

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

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

APOLOGIES: Daisy Agathine-Louise [1]

ABSENT Without Apology: None [0]

CIRCULATION: All Governors, College website

QUORUM REQUIRED: 3/6 (Voting Committee members)

ITEM	ISSUES RAISED IN DISCUSSION	ACTION
1. Welcome	1.1 Welcome: Due to technical issues, SBR took the chair and opened the meeting with a Prayer	
2. Declarations of Interest	2.1 Declarations of Interest: The members of the Committee confirmed there had been no change.	
3. Minutes Previous Meeting	3.1 Open Minutes Agreement – 5 November 2025: The Minutes were adopted as a correct and true record and passed for electronic signature and for publication on the website. DJ noted that the minutes for this meeting are more detailed than other committees, and suggested that there should be a focus on the substance, purpose, decisions and actions in the minutes, rather than grammatical perfectionism, in order to make the best use of LS' time. 3.2 Actions: See actions report for updates.	

Committee Briefing:

'Curriculum Update – March 2026'.

by David Beesley

DBe gave a presentation.

Q – Where do the BTECs stand at the college at the moment? A number of BTECs will continue for the moment, and there is a good map and timeline for what this will look like moving forward. Once those areas run out of funding, there will be a need to move to the new qualifications, but BTECs can continue as long as each subject is funded, until 2028. Some of the BTEC areas that will need to be looked at are the double/triple options. There will be a meeting to look at rules of combination as many of the students are on mixed qualifications.

There will also be a need to consider how students map their studies at St Brendan's with a view to further study.

Q – Where are the risks in terms of the funding ending for current subjects? We understand that BTECs will be funded until there is a V-Level starting. Subjects to consider include Criminology, which could be absorbed into a different area such as law, and other subject areas in a similar situation.

There was a discussion around the challenges created by the different introduction dates, the difficulties for students planning their group of qualifications etc. There will be a need to market very carefully what is being offered. It is likely that there will be significant confusion for students choosing their GCSE subjects. It is hoped that the first qualifications that are brought on-line will enable the college to see how this will work and plan for it.

Q – How does this affect applications to universities? There is still a great deal of communication to do with universities. The plan is that V-Levels will be accepted in the same way that BTECs and T-Levels are now. There will be things to ironed out, but universities will still want to recruit students and are working hard to understand.

Q – Will there still be larger V-Levels offered as was planned? The current thinking is that larger qualifications would be best done as T-Levels. This is something that MC and DBe, will look to raise.

4. Quality of Education

4.1 Student progress: DBe talked through the key points from the reported data. This is the Year 12 key assessment three - the third assessment that students have done. Also shown is the Year 13, key assessment nine. Key assessment eight was the mock exam, so this report shows the most up to date data. DBe highlighted the positive value added of 0.16, which is slightly above where it was at this point last year. The ALPS is slightly lower than would be ideal, at six (seven for vocational) but it is important to remember that this is the key assessment result and not the students' projected grade.

There has been a slight increase in the high grades. Part of the performance management targets for everyone this year has been closing the gap for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, as well as looking at the higher grades: B and above. The reduction in the gaps is very positive. DBe talked through the results for the big five. There was a small dip in in the key assessment, but the previous results from the mocks were more positive. It was noted that the larger number of students in the big five subjects can mean that it is harder to make changes to the percentage points.

It was also noted that the current Year 13 are tracking higher than the previous Year 13, and that the current Year 12 are tracking slightly higher than the current Year 13.

Q – Is this saying that the performance of the current Year 13 is better than Year 13 at the same time last year? Yes

Q – Last year it was thought that the value added was in line with national average, but the IDSR showed something slightly different, how confident are you in the accuracy of the current predictions? The data is always calculated by working backwards a year and what was found was that the data was sitting lower than expected.

Q – Was this significantly low, or just below 0? Below average, -0.25. The level 3 value added that was being used had not been updated for 2025 which, when applied to the performance tables, would apply across the country. This could show that St Brendan's is not performing as well as other colleges, although a comparison with other Catholic colleges showed St Brendan's to be somewhere in the middle. St Brendan's compares well to other local sixth form provision. The six dimensions data does show that the gaps are still closing.

Q – What is being used as the value added against which the performance of the current Year 13 is being compared? ALPS is being used for this, as it gives more solid tracking over time and has been updated on the national dataset.

UAK joined the meeting

DBe noted that, from a quality assurance perspective, there is a need to ensure that grades that are being entered are being seen by another member of staff, so they are not just a single teacher's interpretation of the mark scheme. There is work ongoing to create quality assurance across departments with curriculum leaders / directors of faculty.

Q – What is the strategy for U-Grade students? The 5% / 105 U-grades is on that key assessment and is not the projected grade. For any student who did get a U grade in this assessment, there is a triangulation of staff support.

Q – Are those students being targeted who have two grades below their target in the mock or the key assessment? Both; the mock gives the best indicator of the anticipated result and the key assessment will be used to highlight gaps in knowledge to be worked on. A U-grade does give staff a clear map to be able to sequence work and plan revision.

Q – Are students that are expected to achieve higher grades, who are not achieving those grades, also targeted? Yes, anyone two grades away from their target grade, including the higher grades. It was noted that at least one student in this position has not been approached: DBE will follow this up.

Q – Do we know the reasons for the decline in the big five in year 13? This is a specific assessment on specific content and a specific area of the curriculum. Later in the academic year, assessments should cover more of the content.

It could have been useful to also include the key assessment eight information.

Q – What happens in a BTEC where a student who was predicted a Distinction can now not achieve higher than a pass? This is difficult, and there is a need to, 'front load' the assessments, to maximise the use of retakes where possible and identify issues as early as possible. DBE will be looking at the assessment and reporting calendar for the year to hopefully make the data as useful as possible.

Q – Do we allow people to enter for an examination when they do not have the capacity for it, or are students not completing the work necessary? What lies behind U-grades? It is always important to identify when it became apparent that a student was on track for a U grade. Those conversations are now happening for students in Year 12, moving into Year 13. Attendance is normally the biggest barrier to achievement in this respect.

The final cut-off will be when the entries are entered for the exam boards. There will be conversations with students who are predicted a U,

	and whether they should be entered. <i>GB left the meeting</i> Q – Is there a piece of work around capturing what the predicted grades are telling us? Are there themes that could allow a high number of U-grades showing early in the year to be less alarming? MC noted that there are meetings with the leaders of the relevant areas, partially around ensuring that the assessments are accurate, as well as looking at U-grades through the lens of inclusion; identifying any barriers to student’s learning or understanding, ensuring that these are accurately understood and managed. There was a discussion around how this is managed, and where the line should be drawn for students on being entered for exams. It was noted that there are some issues and barriers around attendance and the key element is the support that is put in place for those students. This could entail a reduction in the course load, pastoral support etc. Q – Do we have a breakdown of persistent U-grades, where assessments have consistently shown U-grades? This is not immediately available. There are 35 U grades projected for this year overall, compared to 62 from last year. There is a need to have conversations with these students, as well as to consider whether the impact is seen on attainment or retention. Updated data to be shared with the Board when the most recent mock exam results are complete. More detailed analysis to be shared of the profile of the students who are predicted U-grades, including the strategies that are being used to support these students. The updated report to include what is being done to mitigate the potential for over-predictions in Year 12, and to build this in to the quality assurance. LS to add an item on this to the agenda for the full Board meeting. Governors noted that the report was easy to understand and included the items that had previously been requested. 4.2 Quality of Teaching and Learning: DBe talked through the key points. Noted that the new Lesson Observation policy has been updated in the light of feedback from Steve Tucker, the quality improvement partner. A key learning point was around leading towards quality improvement more than just quality assurance and making sure that there is a good understanding of where the quality is. The aim is for information that is seen in lessons to feed into CPD in a longer-term way, in terms of how colleagues can develop. From September, there will be Wednesday afternoon CPD sessions and there will be more in the way of twilight sessions offered to staff. The observations of teaching will be used to develop teacher standards, linked to the new Ofsted framework, and this will allow for tracking of the areas where support is needed, both individually and longitudinally across the college. DBe talked through the last set of observations and noted that things are going well. There was a specific lens on disadvantaged students, with staff visiting a disadvantaged student both in their own subject and another subject. This was challenging and also very helpful. Some really good relationships were highlighted, as well as teachers with high levels of subject knowledge and marking work extensively. There is a potential gap in how and when students are acting on this feedback. MC also noted that there is an Inclusion Strategy for the college – Inclusion strategy to be shared with governors at the July full Board.	DBe DBe DBe LS MC/DBe
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	There have been peer reviews of both the lesson observation process and the inclusion strategy. Q – How has the lesson observation process worked with teaching colleagues? The plan has been shared with the unions for feedback. There has been a focus on minimising workload. DBe talked through the process, in terms of how it works in practice. All staff will have had the information from the unions, and some staff have now had experience of the process. DBe has also launched a teaching and learning website for staff, and the inclusion strategy will be launched at the next Inset. PR gave some feedback on staff reactions, although staff will always be nervous of observations, PR believes there will be no issues.	
5. Quality Improvement	5.1 Self-Assessment Report (SAR) update / 5.2 Quality Improvement Plan [QIP] progress: DBe talked through the key points. The format will need to change again, due to the new Ofsted framework. There is no longer a need to submit the SAR to Ofsted but will need to have it available. The report provides a flavour and overview of the quality assurance that is carried out throughout the year. There is a QIP review due, and an updated version will be available for the next meeting. It was noted that Ofsted will ask for the Colleges’ grading and the justification for this. Q – Much of the plan is still orange, with one red – how confident are we that this can be fulfilled? There is a need to clarify the measures for each of the items, in order to be clear when they can be signed off as complete. There has been considerable movement towards completing the actions but it is currently more of a task list than a list of impacts and measures.	
6. Principal’s Report	6.1 Student Recruitment 2026/2027: MC talked through the key points of the report. Recruitment is currently in line with previous years. MC has asked how far we are capitalising on the bulge that is coming through. We are generating a 3% increase, although not in South Gloucestershire and we are looking onto this. Noted that acceptances are high. This is for intake of 2026-27. MC noted that there is a potential drop for future years. Retention is also reasonably high and there are incremental improvements in this for access to level three over the years. Year 12 retention remains high with a small slip in year 13. Overall attendance has improved. There was a discussion around the potential reasons for the lower recruitment from South Gloucestershire and MC talked through the schools we have recruited from. 6.2 Student Attendance Report 2025/2026: MC talked through the key points of the report. 6.3 Recruitment of Staff Update: MC gave an update on current areas of recruitment. It was noted that we have not been successful in recruiting for the VP role, and have agreed with the Diocese not to move forward at this time. 6.4 Accountability Statement: MC talked through the key points of the report. Highlighted that the transition statement for V-Levels etc must be included in this report. The transition statement is due in June, and will need to be added to this. To come back to the full Board in July.	MC

7. Policy Review	7.1 Lesson Observation Policy: DBe talked through the key points. Some aspects have been discussed above. DBe highlighted the appendices where the processes were noted. This is still in conversation with the unions and the processes are still being trialled. Governors were asked to feed comments back to DBe. The policy will come back to a future meeting. Q – Is there an opportunity for teachers who are observed to provide feedback on the observation around student-craft and teacher impact? Yes, there is a plan to create more opportunities for staff to talk to each other and to share pedagogy and practice more informally, increasing the opportunities for staff engagement.	DBe
8. Risk Management	8.1 Review of Board of Governors' Risk Register Items: MC noted that the register has been updated recently, around the risks about failure to respond to the White Paper, falling results etc. There was a discussion around potentially looking at the actions from the previous Ofsted in preparation for the next Ofsted. There is a need to consider how we prepare for Ofsted, with a standing item for each committee where this is relevant. There is a low risk showing for Ofsted, but the updated risk is higher. To discuss the previous Ofsted action plan at the next meeting. 8.2 Safeguarding/Prevent committee duty review: This is relevant to the lesson observations, the inclusion strategy and the support for students who may be predicted U-grades.	MC/DBe
9. Report Items to Board of Governors	9.1 Report topics for Board of Governors: Update on latest year 12/13 performance and mock exams. The new process of lesson observations and the inclusion lens; and the QIP. 9.2 Committee briefing next meeting: Update on careers, destinations and Gatsby benchmarks from the perspective of achievement.	
10. Other Business	10.1 Governors also requested an update on the skills framework	
11. Next Meeting	11.1 Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 20 May 2026	
Minutes Agreed	Minutes of Meeting agreed as true and accurate record. Date: 20 May 2026 Signed: _____ Committee Chair	