

Meeting of the Full Governing Body

Tuesday 18th March 2025

At 6:00pm

Held at the College

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:

Femi Adedeji, Parent Governor
Kate Bainbridge, Co-opted Governor
Michael Belfourd, Foundation Governor, Vice Chair of Governors
Feranmi Durojaye, Student Governor
Gabrielle Hamer Williams, Co-opted Governor
Patrick Kwong, Associate Member (Observer)
Anna Mason, Staff Governor (support)
Nader Sheta, Foundation Governor, Chair of Governors
Mason Rhoomes, Student Governor
Keni Thomas, Foundation Governor

Apologies:

Sarah Medicoff, Foundation Governor
Aaron Takyi, Staff Governor (teaching)

Absent without apologies:

Chukwuweta Uraih, Foundation Governor

In attendance:

Clare Baskott, Clerk to Governors
Karen Foan, Associate Principal, Curriculum
Ciaran Graham, Associate Principal, Ethos and Student Welfare

Minutes

The meeting was quorate throughout.

All reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Item 1 Welcome and Opening

The Chair of Governors opened the meeting at 6pm.

The Principal led the meeting in prayer.

Item 2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received Aaron Takyi and Sarah Medicoff .

Chukwuweta Uraih, Foundation Governor was absent without apologies.

Item 3. Introductions/Membership of the Governing Body

The Governing Body noted the appointment of Parent Governor:

Femi Adedeji from 25.01.2025 – 24.01.2027 (subject to satisfactory DBS check).

The Governing Body noted the appointment of Student Governors:

Mason Rhoomes, Student Governor from 18.03.2025 – 17.03.2026

Feranmi Durojaye, Student Governor from 18.03.2025 – 17.03.2026

Item 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2024, were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

Item 5. Matters Arising and review of Actions carried forward from the previous meetings

None.

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

Monthly Management Accounts

Training/webinars

Maximilian Newsletters

Item 7. Chair's Actions

None.

Item 8. Student Governors' Report

Student Governor, Feranmi Durojaye, gave an update and reported that he had chosen to attend SFX because of its Catholic ethos. He was currently studying Business BTEC and undertaking an EQP. He had originally found the induction process daunting due to the high number of students. However, he had been welcomed into the college and had developed a good sense of friendship. He had recently been awarded the Essential 8 Award. He had also recently undertaken work experience at Wandsworth College. Feranmi Durojaye, said that he would like to see the college offering more trips.

Governor question: Was the work experience easy to arrange?

Response: The college goes through a provider/website called BEST help to arrange placements.

Student Governor, Mason Rhoomes, said that he had previously attended a non-faith school in New Cross. When he joined the college, he had been nervous about meeting new people. He had found staff to be caring, and they had encouraged him to be open to new experiences. Since joining the college, he had made lots of friends.

The Student Governors thanked the Governing Body for the opportunity.

The Governing Body thanked the Student Governors for their presentations.

Item 9. Principal's Report to Governors

The Principal gave an overview of the Executive Summary

The College Sector

Outcomes of the short, focussed review of Applied General Qualifications were largely positive. The removal of the proposed rules of combination were expected to have the biggest impact on the college.

Large and medium sized AGQs such as extended diplomas and diplomas were still at risk of defunding.

Governor question: What is the aim of the review?

Response: There is a view from some areas that there are too many qualifications.

The government began the process with the talk of defunding. It largely stems from the skills gap, hence, the drive for T Levels which are employer focused. Their view was that BTECs are not occupational, however, the BTECs are good to enable students to move on to university etc. We want to ensure that we have the range of qualifications for students. We still have four T Levels on offer.

The NJC managed to agree a pay settlement with the NEU, bringing an end to the strike action, however the NASUWT had recently balloted and voted for some form of industrial action in twenty-three sixth form colleges including St. Francis Xavier. It was noted that this action was against the College and not the Secretary of State.

Unison had accepted the pay offer on behalf of support staff members.

The national funding rate for 25/26 will see an increase of 3.78% bringing the rate to £5,026 per student (from £4,843).

Catholic Life

Daily reflections, morning prayer, weekly prayers in the chapel, monthly masses and House services continued to demonstrate the college's commitment to their Catholic mission.

The college had six confirmation candidates this year who will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in May. Canon Gerard Bradley will once again celebrate the mass.

The college welcomed their very first Chaplain, Fr. Chris Connor, to the college in January 2025.

Hope Week in December coincided with the college's celebration of the feast of Saint Francis Xavier, which commenced the observance of the Jubilee Year. The college will be creating a Jubilee Garden to mark this Jubilee year.

Students

The college had added some intimate open mornings to the College calendar which had been well received.

Governor question: Do attendees also attend the other open events too?

Response: Yes, this helps them to get a good feel for the college.

Governor question: Do you invite the prospective students to other events?

Response: Yes, they are invited to another event in the summer term in the quad, as well as an experience day.

Governor question: How are candidates for these events selected?

Response: It is on a first come, first served basis.

Governor question: How do the number compare with last year?

Response: We are down on numbers of applications. However, last year we had more applications, but the conversion rate was lower

Governor question: What is a good conversion rate?

Response: 44% is our highest conversion rate.

Governor question: Who are you biggest competitors?

Response: The schools, because they want to retain a lot of their students for their own sixth forms. We recently had a curriculum efficiency and financial sustainability visit and they said our attrition rate was reasonably high.

Governor question: When should we begin to start planning for a reduction in numbers due to declining numbers of pupils in primary schools?

Response: We have already started looking at alternative recruitment strategies to ensure that we continue to have sufficient students on roll.

A discussion took place about potential capacity constraints because of the size of the college.

Circa 500 prospective students had attended the Spring Open afternoon earlier this month.

The college had received over 2000 application, with 1046 offers accepted.

Estates

The college had recently submitted two Condition Improvement Fund bids: one for refurbishment of the roofs (resubmission); the other for replacement of the fire alarm system and electrical installations. The college was working on the bids with a new company, Academy Estate Consultants Ltd.

Governor: If there is an over-run on a project who pays for it?

Response: The college does. We determine how much we want to contribute to

each project. It is done on a scoring matrix. We are conscious of college funding and our cash flow.

The college was waiting to receive confirmation about the allocation from the £50m announced by the treasury to help cover the costs of the 5.5% pay award from April – July 2025.

A discussion took place about the pay award. The Principal reported that the School Teachers Review Body has recently released a future 2.8% pay increase. However, the unions were not happy with this offer and there was potential for more strike action in schools. In future pay increases will be linked to student numbers.

Predicted outcomes for this summer were encouraging with just over a quarter of courses predicting strong value-added outcomes that would put students in the top 25% nationally. The Associate Principal for Curriculum was working with departments to ensure predicted grades are good.

The college's partnership with EQR had proved fruitful. The review of the Level 3 BTEC curriculum had helped inform the quality improvement plan for this area of the college.

Teachers and departments had responded well to this year's overarching learning and teaching theme "Aiming High", as demonstrated by the highly successful sharing fair.

The trainee teachers who had joined the college from the Borrromeo Teacher Training Hub were progressing well.

The Associate Principal for Curriculum gave an overview of the Borrromeo Teacher Training Hub programme. The college was currently advertising for new Teachers in the PE and Business departments.

Eleven teachers had completed, or were in the process of completing, the National Professional 3 Qualifications this year.

This term, tutorials had focussed on four Essential 8 themes: Staying Positive; Aiming High; Problem Solving and Creativity.

The student well-being programme was relaunched in January 2025 with the introduction of "Well-being Wednesdays."

Safeguarding

Since September 2024, there had been 398 unique incidents recorded on CPOMS, the college's safeguarding platform, 87 of these required social services involvement.

Governor question: Is this the number of individuals?

Response: No, it is total number of incidents.

The Associate Principal for safeguarding gave an overview of the current difficulties the college was experiencing in liaising with social services.

There had been 6 exclusions this term; 3 temporary and 3 permanent.

The staff pulse wellbeing survey continued to indicate high levels of staff satisfaction with 9/10 staff recommending the college as a good place to work.

Flossie the Wellbeing dog celebrated her first birthday on St Valentine's Day.

The college shared their T Level successes during National Apprenticeship Week on T Level Thursday.

Many of the T Level students were either preparing for, or were already, on their industrial placements.

Year 13 UCAS applications were very encouraging this year. 88% of those eligible had applied to universities, with many having already received offers. Offers from Russell Group, Sutton 30 and the top third were all up when compared to the same time last year.

Earlier this month the college held their annual HE and Careers fair with representatives from over 60 HEIs and employers in attendance

There has been extensive engagement with a range of employers including Investment 20:20, Legal and General, HSBC and The Ask Programme.

The college's Young Enterprise Team won the coveted Customer Service Award when they presented their product, Jar Jaws, at Spitalfields Market. The first round of the competition will take place on Monday 24th March 2025.

Two former students had returned to the College to give some valuable insights about university life at Oxford and Edinburgh.

The college celebrated students' achievements at the SFX Essential 8 Awards in the final week of term.

The Principal commended the students who had taken part in the SFX Talent Show during Mental Health Week

6:37pm – The Student Governors left the meeting.

Standing items:

Item 10. Academisation

The Chair reported that he had recently met the Principal and member of the Governing Body from Christ the King College. Both GB's had agreed that academisation was worth exploring. However, it was noted that they were still in the discussion stages, and nothing had yet been agreed by the Governing Body.

A meeting had been arranged with the Catholic Education Service about the Future of Catholic Sixth Form education.

It was noted that Paul Barber, a former Governor, is a Director of CES.

Item 11. Oral Reports from Governors' Committees:

Item 11.1 Audit committee met on 13th February.

The Chair of the Committee gave an overview of the meeting as outlined in the minutes and invited questions.

Governor question: Is the Cyber Essentials Certification now in place, as it is a condition of funding?

Response: We are in the process of obtaining certification and have until May 8, 2025, to be certified. Our new IT providers uncovered issues which are now being rectified.

Item 11.2 Finance and Resources Committee met on 4th March 2025 minutes in the reports.

The Chair of the Committee gave an overview of the meeting as outlined in the minutes and invited questions.

The Chair recommended the Reserves Policy and the Charging Policy to the Full Governing Board (FGB) for approval. A discussion took place about the current interest being received on the college bank accounts.

The FGB approved the Reserves Policy and the Charging Policy.

The Chair reported that the Committee had discussed the college insurance and procurement process. There were uncertainties in the market, with fewer companies available. The Director of Finance and Resources was exploring options to ensure best value for money. The Principal reported that following the meeting, the Director had been in contact with Graham Peak and the college insurance will go out to tender. The F&R Committee will receive an update at the next meeting or via email. It was noted that the new Procurement Act will need to be followed.

Item 11.3 Curriculum Standards & Quality Committee met on 11th February 2025.

The Chair of the Committee gave an overview of the meeting as outlined in the minutes and invited questions. A discussion took place about the recent Quality Day. The Governing Board noted the high standards demonstrated in the college and agreed that this was a useful event for new Governors to attend as it provides a good overview of the college.

Item 11.4 Appeal Committee

The Appeal Committee had not met since the last meeting.

Item 11.5 Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee had not met since the last meeting.

Item 11.6 Governance Committee

The Governance Committee had not met since the last meeting.

GOVERNANCE:

Item 12. Link Governor updates

The Safeguarding Link Governor provided an update, reporting regular communication with the Associate Principal for Safeguarding. It was noted that Keeping Children Safe

in Education 2025 will have a focus on mental health. Online safety continued to be a theme of concern, particularly regarding deep fakes.

The Safeguarding Governor highlighted ongoing pressures on the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) team. Future Ofsted inspections will involve deeper scrutiny of safeguarding processes in schools and colleges.

Governors, Sarah Medicoff and Keni Thomas reported having met with the Head of Science and Head of Geography. Governor, Michael Belfourd, informed the board of his meeting with the Head of Additional Support for Learning.

Governors provided positive feedback about the Quality Morning, describing it as a very good event. The Associate Assistant Principal presented on events and new initiatives, including the Aiming Higher program. Learning walks were conducted as part of the day's activities.

Governor, Keni Thomas, shared that he had spoken to the Wellbeing Officer to better understand her role, noting that she also worked in ALS. Keni also noted the value of bringing in student expertise. Keni Thomas had also met with the Travel and Tourism Lead to discuss the future of BTECs and their impact on Travel and Tourism. Gabrielle Williams Hamer is scheduled to meet with the Head of RE.

Update on the Focus Morning

The Strategic Planning session was described as a productive event with useful input from governors, with plans to assimilate the feedback into a comprehensive strategic plan.

Item 14. Committees/Link Governors: membership review

Future Chair of F&R and CSQ

Membership of F&R and Audit

Link Governors including SEN

The Governing Body approved the Chair, Principal and Clerk meeting to discuss future committee membership, which will be adopted by the FGB under Chair's Actions. Governors were invited to contact the Clerk to express an interest in the SEND Link Governor role. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 15. Governor vacancies

The Governing Body discussed current governor vacancies. Patrick Kong's Foundation Governor application was still in progress. Interviews were scheduled with two prospective Governors.

Anna Mason left the meeting.

Item 16. Tracking against Governance Improvement Plan

The Governing Body reviewed progress against the Governance Improvement Plan.

Item 17. Governor Training & Development Opportunities

The Governing Body noted the training opportunities circulated by the Clerk.

It was agreed that Michael Belfourd will circulate the SEND training slides. **Action: Michael Belfourd**

Item 18. Governor Engagement

The Chair reported that he and the Principal had attended the SFCA Conference and will also attend the SFCA annual meeting later that week.

Item 19. Schedule of meetings for 2025-26

The Governing Body approved the schedule of meetings for 2025-26.

It was agreed that the dates for the Quality Morning and Focus Mornings will be agreed by the Principal, Chair and Clerk.

Item 20. End of term of office

The Governing Body noted the end of term of office for Michael Belfourd as of 9th June 2025. The Chair expressed his thanks for his 16 years of service, acknowledging his breadth of knowledge across the sector and his support.

Michael Belfourd responded that he had joined 16 years ago and remarked on how the college had changed during that time. He noted that the college was doing well, with a good selection of governors with diverse skills and a strong Senior Leadership Team. He thanked everyone and wished them good luck for the future.

The Principal acknowledged Michael's support for the college with the building works.

It was agreed that the Clerk will follow up email to Clerk at St Charles re Chair's review and contact the clerk at St Dominic's. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 21 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 22 Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked all present for attending.

Item 23 Any Other Business

The Governing Body were informed that the former Chair of Governors was ill and were asked to keep him in their prayers.

Item 24 Close of meeting and closing Prayer

The meeting closed at 7:56pm.

Item 25 Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 1st July 2025 at 5pm

The meeting closed at 7:56pm.

The approved minutes will be signed electronically by the Chair of Governors