

**Wednesday 20th May 2020, 5.30pm
Remote Online Meeting**

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT:

Ms P Rowe, Co-opted Governor, Chair
Mr C Garvey, Foundation Governor, Vice Chair
Mrs B Meier, Foundation Governor
Mr S Ebele, Foundation Governor
Miss C Ezekwe, Foundation Governor
Mrs S Flannery, Principal
Mr G Thompson, Associate Principal / Principal Designate

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs E Lewis, Clerk to the Governors
Mr M Belfour, Foundation Governor (Vice Chair of Governors)

NOT PRESENT:

Ms S Jones, Co-opted Governor

The meeting was opened by Ms Rowe at 5.30pm and was quorate throughout. All participants could see and hear each other on screen.

1. **Opening Prayer:** Offered by Mrs Flannery
2. **Apologies:** Received from Fr G O'Shaughnessy; Mrs K Taylor and Mr R Vianello were accepted.
3. **Declarations of Interests:** there were none
4. **Minutes of previous meeting, 4th February 2020:** Included in the papers and previously circulated 16th March 2020 were duly approved as a true and accurate record for signing in due course.
 - 4.1. **Matters Arising:** there were none not covered by the agenda
 - 4.2. **Actions to be reviewed:** there were none
5. **Quality Improvement and Outcomes:** Mrs Flannery / Mr Thompson
 - 5.1. **Autumn Term results meeting for full Governing Body:** It had been previously agreed that the results achieved in summer 2020 would be scrutinised by the full Governing Body as a single-item-agenda meeting early in the autumn term – 30th September 2020 had been drafted into the proposed schedule. The committee reviewed this in the light of significantly changed circumstances and cancelled public examinations due to the Covid-19 lockdown closure of the college. Mr Thompson explained that, extraordinarily, the 2020 outcomes would not be the results of exams the students had taken but would be based on centre assessed grades. He described the process by which the grades would be compiled by the college for submission and standardisation by the exam boards against historic performance data. Mrs Flannery advised there would be no normal appeal process against the grades awarded this year but it was anticipated that some re-sits could be offered in the autumn term. The terms and arrangements were not yet known or confirmed. It was unanimously agreed, taking into account the uncertainties about exam results and the potential of extended enrolment and induction of students that the additional meeting should be suspended for 2020 – 2021 and taken out of the schedule. Analysis of the 2020 outcomes would be on the agenda for the meeting of this committee on 13th October 2020 and all governors would be encouraged to attend that meeting. Mr Ebele said that the idea should be preserved for inclusion in 2021 – 2022.

For proposal to Governance Committee and approval by Governing Body on 1st July 2020.

5.2. **College QUIP:** Mr Thompson introduced the Quality Improvement Plan (Abridged) 2019 – 2020 which had been updated, and included in the papers, for the meeting. The plan was RAG rated for Risk / Priority and for Progress and laid out in the key priority areas of the Education Inspection Framework. Mr Thompson gave an in-depth review adding background to the updates in the abridged report:

5.2.1. **Quality of Education:** All progress had been rated amber (“in progress”).

Mr Thompson reviewed preparations for responding to changes in the curriculum noting that the results of the first unit exams in Applied Science had been strong but the opportunity to resit in the summer had been cancelled. Two regional T level projects had been useful – the IT project had been completed but science was interrupted by the covid-19 pandemic closure. Mrs Flannery announced that the college expression of interest in teaching on the third wave of T levels (Business and Administration) had been accepted and planning would begin.

Mr Thompson described how the digital transformation strategy was supporting remote learning during the lockdown and progress with implementing the strategy was noted. Teaching staff involved in the first phase of the pilot were being surveyed and results being gathered indicated a positive response.

Mr Thompson announced that since lockdown a new Digital Innovation website had been launched <https://digital.sfx.ac.uk/> which facilitated remote learning bringing together resources, guidance and ongoing support and also featured photos of staff working from home. He announced that the college had applied for funding from EdTech to support other schools to develop digital strategies and said he was hopeful that SFX would be amongst the twenty successful schools to be awarded funding in this round.

Mr Thompson commented on the increased pace, during lockdown, of upskilling teaching staff to use *Google Suite* and the expansion of *Google Classrooms* to most courses to enable remote learning. Lockdown had provided some leverage to encouraging reluctant staff to use the college favoured group of *GSuite* apps.

Work towards becoming an Apple Distinguished provider was noted to include a successful first regional event in February which gained positive feedback from the six other colleges in attendance. Six SFX media students had been appointed to create a cinematic record of the digital journey.

Mr Thompson described the “Deep Dive” in the English Department by colleagues from St Dominic’s Sixth Form College in January to support improvement in value added (L3VA) outcomes. He said the experience had been positive and useful, summarised in a findings report (included in the papers). He commented on the opportunity it had provided to test how well the students could articulate their learning experience, which inspectors would check. The English department would respond to the outcomes suggested for consideration and other departments would be encouraged to experience a similar deep dive review.

Four courses where greater improvement in L3VA scores was required were reviewed. Predictions based on CAG (centre assessed grades) indicated one course would achieve significant improvement. Moderation of CAGs would commence the next day.

Improving high grade achievement on A Level courses had been a focus and, whilst it was acknowledged that the target of 30% A* - B grades was challenging, improvement (based on CAGs) could be seen in five courses.

Following CAGs 100% pass rate was predicted on all A Level courses where improvement in A* to E grades had been a target. In addition to assessing a pass grade the college team had also been required to rank confidence in the CAG from 1 to 7 (1 being greatest confidence). Mr Thompson said he thought some E grades with a confidence rating of 7

might be pushed down to a U.

Mr Garvey commented that schools and colleges would tend towards marking students work generously and that the exam boards would need to take that into consideration. Mr Thompson explained that the exam boards had advised that the awards would closely follow prior achievement and would take analyse a range of statistical evidence including historic performance data and past value added achievement over a number of years (which had been on an upward trajectory for SFX). General Applied outcomes were expected to be based on last year which would be good for SFX. Mrs Flannery said that the sector had been cautioned not to expect outcomes to show improvement on last year.

Ms Rowe asked about progression of 2nd year students to universities and whether the admissions process would be much more relaxed. Mrs Flannery said there was activity which indicated that universities were recruiting and welcoming to prospective students with restrictions lifted on enrolment. She said delivery could be potentially online. Mr Thompson said it could be that many SFX students may be under pressure to stay close to home.

Progress made towards improvement on some courses falling below 75% target for retention and achievement was discussed noting that the current rates were set now.

An update to addressing the achievement gaps where they occur (particularly male students and students of mixed heritage) which had identified that figures were skewed by the students' interpretation of "mixed race" as this is self-declared was discussed. The background to the requirement to show improvement was explained.

5.2.2. Behaviour and Attitudes: All progress had been rated amber ("in progress").

Attendance was noted to have improved by 3% compared with the end of the previous academic year. There was also a significantly lower number of students with very poor (lower than 60%) attendance. Mr Thompson concluded that the post of Attendance Officer had had an impact this year and may become a full time position.

Mr Thompson reported that work related learning placements for Health & Social Care students in the T Level capacity delivery cohort had been cancelled due to lockdown and he anticipated that the placements which Ms Rowe had helped to facilitate with Sir Robert McAlpine for REAch and Engineering students would be unlikely to go ahead. Planning for work related opportunities for all A level students was in progress. Mr Thompson explained the funding of capacity delivery and whilst there would be no claw back, funding for next year was subject to being able to show that expansion was possible. Ninety placements were being sought.

Ms Rowe commented that the reverberations of the lockdown could impact on firms for years to come which would create a significant challenge.

5.2.3. Personal Development: Progress against three of the four aspects was rated amber ("in progress"). There had been no progress as yet to extend the work of the student-led equality, diversity and inclusion group (rated red "yet to start").

Mr Thompson described how support for improving / maintaining the physical and mental health of students was continuing remotely through personal tutors and the ALAM¹ project. Mrs Flannery commended the ALS² tutor who was running a daily virtual PE class.

Progress towards meeting Gatsby benchmarks in providing appropriate careers advice to all students was noted including the purchase of a licence for UNIFROG and the creation of a new post to support the process.

5.2.4. Leadership and Management: All progress had been rated amber ("in progress")

Mr Thompson reported that applications from prospective students continued to increase and, at the time of the report, were 545 higher than the same time the previous

¹ Active Lives Active Minds

² Additional Learning Support

year and at the highest since 2016 / 17. The conversion rate from applications to enrolments was a third. Two new BTEC certificate courses, Applied Psychology and Applied Law would be introduced into the offer and there would be an increased emphasis on enrichment. Some subject-specific transitional work had been creatively designed for prospective students who would usually be sitting GCSE exams to keep their brains active and prepare them for joining SFX.

Measures to improve the skills of some middle managers were noted.

Developments in the collection of learner voice data had been interrupted by the virus lockdown but students were being surveyed about their experiences with remote learning, seeking their views on the different styles and what they think works best.

Mr Thompson concluded the review by confirming that work continued to address those areas where improvement was needed.

In thanking Mr Thompson for his in-depth review Ms Rowe said that she felt quite positive that the digital strategy already in place was now being implemented to great advantage to support teaching and learning and was sure that would support the marketing of the college to prospective students to boost recruitment. Mr Thompson agreed that it had given staff confidence to use the technology. All teachers had been given an iPad to support Teaching & Learning and they were now all using them remotely.

5.3. Impact of Covid-19 college closure: All governors had been sent an update from Mrs Flannery on 13th May. She introduced a position paper, as at 17th May 2020, prepared for the committee, which had been included in the papers for the meeting.

Context: She outlined the context and implementation of the decision to suspend timetabled lessons on 20th March and close the college from Monday 23rd March onwards.

Student Engagement: Mrs Flannery reported on student engagement in remote learning with statistics and described how this and student welfare were being supported.

Operational Arrangement during Lockdown: Mrs Flannery noted that the college had been opening two days a week for high needs students to attend and would extend to three days. She advised which staff had been working on site during the closure and explained how staff recruitment interviews had been held remotely and had resulted in appointments being made.

Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs): Mrs Flannery advised that following moderation over the next few days she was confident that sign-off would be largely completed by the end of May and then uploaded to the awarding boards.

Moving to Increase in Operation and Provision: Mrs Flannery explained why she had advised staff that the earliest she would consider a return to teaching would be week beginning 15th June following government guidelines with a special timetable and a robust assessment of all safety and sanitary measures to be put in place. She said there may be a cautious re-opening of the nursery in week beginning 8th June. She explained the process of consultation with the professional associations and contacting staff to invite them to return - if the government announcement on 28th May confirmed that the five tests had been passed and schools could re-open on 1st June.

Saint Francis Xavier College's Proposed Response: Mrs Flannery outlined specific contextual concerns and considerations to be worked through before the college could re-open.

Provisional Plans and Risk Assessments: Mrs Flannery listed the key policy frameworks which would inform planning and the clear protocol she said would be needed in the event of those returning to College becoming symptomatic.

Ms Rowe invited questions. Mr Garvey offered the full support of the governors on this committee to Mrs Flannery as she exercised her judgement on when it would be safe to return.

Mrs Meier expressed her relief that a prudent approach was being taken and said she had been considering the liability issue. She asked if supplies of hand sanitiser; thermometers etc were available and adequate. Mrs Flannery said the college had supplies of these and

procurement of face masks to be provided to those travelling on the underground and other public transport was being investigated. Mr Garvey said,, without interest, that he knew of a potential supplier and would provide details.

Mrs Meier clarified who would agree the college plans and Mrs Flannery confirmed that the responsibility lay with the Principal and the incorporated governing body. If government advice was not followed there could be funding implications. She advised that advice on online safeguarding had been taken from Wandsworth. Mrs Flannery confirmed that public liability insurance was in place. She said assessment of liability would always test whether decisions, actions, planning and preparations were reasonable and appropriate measures had been taken to protect people.

- 5.4. **London Sixth Form Partnership (LSFP):** Mr Thompson reported the meetings which had continued during lockdown including safeguarding and curriculum. Mrs Lewis had met remotely with the Director of the partnership to discuss future governance group topics. It was likely that link governor schemes would be included again. SFX governing Body had been represented at each of the meetings since its inception. One of the two DfE funded training modules scheduled for 24th March had taken place but regrettably the student governor follow-up event on 20th March had been cancelled.
- Mr Ebele enquired whether there had been any feedback from the partnership regarding experiences with the lockdown / virus crisis. Mr Thompson confirmed that CAGs had been a key discussion and his impression was that SFX was further on in the process than other partner colleges due to the availability of recent mock exam results. He said no college in the partnership was planning to open on 1st June and none had concrete plans in place.
- Mr Ebele asked whether risk assessments had also been discussed in the partnership. Mr Thompson said the Estates Manager and Senior Business Manager had taken part in a partnership meeting at which a representative from another London sixth form college, Sir George Monoux, had taken a lead on risk assessments. Mr Thompson said the LSFP colleges were working collaboratively and willingly sharing ideas.
6. **Digital learning Innovation Strategy:** The committee affirmed it had been updated through review of the QIP in item 5.
7. **Governance:**
- 7.1. **Link governors – follow up on visits, reports and planning:** Ms Rowe said that the process had paused before the second window could be activated and the scheme would pick up and be developed further once lockdown recovery was eased and the college was operational again.
- 7.2. **Governance Self-Assessment process & initial thoughts for focus morning (Sat 10th Oct 2020):** The date was noted and a view to process would be taken in the autumn. Mr Thompson confirmed that the college would follow the usual SAR process as closely as possible incorporating self-evaluation of the effectiveness of governance. Mrs Flannery commented that a major brief would be catching up and reflection and preparation for exams in 2021.
- 7.3. **Governor training & development opportunities:** Mrs Lewis reported governor engagement in recent online training, development and information sessions. Ms Rowe and Mrs Lewis had registered to attend the next SFCA Webinar on 3rd June and Mr Belfour would be joining the AoC Finance and Solvency webinar rescheduled to 22nd May.
8. **Effectiveness of committee:**
- 8.1. **Discussion & completion of effectiveness evaluation questionnaire:** An online questionnaire would be circulated to committee members after the meeting. Feedback would be incorporated into the overall governance self-assessment of 2019 - 2020.
9. **Risk Management:** The summer term Risk Register and Action plan recently accepted by the Audit Committee had been included in the papers for the meeting. The committee was satisfied that the risks and emerging risks covered in the reports and discussions of this meeting were covered in the register.
10. **Any Other Business:**

- 10.1. Mr Garvey explored the process and challenges of interviewing for staff, including senior staff, by remote video conferencing. Ms Rowe, Mrs Flannery and Mr Thompson had all recently participated in remote interviews and reflected on the largely positive experience. Mrs Flannery expressed thanks to Ms Rowe for her participation and input.
- 10.2. Mr Garvey commented that what he had heard at this meeting had relieved some of his concerns about the generation of students experiencing the lockdown and impact on their education. He felt encouraged and cheered up by what the college has been doing and is going to be doing. Mr Thompson spoke about an e-certificate designed incorporating a rainbow by the Heads of Faculty that would be sent out to those students who had engaged well.

11. **Dates of meetings for 2020 – 2021:** The following dates were agreed:

Tuesday 13th October 2020

Tuesday 2nd February 2021

Wednesday 19th May 2021

Mr Ebele requested that calendar meeting invitations should continue. Ms Rowe suggested there would be merit in a future discussion on a blended / hybrid approach to meetings.

12. **Farewell to Claire Ezekwe:** Thanks and farewells were extended to Miss Ezekwe as this was her final attendance at a meeting before her term of office as foundation governor ended on 23rd June 2020.

The meeting closed at 7.12pm

Membership:

Mrs B Meier

Mrs K Taylor

Mr C Garvey, Vice Chair

Mrs S Flannery

Fr G O'Shaughnessy

Miss C Ezekwe

Mr G Thompson

Mr R Vianello

Ms P Rowe, Chair

Ms S Jones

Mr S Ebele