



## **Minutes**

### **Curriculum, Standards & Quality Committee (Students and Staff Experience)**

**Tuesday 30th September 2025 at 5:30pm**

**Remote Online Meeting via Zoom**

#### **Present:**

- Nader Sheta – Foundation Governor/Chair of the Committee
- Kate Bainbridge – Foundation Governor
- Elena Cirillo – Foundation Governor
- Patrick Kwong – Foundation Governor/Vice Chair
- Keni Thomas – Associate Member
- Graham Thompson – Principal
- Gabrielle Williams Hamer – Foundation Governor

#### **In Attendance:**

- Karen Foan – Associate Principal
- Clare Baskott – Clerk to Governors

#### **Apologies:**

- Femi Adedej – Parent Governor
- Chukwuweta Uraih – Foundation Governor

**The meeting was quorate throughout.**

**All reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.**

#### **Item 1 - Opening Prayer**

The Principal opened the meeting in prayer at 5:30pm.

The Chair of the Committee welcomed all present to the meeting.

#### **Item 2 - Election of Chair and Vice Chair for a One-Year Term of Office**

Nader Sheta was elected as Chair of the Committee.

Patrick Kwong was elected as Vice Chair of the Committee.

#### **Item 3 - Apologies**

Apologies were received from Femi Adedej and Chukwuweta Uraih.

#### **Item 4 - Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **Item 5 - Notification of Any Other Business**

**Action: Clerk to arrange Doodlepoll for the June meeting.**

## **Item 6 - Minutes of Previous Meeting, Tuesday 10th June 2025**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were approved by the Committee.

### **Item 6.1 - Matters Arising for This Meeting not on the Agenda**

#### **Student Survey**

A Governor asked for clarification about the responses from the French A Level cohort. The Principal explained that the cohort consisted of fewer than half a dozen students, and there were very few participants in the survey from this group. It was noted that Languages generally received positive feedback in the student survey.

#### **Parent Survey**

A Governor asked for clarification around the cancelled lessons. The Associate Principal explained that improvements had been made around communication to students and parents, to ensure they knew that work had been in the event of staff absence.

#### **Catholic School Inspection**

A discussion took place about the Catholic School inspection. The Principal explained that there were very few inspectors who were qualified to inspect Catholic Sixth Form Colleges, with only thirteen CSFC in England.

## **Item 7 - Quality of Provision (Improvement and Outcomes: Principal/Vice Principal)**

### **Item 7.1 - Outcomes 2025 - Results Commentary**

The Principal and Associate Principal gave an update on the summer 2025 results. The overall achievement rate was 93.5%, which was above the 2022/23 national average of 84.2% and the National Provider Group average of 84.9%. Students with disabilities and health problems had performed in line with their peers. The A\*-B rate had remained in line with previous years at 28%.

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the data as outlined in the report.

A discussion took place about students who were struggling with their A Levels. It was agreed that the college needed to continue to balance giving students second chances with appropriate intervention. The Associate Principal explained that this was a key focus for the college. The transition from Year 12 to Year 13 will include counselling some students onto more appropriate vocational courses.

Part of the college's mission was to give students second chances, and this approach was not impacting on their progression. Progression remained strong, and increased numbers of students had secured places at Russell Group universities.

A discussion took place about alternative routes that could be offered to some students.

**Governor Question: How do you handle the counselling of students?**

**Response: The college uses data from GCSEs during the counselling process, sometimes giving students the benefit of the doubt. The college had started addressing this in Year 12 and had counselled some students into vocational courses to ensure their success in Year 13.**

A discussion took place about the Maths and Statistics courses. The Associate Principal explained that Maths results had improved in terms of higher grades. However, the Statistics course did not perform as well as hoped. Some students who had joined the Statistics course did not complete the full two years of Statistics, as these students were the less academic Maths students from the previous year.

**Keni Thomas joined the meeting at 5:53pm.**

**A Level Environmental Science**

The Associate Principal gave an overview and explained that the course was beneficial to students who wanted to study science but did not have high enough GCSE grades to enable them to study A Level Biology. There were currently approximately 12 students enrolled on the course. The college can also move students from other science subjects if they were struggling at A Level.

**Media Course Discussion**

The course was high performing but needed to be marketed to increase student numbers.

**English Language and Literature**

English Language performed better than English Literature and the college was changing the exam board for English Literature to support students. The core texts remained the same as for the previous exam board. English teaching was strong. Level Two GCSE English had dropped in line with national trends.

**Vocational Courses**

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the vocational courses. Achievement rates were high. The college was awaiting updated curriculum information.

**GCSE English and Maths**

Level Two GCSE English had dropped in line with national trends. The college was looking at making changes to when students re-sit their exams if their GCSE results were below a Grade 3.

A discussion took place about resources.

**Economics Dept**

A discussion took place about the improvements which had been seen in the Economics department following the appointment of a new Head of Department. The Associate Principal explained that higher grades had increased significantly, and the pass rate had also increased.

## **Emerging Issues**

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the emerging issues as outlined in the report. The college had a new assessment cycle with regular reviews, intervention strategies, and increased reporting to parents.

There was discussion about the heavy content load for some subjects and whether attendance had been addressed. The Associate Principal explained that monitoring of attendance remained a key focus.

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the areas for catch-up.

## **Buddy System**

A Governor asked about introducing a Buddy system. The Associate Principal explained that this occurred informally in lessons, but it had not yet been formalised.

## **T Levels**

A discussion took place about the T Level courses. The Associate Principal explained that there were low numbers of students in the T Level courses at the college, and nationally.

**Governor Question: Regarding budgeting, is the college obliged to offer all the courses?**

**Response: Yes, the college received funding from the DfE to run some of the courses. The college is running some courses at a loss, but we are hopeful that numbers will grow. The number of students on the Accounting course has increased.**

**Governor Question: How many have enrolled on T Levels?**

**Response: There were currently thirty-six students across the four T Levels. The college needs to keep running these courses. Numbers are reducing on the Engineering Extended Diploma, but the course was still viable. Course numbers fluctuated year on year.**

**Governor Question: How many new students enrolled in September 2025?**

**Response: There are 1,292 students on roll. In Year 12, approximately 800 enrolled; 100 of the students who had enrolled did not turn into actual enrolment. Approximately 700 students enrolled, of those circa 5% undertook T Levels.**

The college was awaiting the defunding announcement and will conduct a curriculum review. Skills and apprenticeships were part of the government agenda.

## **Key Areas for Improvement**

The Associate Principal gave an overview. The college was continuing to support courses where the achievement of high grades, particularly on A Level courses, was below target levels: Biology, Business, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, English Language/Literature, English Literature, Maths, Physics, and Politics.

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the key areas of strength and weakness.

## **Psychology**

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the strategies being implemented to make improvements.

## **Behaviour & Attitudes**

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the support given to students with mental health issues. There had been issues with non-attendance of exams. The exam team worked closely with the pastoral team to support students' wellbeing. The one-year strategic aim focused on GRIT (resilience).

## **Personal Development**

The college had been awarded the Gold Skills Builder Award. Students progressed to a wide range of prestigious destinations. The college needed to embed the EDI Co-ordinator role and was looking at re-advertising the position.

## **Leadership and Management**

T Level recruitment was a key issue. The college was preparing for the imminent Catholic College inspection.

### **Governor Question: Is there an indication of the destination of the T Level cohort?**

**Response: The college is still gathering the data. University destinations were strong. Anecdotally, students had progressed well. Most T Level students progressed onto university courses. The destination of choice was to go on to university. There is difficulty in securing degree apprenticeships.**

## **Item 7.2 - College QuIP with Summary of Key Emerging Issues**

The Associate Principal gave an update on QuIP discussions and emerging issues. Heads of Departments were reviewing Annual Assessment Questionnaires (AAQs). Maths GCSEs remained a concern.

A discussion took place about the vulnerability of students who did not have GCSE grade above 2 or 3.

A discussion took place about the National Literacy Trust's work on literacy and numeracy.

A discussion took place about the difficulty some students had with their maths skills, which made it difficult for them to achieve above a Grade 2 GCSE.

Business results had improved, and the college continued to aim high.

## **Item 7.3 - Curriculum Update**

The Associate Principal gave an update on curriculum developments, including:

- Running Environmental Science
- Media course developments

## **Item 7.4 - External Quality Review Programme Update**

The Associate Principal gave an update on EQR activities and outcomes.

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the EQR peer review programme. The college had eight trained reviewers.

The college had had two departmental reviews: Art, and PE and Sports Science.

All departments who had taken part in the programme were positive about the experience.

### **Item 7.5 - Quality Day 2025 – 30th January 2026 – Morning**

The Associate Principal gave an overview of the Governor Quality Day scheduled to take place on 30th January 2026. The Heads of Department will meet with Link Governors.

Governors were invited to request any items for inclusion.

**Action: Governors to inform the Clerk of any requests.**

### **Item 7.6 - Ofsted Framework**

The Principal gave an update on the new Ofsted framework. There had been a significant change with the new report card system. The Principal gave an overview of the ten areas which schools and colleges will be graded against.

The report card would include a grade for each evaluation area:

- Exceptional
- Strong Standard
- Expected Standard
- Needs Attention
- Urgent Improvement

For the safeguarding area, the college will receive a judgement of 'met' or 'not met' instead of a grade. Ofsted webinars had indicated that inspectors will expect to see 'Expected Standard' as the norm and they did not expect to see 'Exceptional' standards very often. They will initially visit schools and colleges who had volunteered for the first phase. These areas would be a key focus of the Focus Morning. The SLT would be grading the college against the new framework.

### **Item 8 - The Student Experience: Principal/Associate Principal**

#### **Item 8.1 - Year 12 Survey**

The Principal gave an update on the Year 12 survey.

The overall satisfaction rate was 85%, which was 3% higher than last year's survey. The Principal noted that it was particularly pleasing that there had been an improvement in every measure.

The highest scoring statement with a 92% satisfaction rate was "I am treated fairly with respect to my gender, ethnicity, religious belief, disability and sexuality" (90% last year).

There was improvement in the response to the college's digital resources this year, following changes to the way the question was worded.

The lowest scoring statements with an 83% satisfaction rate related to written feedback, revision, and exam preparation.

The Principal gave an overview of key areas for development.

**Governor Question: Have you received any feedback from the Engineering dept?**

**Response: Not yet; the Principal met with the Head of Science and Engineering at the start of the year. This will form part of the department's self-assessment.**

**Governor Question: What were the issues with the Social Care and Travel and Tourism score?**

**Response: There were issues with staff sickness which may have impacted on students' responses. The survey was also undertaken when students were in the middle of their studies, at a time when they were feeling less positive about teachers and the college. Travel and Tourism had some of the best results overall.**

### **Item 9 - Staff Survey: Principal**

The Principal gave an overview of the staff survey. The annual Staff Satisfaction Survey was administered by York College and provided benchmark data against 40 other colleges. The survey was completed in the summer term and had a response rate of 57%, which was the highest of all sixth form colleges and higher than the average of all colleges, which was 51.9%.

The results of this year's survey compared very favourably with those of other colleges and the results received in the previous three years. The results were the best set of results the college had received on both counts. The college scored higher than or equal to the most positive responses in 31/33 statements when compared to the previous three years.

The highest scores were in response to the following statements:

- I am treated fairly and with dignity and respect in the college (100)
- Students are supported to develop positive attitudes to learning and work (100)
- I understand my role and the contribution I am making to the goals of the college (100)
- I am proud to be a member of staff at the College (100)
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective at the College (100)
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The lowest scores were in response to the following statements:

- Staff are not afraid to say what they really think (90)
- Complaints are seen as opportunities for improvement rather than threats (88)
- Adequate resources are provided by the college for students (88)
- Communication is effective in the college (86)
- There is an opportunity for me to progress within the College (77)
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Responses were considered by the SLT, and will form part of the College Quality Improvement Plan. Governors noted the excellent results, which showed the college was a great place to work.

Governors noted that issues had been raised in the free text comments which included the mobile phone policy and IT and computer issues. The Associate Principal explained that the Mobile Phone policy had been revised in conjunction with Heads of Departments. Mobile phones were used by students in some lessons. However, it was a controversial topic; staff

were split, with some wanting a phone ban and there were also some students who had been using phones inappropriately.

**Governor Question: Could there be a more structured approach for each subject?**

**Response: This is a sensitive topic. Heads of Departments are happy with the policy. The college can give flexibility to departments to adapt some of the policies as it varied between departments.**

**Gabrielle Williams Hamer left the meeting at 7:04pm.**

**Governor Question: Regarding students not turning up for exams, is this a COVID legacy, mental health issues? Are students also over-reliant on AI?**

**Response: This is something that we are focusing on. We are also looking at the positives of AI whilst considering key issues.**

The Committee congratulated the college on the survey results.

A discussion took place about newly qualified staff. The Associate Principal explained that the college used the National Professional Qualifications to support staff development, and the college aimed to retain talented staff.

#### **Item 10 - Effectiveness of Committee**

Clerk to circulate a questionnaire following the meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

#### **Item 11 - Risk Management**

**Have governors identified any new risks or modifications to existing risks on the register?**

There was a discussion regarding future Ofsted and Catholic inspections.

The Safeguarding Link Governor raised safeguarding as a consideration.

#### **Item 12 - Any Other Business**

None.

#### **Item 13 - Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 10th February 2026 at 5:30pm on Zoom.

**Action: Clerk to rearrange June meeting date.**

#### **Item 14 - Close of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 7:11pm.

#### **Action Items**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Arrange Doodlepoll for the June meeting	Clerk
Governors to inform the Clerk of any requests for Quality Day agenda items	All Governors
Circulate Committee effectiveness questionnaire	Clerk

**Attendance Record 2025/26**

<b>Name</b>	<b>30 Sept 2025</b>	<b>10 Feb 2026</b>	<b>June 2026</b>	<b>TBC</b>
Nader Sheta (Chair)	✓			
Kate Bainbridge	✓			
Elena Cirillo	✓			
Patrick Kwong	✓			
Keni Thomas	✓			
Chukwuweta Uraih		Apology		
Graham Thompson (Principal)	✓			
Gabrielle Williams Hamer	✓			