
- overall decrease in incidents compared to 2022-23
- newly appointed Assistant Principal and DSL had undergone extensive training and CPD throughout the year
- general staff CPD and training activities reported
- positive outcomes for vulnerable learners achieved in summer examinations
- plans for year ahead including key action plans and audits (sexual harassment and misogyny; mental health and wellbeing; prevent, e-safety filtering and monitoring; hiring facilities)
- site security – student barriers and detection dogs.

Following discussion, a query was raised by a governor regarding the arrangements in place for fire drills and evacuation. The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) provided an overview of the operational processes in place to ensure student and staff safety. It was confirmed that consultation with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service had also taken place to ensure these processes were appropriate.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal for her comprehensive report and extended the governors' appreciation to the whole of the Safeguarding Team for their work in this crucial area. In particular, governors commended the excellent outcomes for vulnerable students which was testament to this work.

**Resolved:**

- **That the Safeguarding Annual Report be received.**

**3. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

3.1 **Examination Results 2024** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) reported on an excellent set of examination results, the full details of which were contained within her report to governors. It was important to note that these results had unlocked excellent destinations for the students, allowing them to take their crucial next steps.

The following key points were highlighted:

- A Level raw results – increase in high- and mid-grades and sustained pass rate compared to 2023. Significantly exceeded national averages across all grade bands.

- A Level ALPS data – improvement in overall ALPS banding and T score. Drill down data illustrated:
  - females outperforming males
  - outstanding outcomes for students with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP)
  - no differential between students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and non-SEND students
  - excellent outcomes for disadvantaged students.
- BTEC raw results – increase in high- and mid-grades and marginal dip on pass rate compared to 2023.
- BTEC provisional ALPS data – sustained ALPS banding. Drill down data illustrated:
  - no gender differential between male and female students
  - no differential between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students
  - no differential between students with EHCP and those with none
  - no differential between students with SEND and non-SEND students.
- Level 3 value added score
- Six Dimensions progress analysis reports for specific cohorts, including gender, ethnic group, socio economic group, and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) – all cohorts performed above the sector average.
- Progress of specific departments – high volume subjects, previously under-performing subjects.
- Outcomes for Art Foundation, GCSE English Language, GCSE Mathematics, and Foundation Learning.

The Vice Principal encouraged governors to view this performance data in the context of other key metrics including retention, attendance and achievement rates. College performance was reported to be above the national benchmarks for all of these additional measures.

All of this data was used by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to identify strategic priorities for the year ahead to ensure continued focus on quality improvement. The Vice Principal updated governors on the priorities for 2024-25 which included: high volume subjects, three subjects under formal subject review, two subjects under support and challenge and one subject under maintain and sustain. Progress reports on these priority areas would be provided to governors in line with the cycle of business.

Following discussion on the benefits of the maintain and sustain level of support, additional comments and questions were invited from governors.

**Q** – Would the College’s wider context in terms of location, socio-economic indicators etc. be considered by inspectors during Ofsted inspection?

**A** – Yes. Opportunity for Principal to brief inspectors on key contextual data.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her report and congratulated all staff and students on an excellent set of examination results.

**Resolved:**

- **That the 2024 examination results report be received and noted.**

### 3.2 **In-year Operating Plan 2024-25** *(previously circulated)*

The Principal referred governors to the draft in-year operating plan. Key performance indicators (KPIs) were highlighted on the first page of the plan and it was confirmed that a RAG rated progress report would be provided at future Governing Body meetings. The plan included the focal points and priorities for 2024-25 based on the overarching strategic plan.

An update on the new government's approach to Level 3 reform was provided and discussion ensued on the need to respond flexibly mid-year once the final outcome of the review was known. The impact on marketing and liaison activity was highlighted with specific reference to course information leaflets for upcoming open days. The Principal confirmed that in preparation for potential curriculum changes, all current BTEC provision had been mapped against new Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQ) and consideration given to appropriate entry criteria.

The Principal provided an overview of the priorities and actions contained within the plan and discussion ensued on the issue of flexible working options for staff. There was universal support for this to support staff wellbeing, however it was noted that the extent to which it could be offered was dependent on the nature of the role.

The Chair thanked the Principal for her report.

#### **Resolved:**

- **That the In-year Operating Plan 2024-25 be approved.**

## **4. FINANCE AND ESTATES MANAGEMENT**

### 4.1 **Student recruitment and retention report** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to her report which provided detailed data on student enrolments for 2024-25. It was confirmed that the College had over-recruited against planned student numbers for both 16-19 provision and Higher Education (HE). Drill down data was provided by assigned area, gender, ethnicity, religion, local authority area, and feeder school. Of particular note was the ethnic diversity amongst the student population which was significantly higher than that of the local authority area.

The staffing and financial implications of this over-recruitment were highlighted and it was confirmed that additional staff had been deployed to meet the increased demand. The Vice Principal confirmed that the College was likely to trigger in-year funding in response to the increase in 16-19 student numbers and an estimate of the additional funding was provided. Additional in-year HE funding and high needs funding was also anticipated. It was reported that the College's T Level course had proved unviable to run due to insufficient student enrolments.

The Vice Principal proceeded to present a summary income and expenditure report highlighting these estimated changes to the previously approved financial plan. The net effect was estimated to be a surplus of £39k.

Retention of students onto Upper Sixth was highlighted and it was noted that this had also been greater than anticipated. Strategies to maintain and sustain student retention were in place.

Governors were updated on the situation surrounding the National Joint Council (NJC) for Staff in Sixth Form Colleges staff pay negotiations. It was noted that the government's commitment to provide additional funding to schools and academies

for the teaching staff pay award of 5.5% had not been extended to sixth-form college corporations and the Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) was in the process of challenging this decision. Therefore, the potential financial impact of any final staff pay award on the College's budget for 2024-25 remained uncertain.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her comprehensive report and governors' questions were invited.

**Q** – What was the impact on our students of this over-recruitment in and around College? Did it feel over-crowded?

**A** – Managing the numbers well. At the start of term common areas were busy, but things had improved since students had settled into regular routines. May feel a greater impact if enrolment next year is also high. The Student Governor provided an insight into how it felt around College from a student perspective.

Discussion ensued on the staffing implications of increased enrolments. It was confirmed that a full curriculum and staffing review would be undertaken this year to fully assess ongoing implications.

**Resolved:**

- **That the student recruitment and retention report be received.**
- **That the increase to the staffing budget be approved retrospectively.**

**4.2 Financial Update – Interim Year End Accounts 2023-24** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) provided an overview of the finance update and interim year-end accounts for 2023-24. The outturn position as at the end of July 2024 was reported to be better than anticipated with an operating surplus of £99k. This included the net FRS17 actuarial adjustment to the pension valuation.

Governors were referred to the financial key performance indicators (KPIs) for July 2024 which were all RAG reported as green.

The Vice Principal confirmed that the external auditors were currently in College completing the audit of the financial statements and the regularity audit. The outcome would be reported to the Governing Body at its next meeting.

**Resolved:**

- **That the year-end financial updates as at 31 July 2024 be noted and approved.**

*Lauren Boswell, Peter Murphy, Liz Walls and Kim Wallace left the meeting at this point.*

**5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT**

**5.1 Risk Management Action Plan** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) presented the updated Risk Register and Action Plan. The revised document had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 24 September 2024. The updated significant and contingent risks were highlighted. It was noted that there was one significant risk – Level 3 policy reform – and eight contingent risks.

**Resolved:**

- **That the updated Risk Register be noted and approved.**

## 5.2 **Audit Committee Annual Report 2023-24** *(previously circulated)*

As the Chair of the Audit Committee was not present, a member of the Committee presented this annual report and confirmed that Audit Committee members had considered it at their meeting on 24 September 2024 and recommended it to the Board for approval. The Audit Committee had concluded that it was of the opinion that the College's assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the use of resources, solvency of the College and the safeguarding of assets were adequate and effective.

Governors' comments and questions were invited on the contents of the report and it was noted that one minor correction was required to the resignation date of a former member.

### **Resolved:**

- **That the Audit Committee Annual Report 2023-24 be noted and approved.**

*Amelia Southward withdrew from the meeting at this point.*

## 6. **GOVERNANCE**

### 6.1 **Membership and Succession Planning** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred governors to the Clerk's report and invited her to highlight the key points.

- Co-opted Governor vacancy – Search Committee members had considered an application submitted by Amelia Southward. An overview of Amelia's professional skills and experience was provided and it was noted that – as a qualified chartered accountant – her skills were closely aligned to the needs of the Board. An interview had taken place on 17 September 2024 and the recommendation to the Governing Body was to appoint Amelia as a Co-opted Governor for a term of four years subject to satisfactory completion of DBS and other standard checks. Assignment to the Audit Committee was recommended.
- Staff Governor vacancy – the Clerk reported that Sam Johnstone had submitted his resignation from the Board on 19 September 2024 due to personal reasons. The election process for his replacement would be conducted in the coming weeks.
- Foundation Governor vacancies – two vacancies remained and open advertisement was ongoing across a range of platforms.

Governors put on record their thanks to Sam Johnstone for his service as Staff Governor.

### **Resolved:**

- **That Amelia Southward be appointed as Co-opted Governor with assignment to the Audit Committee for a term of four years from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2028.**

### **ACTION**

- **Clerk to arrange standard checks, documentation and induction for newly appointed governor**

*Amelia Southward returned to the meeting at this point and the Chair congratulated her on her appointment.*

## 6.2 **External Governance Review – action plan** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk referred to the External Governance Review report that was presented to the Board at its last meeting. In response, governors were required to ensure that there was an appropriate action plan in place to address the report's recommendations. A draft RAG rated action plan was presented for consideration with Autumn Term 1 progress updates. The Clerk indicated that – if approved – the action plan would form the basis for the Governance SAR and Quality Improvement Plan which would be presented to Search Committee at its next meeting. Progress updates would then be reported to the Governing Body on a regular basis.

### **Resolved:**

- **That the external governance review action plan be approved.**

## 6.3 **Policy approval schedule** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk confirmed that in response to one of the recommendations arising out of the external governance review, she had undertaken a full review of the policy approval framework building on the work completed earlier in the year to review the College's policy schedule against the guidance provided by Eversheds. The purpose of this review had been to ensure that all policies were approved at the appropriate level, freeing up the Board's time to focus on more strategic areas where possible. In addition, policy review frequency had been considered and proposals made to align and reduce review frequency for certain types of policy. She referred governors to the areas of proposed change which had been highlighted in the policy review schedule. The draft schedule had been shared with SLT and agreed in principle.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for her report and, following discussion, governors agreed that further opportunities to devolve approval of more operational policies to the SLT should be explored. The Chair invited the SLT to consider this further and present ideas at the Strategic Planning session. In the meantime, the Governing Body agreed that the highlighted changes were appropriate.

### **Resolved:**

- **That the policy approval schedule – including delegated approval levels – be approved.**
- **That further consideration be given to this matter at the strategic planning session.**

**ACTION – SLT to consider opportunities for further policy delegation and present findings to the Governing Body at the strategic planning session**

## 7. **COMMITTEE AND LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS**

### 7.1 **Audit Committee draft minutes from 24 September 2024** *(previously circulated)*

The draft Audit Committee minutes were presented for information.

### 7.2 **Link Governor updates**

As it was still early in the year, the Chair noted that most link governor Autumn Term meetings had not yet taken place. The Safeguarding Link Governor had conducted early visits to College which had already been captured in the Safeguarding Annual Report (item 2.1).

### **Resolved:**

- **That all committee minutes and verbal reports be received and noted**

## 8. CONSENT AGENDA

It was noted that no questions had been raised in advance of the meeting with the Chair or Clerk regarding the papers listed under the consent agenda. The Chair advised the Governing Body that there remained an opportunity to raise any queries if required. None were raised.

### **Policies and other documents** *(previously circulated)*

- 8.1 **Counter Fraud Policy**
- 8.2 **Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy**
- 8.3 **Whistleblowing Policy**
- 8.4 **Worker Protection Act Plan**

#### **Resolved:**

- **That all policy documents be approved**

## 9. OTHER MATTERS

### 9.1 **Any other business**

None

### 9.2 **Date of next meeting**

Monday 9 December 2024 at 6pm. The Chair reminded governors that the next meeting would take place on a Monday.

Governors were also reminded of other upcoming dates:

- Strategic planning session in January 2025 (date to be confirmed) – the Clerk would be in contact with governors to check availability across a range of dates.
- Ofsted preparation session – Teams session with the Vice Principal and Ofsted Nominee scheduled for Monday 7 October at 8am.
- Self-Assessment Review (SAR) panel dates – governors were invited to attend at least one panel meeting in the role of critical friend and the Clerk would circulate the SAR schedule for governors to confirm their availability.

#### **ACTION**

- **Circulate SAR schedule and confirm governor availability.**
- **Consult governors on potential strategic planning session dates.**

There being no further Part 1 business to discuss the meeting concluded at 7.15pm.

Signed by the Chair: \_\_\_\_\_



On this day: \_\_\_\_\_ 9 December 2024 \_\_\_\_\_