

MEETING OF THE FULL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Tuesday 17th March 2020, 6pm

MINUTES – PART ONE

PRESENT:

Mr C Garvey, Foundation Governor, Chair	Mrs S Flannery, Principal
Mr M Belfour, Foundation Governor, Vice Chair	Ms P Rowe, Co-opted Governor
Mrs B Meier, Foundation Governor via audio link	Mrs E Preece, Staff Governor (non-teaching) from item 2
Mrs K Taylor, Foundation Governor via audio link	Ms R Clark, Staff Governor (teaching) from item 2
Mr P Barber, Foundation Governor	
Mr J Opara, Foundation Governor	
Miss C Ezekwe, Foundation Governor, 6.55pm	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr G Thompson, Associate Principal, Curriculum (from item 2 onwards)
Mr C Graham, Associate Principal, Ethos (from item 2 onwards)
Mrs E Lewis, Clerk to the Governors

The meeting was opened at 6.05pm by Mr Garvey and was quorate throughout. The audio link with governors present remotely was maintained throughout the meeting.

- 1. THE SELECTION PANEL RECOMMENDATION ON THE APPOINTMENT & REMUNERATION OF A NEW PRINCIPAL:** Mr Garvey recapped the process that had been followed since Mrs Flannery announced her decision to step down as reported to the Governing Body on 5th December 2019. He reported that two applications had been received and reviewed by the appointed selection panel¹ - one candidate, Mr Graham Thompson, was shortlisted for interview. Mr Garvey described the selection day held the previous day, Monday 16th March, during which Mr Thompson had met with three panels of governors and staff for rigorous discussion in the key areas of Finance & Data; Catholic Ethos and Curriculum & Standards. Mr Patrick Harrison, Diocesan Adviser for Religious Education, had been a member of the Catholic Ethos panel. The panel sessions were followed by a presentation to the selection panel and a formal interview.
Mr Garvey announced that the unanimous decision of the selection panel, and Mr Harrison, was to recommend the appointment of Mr Thompson to the post of Principal from the start of the academic year 2020 – 2021 and he gave details of the remuneration and benefits that had been proposed in consultation with Mr Belfour. Mr Thompson had confirmed to the panel that he would accept the appointment if it was offered to him.
Mr Belfour advised that suitable references had been duly sought and provided, including from the Parish Priest.
Governors asked questions of Mr Garvey and he and other panel members confirmed that the process had been thorough in all aspects and that Mr Thompson's performance had been strong.
The recommendation of the selection panel, supported by Mr Harrison for the Diocese, to appoint Mr Graham Thompson to the post of Principal to take effect from the start of the academic year, 2020 – 2021, on the agreed remuneration and benefit package as advised, was

¹ Colin Garvey, Paul Barber, Nader Sheta (subsequently replaced by Michael Belfour due to illness), Bernadette Meier and Paddy Rowe with Patrick Harrison representing the Diocese. Mrs Lewis, Clerk to the Governors, had been in attendance throughout.

unanimously accepted by all governors present including those via remote audio link, and was duly approved.

Mr Garvey commented that co-ordinating the process had been challenging due to illness amongst the panel members and he thanked Mrs Houston (who had also been on sick leave for the selection day) and Mrs Lewis for their organisation and support.

Staff governors joined the meeting at 6.24pm along with Mr Thompson and Mr Graham.

2. **OPENING PRAYER:** offered by Mrs Flannery
3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies received from Fr G O'Shaughnessy; Mr S Ebele, Mr N Sheta, Ms S Jones and Mr R Vianello were accepted. Miss Ezekwe had sent apologies for her anticipated late arrival.
4. **MEMBERSHIP OF GOVERNING BODY:**
 - 4.1. Mrs Eve Preece, elected Staff Governor (non-teaching), was duly appointed to a four year term of office to end on 16th March 2024
 - 4.2. It was noted that Miss Claire Ezekwe's term of office as Foundation Governor would end on 23rd June 2020. Mr Garvey announced that the term of office of three other foundation governors², himself included, would end in mid-September 2020. Mr Garvey said that he would seek re-appointment and stand again for election as chair of governors but his intention would be to step down at the end of the autumn term 2020. This, he explained, would give time for the governing body to identify a successor as chair of governors and for the new Principal to settle into the role.
5. **TO RECEIVE THE OUTCOME OF THE PRINCIPAL APPOINTMENT:** Mr Garvey formally announced the appointment of Mr Thompson as approved in item 1. Mr Thompson accepted his appointment and was congratulated. Mrs Flannery would inform staff.
6. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**
 - 6.1. **5th December 2019:** Minutes previously circulated 27th February 2020 and included in the papers for this meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record and duly signed by Mr Garvey.
 - 6.2. **Review of Confidential Minutes:** The minutes of the confidential part two of 4th December 2012 remain **confidential** as they contain reference to two specific individuals. **Agreed.**
7. **MATTERS ARISING (if not covered by agenda items):** there were none.
8. **REVIEW OF ACTIONS CARRIED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**
 - 8.1. Binding of Principal's report. Governors were satisfied with the revised format of the printed Principal's report which had been produced without binding or plastic covers.
9. **INFORMATION / DATA COMMUNICATED SINCE DECEMBER 2019 MEETING:** Circulation of the following was acknowledged:
 - Monthly Management Accounts November 2019 – January 2020 inclusive
 - College Performance & SAR 2019 – uploaded to ShareFile 3rd March 2020
 - Governor training / conference briefings from Diocese, AoC / ETF, SFCA
 - 27th Feb 2020 Draft minutes, full Board held 5th December 2019
 - 19th Feb 2020 Written Resolution for approval and sign-off of IFMC
 - Recruitment of Principal campaign updates
 - 10th December 2019 Follow up to meeting on 5th December (action points and attachments)
10. **CHAIR'S REPORT /ACTION:** there was none.
11. **STUDENT GOVERNORS' REPORT:** The Student Governors were not present and no report had been provided. The London Sixth Form Partnership (LSFP) follow up training event for Student Governors planned for 20th March had been postponed due to the developing Covid-19 restrictions.
12. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT TO GOVERNORS:** Mrs Flannery introduced her report number 82 which had been distributed in hard copy. Governors had been invited to submit questions in advance of the

² Mr C Garvey, Mr P Barber, Mr J Opara

meeting. The report was cross referenced to the Strategic Plan 2019 – 22 throughout. The introduction confirmed the publication of DfE performance tables and related Ofsted Dashboard noting that there was little variance between college forecast and the ratified published outcomes. It referenced a primary development of the Digital Innovations' Project run in partnership with *Apple*; targeting of A level value added; student recruitment and managing the financial challenges. It noted that several members of staff had indicated an interest in severance or resignation at the end of the summer term. Some of the posts would not be replaced or would be scaled down. Mrs Flannery said that the requirement for compulsory redundancies in the strategy to achieve staffing cuts may therefore be minimised.

- 12.1. DfE Performance Tables [published January 2020]:** Mrs Flannery reviewed the tables in the report highlighting and comparing the key outcomes. She spoke about the average A level grade which had improved from C- to C which was against the trend of other comparators where averages had remained the same. Mrs Flannery said that the college aimed to build up numbers in the A Level cohort in 2020 - 2021. Value added was noted to be -0.06
- 12.1.1. Disadvantaged Students (Advanced Level)**
- 12.1.2. Applied General Courses**
- 12.1.3. Summary Position – General Applied (8 students) and GCSE Re-sits**
- 12.2. Destinations:** The college position in the top 5% of outcomes with respect to positive destinations according to the ratified 2017 data was noted. Performance was better than National and Wandsworth. Most former SFX students choose to progress to Higher Education either full or part time.
- 12.3. Sixth Form College Comparators – London:** The table showed that the college had achieved third place amongst inner and some outer London SFCs for A Level points per entry and value-added taken together. Mrs Flannery also explained a table of comparison with a sample half of the Catholic Sixth Form Colleges in and outside London.
- 12.4. The Ofsted Dashboard [Appendix A]:** Mrs Flannery's report had appended the DfE "16 – 19 Study Programmes' Inspection Data Summary report" and summarised key extracts. Mrs Flannery reminded governors that the data did not include all SFX students because 60 – 65% were following non-reformed General Applied qualifications. She commented that Ofsted would be interested to know why the college had not moved more quickly to the reformed qualifications. Mrs Flannery mentioned the expression of maths and English progression from the Dashboard and commended Maths. Ms Clark discussed the impact on the outcomes from the discontinuation of the "use of maths" qualification explaining that the GCSE of functional skills (pass or fail) was harder to achieve. Achievement was reported in the final year when over 18s are not included.
- 12.5. Progress against Key Objectives: QUIP 2019/20:** Mrs Flannery had included an extract from the Quality Improvement Plan illustrating progress in the key priority area of Quality of Education. She discussed the expression of interest which had been submitted to participate in the third wave of T levels in 2023 in business administration and human resources. Mrs Flannery spoke about the impact of the digital transformation strategy on teaching and learning. Governors discussed with Mr Thompson and Ms Clark how this would support the likely imminent extension of remote learning. Mrs Flannery described events which had furthered the college ambition, and strategic objective, to become an "Apple Distinguished" provider. Mrs Flannery's commentary included a review of A level and advanced courses which are a priority for improvement in value-added performance.
- 12.6. Financial Position:** Mrs Flannery explained the ongoing difficult financial position which had been exacerbated by several years of under-recruitment of students. She said there had been no further invitation from the ESFA to follow up the early intervention meeting that had taken place on 5th December 2019 and no response to monthly accounts that had been provided to the team. She reported that the indicative grant allocations included the pledged increase in base rate as well as additional sums for high value courses and for GCSE Maths and English

retakes. She reviewed progress with the planned reduction in staffing costs to be on track – a key element in delivery of the financial plan.

- 12.7. **Recruitment 2020/21:** Mrs Flannery confirmed the recruitment target for October 2020 (census date) was 1141 students. She reported that applications were 400 ahead of the same point last year which would convert to just over 100 enrolments and attributed this upturn to the impact of the digital marketing platforms. Mrs Flannery discussed developing ideas to counter the unfolding challenges of maintaining that position with the likely closure of the college due to the Covid-19 containment measures.
- 12.8. **Progress against Strategic Objectives:** Mrs Flannery reviewed progress against the in-year objectives drawn from the overarching 2019 – 2022 plan:
A “Apple Distinguished
P Punctuality and Attendance
P Prepare for move to Reformed Qualification Framework for General Applied
L Lens: close the VA Gap
E Exchange and Reflect
- 12.9. **Sixth Form College Campaigns and News:** Mrs Flannery had appended the SFCA³ briefing paper to MPs and reported continuous lobbying by the member association.
- 12.10. **Staffing Update:** Minor staff changes were noted from the summary provided in the appendices.
- 12.11. **Covid 19:** Mrs Flannery reviewed the emerging picture of government advice on imminent college closure and the cessation of face to face education. She reported that the number of students and staff in isolation was increasing and the nursery had closed because staff were self-isolating.
- 12.12. **College Events and the Life of the College [Appendix D]:** Mrs Flannery reviewed the events and trips summarised in her report including the roll out of “house” events for all students. Mr Graham reported that the college team had made a good start in the early rounds of the Young Enterprise competition which, disappointingly, had now been curtailed. The range of activity was captured in a photo gallery in the appendices.
- 12.13. **Catholic Life of the College:** Mrs Flannery had summarised activity in the RE Department and tutorial programme and commended the students efforts raising money for charity through House events. She reported the appointment of an experienced temporary Chaplain to cover long term absence of the postholder.

Mr Garvey invited questions. He reflected on the impact of the impending closure of schools and colleges on young people and their education. It was agreed to be a very difficult situation. Mr Thompson emphasised the importance of keeping the students focused and busy and Ms Clark said that constant checking in was going to be crucial. Mrs Flannery spoke about the uncertainty and potential decline in motivation for the students finishing their courses in the summer without exams to confirm their achievement. Ms Rowe said the psychological impact of coping with profound lifestyle changes was worrying.

Mr Garvey thanked Mrs Flannery for her report and asked her to pass on the thanks of the governors to all the staff for the work they had done and would be doing in the difficult times ahead.

13. ORAL REPORTS FROM GOVERNORS COMMITTEES:

- 13.1. **Audit committee (3rd March 2020):** With reference to the Aide Memoire included in the papers, Mrs Lewis reported that the Audit Committee meeting on 3rd March 2020 had been chaired by Mr Sheta and had:
- 13.1.1. Accepted the Internal Audit Service (IAS) report (included in the papers for the meeting) of the assignment visit in January 2020 which had reviewed the bursary fund

³ Sixth Form Colleges Association

and the learner numbers system. One medium recommendation had arisen in respect of the bursary fund and one low priority recommendation for the learner numbers system. Recommendations had been accepted by management and the committee was satisfied with the report on the tracking of actions.

- 13.1.2. Received the risk register and policy updated for the current term. Ranking was unchanged since the autumn term version. Student Recruitment remained in top position for risk with closely related Funding at number two. Controls for top ten risks had been reviewed at the meeting by report from Mrs Flannery and Mrs Plumb.
- 13.1.3. Reviewed and confirmed the design and effectiveness of the Board Assurance Framework (BAF). Mrs Lewis explained that this would be updated mapped to the May (summer term), version of the risk register.
- 13.1.4. Considered suggested areas to be scoped for the Internal Audit Strategy in 2020 – 2021 and agreed that the assignment should review Key Financial Controls and Safeguarding. Subject to further discussion at the summer term meeting, the strategy would be expected to require the same number of days (9½) as this year.
- 13.1.5. Undertaken a routine review of the committee’s terms of reference. On behalf of the committee, Mrs Lewis recommended the revised version, which had been included in the papers for the meeting with the updates highlighted, for approval. **The updated terms of reference for the audit committee were unanimously approved for immediate adoption. They would be routinely reviewed in the spring term, 2022.**
- 13.1.6. Noted updates in the revised (January 2020) Insolvency Regime Guidance from the DfE.
- 13.1.7. Reviewed the performance of Buzzacott, LLP, financial statements and regularity auditors with complete satisfaction. On behalf of the committee, Mrs Lewis recommended continued appointment of Buzzacott LLP for the external audit work on year end 31st July 2020. **Continued appointment unanimously approved.**
- 13.1.8. Reviewed the performance of RSM Risk Assurance LLP, providers of the Internal Audit Service (IAS) with complete satisfaction. On behalf of the committee, Mrs Lewis recommended continued appointment of RSM Risk Assurance LLP, to provide the IAS for the year 2020 – 2021. **Continued appointment unanimously approved.**
- 13.1.9. Considered the length of engagement with both auditors and requested a market test to establish value for money. A question to establish value for money would be added to the performance review questionnaire next time.

The Audit committee is scheduled to meet next on Tuesday 5th May 2020

- 13.2. **Finance and Resources Committee (22nd Jan and 25th Feb 2020):** Minutes of the meeting on 22nd January 2020 had been included in the papers for this meeting and were taken as read. Mr Belfour referred governors to the minutes and mentioned the two bids for funding which were awaiting decision and advised that annual revision of the Charging Policy had been deferred to the summer term meeting. With reference to the aide memoire included in the papers, Mr Belfour reported that the F&R committee had:
 - 13.2.1. Reviewed Funding / Financial Projections and re-forecasted financial plans at both meetings. The main agenda item of the meeting on 22nd January had been to scrutinise the commentary and template of financial plans, cashflow, budget and health for 2018 / 2019 to 2022 / 2023 to be filed as the IFMC (Integrated Financial Model for Colleges) by the 28th February 2020 deadline.
 - 13.2.2. The meeting on 25th February had acknowledged formally the written resolution of the full Governing Body approving filing of the completed IFMC for 2018 / 2019 to 2022 / 2023, as circulated by email on 19th February 2020 to all governors with a commentary and explanatory note from Mr Belfour. Responses returned from 12 governors provided a quorate, unanimous written resolution in favour of approval that the IFMC should be signed off by Mrs Flannery as Accounting Officer and filed with the ESFA to meet the 28th

February 2020 deadline. Mr Belfourd outlined the rigorous process of compilation of the IFMC including his personal attention to reviewing the six versions of the template model with Mrs Searle. He emphasised that the decision of the Governing Body on 5th December 2019 to use written resolution by email, in conjunction with the additional F&RC meeting on 22nd January had proved to be the most pragmatic method of approval. Mr Belfourd confirmed that the IFMC had been successfully filed to meet the 28th February deadline. It was noted that the grant funding allocations had been received after submission of the IFMC. Mrs Searle would re-forecast again in the summer term based on the latest projections of student recruitment and confirmed grant funding allocation.

Mr Belfourd said that a follow-up early intervention meeting with the ESFA was expected in March although no details had been advised and no comment had been made on the monthly accounts which had been submitted.

- 13.2.3. Considered a confidential item of any other business which would be discussed in part two of this meeting.

The F&R Committee is scheduled to meet next on Tuesday 23rd June 2020

- 13.3. **Curriculum Standards & Quality Committee (4th Feb 2020):** Ms Rowe introduced the draft minutes of the meeting held on 4th February which had been added to the papers for the meeting and tabled. Ms Rowe had chaired the meeting and reported that the committee had:
- 13.3.1. Received a presentation from the Head of Science giving a good overview of the work of the department.
- 13.3.2. Agreed an update to the Student Complaints Policy which has since been published on the website. Revisions were minor and mainly to reflect changes in personnel. **Noted.**
- 13.3.3. Scrutinised performance and progress data which the Principal's report also references.
- 13.3.4. Monitored RAG rated progress in detail against the Quality Improvement Plan aligned with the key priority areas of the inspection (EIF) framework.
- 13.3.5. Reviewed the "Arrangements for obtaining the views of staff and students on the preservation and development of the educational character and mission of the institution and the oversight of its activities". Mrs Flannery summarised the changes incorporated in the revised statement. On behalf of the committee, Ms Rowe proposed the revised statement for approval and publication on the website as required under Article 5 (2) (b). **Unanimously approved. Next routine review due March 2022.**
- 13.3.6. Overseen the phasing in of the governor link scheme which Ms Rowe spoke about and confirmed her enthusiasm for its development. She said that the agreed protocol which had been adopted included a report / feedback template which the CSQ committee would review. Her report on her link visit to the Business department had been shared with the committee. Other areas which had been assigned for a link visit in the first phase were: RE (Mr Garvey), Health & Social Care (Ms Jones). The second window would likely be held in abeyance due to the uncertainty about college closure in response to the Covid-19 health crisis but would include Politics (Mr Vianello), Maths (Mr Ebele) and English (Mrs Meier).
- 13.3.7. Received updates on the work of the London Sixth Form Partnership which Ms Rowe said was going from strength to strength in the work it was covering. Governance events were being offered including two ETF modules from the Governance Development Programme on 24th March, although one module had been cancelled due to the Covid-19 situation, the other "Culture, People & Organisational Development" would be offered as an evening webinar). **ACTION: Mrs Lewis to send information round.**
Mr Belfourd, Ms Clark, Mr Thompson and Mrs Lewis had attended the LSFP Governor Liaison Group meeting on 5th February at St Charles SFC at which Mr Rieks Drijver had given a presentation focused for governors on the Ofsted EIF.

The CSQ Committee is scheduled to meet next on 20th May 2020.

- 13.4. **Appeal Committee:** had not met since the previous meeting of the full Governing Body

- 13.5. **Remuneration Committee:** had not met since the previous meeting of the full Governing Body. Mr Opara asked whether the Remuneration Committee had convened in the process of recruitment and appointment of a new Principal. The three members of the Remuneration Committee had been members of the selection panel. Mr Sheta, Chair, had been ill for the interview when his place was covered by Mr Belfour. This was agreed to have been appropriate.
- 13.6. **Governance Committee:** had not met since the previous meeting of the full Governing Body
14. **GOVERNANCE:**
- 14.1. **Committees:**
- 14.1.1. Ms Clark had joined the F&R Committee and attended the meeting on 25th February 2020. Her membership was approved.
- 14.2. **Schedule of meetings for 2020 – 21:** A suggested first draft provisional schedule was tabled for consideration including the extra full Governing Body meetings that would be required to approve submission of the IFMC in January and the additional results meeting in September.
ACTION: Each committee to consider the dates. All governors to review draft schedule and feedback to Mrs Lewis.
Mr Belfour made the point that with the impending restrictions on gatherings a contingency plan and strategy for remote meetings was needed for the summer term.
ACTION: Mrs Lewis
- 14.3. **Governor Engagement: Feedback from meetings / conferences / LSFP:** Induction and financial induction has been provided to both new staff governors. All other engagement had been covered in the report from the CSQ.
15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** Mr Garvey proposed a social evening at the end of the summer term to be held in the college at which governors could thank and say farewell to Mrs Flannery and welcome Mr Thompson as Principal.
ACTION: Mrs Lewis to consult governors for a suitable date.
16. Governors were satisfied that the information received and all decisions taken at this meeting had been centred on improving the experience and levels of achievement of students at St Francis Xavier College in a safe environment that embraces the catholic ethos, prevent duty and promotes equality, diversity & inclusion.

Part one of the agenda ended at this point. Staff Governors withdrew from the meeting.

The meeting closed after the confidential part two at 8.03pm

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

Date of next meeting of the full Board of Governors: Wednesday 1st July 2020