



Board of Governors

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2010

THE MEETING OPENED WITH A PRAYER

Item 1 – Members present:

Sr Patricia Goodstadt (Chair)
Pamela Catherall
Dr Catherine Morgan
James Gresty
John Lumb
Peter McGhee (Principal)
Teresa Richardson
Anne-Marie Siney
Simon Dale
Peter Simpson
Fr. Tony Slingo
Neil Stevenson
Michael Owens

Also in attendance:

Dominic Jones (Director of Progression & Achievement)
Allan Keating (Director of Finance)

Item 2 – Declarations of Interest in any agenda item by Governors and staff present

None.

Item 3 – Resolve that any items of a confidential nature relating to the staff, finances or operation of the College be taken in a confidential part of the meeting.

None.

Item 4

(i) Minutes of the meeting of 21 October 2010

AGREED and signed by the Chair.

ii) Matters Arising

Thanks were expressed to all the Governors who had attended performances of Sweeney Todd.

The Governors wished to minute their appreciation to all those involved in this extremely impressive production.

Item 5 – Notice of Items of any Other business

None.

Item 6 – Governance Self Assessment – Report from Promoting Excellence.

Final report circulated and commented on by Peter Rushton of Promoting Excellence.

The report showed the findings of the self assessment project, incorporating both the quantitative and qualitative data and made recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Governing Body.

The report concluded that the support and passion for the College by the Governing Body is very clear. Many people have given generously of their time and commitment over many years.

The Governing Body has strong leadership. The Principal, with the confidence the governors have in him, could now give more direction. There is a widespread recognition of the variety of skills, expertise and talents; however these are somewhat untapped and underexploited.

A key issue is the need to develop more open and enabling meetings, based on trust and a constructive approach. This would allow more governors to contribute and enrich the debates.

There is a need for governors to be pro-active in attracting new blood. Succession planning and talent management within the Governing body would be beneficial to build leadership capability and capacity. There is a strong willingness to take on new roles and responsibilities

Many of the issues raised could be addressed by full Governing Body training and frank discussions. The new clerk, in supporting the Governing Body, has a key role, and this should be developed to ensure more openness and transparency.

It is clear that governors really want the College and the Governing Body to improve. This positive, willing and open minded approach will allow them to address effectively the issues raised in this report in order to make both outstanding.

Things to avoid...

- Harking back to the past...
- Unhelpful comparisons with other colleges
- Agreeing issues outside or before meetings
- Letting individuals dominate discussions

Things to do more of...

- Celebrate successes
- More open and inclusive debates and discussion
- More informal contact between governors
- Promoting the catholic nature of the college
- Fostering a no-blame culture.

The report recommended –

1. Training sessions focusing upon;
 - Team effectiveness- establishing ground rules; running effective meetings; time management; vision and values as a team
 - Clarity of expectations and roles and responsibilities
 - Interpretation of data
 - Strategic educational developments, especially in the college sector.
2. Increased emphasis on strategic and future planning.
3. Agreed performance measures to assess the quality of governance.
4. [i] More effective governor induction and a ‘buddy’ system for new governors.

[ii] Succession planning and talent management within the Governing Body to build leadership capability and capacity.

[iii] Mentoring support for governors undertaking new leadership roles.
5. An annual skills audit to identify gaps and recruit appropriately.
6. Explore ways to develop a wider range of contact, both formal and informal, with students and staff.
7. A review of venues and timings for meetings to encourage more flexibility, open and relaxed discussion and a greater variety of approach.

Some Governors expressed surprise that the diversity of views expressed at the previous exercise had not appeared in this final report and concluded that some of the recommendations could be seen as quick wins.

The Governors AGREED that the Strategic Planning day scheduled for Saturday 12 February 2011 should be used to take this matter forward. It was also AGREED that the event should be extended to include the evening of Friday 11 February. This will be designed to enable governors to get to know one another better and, hopefully, to have input from Tony Charnock on the role of governors.

Also, AGREED –

1. That the Chair hold “ 1 to 1 discussions” with all the Governors early in the New Year to progress the skills audit recommendation.
2. Pamela Catherall to meet/attend the Student council meeting once a term.
3. Simon Dale volunteered to assist the Chair and the Principal in the planning of the event on the 11/12 February 2011.
4. John Lumb to speak to Tony Charnock with a view to Tony facilitating a governor training session on the evening of Friday 11 February 2011.

Item7 – Self Assessment Report 2009/10

Copy of the Executive summary circulated and the Principal commented thereon. He explained the Self Assessment and Validation process, commented on the different areas and gave an overall summary of the self assessment grades. He also, commented on the Colleges overall effectiveness. which was satisfactory.

Outcomes for learners at St John Rigby College are satisfactory; although overall success rates have declined by 1.8% (due to retention) they are on the sixth form college benchmark and are higher than 2007-08 and 2008-09.

The College assesses the overall quality of provision as satisfactory.

Leadership and management at St John Rigby College are satisfactory.

The College manages its finances prudently and has outstanding financial health under the FFE/YPLA criteria. However, 'financial management' assessed within the Common Inspection Framework is linked to impact on student outcomes and is therefore self assessed as satisfactory.

In light of the judgments made for quality of provision, outcomes for learners and leadership and management, St John Rigby College's capacity to improve remains satisfactory.

Key Strengths of St John Rigby College 2009-10

An unwavering commitment to the College's Catholic mission, ethos and values.

Outstanding safeguarding for students and a welcoming and supportive environment.

Very good support for students.

Strong student achievement on entry, level 1, level 2 and vocational level 3 programmes.

Good equality and diversity promotion to draw in learners who may otherwise not access FE.

Effective measures that ensure that the achievement gap has been closed for students from areas of deprivation.

Unique and effective collaboration with Loreto College, an outstanding sixth form college, through the Executive Principal (until March), the Chair of Governors and the new Principal (mentored by the Principal at Loreto College)

Outstanding financial health and highly effective management of finances, resources and estates.

Areas the College should improve

Success rates on subjects at level 3 that are below the sixth form college benchmark.

Retention rates especially on level 3 academic programmes and level 2 GCSE.

The continued need to improve level 3 value added measures.

Closely monitor and improve male achievement

Continue to develop consistent strategies for differentiation in teaching and learning.

Continue to develop more opportunities for student on vocational programmes to gain an insight into the world of work.

Further embed the involvement of learners in decision making processes.

Ensure that all key aspects of provision are rigorously evaluated.

Further enhance the careers advice for student seeking employment

The meeting discussed what actions could be taken to improve the underperforming areas. There was no one particular problem across the underperforming areas; each area had its own “story to tell”.e.g Staffing issues.

AGREED: That the report be approved for submission.

Item 8 – Audit Committee Minutes – 16 November 2010

Noted and approved.

The Statutory Accounts year ended 31 July 2010 were approved.

Item 9 – Quality & Standards Committee Minutes 2 December 2010

Noted and approved.

AGREED: That the policies and procedures considered at Item 9 be approved and that for the future delegated approval be given by the Full Governing Body to the relevant Committee to approve.

Reference was also made to possible changes to Bus Travel Policy and charging pupils for travel to Catholic Schools by Wigan Council.

The Governors expressed concern at the lack of consultation, the speed with which this possible development was moving and the long term implications of the proposals on this College.

AGREED: That the Principal continue to monitor developments very carefully.

Item 10 – Principal’s Report on Strategic Objectives

The Principal took the meeting through the report highlighting areas of success/improvement.

AGREED: That the report be accepted.

Item 11 - Any Other Business

1. Potential 14 – 19 Developments in Wigan

The Principal circulated a paper outlining the rationale for emerging 14-19 developments in Wigan. Discussions are continuing with regards developments in the East of the Borough but two proposals are now beginning to emerge in the West and in the Centre of Wigan which respond to skills priorities in Greater Manchester.

AGREED: That the Principal continue to monitor developments very carefully.

2. Financial Management and Control Evaluation (FMCE) Annual Return 2010

With reference to the above the Principal confirmed that in relation to openness of governance under part 17(3) of the College’s Instrument of Government, the College was obliged to ensure that copies of minutes and agendas of Governing Body meetings were published on the College’s website. He confirmed this would start in the New Year.

3. College Trips

Approval was given to the following College Trips –

London Theatre Experience 16/17 February 2011
Cern Switzerland 16/18 February 2011
Angers France 19-26 February 2011.

Item 12 – Implications for Risk Management in any items above

The following were noted –

Governance/Self Assessment issues
Wigan Council Bus Travel Policy
14 -19 Developments in Wigan
EMA/Financial Issues

The meeting closed with a prayer

Signed:

Date: