



# Notre Dame

CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

## NOTRE DAME CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Minutes of the **Curriculum and Standards Committee** meeting held at the college on:  
**THURSDAY 27 JUNE 2024 AT 5.00PM**

**PRESENT**                      Father Michael Hall (Chair)                      Justine Barlow (Principal)  
    Graeme Brown    David Wright (On Teams)  
       Helen Hayden (On Teams)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**      Sarah Dumont Deputy Principal  
    Andrew Kellett - Assistant Principal  
    Lisa Guest - Assistant Principal  
    Lucy Johnson – Assistant Principal  
    Kirstie Kohling – Assistant Principal  
    Denise Hark – Clerk to Corporation  
    Martin McNeill – External Reviewer AoC  
    Victor Olowe – Observing External Reviewer

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

<b>1.00</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1.01</b>	<p>Apologies were received and accepted from Natalie Cullen.</p> <p>DW noted that he would need to leave the meeting at 5.45pm and HH noted that she would need to leave the meeting at 6.00pm.</p>	
<b>2.00</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	
<b>2.01</b>	There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>3.00</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>	
<b>3.01</b>	The minutes from the meeting on 19 March 2024 were agreed as a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them.	
<b>4.00</b>	<b>REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
<b>4.01</b>	<p>Q: Re Minute 7.02 has further analysis been carried out regarding attendance at assemblies?</p> <p>A: Yes. There had been a glitch in the system with the tablets used by students to record attendance on Cedar. An upgrade has been carried out but there has not yet been an opportunity to test it. This will be carried out next term.</p>	

## **5.00 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

- 5.01** The college is please with progress on the QAR data.
- 5.02** Attendance for the year to date stood at 93.1%, compared to the average reported by the SFCA for all Sixth Form and GFE colleges of 89.8%. This showed a good reflection of how attendance was managed by senior tutors.
- 5.03** Q: The mean is influenced by the spread at the extremities. What does the 63.8% data for GCSEs signify?  
A: This is a screenshot of the SFCA data not the college data. The college has English and Maths GCSEs and this shows under Level 2 progress rather than under the GCSE heading.
- 5.04** Exam boards are considering AAQ exam specifications as an alternative, with the first teaching to commence in September 2025. Some of these could enhance the curriculum provision.
- 5.05** Q: Are we looking into having these qualifications and what would be the advantage for our students?  
A: These will be single awards which will replace BTEC and CTEC qualifications. The triple awards have been removed and replaced by T-Levels.
- 5.06** There is uncertainty around the criminology qualification. If this is not replaced it would be a concern for the college. OCR have written a specification and are trying to get this in the policing strand from July 2026
- 5.07** Q: How is the uncertainty around the curriculum affecting mid-term planning.  
A: The TES Pulse survey key question around staff workload showed that workload stress reflected what was happening in the wider area, for example full-time teachers of criminology were concerned over their roles in the future. The college would not make any major changes until there is a definite communication regarding the status of this subject.
- 5.08** Work is ongoing looking at students' journey through Lower 6 to see if there are any trends. This includes looking at the point score which is arrived at by dividing the grade at GCSE by the number of GCSEs taken. Students scoring 5.6 or above tend to make expected progress, and students below this score usually make better progress with vocational subjects. Advice and guidance will be given at enrolment on which programme of study will be the most suitable.
- 5.09** Q: Is a 5.6 equivalent to an average of a B grade?  
A: It is between a B and a C. 4 is a standard C.
- 5.10** Q: Could the disproportionate amount of time spent on the ND+ learners could be made a bit clearer?

A: This was constantly being looked at. There were a lot of workshops for ND+ and subject enrichment on top of this. There is a need to make sure that this is manageable. Having the right students on the right course helps with this.

- 5.11** A governor asked for clarification on the curriculum offer for T-Level Media and Legal. The Principal noted that there had been 12 offers. This was low because students sometimes change their mind during the interview. The announcement of the ABS qualification had not helped with this.
- 5.12** Q: What is a viable number of students for the course?  
A: 12 is the minimum number. All prospective students would be told at enrolment that the course might not run.
- 5.13** A report on meeting Skills needs was received for information as this had been presented at the Strategic Away Day.
- 5.14** The college was meeting the needs in all the priority areas where it was able to do so.
- 5.15** The Ofsted inspection would have a separate judgement on Skills. There was only one college in the North which had received a Strong judgement for Skills. This college and they had given direction and reassurance that Notre Dame is moving in the right direction.
- 5.16** With reference to 7.5 of the report, the college would map against the sector overview to create a position statement.
- 5.17** Q: What could affect the college not getting a Strong judgement?  
A: One curriculum area not meeting the standard if it does not have links with employers.
- 5.18** A skills audit has taken place across college to enquire who the department is working with.
- 5.19** An employer engagement survey has been sent out to ask them what skills they are lacking.
- 5.20** The Notre Dame curriculum & enrichment offer is being mapped across all subjects.
- 5.21** Q: How do inspectors triangulate information in the position statement?  
A: Skills inspectors will focus on the LSIP. A schedule will be planned for them, and they will make selections from the stakeholder list and will have deep dive areas. They will talk to someone in that department including students and the Head of Department. A plan for governors and employers would be launched in September.
- 5.22** Q: When might there be some impact assessment available?

A: T-Levels in Health, Digital and Childcare are currently feeding into the Skills agenda and are weaved into the self-assessment reports.

**5.23** An ambassador programme is being put together by the Marketing department which students can apply for.

**5.24** There is a T-Level IT student working with the IT department.

**5.25** Q: What does support for employers look like and who will do this at the college.

A: The Employer Engagement Lead will send out information and do a Teams briefing.

**5.26** There are no issues with regard to placements.

Action: Skills Agenda to be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Clerk

## **6.00 Reports & Updates**

### **6.01 Safeguarding Annual Report**

The Safeguarding & SEND Link Governor thanked staff for their work in preparing the report. He reported that he had visited the college in his role as Link Governor and had been impressed with the support for students in Safeguarding and SEND.

**6.02** Q: How do leaders view the upward trend in Safeguarding issues?

A: The work is relentless; however, the Safeguarding Manager is confident that there is capacity in the department due to the processes which are in place.

**6.03** The Link Governor for Safeguarding noted that the team meet constantly so that the work is not duplicated.

### **6.04 Complaints Annual Report**

The Principal reported that there had only been three complaints during this academic year, and these had all been resolved at Stage 1.

A governor commented that this was commendable, particularly for the size of the college.

### **6.05 Lesson Observation Annual Report**

LG, Assistant Principal, reported that the number of lesson observations at 130 were in line with last year.

**6.06** There had been a pleasing improvement in the action against targets. A lot of work had been undertaken on objectives. Pace had improved in all areas except for curriculum support.

- 6.07** One of the main targets for the college was Stretch & Challenge, progress on this would be seen with the exam results. This would remain a focus next year.
- 6.08** The quality improvement of the standard of QA has been maintained from last year's improvements. This would continue as a priority next year.
- 6.09** It was reported that Heads of Department and Assistant Principals having scheduled lesson observations had been positive. This had reinvigorated the process and staff had reported that they like it that their practice has been seen by someone else outside the department.
- 6.10** It was noted that a lot of Sixth Form Colleges were moving away from lesson observations. Notre Dame would continue with full lesson observations for new starters and those staff receiving curriculum support. For other staff there would be two designated learning walks for up to 20 minutes. These would take place during two designated weeks. There would be a low level of preparation required and they would enable Heads of Department to be able to conduct a temperature check.
- 6.11** Q: Are learner walks carried out at other times?  
A: Yes, general ones take place with SLT looking at an area of focus. The general learning walks are on designated areas.
- 6.12** Q: Is there a culture of lesson drop-ins?  
A: There is a growing culture.
- 6.13** A governor commented that he was surprised to see that some staff see learning walks as a threat. LG noted that this was the case 8 years ago, but significant improvement has been made since then. It is staff who are underperforming who see the learning walks as a threat.
- 6.14** The Chair thanked LG for her report and said that as part of his role as link governor for Curriculum and Quality he had seen staff going from strength to strength and they were now working smarter.
- DW left the meeting at this point.*
- 6.15** **Staff Development Annual Report**  
LJ, Assistant Principal, presented the key highlights of the report.
- 6.16** IT staff development would be included as a key focus each year.
- 6.17** Staff are encouraged to attend industry days to support their knowledge of working practices in other institutions or industries. This has been rolled out to support and teaching staff.
- 6.18** All curriculum Heads of Department had attended the SFCA Middle Leaders Programme. This had been a success with highly positive feedback received.

- 6.19** The Aspiring Leaders programme had been attended by a group of 7 staff, 2 of whom were support staff. The measurement of impact was that one member of staff had been promoted internally.
- 6.20** The post of Director of Innovation: Teaching & Learning ends in July 2024.
- 6.21** The number of Smartlog courses that staff are expected to do have been significantly reduced.
- 6.22** The college has an ambition for all staff to take part in exam board training.
- 6.23** Nationally 1 in 5 new teachers leave the professions after 2 years. To date the only ECTs leaving Notre Dame have done so to secure permanent positions in other schools or colleges.
- 6.24** The Key Foci for 2024-25 are:
- To introduce an in-house training programme for new leaders and provide external training for support staff managers.
  - To introduce an in-house training programme for early career teachers.
  - To support staff development and training required to introduce innovative practices utilising AI.
  - To continue to embed industry days.
  - To support the expanding team of IT staff in accessing industry standard training to ensure innovative and efficient working practices.
- 6.25** Q: Are we at capacity for the number of ECTs.  
A: There is no limit to how many ECTs we can have.
- 6.26** Q: Can trainee teachers for 11-16 schools in the local area do their placement at Notre Dame?  
A: Yes, that already happens.
- 6.27** **Student Perception of Course Analysis**  
The Deputy Principal presented the latest Student Perception of Course Analysis which was one on curriculum for Year 12.
- 6.28** The vast majority of areas showed improvements. The report looked at each course and how it is performing. Any score above a 3 is positive with the focus being on the lower scores.
- 6.29** The “teacher expresses lessons clearly” statement had a lower score. The Deputy Principal reported that this had been drilled down and it had shown

that 4 teachers for a particular lesson had scored below 3. One of these was a cover teacher, and one had taken over from a cover teacher. The Head of Department would carry out a learner voice activity with the group.

**6.30** Q: Are there no questions on feeling safe?

A: This had been covered in a different survey.

**6.31** A questionnaire on Skills would be introduced next year.

**6.32** The Chair commented that he liked the way data had been used to analyse and seek improvement.

## **7.00 CATHOLIC LIFE**

**7.01** The Principal reported that the new Head of Core RE was having a transition into post and would take over the role fully in August. She would have oversight of Catholic life along with the Principal and the SLT.

**7.02** Mid-year reviews had taken place for PTE, Chaplaincy and Core RE.

**7.03** Staff and students were continuing to promote and engage with stewardship and sustainability in support of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

**7.04** The Link Governor reported that it was important that the 3 strands of Catholic Life, Curriculum RE and Chaplaincy are covered in detail. He added that the meeting now has a larger format, but this has resulted in being better informed.

**7.05** Governors were notified of 2 key dates in 2024/25: The Staff and Governors Carol Service on 18 December and the Stella Maris Leadership Awards on 30 April.

## **8.00 LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS**

**8.01** GB, the Link Governor for Safeguarding & SEND, had submitted a Link Governor report and had discussed this in the previous item on Safeguarding.

**8.02** The Chair reported that he had met with the Deputy Principal in his role as Quality Education Link Governor. During the meeting he had looked at predicted outcomes which looked positive and attendance in all areas continued to be good.

**8.03** Q: Are the predictions based on the mock exams?

A: They are the final predicted grades, which were cautious in some subject areas. Great efforts had been made to ensure that the way statistics were being reported remained the same. 2025 would be the first cohort where there had not been any adaptations for GCSE and A-Level exams following Covid.

## 9.00 POLICY REVIEW

The following policies were presented for review by the Committee:

### 9.01 RHSE Policy

There had been no changes to the RHSE policy. The content of the policy had been informed by the Diocese.

**Agreed:** That the RHSE policy is **approved**.

### 9.02 Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Framework

### 9.02 There had been no changes to the policy.

**Agreed:** That the Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Framework is **approved**.

### 9.03 Fitness to Study policy

There were no changes to the policy.

**Agreed:** That the Fitness to Study policy is **approved**.

### 9.04 Admissions Policy

The Admissions Policy had previously been discussed at length. It had been decided that the policy should remain unchanged.

**Agreed:** That the Admissions Policy be **recommended for approval** by the Corporation.

### 9.05 Student Code of Conduct

The following changes had been made to the Student Code of Conduct which had been reviewed in line with the Sustainable Development Goals:

- Reference to zero tolerance has been removed following legal recommendation.
- The section on remote learning has been removed.
- Wording in section 1.1d should say underpinned by the principle not underpaid.
- The section on appeals had been updated and clarified.

A governor questioned whether there should be governor involvement in permanent exclusions. The Principal noted that the policy states that the decision of the Principal is final following the Appeal Panel meeting.

**Agreed:** That the Student Code of Conduct be **recommended for approval** by Corporation.

### 9.06 QA Cycle for Staff 2024/25

The QA Cycle for staff 2024/25 was received for information.



**10.00 COMMITTEE SECTION OF ANNUAL PLANNER**

The committee received and noted the annual work plan for the committee.

**11.00 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Business raised.

**12.00 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 5.00pm

The meeting closed at 6.15pm.