



**St Brendan's Catholic Sixth Form College
Board of Governors**

OPEN – MINUTES

In Person and Virtual Meeting Held On: Wednesday 26 March 2025

D-Building Room D2/D3 at 16:00– 19:10 hrs

Governors Present: Svetlana Bajic-Raymond [Chair of Governors], Maragret Abazie-Humphrey [R], Uzo Agyare-Kumi [R], Roger Bridgeman, Antonia Corrigan, James Creamer, Marian Curran [Principal], Sr Margaret Harlock MBE, Michelle Hazelwood, Risha Hussain, Doug Jennings, Melaine Jonik, Mark O'Sullivan, Aaron Skinner, Peter Turner [R], Iain Turri, [17]

Apologies: Gareth Beynon, Paul Ryan [2]

Absent without Apology: None [0]

Attending: Leanne Sowersby [Governance Professional], Shane Blackshaw [Executive Director, Finance]

Quorum Present: 16/18 [includes required minimum of 4 Foundation Governors]

Note – [R] – remote attendance in MS Office Teams

Circulation: All Governors, Governance Professional, Principalship, & [College Website after signature if declared OPEN].

ITEM	ISSUES RAISED IN DISCUSSION	AGREED ACTION
1. Welcome	1.1 Welcome: Svetlana Bajic-Raymond [Chair of Governors] opened the meeting with prayer. Reasons for apologies were given and were accepted. UA was welcomed to her first meeting.	
2. Declarations of Interest	2.1 Declaration 2023/2024 Access/Equality/Safeguarding Declaration: There were no additional declarations.	
3. Minutes Previous Meetings	3.1 Previous Minutes: 11 December 2024 The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting, to be signed by the Chair of Governors electronically. The open Minutes to be made available on the College website by the Governance Professional. Minutes of the Governor Day 14 February to be shared with the minutes of this meeting	LS
4. Matters Arising & Actions	4.1 Actions Report: see actions report for details Q – Did some students not attend on strike days? Yes, some students felt it was not worthwhile to come in on strike days. The college have been trying to look for consideration for students impacted, but this has not been successful.	
5. Governors' Committee Reports	Noted that all papers except Strategy are accessible on Teams by all governors. 5.1 Audit Committee: RB updated. The main item noted was the need for updated terms of reference. Also noted the amount of paperwork / reports and having a standard format for reports with summaries. Discussion around reporting and the best ways to streamline this. 5.2 Ethos Safeguarding Welfare Committee: AC updated. The Chaplaincy report was shared and AC talked through some of the key items. Also noted that UCAS was encouraging, and the attendance figures. 5.3 Resources Premises Human Resources Committee: JC updated. There is nothing not covered on the agenda. Noted that the next meeting requested a breakdown of issues broken down by support staff. 5.4 Finance Committee: IT updated. Terms of reference were discussed. The main focus was on the management accounts and Becky Edwards from the DfE was very happy with these. There was also an action to make the rick register more accessible to governors, which is reflected in tonight's report. 5.5 Strategy, Search & Remuneration Committee: The majority of this is on the agenda.	

	<p>Discussed the possibility of having more detailed briefings around finance. This is the training that is planned for the end of May/early June.</p> <p>5.6 Teaching Curriculum Quality Committee: SBR updated. The QIP was discussed, as well as three extended subject reviews. CPD was also discussed.</p>	
6. Diocesan Education Strategy	<p>6.1 Aquinas Partnership Report / 6.2 Diocesan Education Strategy Report / MAT update: MC gave an overview of the partnership and the primaries that are not in MATs. All Sixth Form colleges have been invited to a meeting in London on 30 April and we are continuing to find a time to meet with the Diocese. MC has written to the diocese explaining how busy and challenging this term has been.</p> <p>MC has also been in touch with the DfE and ESFA.</p> <p>Governors are urged to consider this in the context of Post 16 education in the city. We are a very successful college serving communities of Bristol, and surrounding counties. All Catholic Sixth Forms are concerned that current Diocesan strategies may not, through no fault of their own, understand the uniqueness of sixth form colleges and how these may impact on MAT growth and development.</p> <p>Q – What role do the CES play? They essentially work for the Bishops. It is unclear how well the different situation of a sixth form college is understood. It could be that this is being driven by all Bishops. The overall previous MAT strategy was for schools to be in MATs, this was not a strategy that was designed for Colleges, but can see the benefit to schools, especially primary schools within the diocese.</p> <p>Q – Are we able to articulate the impact of things like the potential top-slice on our offer? This is one of the things to consider. Most MATS do have a top slice and of course colleges are funded a lower rate than both primary and secondary schools. The college has a need for lot of IT investment which currently stands at over 1 Million pounds, if there is a top slice we wondered if the MAT would then be able to invest this in the college?</p> <p>Discussion around providing a report around the issues, showing the full context and the problems. This could allow us to be constructive around the process.</p>	
7. Principal's Report	<p>7.1 Student Enrolment 2024/2025: Current numbers - applications are at 2597, total offers are at 1980, and acceptances at 1718. MC noted that funded retention has been improving year on year, and this affects the funding formula. MC also discussed the Access to Level 3 retention and the reasons for this being lower than we would like.</p> <p>Attendance is slightly down from last year.</p> <p>7.2 Staffing / Recruitment: MC talked through the key staffing updates. Noted the teacher of engineering post.</p>	

<p>8. College Business</p>	<p>8.1 College Self-Assessment Report: MC gave an update. The most recent report was submitted in January and we assessed ourselves as good in all areas, with evidence to support a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs in the region. This reflects a strong and consistent performance across the college, and acknowledges where elements of provision are beginning to show characteristics of outstanding practice.</p> <p>The Ofsted framework is changing next year will not have an overall grade. It will instead report on four key areas: quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management. We are aligning our self-assessment process to reflect this shift. Our 2025 SAR cycle will begin in June, with faculty and course self-evaluations forming the foundation of our triangulated approach. These will be revisited and updated in light of student outcomes in August, to ensure the judgements are robust and evidence-based.</p> <p>We are mindful of the growing emphasis within the new framework on inclusion and addressing disadvantage. As such, we will ensure our 2025 self-evaluation includes specific analysis of outcomes and experiences for our disadvantaged students, including those from EAL, SEND, and lower socioeconomic backgrounds.</p> <p>Emerging Priorities and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced Focus on Assessment: Both formative and summative assessment practices will form a central thread in our next Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), in response to internal review findings and national focus areas. • Preparation for the New Framework: We will review our current evidence base against the updated inspection handbook once published, particularly around inclusion and the ‘meeting skills needs’ judgement. • Inclusion Review: As part of the SAR, we will conduct a review of how well the college identifies and addresses disadvantage in the curriculum, pastoral systems, and wider student experience. • Curriculum Impact Evaluation: Planned curriculum and assessment review meetings will be used to evaluate how well the curriculum secures progress and readiness for next steps for all student groups. <p>This approach positions us well to maintain and build upon our current strengths, while meeting the expectations of the revised inspection regime.</p> <p>8.2 College Quality Improvement Plan: MC talked through the key points. Noted that amber is in progress, green completed. MC talked through the individual items on the plan.</p> <p>Green items -</p> <p>1. Embedding Formative Assessment Strategies - Impact: All teaching staff have received training on embedding effective formative assessment strategies. Initial evidence from lesson visits and student feedback (January INSET and follow-up walkthroughs) shows increased use of retrieval practice and more responsive lesson planning.</p>	
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2. Enhanced Peer Observation and Professional Dialogue - Impact: Teacher-led peer observations completed in Term 2 have led to increased engagement in professional development and a measurable improvement in student feedback on classroom experience.

3. Tracking Home Learning and Intervention - Impact: Home-learning trackers have been implemented across departments. Work samples and student voice indicate improvements in completion rates and the quality of work submitted, supporting long-term retention.

Section 2: In Progress — Trajectory Towards Impact (Amber)

1. Curriculum Reform and Qualification Transition - Current status: Alternative qualifications have been scoped to replace defunded BTECs. Awaiting final government confirmation to proceed with applied general offer. Work on potential T Level readiness continues. Expected impact: A future-proofed curriculum model aligned to progression routes and higher education expectations, particularly in Health, Business, and Law.

2. Targeted Progress Interventions (Gender, EAL, Disadvantaged) - Current status: Course-level reviews and student focus groups are planned to identify barriers to male achievement and EAL progression. Expected impact: A refined strategy, co-produced with staff and learners, will lead to a reduction in historic achievement gaps in key subjects.

3. Attendance Interventions and SMART Targeting - Current status: The new attendance intervention programme is being trialled with the 60–70% cohort, alongside SMART targets shared with progress tutors. Expected impact: Increased attendance and a stronger link between academic and pastoral interventions, especially for vulnerable learner

Next Steps

- Finalise curriculum decisions in light of national qualifications reform.
- Evaluate the impact of new assessment strategies via lesson visits in June.
- Implement tailored interventions following EAL/disadvantaged focus groups.
- Monitor the trial of SMART targets and progress tutor collaboration.
- Strengthen employer links into curriculum planning for vocational pathways.

PT joined the meeting

Q – Have the students noticed any differences in teaching and learning? Have noticed more feedback in terms of questions etc and that it seems more streamlined. Also, more exam question practice and targeted feedback on this, which helped to better prepare for the exams. Discussed how much new material is still to be taught.

Q – Is the engagement with employers as good in terms of making future plans? Yes, there are a number of students moving on to firms we have made links with.

	<p>Q - Is there any particular area you are concerned about with the QIP for the coming year? Formative assessment and curriculum. The consistency of assessment across curriculum areas, and pastorally.</p> <p>8.3 Curriculum Review: MC talked through the key points of the report. MC noted that we offer some double courses, and it is unclear how these will be affected. There is a campaign to ensure that multiple qualification courses can continue. There is information that has not yet been released, which is making it difficult to plan.</p> <p>Q – Will learning less breadth in more depth be a challenge for teachers? Possibly. There is also the issue around recruiting teachers. There is also an argument around students doing fewer subjects, as well whether assessments should be examined.</p>	
<p>9. College/ Financial Matters</p>	<p>9.1 Estate Development Report: SB talked through the key items of the report.</p> <p>Q – On the proposed capital projects – will this list be prioritised at some stage? Yes, SBk felt it was important for governors to have sight of the full list, for transparency. Asterisked figures show the differences if the college receives funding, or where there is a lease option.</p> <p>It is important that decisions about which projects will proceed are taken with a view of all of the projects required. SBk noted that there is still a need for a strategy, but we do not want the creation of a strategy to delay the decision-making for the 2025-26 round of funding bids etc.</p> <p>9.2 College Security / Martyn’s Law: SBk updated on Martyn’s Law. There is a recommendation around the need for improved security in larger venues. SBk noted that we have put in a bid for security gates and fencing, but in the meantime have employed some security personnel. This does have a cost, but we have seen a massive reduction in intruders on site and duty manager call outs. We may still need a presence on the gate, even with fencing, but it is likely to be cheaper.</p> <p>9.3 Current College Cash Flow Update and Management Accounts: SBk talked through the report, which is an extract of the new format of the accounts, based on the model created by the FE Commissioner team. Key headlines from February, forecast for year end is above budget. We expect the financial health rating to be good. There are some overspends, that are</p> <p>Cash forecast will be largely on budget.</p> <p>The report now includes a sensitivity analysis, showing best- and worst-case scenarios.</p> <p>As of today, we know how much in-year funding we will receive. This, and the other additional funding we expect to receive will ensure that the increased NI costs, and the pay award approved by governors will be affordable.</p> <p>This increases the cash days in hand from 21 days to 25.</p> <p>Q – Do we run any risks with honouring the pay rise? There will be no further funding for higher pay rises, we have used current college funds to pay for this pay rise until we receive the grant from the ESFA. There is concern from the school sector around</p>	

	<p>proposed pay increases. We can now include all of the pay award costs and funding in the accounts.</p> <p>9.4 Outline Budget Planning: SBk talked through the key points in the reports. The 2025-2026 funding statement has been received and there has been an increase in the funding formula. The pay award is assumed to be around 3%. SBk talked through the process for assessing the capital programme. Discussion around the format of the report. It would be useful to have a list of the acronyms/abbreviations. <i>MAH left the meeting</i> SBk can use the management accounts template for the draft budget figures.</p> <p>9.5 Teaching Staff and Staff Pay Award Update: MC updated. We have paid 3.5% backed to September 2024, and a further 2% from 1 April 2025, so this is a total of 5.5%. Support staff will receive 4.2 – 4.6% in the same way. The total cost for the college is £175k. £126k will be received in funding, strike savings will also be used to fund this, savings from the bus contract, as well as the in-year funding. This is at the top level of college affordability. MC has been investigating whether there will be in-year funding in future years. The budget will not include any in-year funding.</p> <p>Q – Does the funding include the NI? The pay award grant will pay for the inflationary pay increase. The NI grant will cover some of the NI increase – we do not yet know the amount of that.</p> <p>Discussion around the need to remain aware of the risks, especially around pay rises. There is also a government spending review to come, and the fact that the FE budget is not protected. A decrease in funding for the college could also significantly impact a MAT. When the three-year spending review is complete, we will have better knowledge about the future.</p>	
<p>10. Board of Governors' Operations</p>	<p>10.1 Governors' Briefing next Meeting: MAT/Academisation</p> <p>10.2 Governance Review Action Plan Update: SBR, MC and LS to meet to update the report. Noted that the skills report has been completed, but there are still some governors who need to complete this.</p> <p>10.3 Governor Vacancies / Recruitment Update: UA welcomed as a new Foundation Governor. There is one Foundation vacancy. SrMH updated on a potential candidate who eventually withdrew.</p> <p>10.4 Governor Day Outcomes: The minutes will be shared with the minutes from this meeting.</p> <p>10.5 Governor Skills Report: The report has been shared. SBR and LS will look at the training required from this.</p> <p>It was noted that there is still a need for a Vice Chair, and it is important to fill this role. Governors asked to reflect on this. Discussion around this. JC is prepared to take on the Vice Chair role for the remainder of his term. Proposed SBR, seconded MC, approved</p>	

	<p>unanimously.</p> <p>LS to check whether we can have two Vice Chairs (2022-23 minutes)</p> <p>10.6 Governor Induction Training: This is ongoing.</p> <p>10.7 Governor Business Diary 2025-2026: LS will produce a draft calendar for 2025-26</p> <p>10.8 Correspondence: SBR shared a letter from the NEU, advising the intention to ballot teacher members for industrial action, over failure to address concerns around teacher workload and security. MC updated on communications around this. She has met with unions last week, to advise our response to the issues. There is a concern around why they did not come to MC to discuss the issues, rather than going straight to ballot. There has now been a dialogue between MC and the NEU reps, but not with the teachers directly. Discussion around the concerns that have been raised. These included safety and security, workload (desire to work from home, not doing student interviews etc).</p> <p>Q – Was there any indication of issues in the staff survey? There was a mixed response to the staff survey and governors advised that the responses be broken down by area of staff.</p> <p>Governors Expressed concern for MC’s wellbeing in this situation.</p>	
<p>11. Policy Reviews</p>	<p>11.1 Complaint Resolution Policy and Procedure: MC talked through the key points of the policy. This has been approved by the Resources committee. Proposed SrMH, seconded JC, Policy approved</p> <p><i>DJ left the meeting</i></p>	
<p>12. Risk Management</p>	<p>12.1 Review of Board of Governors’ Risk Register Items: SBk talked through the key points of the new format. There are now two documents. The full risk register for the college leadership to track and manage risks, and a risk dashboard to allow governors to see changes and an overview, to allow them to see that risks are being managed.</p> <p>Five review points are proposed across the year and that all committee meetings see the same version of the report following each review point.</p> <p>Q – Is there a summary count? count? Yes, this is part of the dashboard</p> <p>Q – Is there separation of things that are happening, vs risks? This is usually done in terms of the level of risk.</p> <p>Q – Who inputs into the register every year? This is the leadership team. Review points are September, January, March, May, June</p> <p>Q – What is the difference between inherent and residual? The inherent risk is the risk associated with any identified risk item. The residual risk is after the controls have been put in place.</p> <p>Discussion around whether some of the risks should be deleted. Some of these become ongoing issues, rather than risks per se.</p>	

