



CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

ST FRANCIS XAVIER CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Meeting of the Full Governing Body

Tuesday 19th March 2024

6pm – 8.30pm

Held in St Francis Xavier Catholic Sixth Form College

Minutes

College mission statement:

St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College is an inclusive educational community rooted in the Catholic faith, that has Christ at its centre. Our aim is to provide a broad curriculum which emphasises the pursuit of excellence and focuses on career preparation, leadership and service to others. We are committed to preparing the whole person to lead a life of purpose and success in a just and sustainable world.

March 2022

Present:

Nader Sheta, Foundation Governor, Chair of Governors
Kate Bainbridge, Co-opted Governor
Michael Belfour, Foundation Governor, Vice Chair of Governors
Paul Barber, Foundation Governor
Dave Navarro, Foundation Governor
Somayina Ebele, Foundation Governor
Sarah Medicoff, Foundation Governor
Keni Thomas, Foundation Governor
Graham Thompson, Principal
Aaron Takyi, Staff Governor (teaching)
Chukwuweta Uraih, Foundation Governor
Gabrielle Williams Hamer, Co-opted Governor

Apologies:

Anna Mason, Support Staff Governor

Absent without apologies:

Daniel James-Proffitt, Student Governor
Isabella McGhee, Student Governor

The meeting was quorate throughout.

All Reports had all been circulated prior to the meeting.

Item 1 Opening Prayer

The Principal opened the meeting in prayer.

Item 2 Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Anna Mason, Support Staff Governor.

Paul Barber had also sent his apologies, as he would be arriving late.
Daniel James-Proffitt and Isabella McGhee were absent without apologies.

Item 3 Introductions/Membership of the Governing Body

To note the resignation of Virginie Ramond (Parent Governor) as of 2nd February 2024.

To note the end of term of office of Eve Preece (Support Staff Governor) as of 16th March 2024

To note the resignation of Somayina Ebele (Foundation Governor) as of 12th March 2024

To note the appointment of Anna Mason (Support Staff Governor) as of 15th March 2024 to 14th March 2025.

The Governing Body paid tribute to Virginie Ramond, Somayina Ebele and Eve Preece and thanked them for their contributions to the Governing Body.

The Chair of Governors welcomed Gabrielle Williams Hamer, Prospective Co-opted Governor to the meeting. All present made their introductions.

Gabrielle Williams Hamer withdrew from the meeting.

A discussion took place about the wealth of experience that Gabrielle would bring to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body agreed to appoint Gabrielle Williams Hamer as a Co-opted Governor with a four-year term of office from 19th March 2024 until 18th March 2028.

Gabrielle Williams Hamer returned to the meeting.

Item 4 Minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2023

The minutes of the above meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Governing Body approved the minutes. Clerk to upload to GovernorHub for electronic signature. **Action: Clerk/Chair of Governors.**

Item 5 MATTERS ARISING (other than those covered by agenda items)

All items had been completed or were on the agenda.

Item 6 Information/Data etc communicated since the previous meeting:

- Ofsted inspection report (January 2024)
- Monthly Management Accounts: November 2023, December 2023, January 2024, February 2024
- Training/webinars (various dates)
- Maximilan Newsletters (various dates)

Item 7 To provide an update on Chair's Actions

None.

Item 8 Student Governors' Report

It was agreed that in the absence of the Student Governors that this item will be carried forward to the next meeting. Clerk to add to the agenda. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 9 Principal's Report to Governors - Graham Thompson, Principal.

The Principal to give an overview of the Executive Summary

SFCA

The Sixth Form College's Association had published its six-point manifesto ahead of the impending general election, which were to:

- Raise the rate of funding.
- Protect student choice.
- Reduce bureaucracy.
- Tackle the teacher recruitment and retention crisis.
- Create more avenues for capital funding.
- Conduct an evidence-based review of the sixth form curriculum.

Funding

According to London Economics the average per student funding for sixth formers needed to rise from £5760 to £6470, in order for colleges to keep pace with inflation and other costs.

The de-funding process had now moved into the approval phase, where awarding bodies can seek approval for alternative academic and technical courses. At the college's recent strategic planning day, the SLT had agreed to adopt Plan B which was to pause and review in the event that a new government is elected.

Exams

From September 2024 the GCSE maths and English tolerance of 5% will be removed. In addition, minimum teaching hours for GCSE English and maths had been stipulated as three hours for English and 4 hours for maths, although this will not be audited until 2025/26.

Governor question: What is the expectation regarding the Advanced British Standard, if there is a new government?

Response: Civil Services have spent a lot of time working on the Advanced British Standard, so we expect that it will continue.

Academisation

Five Catholic Academy Trusts had been established in the Diocese; all schools were expected to be working towards joining one of these. A recent letter received from Angela Cox, Diocesan School's Commissioner, set out the Education Commissions' expectations for academisation.

The Diocese remained open to the idea of a horizontal CAT formed of their two sixth form colleges. The principals of the four Catholic sixth form colleges across London were currently writing a proposal to explore the possibility of a pan-London CAT.

A discussion took place about academisation.

Sarah Medicoff joined the meeting remotely at 6:15pm.

Governance

The Principal reported that it was possible that the College will need to adopt a new code of governance in response to the Department for Education removing the UK Corporate Governance Code. The most obvious code to adopt will be the Association of Colleges' code of governance, but this may need a few tweaks to satisfy some minor concerns raised by the Catholic Education Service (CES).

The new College Financial Handbook was expected to be published on 20th March 2024.

Catholic mission

The college continued to offer daily reflections for all students in the college.

Nine students recently attended a 3-night retreat at Kintbury.

Deacon Tony was preparing eleven students to receive the sacrament of Confirmation later this year

House Services has been held.

The College had adopted a new prayer.

Students

More than 500 prospective students attended the open event in March 2024.

The number of applications currently stood at 2239, with 958 offers accepted. This was an increase on the same time last year.

The college had produced a T level-specific information film to share with careers departments in all the feeder schools.

Estates/Capital works

There were several planned improvements of the estate including the development of a new media suite, relocation and upgrading of the careers hub, reconfiguration of the Learning Resource Centre, and the installation of a new public address system.

The college was waiting the outcome of two CIF bids both focussed on repairs to roofs across the estate.

Finance

The Principal reported that it will be a challenge to maintain the college's Outstanding finance health this year due to lagged funding. When benchmarked against other Catholic sixth form colleges, the college's finances look relatively healthy.

The funding rate will be increased by 1.89% taking the basic rate to £4843 per student.

Ofsted

The Principal reported that the college was delighted with the "Good" judgement of the Nightingales nursery's Ofsted report based on the inspection that took place in January 2024

Excellence in quality and standards of educational achievement

Using the ALPs value added metric, the college was forecasting that 59% of departments will perform in line with students' prior attainment, 32% will perform better and 9% will fall below expectation based on their students' prior attainment. The DfE's L3VA metric will not be returning until after the publication of this summer's results.

The College had joined the External Quality Scheme, in addition to remaining part of the College collective.

Staffing

To address the teacher recruitment and retention crisis, the college had collaborated with the three other Catholic sixth form colleges in London to form the Borromeo Teacher Training Hub; with the ambition that the training hub will train new teachers. The college continued to invest in staff development and INSET. Teaching staff valued the recent "Sharing Fair".

Twelve staff had recently participated in the DfE's funded National Professional Qualifications this year.

The Principal paid tribute to the Head of Estates, Mark Preece, on reaching the incredible milestone of his 40-year work anniversary.

Governor question: Which organisations will the teaching hub be linked to?

Response: Teach SouthEast are the awarding body.

Governor question: Have there been any staff recruitment issues for the college?

Response: We have not had any significant issues. We recently recruited for the Head of Business and Economics post and the Head of Psychology is currently being advertised.

Students

Excellence in pastoral care and contribution to the welfare of our young people and staff.

The college had been awarded Outstanding for Personal Development in the Ofsted inspection.

Two students were currently on a child protection plan, two 'Child in Need' students and 23 'Looked After Children' (LACs).

Mental health remained the biggest issue facing students. There had been 207 interactions so far since September with the College Welfare Officer and College Counsellor

Governor question: Is there an upward or downward trend?

Response: The trend is down for cases of Child Protection and Children in Need. However, we have seen an increase in mental health issues, with some extreme

cases. The college's Welfare ambassador had reported grief and exam anxiety as key issues that many students are presenting with.

The College had achieved the Carnegie Further Education Mental Health Bronze Award. The Principal thanked the Safeguarding Link Governor for her contribution. The Principal paid tribute to Mr Spindler for all his work on the award. The ambition was for the college to work on the silver award.

The college's focus on attendance had had a positive impact, with current attendance at 92%. The college had extended the strategy to include weekly emails to the next of kin of all students, detailing their attendance during the previous week. This will also provide an opportunity to congratulate those who have very good attendance.

Excellence in pastoral care and contribution to the welfare of our young people and staff

The delivery of all three T levels was going well.

A series of short films had been created to raise awareness, inform, and educate prospective students and their parents about T levels.

Applications for the Cricket Academy, a collaboration between the College and Surrey County Cricket Club were looking positive for next year.

The college had invested in 'Uplearn' a new platform that used AI adaptive learning and on-demand tutor support to support students in A level: Biology; Chemistry; Physics; Maths; Economics and Psychology. The impact was expected to be seen in 2025.

Governor question: Do students have to be trained to use UpLearn?

Response: Students will have access to a live tutor who will support them. Staff have also been trained to use UpLearn. We will be looking at the data to see the uptake.

It was agreed that the UpLearn usage data will be provided at the next meeting.

Excellence in preparation for higher education and employment that contributes to the local and the national economy.

88% of eligible Yr13 students have applied to UCAS this year. 41% have made at least one application to a Russell Group university.

Governor question: Is there any support to provide financial advice to students to visit universities?

Response: We have bursaries available for students who wish to visit. We are also encouraging students to take up places at summer school as they often then get contextual offers and access to bursaries.

A discussion took place about the benefits of degree apprenticeships. The Principal reported that the National Apprenticeships week had helped to get more employers into the college to raise awareness and many of the higher ability students were considering these apprenticeships.

The inaugural employers board meeting was held on 1st February 2024. It was hoped that by engaging with employers the college will be able to adapt the curriculum to meet their skills needs.

The SFX Essential 8 was now embedded across the College in both the curriculum and tutorial programme. Students who had shown aptitude in one or more of the skills were celebrated at the Essential 8 Awards at the end of last term.

The Young Enterprise team epitomised the college's essential 8 transferable skills at the Old Spitalfields Market Trade Fair where they sold out of their product "Snuggle" and were now in the final.

A discussion took place about the "Snuggle" product.

Paul Barber joined the meeting at 6:45pm.

Raising Participation

32% of English and 11% of maths students were successful in securing a grade 4 or above in their November GCSE qualifications.

The college continued to support speakers of other languages through appropriate ESOL support sessions and qualifications. This year the qualifications included the AQA Unit Award Scheme and ESOL Skills for Life.

Governor question: Do students need to keep re-taking the exams if they do not pass?

Response: Yes, and some students will be required to re-sit some exams up to four times before they leave.

A discussion took place about functional skills. The Principal explained that Maths was a national issue for all colleges and functional skills were no longer considered a credible alternative.

The Chair thanked the Principal for the update .

Item 10 Update on the Post Ofsted Action Plan – Graham Thompson, Principal and Karen Foan, Associate Principal

The Associate Principal (KF) gave an update. It was noted that the Post Ofsted Action Plan had been discussed in detail at the recent focus morning.

Governor question: Are the students who would benefit most from using UpLearn, using the platform?

Response: We will be analysing the use of the platform to assess this and we will update you.

Item 11 Update on the College SAR Executive Summary & QUIP – Karen Foan, Associate Principal

The Associate Principal (KF) gave an update and invited questions. It was noted that

the College SAR Executive Summary & QUIP had been discussed in detail at the recent focus morning.

Governor question: Regarding the eight students on the T Level course, was this the aim?

Response: The aim was to have between 15-20 students on the course. We are still addressing some challenges, as there are some reservations from student and parents about universities not admitting students with T Levels. Other colleges have not had high enrolment.

Governor question: Can you explain more about the number of students dropping out of courses?

Response: Many students leave to undertake apprenticeships which often begin in April or May each year.

A discussion took place about the viability of some of the T Level courses. The Associate Principal explained that they will be reassessing the course after two years. They are also targeting some Level Two students, who had shown an interest to begin a trial on the T Levels course.

A discussion took place about the funding for T Levels. The Associate Principal explained that if BTecs were withdrawn there will be little choice for students but T Levels.

Oral Reports form Governors' Committees:

Item 12.1 Audit committee (met remotely on 26th February 2024):

The draft minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting. In the absence of the former Chair of the Committee, Dave Navarro gave an update on the meeting, as outlined in the minutes of the meeting.

The Chair of the Committee introduced the updated Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

The Governing Board approved the Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Item 12.2 Finance and Resources Committee (met remotely on 20th February 2024):

The draft minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee gave an update on the meeting, as outlined in the minutes of the meeting.

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee introduced the updated Charging Policy 2024-25.

The Governing Body approved the Charging Policy 2024-25.

Item 12.3 Curriculum Standards & Quality Committee (met remotely on 1st February 2024)

The draft minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair of the

Curriculum Standards & Quality Committee gave an update on the meeting, as outlined in the minutes of the meeting.

Item 12.4 Appeal Committee

The Appeal Committee had not met since previous FGB meeting.

Item 12.5 Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee had not met since previous FGB meeting.

Item 12.6 Governance Committee

The Governance Committee had not met since previous FGB meeting.

Item 12.7 College Financial Handbook update

It was noted that the College Financial Handbook was due for publication on 20th March 2024.

Item 12.8 Link Governor updates

Safeguarding Link Governor: Kate Bainbridge

The Safeguarding Link Governor gave an update and reported that she had regular safeguarding updates from the Associate Principal (CG) and had also recently met the college's Welfare Officer. The Safeguarding Link Governor reported that the college's safeguarding practices were robust, and promotion of mental health was good. During the recent meeting they had discussed students on Children in Need plans, the Virtual School and students in Kinship arrangements. The Associate Principal received three reports each day about vulnerable students.

Sarah Medicoff reported that she had recently undertaken a Science Department link governor visit.

It was agreed that all governors will contact the Associate Principal (KF) to arrange visits. The Clerk to Governors will recirculate the Link Governor protocol and visit form. **Action: Clerk.**

It was agreed that Keni Thomas will arrange a Link Governor visit to revisit the 'Dream College' with students after Easter. **Action: Keni Thomas.**

Item 12.9 Governor feedback from the Quality Morning (2nd February 2024) and Focus Morning (8th March 2024)

Quality Morning

The Governing Body thanked the college for the time and effort they had taken to organise the recent Quality Morning and for the reports which had been uploaded to GovernorHub.

Focus Morning

The Governing Body agreed that it was useful to have two mornings each year. It was noted that the new strategic plan needed to be in place for September 2025.

Item 12.10 External Governance Review (scoping meeting scheduled for 22nd April 2024 and governance review to take place in summer term 2024) plus webinar

The Chair of Governors reported that the scoping meeting had been scheduled to take place in April 2024, and the governance review during the summer term. The review

will be undertaken by David Wright, who was a National Leader of Governance and Chair of Governors at a Catholic Sixth Form College. It was noted that the Chair of Governors and the Clerk will also be attending a webinar on Governance reviews in April 2024.

Item 12.11 Committees: to review membership

To add additional Governors to the Remuneration Committee and the Audit Committee

Remuneration Committee

It was agreed that Gabrielle Williams Hamer and Keni Thomas will join the Remuneration Committee.

Audit Committee

It was agreed that Gabrielle Williams Hamer will join the Audit Committee.

Item 12.12 Governor vacancies (updates as applicable)

Parent Governor

It was agreed that the Principal and Clerk will advertise the Parent Governor vacancy.

Action: Principal/Clerk.

Foundation Governor

A recent advertisement for a Foundation Governor had resulted in an interested candidate. The Chair, Principal and Clerk had recently met the candidate and his details will be forwarded to the CES for consideration as a Foundation Governor.

Item 12.13 Tracking against Governance Improvement Plan

It was agreed that this had been discussed in detail at the recent Focus morning. It was agreed that the Chair will forward the one-to-one governor interviews to the Clerk for collation. **Action: Chair of Governors/Clerk.**

Item 12.14 Governor Training & Development Opportunities

It was agreed that the clerk will set up a training log. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 12.15 Are Governor satisfied that all information received, and all decision taken at this meeting have been centred on improving the experience and levels of achievement of student at St Francis Xavier College in a safe, healthy environment that embraces the Catholic ethos and missions and values of the college, the PREVENT Duty and promotes Equality, Diversity, Dignity and Inclusion? Yes

Item 12.16 Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair of Governors reminded governors to continue to research the subject of academisation for future discussion.

Item 12.17 Any Other Business

The Clerk informed all present that Eve Preece had asked to thank the Governing Body for her time as a support staff governor.

Item 12.18 Close of meeting and closing Prayer

The meeting closed in prayer at 7:47pm.

Item 12.19 Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 2nd July 2024 at 6pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair of Governors

Actions:

Action 1: The Governing Body approved the minutes. Clerk to upload to GovernorHub for electronic signature. **Action: Clerk/Chair of Governors.**

Action 2: It was agreed that all governors will contact the Associate Principal (KF) to arrange visits. The Clerk to Governors will recirculate the Link Governor protocol and visit form. **Action: Clerk.**

Action 3: Student Governors' Report

It was agreed that in the absence of the Student Governors that this item will be carried forward to the next meeting. Clerk to add to the agenda. **Action: Clerk.**

Action 4: It was agreed that Keni Thomas will arrange a Link Governor visit to revisit the 'Dream College' with students after Easter. **Action: Keni Thomas.**

Action 5: It was agreed that the Principal and Clerk will advertise the Parent Governor vacancy. **Action: Principal/Clerk.**

Action 6: It was agreed that the clerk will set up a training log. **Action: Clerk.**

Action 7: Parent Governor

It was agreed that the Principal and Clerk will advertise the Parent Governor vacancy.

Action: Principal/Clerk.

Action 8: It was agreed that the Chair will forward the one-to-one governor interviews to the Clerk for collation. **Action: Chair of Governors/Clerk.**