



NOTRE DAME CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

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

WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2025 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT Father Michael Hall (Chair)
Justine Barlow (Principal)
Graeme Brown
Sarah Wickham
David Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Dumont – Senior Deputy Principal
Lucy Johnson – Assistant Principal
Denise Hark – Clerk to Corporation
Helen Collins – Careers and Employability Manager
Georgia Ferguson – Employability and Skills Manager

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Careers and Employability Manager and the Employability and Skills Manager gave a presentation on Careers, Employability and Skills.

The following points were noted from the presentations:

- There are four fully trained careers advisors at Notre Dame.
- All destination data is collected and there is a follow-up with all leavers.
- The College is working towards the Gatsby benchmarks.

Q: Do you maintain contact with students on a gap year?

A: Students are not officially on a gap year unless they have deferred a place at university until the following year. The Careers team makes sure that these students are working or volunteering during their gap year.

- The aim is for the Careers team to become more visible.
- Level 2 students will be expected to do work experience, and they will be supported in doing this.

Q: Is work experience for Level 2 students our requirement or a government requirement?

A: It is part of the Gatsby benchmarks. The biggest challenge for securing work experience is hybrid working.

The longer-term goals are to achieve the Quality in Careers Award, to develop a Sharepoint page and to have more work experience.

- 75 T Level students completed a placement this year
- Skills bootcamps have been introduced.
- A Smartlog programme for key skills has been developed in conjunction with John Lewis.
- Degree apprenticeships in Health are very competitive.
- 5 out of the 14 T Level students in health had gone onto apprenticeships in either nursing or physiotherapy with the remaining students going onto university.
- 16 T Level Digital students are on placements worldwide, with 9 of these students being offered apprenticeships.

Q: Do the degree apprentices work full time?

A: The company pays for their degree and their salary. They do a placement in their third year. One student did a 3-month placement in America last year.

The Principal commented that it was testament to the work of the Employability and Skills Manager who had nurtured the relationship with the employer to prepare them for apprenticeships. There is the expectation that the company will employ new staff from the Notre Dame students every July.

Q: How many students will they take for Legal?

A: They are willing to take up to five students.

Partnership with Leeds Health Care

Students get the opportunity to work on the ward. Next year students will be able to shadow midwives on the delivery ward if agreed by the mother to be.

Leeds Rhinos will support the CTEC Sports Students by supporting their foundation sessions and providing training kits.

Digital badges are being developed. This will enable students to achieve 3 badges over 2 years. This can be in the format of a QR code on the bottom of a CV.

Internal CRM system. Three digital students have been tasked to create a new CRM system. This is close to becoming live.

The Chair thanked the Careers and Employability Manager and the Employability and Skills Manager for their informative presentations.

The Committee considered areas to be covered by a presentation at the next meeting and it was agreed that Teaching and Learning Leads should present at the next meeting as this is a new initiative.

1.00 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Apologies for absence were received from Mark McEvoy and Victor Azubike.

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 18 March 2025 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the typographical error at 8.06, 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 REPORT

The Chair commented positively on the new format of the report and noted that preparation for the CSI inspection was working well.

- 5.01** The Chair drew governors' attention to the positive response to the Lourdes pilgrimage which has 30 students participating this year.

6.00 PRINCIPAL'S AND SLT REPORTS

- 6.01** The written report detailed the KPIs compared to the national benchmark.

- 6.02** It was noted that there had been a further improvement on attendance compared to the same time last year. Attendance for the year to date stood at 94%.

- 6.03** The Principal highlighted the strong profile of Level 2 students, 88% attending PTE.

- 6.04** The new system for Level 2 students enables them to achieve at least a Bronze Stella Maris Award.

- 6.05** Q: Will a college target be determined?
A: There is an internal target for value added. The aim is to be in the top 25% percentile, and to be above the benchmark for higher grades.

- 6.06** The Principal reported that there was cautious optimism for value added and higher grades in the summer exams. Internal QA processes suggest a similar position to last year. The Principal added that it would be positive for the college to consolidate results.

6.07 Curriculum Reform Update

The DfE issued a list of qualifications which would be withdrawn, following a pause and review in the autumn term 2024. A further pause and review is expected for autumn 2025.

- 6.08** It was noted that the impact of the curriculum reform remains relatively unchanged, with single BTECs being replaced with AAQs.

- 6.09** Further information about Criminology is still awaited. The last enrolment for this subject being August 2026.
- 6.10** Q: How many applications have there been for criminology?
A: There are currently 400 applications with over 900 students across criminology and law.
- 6.11** If Triple Applied Science is removed the AAQ offer will be reviewed to meet the progression needs of students.
- 6.12** A caveat has been put on the applications for 2025 that they could be subject to government change.
- 6.13** There are new curriculum offers for T Level Media and T Level Legal. It was noted that there were difficulties recruiting law teachers.
- 6.14** The Assistant Principal reported that the college was engaged in a law internship with Leeds Beckett University. This would involve the offer of one-year paid internship after the student has finished the second year of their law degree. They would work at Notre Dame for a year and then return to the university to finish their degree.
- 6.15** **Ofsted Framework**
A new Ofsted framework may be introduced in the autumn term.
- 6.16** The Assistant Principal, Quality & Curriculum is an Ofsted inspector and will be having training on this in October.
- 6.17** **Safeguarding Annual Report**
This report would be presented at the Corporation meeting on 2 July.
- 6.18** **Complaints Annual Report**
There were no complaints to report for the period September 2024 to June 2025. The Principal reported that this was testament to the work carried out in the background. Any issues below Stage 1 had been dealt with by working proactively with students and parents to resolve concerns.
- 6.19** **Lesson Observations Annual Report**
There has been a move away from one hour lesson observations. Two quality walk weeks have been introduced which look at whether Rosenshine principles are being evidenced in the classroom.
- 6.20** The new system has been positively received and has resulted in a reduction of teacher workload.
- 6.21** Outcomes were strong and these can be evidenced in the data.

- 6.22** One area for development was questioning. Staff are working with the Teaching and Learning leaders to develop this.
- 6.23** This approach would be continued next year along with the introduction of work scrutiny.
- 6.24** The Chair of Corporation noted that the structure of the report should be commended and added that it was pleasing how new starters have been integrated into the College ethos.
- 6.25** **Staff Development Report**
Certificates have been awarded to staff who have completed the Aspiring Leaders course. A further cohort of staff will be recruited in September. It is also planned to network with other colleges on this initiative.
- 6.26** £5,000 has been allocated to a new ECT project for one-to-one meetings and mentoring.
- 6.27** Teaching and Learning Leaders were positive about their new role.
- 6.28** There has been a 47% increase in CPD undertaken by staff.
- 6.29** An industry day has been launched for staff to go out into industry and bring information back into college.
- 6.30** There have been an increased number of requests for placements.
- 7.00** **POLICY REVIEW**
The following policies were presented for review by the Committee:
- 7.01** **Fitness to Study Policy**
A governor commented that there was no reference to the questionnaire to be used after enrolment. The Principal reported that this had not yet been designed.
Agreed: that Fitness to Study Policy is **approved**.
- 7.02** **Careers Education, Information, Advice, Guidance, Enterprise, Employability Framework 2025-26 (for approval)**
There had been a minimal change to the framework.
Agreed: that the Careers Education, Information, Advice, Guidance, Employability Framework 2025/2026 is approved.
- 7.03** **RHSE Policy**
There had been minor changes to this policy.

A governor questioned the removal of the reference to unintended pregnancy on page 11. The Principal explained that this was no longer delivered through PTE but was delivered through tutorials.

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

7.04

Admissions Policy

There had been a minor change to include an age range.

Agreed: To recommend approval of the Admissions Policy to Corporation.

8.00 SKILLS AGENDA

This item had been discussed during the presentation at the start of the meeting.

9.00 LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

9.01 Safeguarding & SEND

A written report from the Safeguarding and SEND Link Governor following his meeting with the DSO had been included with the papers for the meeting. The Link Governor noted that these meetings had been very useful.

9.02 Quality of Education

The Link Governor for Quality of Education had met with the Deputy Principal and had noted that these meetings had been very successful and had worked well.

It had been pleasing to note the glowing report from the external verifier for BTEC Psychology.

9.03 Link Governor for Careers

Following recommendation by the External Review, and request from the Head of Careers. The Committee considered the appointment of a Link Governor for Careers.

9.04 The Chair agreed to contact Mark McEvoy to see if this is something that he might like to take on if a decision is made to have a Careers Link Governor.

9.05 The Principal suggested that a decision on this could be delayed until the new Ofsted framework has been agreed. The Curriculum and Standards Committee could oversee careers in the meantime.

10.00 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

10.01 Annual Strategic Conversation

The Annual Strategic Conversation took place with the DfE Placement team and the FE Commissioner's Office on 15 May with John Barnes attending on behalf of Corporation.

The Chair of Corporation reported that the feedback following the meeting had commended governors on their involvement with the College. He added that this was a strong endorsement of the position of the College and suggested that governors should receive a copy of the feedback report.

11.00 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 24 September 2025 at 5.00pm

The meeting closed at 6.25pm.