



ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
Governors' Teaching Curriculum Quality Committee

MINUTES OF MEETING

Wednesday 5 November 2025

Virtual Microsoft Office Teams Meeting (16:00–18:15 hrs)

GOVERNORS/MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark O'Sullivan [Chair], Uzo Agyare-Kumi, Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, Gareth Beynon, Marian Curran [Principal], Margaret Harlock MBE, Melaine Jonik, Paul Ryan, [8]

ATTENDING: David Beesley [Vice Principal Curriculum Quality Innovation], Vicki Haigh [Head of Teaching, Learning & Assessment], Leanne Sowersby [Governance Professional].

APOLOGIES: None [0]

ABSENT Without Apology: Cassie Hogg [1]

CIRCULATION: All Governors, College website

QUORUM REQUIRED: 3/6 (Voting Committee members)

Committee Briefing:

'Implications of the Post 16 Education and Skills White Paper (Oct 2025) for curriculum'

by David Beesley [Vice Principal Curriculum Quality Progression]

DBe gave a presentation for which a briefing paper had been circulated with other papers. DBe noted that there has been an announcement today for a curriculum and assessment review for Key Stages four and five across the board. This will mean some reflection around the qualifications that the college offered, what will be funded and so on.

There is a lack of clear guidance so far. The headlines are that the government would like to introduce an additional qualification, a V-level, which is a vocational qualification that would sit alongside A-Levels and T-Levels (technical qualifications we do not offer at the college).

DBe talked through the implications for BTECs and for the college. V-Levels will be single qualifications, and any double qualifications will move into the T-Level suite. There will be a need to consider how we phase out the BTECs, and promote what we will be doing, as well as mapping the curriculum and mapping the local skills need.

Q – Do we know what the difference between T-Levels and V-Levels is, aside from the size of the content – are there any published decisions around qualitative differences?

DBe noted that we believe that V-levels will take more of a work-experience slant. A T-Level is a very large, 3 block qualification, so V-levels are hoped to sit alongside A-Levels as smaller qualifications.

Q – When do we finish delivering the last of the BTech? We have a stagger of lots of different qualifications. They need to end by the first teaching of 2027, but there are some which can finish earlier. We made the decision to start delivering Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs), and the literature at the moment is suggesting that these will need to convert to V-Levels. MC noted that there is a suggestion that V-Levels could be broader than T-Levels, less closely linked to professional standards, to allow a wider field of progression.

Governors also expressed concern for staff, who have just been asked to prepare for T-Levels and AAQs, and now need to prepare for V-Levels. MC talked through some of the key considerations for the move from AAQs to V-Levels such as: key subject areas like sport, public services, law and criminology; implications for level 2 courses; and whether AAQs can be tweaked to become V-Levels.

Q – What is driving this need for new qualifications and what is the evidence that BTech was not working? It appears that the government were confused about the range of qualifications that are offered, and have inherited the previous governments' advanced British Standard. It looks like they want to reduce the complexity and have only three qualifications (V, T and A-Levels) but have created more confusion. There is also a skills shortage, and they are looking to close that gap to support the economy.

Q – What is meant by the proposed shift to outcome-based funding, and what will be the impact of this? There is a line in the White Paper about increasing post -16 funding in real terms, so we will not remain static, but they have been very careful about what will be invested in. MC talked through some examples of how skills-based investment has worked in the past. There are uncertainties around how things like Skills England will be funded, as well as adult education.

There was a discussion around the proposal to remove the EBACC heading for Key Stage 4, and how these changes might feed through into FE. This is going to affect current Year 8. There is discussion with unions around whether this will allow broad and balanced curricula to continue. There was a feeling that it could reduce the number of GCSE options being offered. There is a need to include subjects to contribute to the progress 8 figures. There may be more children with an opportunity to do triple science, as schools will no longer be able to restrict this at GCSE.

| ITEM | ISSUES RAISED IN DISCUSSION | ACTION |
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| 1. Welcome | <p>1.1 Welcome: MOS opened with the Prayer of St Brendan.</p> <p>An emergency incident in the College the previous day had turned out to be a false alarm, but Governors congratulated MC and the team on their handling of the response.</p> | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | <p>2.1 Declarations of Interest: The members of the Committee confirmed there had been no change.</p> | |
| 3. Minutes Previous Meeting | <p>3.1 Open Minutes Agreement – 14 May 2025: The Minutes were adopted as a correct and true record and passed for electronic signature and for publication on the website.</p> <p>MOS requested some changes to make the minutes more easily accessible to parents and others reading them on the website.</p> <p>3.2 Actions: No actions outstanding</p> | |
| 4. Committee Business | <p>4.1 Committee Terms of Reference: The terms of reference were approved.</p> | |
| 5. Quality of Education | <p>5.1 Student Progress: A data report was shared, showing an overview of student progress in individual subjects and cumulatively. DBe talked through the key points. It was noted that Year 13 would be sitting mock exams soon, which would provide more data.</p> <p>Q – Was there a discrepancy in the numbers of entries for the progress grades and key assessments – should they not be the same for the same cohort? They should be the same; this could be because students were absent for the assessment, or towards the end of a course, because students have left a course.</p> <p>DBE noted that the data from the mock exams are usually more secure and it was common for the College to see some fluctuations in the teacher assessed grades. DBe also talked through the interventions and other work that teachers would do with students to increase grades.</p> <p>Governors would like to see the mock exam results compared to last years mocks, as well as a comparison to the actual grades that were achieved.</p> <p>Governors noted that it would also be helpful to have a written narrative to highlight the key points.</p> <p>5.2 Quality of Teaching & Learning: DBe talked through the key points. It was noted that lessons were not currently being specifically graded at this point. It was observed that the new Year 12s had settled into the new year very well in the new setting. The team were also looking at the challenge required for the stretch to the higher grades, and this is becoming evident. The College would now start a round of paired up peer observations, and formal lesson observations.</p> | <p>DBe DBe</p> |

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| | <p>Governors noted that the committee has previously looked at value added, and it would be helpful to look at this again It would also be helpful to have some information on communication skills, as well as around literacy.</p> <p>MC noted that lesson observations would be important moving forward, but that student voice would be particularly important in assessing the quality improvement in areas identified in the plan.</p> <p>Q – What are the parameters for peer observations, do staff have a set of criteria to assess against? The Curriculum Cluster Leaders (CCLs) are running this within their teams and sharing best practice. The new Ofsted framework would be shared with staff at a forthcoming Inset day, where the College would make sure that staff were aware, particularly of the inclusion agenda, and this, in turn, would inform the peer observations. This was also linked to quality improvement plans at a subject level, and to the targets for the subject, and individual performance development.</p> <p>Q – Do students provide any information to evaluating teachers, and to teachers around this? The College had a programme of “student voice”, where students were asked more broadly about their learning and engagement. Individual teachers would ask students about their own delivery and what was working for them. Students would tend not to attend if they were unhappy with teaching and were often reluctant to give direct feedback. Teachers would sometimes hold focus groups with students where they could give feedback about specific classes/teachers. There was also an end of year survey.</p> | |
| <p>6. Quality Improvement</p> | <p>6.1 Steve Tucker visit notes: DBe advised that Steve Tucker was the College improvement partner and talked through his involvement with the College as an external support. Some notes from the visits have now been shared with the committee and DBe talked through the key points. It was noted that the visits have been positive and the conversations with the leads in the relevant areas were constructive and helpful.</p> <p>It was noted that the review for the Arts had some recommendations, and this had been well-received.</p> <p>Governors noted that the reports demonstrated how well ST knew the College, that his ability to identify exactly where improvements could be made was very useful and that they would like their thanks passed on to him.</p> <p>6.2 <u>New Ofsted Framework</u> – Implications for the committee: DBe talked through the key points. It was noted that the College had been reassured that the initial starting point for every inspection would be the expected standard. The College would need to be very aware that the inclusion agenda was covered in everything that it did.</p> <p>Governors asked that colleagues looked at an aspect of the new framework in more detail, and that the mock exam analysis for the next meeting should be broken down by the various vulnerable groups, including how students with multiple indicators are monitored.</p> <p>SBR took the chair</p> <p>MC noted that this was an overview of the new Ofsted framework. There would also be a need to look at the Ofsted action plan, and the SAR when this was put into the new framework.</p> <p>MC also noted that there was a misinterpretation happening with the new framework of seeing inclusion as only SEND.</p> | |

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| | <p>Teaching and curriculum would still be significant elements, in respect of how they were adapted for all students. Ofsted inspectors might still choose a random subject and look at what inclusion was like in that subject. The College would be trialling the approach this year, to look at some of the areas. It would no longer be required to give the SAR to Ofsted, but they would provide a self-evaluation form to be completed and returned to them, which would start with the question, ‘how would you rate your college?’.</p> <p>It would be useful to have a summary of the, “student voice”, in respect of the quality of teaching and learning. If there was then any sampling of those students who had various barriers, this would be useful for the committee, as an illustration of how the framework was being applied, and how students were being supported.</p> <p><i>MOS left the meeting</i></p> <p>MC talked through some examples of the ways in which disadvantaged students have been identified, and how these students were now being tracked. The next steps would be to look at some of the big five areas, to have the, “student voice” of those students identified and to ask specific questions around the support they were getting and their classroom experience. The expectation would be that most vulnerable students would be at the expected standard.</p> <p>It was also noted that student destinations were also important, and this would be useful information for the next TCQ.</p> <p><i>MOS rejoined the meeting, MJ left the meeting.</i></p> <p>There was a further discussion around the SAR. The College still needed to submit the current one for this year, as last year we were evaluated on the old framework. Moving forward the QIP relates more to the new framework. Once we have rated this, we need to evaluate where we sit in the new framework. Then there will be an evaluation at the end of the year, but there will be no obligation to submit a SAR.</p> | |
| <p>7. Principal’s Report</p> | <p>7.1 Student Recruitment 2025/2026, Attendance Report 2024/2025: MC gave an update. The College currently had 2262 enrolled. Overall retention was holding, and funded retention was also reasonably high.</p> <p>MC also noted the improvement in attendance, and thanked VH, TSc and the teaching staff for their work on this.</p> <p>There is an improvement in Access to Level 3, but more work was needed unpick attendance there. Overall attendance was up by 0.5% which was excellent.</p> <p><i>DBe left the meeting</i></p> <p>There was a discussion around the ability to compare the current data for applications to the end of October with previous years’ data. MC expressed hope that this number would have increased by the next meeting.</p> <p>7.2 Recruitment of Staff Update: MC gave an update on current recruitment activity.</p> <p>7.3 Local Skills Priorities: Governors noted that the paper was very informative. MC noted that the remit of this committee included making sure that the curriculum was aligned with the local skills needs, and highlighted the elements of the paper</p> | |

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| | <p>that related to this. There was a need to be mindful of addressing young people not in education, employment or training, lifting children out of poverty and supporting the strategic areas that had been identified. The College needed to be clear about how it was working with the local authorities, how it was working with local businesses etc.</p> <p>Q – Is there scope within this for opportunities for businesses to provide simulated experiences within the college? MC noted that there was a real drive to identify how employers were involved in the design of the curriculum and gave some examples of the ways that employers were currently being involved in the curriculum. There was also the option for colleagues to go out into industry and bring skills back into the college.</p> | |
| 8. Risk Management | <p>8.1 Review of Board of Governors’ Risk Register Items: A paper had been shared to identify the key updates to the risks that were relevant to this committee and MC talked through the key points.</p> <p><i>MJ rejoined the meeting</i></p> <p>MC noted that the need to respond to the new Ofsted framework was also included.</p> <p>8.2 Safeguarding/Prevent committee duty review: Covered in the inclusion and attendance discussions</p> | |
| 9. Report Items to Board of Governors | <p>9.1 Report topics for Board of Governors: The white paper and new Ofsted framework/local skills priorities, and the external support reports; also the updated risk register.</p> <p>9.2 Committee briefing next meeting: One area of the new Ofsted framework – Curriculum, teaching and inclusion, linked to student voice – was to be narrowed down closer to the time. MOS would agree the final topic with DBE.</p> | |
| 10. Any Other Business | 10.1 None | |
| 11. Next Meeting | 11.1 Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 25 March 2026 | |
| Minutes Agreed | <p>Minutes of Meeting agreed as true and accurate record.</p> <p>Date: 25 March 2026</p> <p>Signed: _____ Committee Chair</p> | |