**Tuesday 14th June 2022, 5.30pm**

**Remote via 0nline Meeting platform**

# MINUTES

**PRESENT:**

Ms P Rowe, Co-opted Governor, Chair of Committee

Mrs B Meier, Foundation Governor, Vice-Chair of Committee

Mr G Thompson, Principal

Ms K Foan, Associate Principal Curriculum & Quality

Mr N Sheta, Foundation Governor, Chair of Governors (from 6.12pm)

Mr K Thomas, Foundation Governor

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs E Lewis, Clerk to the Governors

Mr M Belfourd, Vice-Chair of Governors

**The meeting was opened by Ms Rowe at 5.41pm. It was quorate throughout, and all participants could see and / or hear one another.**

1. **Opening Prayer:** Offered by Mr Thompson
2. **Apologies:** Mr D Navarro; Ms K Bainbridge; Mr N Sheta for anticipated late arrival. Mr D Freeman and Mr R Vianello were not present.
3. **Declarations of Interests:** There werenone.
4. **Minutes of previous meeting, 1st February 2022:** Previously circulated on 22nd February 2022and included in the papers for the meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record to be signed in due course.
	1. **Matters Arising** for this meeting not covered by items on the agenda
		1. **Governor with oversight for Safeguarding:** It was noted with appreciation that Ms Bainbridge had taken on the role.
		2. **Governors’ aspirational award:** This had been agreed in principle to be funded by voluntary contributions from governors. Mrs Meier summarised progress with introducing the award including the recommendation of Student Governors about the prize. She suggested that the award be announced in September 2022 to all students (new and returning) with an explanation of what the criteria would be to win it. The criteria were still to be finalised and, Ms Foan suggested, could be fairly wide, based on the intent to recognise excellence in achievement or progress despite hardship or adversity. It was agreed that nominations would be made to the summer term meeting of this committee. Whether the scheme was sustainable as an annual award would be reviewed.
		**ACTIONS:
		Criteria to be defined: Mrs Meier, Mr Thompson, Ms Foan
		Process of gathering contributions from governors: Mrs Lewis, Mrs Meier
		Timeline towards presentation at VESPA awards, summer 2023: Mrs Meier**
5. **Quality of Provision (improvement and outcomes):**
	1. **Progress against College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):** Ms Foan introduced the QIP which had been included in the papers for the meeting. She explained that the Progress and Impact had been updated and was RAG rated to highlight what had been completed (green), in progress (amber) or yet to be started or improved (red). Ms Foan noted one red milestone in Key Priority Area 1, Quality of Education, to increase the high grade percentage of outcomes in November Maths GCSEs had not been achieved and, therefore, remained as the only red item for Progress and Impact. She advised the committee that a strategy had been put in place to improve achievement in the summer session.

	Governors had been invited to submit questions in advance of the meeting and Ms Foan responded to those:
	Key Priority Area 1: Quality of Education
	Ms Bainbridge had asked a three-part question about Recovery Education (page 4 of QIP) - was it having an impact? How easy was it to recruit the 21 support tutors of the required standard? Are the disadvantaged pupils who are accessing it benefitting?
	Ms Foan explained that 726 disadvantaged students had been accessing the support provided by former students tutoring alongside teachers providing Easter revision sessions and end of day RAP[[1]](#footnote-1) education workshops. She said that the college had received funding for around 1000 students identified as eligible to be supported from the tuition fund. She had looked into who the 274 students were who hadn’t been counted in the number who had accessed the support and that had shown that they were students who were doing well anyway with high predicted grades. Whilst they might have attended the workshops they could not be identified as being funded through the tuition fund.
	Ms Foan explained how the tutors had been recruited via existing links and advertising by HR. She concluded that analysis of the results will show how effective the support had been but commented that teachers offering additional support were the experts and knew what the students needed.

Ms Bainbridge had asked how the HoDs half-termly level 3 VA reports and targets were going and if there was any measure of improvement so far. Ms Foan referred to pages 4 and 5 of the QIP and discussed the progress and predictions against the monitoring targets and aspirational value-added measures in ALPS by subject. Her overall conclusion was that departments were on track, but the outcomes would show the real position.
Mrs Meier asked whether value added was also a measure of additionality (eg trips, enrichment) delivered by the college. Mr Thompson clarified that in this context it was data showing progress made by a student over a period of time from the point of entry to the college.

Ms Bainbridge had asked what the learning code was and how has it had an impact?
Ms Foan described how the learning code was a pastoral support system used to ensure that students, about whom there was a concern, were doing what they should be doing and included parental involvement. She explained some of the changes introduced this year, the impact of which had been a slowing down of moving through the stages to enable more chance to improve. Ms Foan said that students had responded to that supportive and stayed in lessons thereby improving their achievement.

[Mr Sheta joined the meeting]

Ms Bainbridge had asked what the level 3 grade predictions were based on tracking data? (do they fall between 2019 and 2021 levels?)
Ms Foan reported that using tracking and comparison data the prediction was 92.4% achievement which was higher that 82.2% in 2019.

Key Priority Area 2, Behaviour and attitudes
Ms Rowe had submitted a comment that June attendance slipped just below 90% target to 89%. Ms Foan described the determination to get students who are struggling to attend college and encourage them to complete their courses.

Progress report accepted.

* 1. **Impact of Covid-19:** Mr Thompson referred to the report on Recovery Education in the QIP. He said there were currently a few cases of Covid, including two staff, but was thankful that the level and impact was far lower now. Three students had missed exams and application would be made for special consideration. Mr Thompson explained that the exam boards had arranged the timetable so that subject papers were spread out to enable a student who was ill for one paper to recover in time for the next. Ms Rowe said that there was a residual impact of covid infection which lasted longer in some people than in others and needed to be managed.
	2. **Learner Voice**: Ms Foan introduced the “Learner Voice Feedback – Leavers 2022” report which had been included in the papers for the meeting. This was feedback gathered online from leavers or those finishing a qualification, summarised by course type and overall.

	Ms Foan responded to the question submitted by Ms Rowe that views of the Maths GCSE students seemed to be on the low side. Ms Bainbridge had also asked “about 25% are not finding GCSE maths learning helps them progress etc. Why? What is being done about that?”
	Ms Foan and Mr Thompson put this into context of the mindset of students being required to resit the GCSEs and not by choice – often feeling they were on a trail of failure and held back from the courses they really wanted to study. The teaching of level 2 maths would be revamped next year, and alternative funded qualifications were being investigated – stretching those keen to achieve grade 4 whilst supporting those who found it more difficult. Motivation, enjoyment of the lessons and celebration of success would be a focus.

	Ms Rowe had commented that 70% of BTEC students strongly agreed / agreed that “iPad has a positive impact on learning in and outside of the classroom” was lower than she would have thought. Ms Foan agreed and said that the data was not convincing and would be interrogated further through focus groups. This particular question would be re-phrased in the next survey, but others would remain the same to provide a year on year comparison.

	Mr Navarro had submitted his thoughts: My congratulations to the staff for what look like very strong results - I note the 97%[[2]](#footnote-2) on the last question "I am treated fairly in regard to my gender, ethnicity, religion, disability and sexuality" which, given some of the negative press around Catholic schools recently, is excellent to see. This inclusivity and welcoming approach is precisely what we should be showcasing and using to attract students to Catholic education.”
	Mr Thompson and Ms Foan confirmed emphatically to Mrs Meier that the aspiration was 100% feeling they were treated fairly and said that pleasing progress was being made as the response was lower last year with some concerns being raised.
	3. **Staff Voice:** Mr Thompson introduced the *Staff Pulse Survey* report which had been included in the papers for the meeting. Mr Thompson observed that the results were pleasing overall showing the college to be above the national average for schools and colleges in all but three aspects (confidence, students’ wellbeing and reward & recognition) which were just below. He outlined the reasons behind these scores and commented that it was particularly disappointing that reward and recognition had attracted the lowest score in addition to being below average. He explained that deeper analysis showed that this was around salary levels, less in the pay packet because of higher NI contributions and the escalating cost of living, which would be the same situation in schools.

	Mr Navarro has submitted a two part question (a) re the lower than average grade for "rewards and recognition": cost of living is an issue for all, reference the upcoming NEU March on 18 June for better pay but do you anticipate this will add more pressure for next year's pay award and when do we normally start this process (consulting)?  (b) regarding workload (another area where we have lower than average score), are we more at risk of staff leaving / retiring than before?
	Mr Thompson explained that staff salaries for the college were part of NJC[[3]](#footnote-3) negotiations undertaken by the SFCA[[4]](#footnote-4) had just opened. Robust discussions were expected with the unions putting forward a strong case for significant pay increases next year with inflation running high and the cost of living rising. Mr Thompson said that an allowance of 5% had been made in the budget for 2022 – 2023 to cover the award.
	Mr Thompson said that although the response to the question in the survey about workload had one of the lowest scores it was higher than the national average which he felt reflected the encouragement and support being given to staff to achieve a better work / life balance.

	Mr Thompson announced that staff would be completing the annual YORK summative survey in the next few weeks which benchmarks against other colleges.
	4. **The College Collective:** Ms Foan briefed the committee on this new, pilot initiative. Three college Directors had trained as Associate Partners and each were providing and receiving support from another provider, Barnsley College, Coleg Cambria and Education training Collective. She said this had been a useful experience which should develop further in the longer term. Other senior staff were taking part in a collaborative mentoring process in areas that the college had identified as needing some support including leaner support.
	Mr Thompson endorsed the pilot as a positive experience and said that the college would subscribe to move it forward. Kate Webb was in partnership with the AoC to deliver it and Anna Griffiths from SFX had attended the Board meeting held the previous day to articulate her participation. It was heartily agreed that being one of the original colleges in the collective and having fulfilled each element of it was very good for the college profile as well as bringing benefit in the development of learning and skills.
	5. **Ofsted inspections updates / plans**: Ms Foan said that as all colleges would be inspected in next three years, college preparation was focused on a working assumption that it would be inspected next year. Planning and training had begun with Heads of Department and would develop and continue so that all teachers, students and governors understood the framework and would be able to respond articulately and confidently to questions asked by inspectors and be fluent about how it benefits the students. Mr Navarro had asked about preparation / training of governors for inspection, and it was confirmed that governors would have training at the focus morning on 8th October 2022. Any external / Diocesan training opportunities would be circulated by the Clerk.
	Mr Thompson outlined a new, additional requirement in the framework, arising from the Skills Act, 2022, for inspections to consider what colleges are doing to fill the large deficit in skills in the country. He explained the impact and said why this may be more relevant to General Further Education (GFE) Colleges, given that most SFX students progress to Higher Education and beyond that would use their skills outside the college local area. Nevertheless, as two inspectors in the inspection team would be assigned solely to looking at how the skills gap in local needs was being addressed through the curriculum, it was an element of specific preparation so that aspects such as the level of engagement with local employers; partnership in a local LSIP[[5]](#footnote-5) etc was shown to be relevant. It was noted that the SFCA is lobbying for a proportionate approach during inspections of Sixth Form Colleges and Mr Thompson commented that this aspect of inspection did not apply to Academies. He explained there remained some legalities to be laid down before Catholic Sixth Form Colleges could convert to become an Academy. He and Ms Foan would be attending a conference with Ofsted shortly and intended to raise these concerns with the presenters.

	Mr Thomas asked about progress toward the introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh scheme at the college and suggested it could support this element of the Ofsted inspection framework. Mr Thompson said that the intention to appoint a member of staff to take responsibility for this would be taken forward once existing vacancies were filled. Mrs Meier added her support to this initiative.

	Mrs Meier asked how much weight would be given to this element of the inspection in the overall judgement grade. Ms Foan explained that whilst it was not a limiting grade it would go some way to influence the judgment. Mrs Meier commented that if this was an ongoing focus it should it play into our longer-term strategy for curriculum planning. Ms Foan emphasised that the college is doing many good, relevant things but it would be important to be clear about what was being done and why and describe convincingly how they linked to each aspect of the inspection framework.
	Mr Thompson explained the variety of different skills gaps in London and gave digital as an example where the college could hold up its digital transformation strategy as supporting that.
	6. **Catholic Schools’ inspections update:** Mr Thompson advised that inspection under the new framework would be after Easter 2023. The SLT and Assistant Principals had received some helpful training on the Catholic Life and Mission element from Patrick Harrison, Diocesan Adviser for Religious Education.
	Mr Thompson announced that Mr Graham[[6]](#footnote-6) had been successful in his application to train as a Catholic Schools’ Inspector following a very rigorous process. He reported that the Chaplaincy team was making a noticeable difference to the Catholic life of the college which he would elaborate in his summer term report to Governors. Governors would also receive preparatory training on Catholic Schools’ inspections at the focus morning in October.
	Mr Navarro had put Mrs Lewis in touch with a Priest who could become available for appointment as a foundation governor which might be helpful in the Catholic Schools’ inspection of the college.
1. **Curriculum Development:** Ms Foan outlined changes to the curriculum for the coming new academic year including the launch of the T Level business course in administration and management. She explained a slight change to units offered in the level 2 Business BTEC which, if successful could be added to the rest of the suite of level 2 provision. Photography A Level would go into its second year.
Mr Thompson noted that if the LSIP bid for funding was successful it would support the introduction of a level 2 course in biodiversity as part of the sustainability agenda.
Mr Thompson said that the first list of BTECs to be defunded had been published and contained both good news and curious anomalies which he would report more fully to the governing body meeting on 5th July. He highlighted that level 2 health and social care had been spared which was good news for the college. Defunding remained on the agenda and a further list was expected in spring 2023. He reminded the committee that there had been active lobbying against the de-funding (including the #protectstudentchoice petition) and said that the MP for Battersea had opened up the debate in Parliament and invited some SFX students to create videos to articulate and explain the impact of scrapping funded BTECs to be shown before the debate in parliament.
2. **Governance:**
	1. **Link governors – follow up on visits, reports and planning:**
	Ms Rowe reported her intention to visit the Business department which would include meeting and chatting with students who had taken part in the forum in February.
	Mr Thomas impressed the committee with his account of an immersive project workshop he had led for Geography students looking at regeneration. The geography teacher, Ms Jane Adams, had written an exam paper based on it. He emphasised that it was a two-way delivery and way of developing the important skills of supporting each other through discussion, research, questioning, understanding and reflection. Mr Thompson commented that it had been good to see Mr Thomas’ reflection of the workshop on LinkedIn. It was agreed to have been a positive experience for all which would be spotlighted at the GB meeting on 5th July.
	Mrs Meier confirmed that a meeting was being planned with the new Chaplaincy team before the end of June.
	2. **Governance Self-Assessment process; External Review & initial thoughts for focus morning (Sat 8th Oct 2022).** It was confirmed that the programme for focus morning would include an invitation to the Chaplain and training on Ofsted and Catholic Schools inspections. Mrs Meier stressed that it would be reassuring for governors to gain an understanding of what was expected of governors involved in the process and meetings with inspectors. Mr Thompson said that sample questions would be shared and there could be a role play session around those to share and discuss them in small groups.
	The Governance Committee had discussed the requirement as a condition of funding to have an external review of governance in the coming academic year and a watching brief was being held on what organisations such as AoC and SFCA might offer as a service to support the process including appropriate reviewers. There had been a session at the recent AoC London & SE Regional Governance Conference which Mrs Lewis, Mr Sheta and Mr Belfourd had logged onto and an SFCA webinar (no 7) on 17th May 2022 (recording available[[7]](#footnote-7))
	The self-evaluation of governance for 2021 – 2022 would encompass feedback from committees and consider the external review guidance and corporate code of governance as a framework.
3. **Effectiveness of committee:** Mrs Lewis would circulate anonline questionnaire / survey after the meeting for completion and return
4. **Risk Management:** The current risk register had been included in the papers for the meeting and governors were asked if they or discussion at this meeting had identified any new risks or modifications to the existing risks on the register.

Mr Navarro had asked in relation to risk 5 (Catholic Ethos) “referencing the secondary schools (e.g. Notre Dame, St Mary's) which have now submitted applications to join SELCAT[[8]](#footnote-8) does that create a new risk (or more drive to join a MAT )for SFX?
Mr Thompson advised there had been a discussion at the recent Governance Committee meeting about academisation. He acknowledged a bit of a concern that the only true partner school of the college (Notre Dame) was planning to join SELCAT and outlined why he did not expect it to have a significant impact on recruitment from there. He said he understood that Coloma Convent, which has a sixth form, was also intending to join SELCAT but located in South Croydon that would be quite a distance for Notre Dame girls to travel. Mr Thompson reported, and Mr Sheta confirmed, that Academisation would remain on the agenda of the Governance Committee but that currently there was no drive to leap into a decision particularly as this was still not available due to further legislation being necessary.
Mr Thompson announced that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) was currently looking at reclassifying colleges including designated SFCs back into the public sector. His attendance at meetings and webinars indicated that this was likely to happen and, he explained that it could bring some financial benefits such as VAT rebates. Although nothing had been confirmed as yet it was acknowledged that this could influence a decision on whether to academise or not.
Mr Belfourd commented that Coloma already admit external pupils into their sixth form he didn’t think joining a MAT would change that.

With regard to risk 7 (Estates and Health & Safety Compliance), Mr Navarro had offered to recommend a third-party agency. Mr Thompson would follow this up with Mr Navarro.
Mr Navarro had also advised that “RCAOS schools were asked to have a detailed building condition survey (paid for by the Diocese) which is added to a central database, which schools pay for, which the Diocese can see and use to monitor compliance as well as to prioritise requests for funding”. Mr Thompson explained that this was the *Statlog* scheme, but the college was not within the scope of eligibility.

Ms Bainbridge had submitted a question to ask about safeguarding [risk 8] what progress there had been with introducing CPOMs [page 32]. Mr Thompson advised that this was an online system for logging safeguarding concerns and confirmed that progress had been to resolve integration challenges so that CPOMs could be launched in September 2022 prior to which staff would be trained.

Ms Bainbridge had asked whether “emotional health ambassadors” [risk 8, page 34] was an SFX term for Mental Health champions and whether they had received mental health champion training. Mr Thompson confirmed that this was the case and that they had been trained.
*Ms Rowe had submitted a comment that governors, as owners of it, need heightened awareness of the risk register. She had asked whether current awareness was sufficient and where there should be a risk link governor. She wondered whether this should be at the top of agendas for all committees/BoG meetings as it tends to be at the bottom normally. She asked whether it could be included in the Governor Focus morning in the autumn.
Note in response: The Risk Register is updated for review as an agenda item for each meeting of the audit committee and is used to inform the annual plan of internal audit assignments commissioned by the audit committee. The opportunity for each of the other committees to feed back to the audit committee is facilitated by this question at the end of each meeting. This year the Risk Register has been streamlined and the number of key risks reduced to ten. It is included in the papers for each meeting of the GB.*
5. **Any Other Business:**Ms Rowe commented that the high calibre and content of the questions submitted prior to the meeting had prompted good discussion and thanked contributors for submitting them. Mrs Meier asked how filling the marketing role was progressing. Mr Thompson announced that an interim appointment until the end of September had been made and Mr Andrew Mitchell, who had experience and credibility in the FE sector, had joined the college the previous week.
6. **Dates of meetings for 2022 – 2023:** The following dates were agreed:Tuesday 18th October 2022Tuesday 31st January 2023
Tuesday 13th June 2023

Ms Rowe reminded the committee that the election of Chair and Vice Chair would be due in October and advised that she would not stand for re-election. She intended to remain as a governor and member of the committee but urged members to think about who could be nominated as Chair.
Mr Sheta commended Ms Rowe on her chairing and thanked her for her commitment to the development of the committee.

**The meeting closed at 7.43pm**

**SIGNED**

**DATED**

1. Revision and Progress [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Of A Level leavers (overall 95%) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. National Joint Council [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Sixth Form Colleges Association [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Local Skills Improvement Plan [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Mr Ciaran Graham, Associate Principal, Ethos [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.sixthformcolleges.org/1657/sfca-governance-webinars-202122> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. South East London Catholic Education Trust [↑](#footnote-ref-8)