



NOTRE DAME CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Minutes of the **Curriculum and Standards Committee** meeting held at the college on:

TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2025 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT Father Michael Hall (Chair)
Justine Barlow (Principal)
Graeme Brown
Mark McEvoy

IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Dumont – Senior Deputy Principal
Lucy Johnson – Assistant Principal
Lisa Guest – Assistant Principal
Kirstie Kohling – Assistant Principal
Denise Hark – Clerk to Corporation
Hannah Smith – Head of EPQ and Enhancing Excellence

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting Hannah Smith gave a presentation on Enhancing Excellence.

The following points were noted from the presentation:

- Enhancing Excellence focuses on MEDEV (medical, dentists and vets), Oxbridge and High Tariff courses.
- Students are prepared for the UCAT admissions tests for Medics and Dentists.
- Visiting speakers are organised. These have included former students who are now medical students, dentists, junior doctors and an A&E Consultant.
- Students were runners up in the IN2MED competition after carrying out a project looking at community health.
- A Sharepoint has been created for the students to access all resources including webinars and UCAT resources.
- One to one meetings are arranged with the students three times per year.

Q: What is the number of students involved?

A: There are 135 Lower 6 students out of 400 original applications, with 98 of them want to go to Oxbridge.

- Mock interview sessions are arranged along with panel interview practice and multi-mini interviews.

- Sessions are held to support students who are going to apply after taking a year out following A Level.
- A lot of work is done around a fifth choice so that students have a realistic Plan B.
- Weekly study groups take place for students who are applying for Oxbridge. These are subject specific.
- Webinars and lectures from visiting lecturers are organised.

Q: How are the students trained for the TMU and MAT which they have to do in order to study Maths at Oxbridge and Imperial College.

A: There is a problem-solving group for the hard sciences. Even if they don't get an offer they are being prepped for high tariff courses.

- Trips have been arranged to Oxford and Cambridge, with one having been funded by Widening Participation.
- Notre Dame has links with Selwyn College, Cambridge and Worcester College, Oxford.
- Networking has taken place with some colleges which has resulted in additional opportunities being offered.
- As part of Widening Participation some of the student societies have been to speak to the students.
- Students are supported with preparing their personal statement and preparing for interview.
- Last year there had been 20 students going onto medical courses, 2 on dental courses, 2 vets, 6 students going to Oxford and 4 to Cambridge. 40% of students going onto university went to Russell Group universities.
- This year 22 students have been accepted onto medical courses, 4 vets, 7 to Oxford, 7 to Cambridge. 43% of university applications have been made to Russell Group universities.

The Chair thanked Hannah for her informative presentation.

1.00	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS Apologies for absence were received from David Wright and Helen Hayden.	ACTION
2.00	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS There were no declarations of interest made.	
3.00	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING The minutes from the meeting on 10 December 2024 were agreed as a correct record and the Chair was authorised to sign them.	
4.00	REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.	
5.00	CATHOLIC LIFE The following reports on Catholic Life had been included with the papers for the meeting: CSED 2024-2025; Catholic Life Summary report and CSI Quality Assurance report.	

- 5.02** The Principal reported that the CSED expands the section on Catholic Life which is included in the overall College Self-Evaluation Form. There is no prescription on what this should look like post-16.
- 5.03** Inspectors will test the judgements made by the College. All areas have been graded as Outstanding with the exception of Collective Worship which is graded as Good.
- 5.04** The Catholic Life Summary report had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. This had been prepared by the Head of PTE and the Lay Chaplain. The report details the holistic Catholic Life work undertaken at College.
- 5.05** Q: Has any progress been made with the appointment of an Assistant to the Lay Chaplain?
A: Advertisements are out for an Assistant to the Lay Chaplain and an Assistant Head of PTE. Boths posts are difficult to recruit to. Two staff have stepped up temporarily to the role of Assistant Head of PTE.
- 5.06** Q: Are you not getting applications or are applications not up to the required standard?
A: There have not been enough applications and those received were not the correct fit for the College.
- 5.07** A copy of the CSI Quality Assurance framework had been received with the papers for the meeting. The document maps progress against the criteria for Outstanding.
- 5.08** Q: Why is there no crossover between the actions in the CSI and the CSED?
A: The CSED is an annual review summary document, and the CSI is used for monitoring internally.
- 5.09** The Chair asked for thanks to be passed on to all staff who had an input in the Catholic Life reports.
- 6.00 PRINCIPAL'S & SLT REPORTS & UPDATES**
- 6.01 Progress Review of College Quality Improvement Plan**
Six Teaching and Learning Leaders had been appointed from high performing departments. They work with departments identified in the SAR as needing support.
- 6.02** Staff have been more responsive to peer-to-peer support as they feel that they are not being judged.
- 6.03** The Chair reported that he had carried out a Quality of Education Link Governor visit and had met with the Deputy Principals and the Head of

English to discuss the work of the Teaching and Learning Leaders in order to triangulate information.

- 6.04** The Principal noted that progress was being made with subjects identified in the SAR, however, progress was not as rapid as expected in some areas.
- 6.05** A governor suggested that as the appointment of the Teaching and Learning Leaders was a significant investment it would be useful to have a report or case study on the impact of their work.
- 6.06** The Principal reported that this was a 2-year project, and a mid-point report could be presented to the Committee at the next meeting in June. It was noted that the support plan was for 2 years, with a light touch in the background in the second year, so that progress did not slip back in the second year.
- 6.07** Q: What happens if expectations are not being met?
A: This work is about providing support. If this approach doesn't work the Leadership team would decide an appropriate route.
- 6.08** **Analysis of January GCSE and L2 Units results**
The Senior Deputy Principal reported on the English and Maths January resits. 62% of resit students have now achieved a Level 4 or above. This represents a slight increase from a high starting point. This is above average for post-16. 32% of resit students have already achieved Maths Level 4.
- 6.09** 60% L2M grades had been achieved in the Unit 9 grades.
- 6.10** **National Performance Table summary report for 2024**
The Progress score of 0.09 for A Levels is above the averages for Leeds and National.
- 6.11** Value Added progress showed Notre Dame being the third highest compared of all the Catholic Sixth Form Colleges.
- 6.12** Applied Generals have a progress score of 0.42 which is above average. The average point score is well above the averages for Leeds and National.
- 6.13** **National Curriculum Review Update**
The government's review on Level 3 Vocational, Applied, BTECs and CTECs is ongoing.
- 6.14** Two courses which had the last enrolment in 2024 will be moving to the new AAQ specifications (BTEC Applied Science Extended Certificate and the Health & Social Care CTEC Extended Certificate). Work has started on training and how assessment will be carried out.
- 6.15** Alternatives are being explored for the BTEC Applied Science Extended Diploma L3. The last enrolment for this course is 2025. Options being

considered are AAQs in Medical Science, Engineering and Double BTEC Applied Science.

6.16 Q: Do we offer Science T Level.
A: No.

6.17 Health and Social Care CTEC Diploma will have the last enrolment in 2025 but AAQs in Mental Health and Wellbeing could be offered as an alternative.

6.18 There is no alternative to BTEC Applied Psychology which has the last enrolment in 2025,

6.19 CTEC Art and Design will not be replaced. The last intake for this subject will be in 2026.

6.20 A new AAQ in Applied Sustainability is being introduced in Cycle 2.

6.21 Criminology will be part of Cycle 2 with the last enrolment being 2026/27. The Principal noted that this would affect lot of staff. Alternative qualifications are AAQs in Policing and Criminal Justice.

6.22 A governor commented that colleges would need to follow employment law if staffing restructures are required following the government curriculum reforms, and this could present difficulties for colleges.

6.23 **Student survey reports: Curriculum and Student Experience**
The Deputy Principal reported that the surveys are carried out twice per year, one focusing on the Curriculum and one on Pastoral. Analysis is carried out comparing a three-year trend question by question.

6.24 All surveys had been very positive. The lowest scores had been with the GCSE resits which was as expected.

6.25 The Pastoral survey had positive results, however, there had been a slight decrease in the response to the question on Keeping Safe Online. The pastoral team pick up on everyone who say that they don't feel safe online.

6.26 There had been an increase to the question regarding recommending studying at Notre Dame with 97% positive responses.

6.27 There had been a significant increase in the question on whether the College promotes spirituality with 92% of students being in agreement with this statement.

6.28 **Student application update**

Projections indicate that there should be 1435 Lower Sixth students on roll by the Census date.

6.29 There are plans to slightly increase the Level 2 provision by creating two groups in the following three areas: Business, Health and Science. This will result in a strategic increase from 85 to 135.

6.30 Q: Does this put the College near capacity?
A: This is past capacity but there have been discussions to increase student numbers to around 3000 as this would put the College in a strong position.

7.00 POLICY REVIEW

The following policies were presented for review by the Committee:

7.01 Prayer and Liturgy Policy

The interim Prayer and Liturgy Policy had been approved at the previous meeting. Subsequently it has been reviewed by the Lay Chaplain and it now mirrors what has been issued by the CES.

Agreed: that Prayer and Liturgy Policy is **approved**.

7.02 Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Complaints policy had been reviewed in light of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Agreed: that the Complaints Policy and Procedure is recommended for approval by Corporation.

8.00 SKILLS AGENDA

8.01 Smartlog training was being developed to allow students to complete online courses relating to employability skills.

8.02 Microsoft Clip training in PowerPoint and Excel was being provided which would enable students to receive certificates in these areas.

8.03 Links are being developed with primary schools in sport to allow students to deliver on this area.

8.04 An employability fair will be a new annual event.

8.05 The College is working on a new project in partnership with Leeds City College on Digital badges.

8.06 The Bank of England had asked the College to host training sessions for economics teachers across the country.

8.07 It is planned that Digital students will be employed to design and develop a CRM system.

9.00 LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

9.01 Safeguarding & SEND

A written report from the Safeguarding Link Governor following his meeting with the DSO had been included with the papers for the meeting. He added that he intended to visit College to look at SEND next term.

9.02 Quality of Education

The Link Governor for Quality of Education had met with the Deputy Principal and had looked at common assessment points and had discussed the bespoke Aspiring Leaders training which had been designed by the College. The course had been designed to support teachers who are in years 3 to 5 of teaching as this is the main timeframe for teachers leaving the profession.

10.00 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

10.01 Consideration of a further Link Governor area to be discussed at the next meeting.

10.02 The next meeting would include a presentation from staff. The area would be decided following the next Corporation meeting.

11.00 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 18 June 2025 at 5.00pm

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.