

ST HELENS COUNCIL

COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
OF COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON
THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2024 AT 5 PM

Members:

(Based on
Constitution = 16)

Co-Opted Governors

*Mr Garry Anders (Chair)
*Mrs Stacey Hill (Vice-Chair)
*Mr Innes Arnold
*Mrs Margaret Bellis
*Mr Russell Cormack
Mrs Justine Kellett
*Mr Paul Worthington
*Mrs Angela Farrell
Vacancy (1)
Vacancy (2)
Vacancy (3)

Local Authority Governor

*Cllr Anthony Burns

Staff Governors

*Mr Cameron Sheeran (Executive Principal)
*Mr James Hunt

Parent Governors

Mr Karl Van Der Laan
Vacancy (1)

*denotes those present

Also attending:

Mrs Jennifer Merrills, Governor Services, acting as Clerk

Part 1

1. **Apologies and Consideration of Consent to Absence**

Apologies were received from Justine Kellett and Karl Van Der Laan. Governors consented to their absence.

The meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were declared.

3. Governor Membership

Governors were aware that they had a number of vacancies (3 x Co-Opted and 1 Parent Governor).

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 February 2024

A typographical error under point 9 Me Sheeran, rather than Mr Sheeran, was noted.

Otherwise the minutes were approved as a true record.

5. Matters Arising from the above Minutes

There were no matters arising.

6. Minutes from Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2024

The minutes were approved as a true record.

7. Matters arising from Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2024

Governors fed back that the students were engaged, vocal, articulate and well prepared. This was as they had gone through an interview process.

Chair has asked Mr Cormack to email all staff to thank them, Mr Cormack confirmed he has done so.

8. Recommendations from Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2024

N/A.

9. Minutes from Quality of Education Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2024

The minutes were approved as a true record.

10. Matters arising from Quality of Education Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2024

Mr Cormack updated on the following points:-

- KS4 performance update.
- English team were there - new faces.
- New library resources manager – doing a good job.
- Reading etc update – all positive.
- Actions – postponed 6th form performance update to May - requested update re Maths performance for May.

11. Recommendations from Quality of Education Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2024

Committee members need to have data training for better understanding of the reports.

12. Minutes from Finance, Personnel & Premises Committee Meeting held on 14 March 2024

The minutes were approved as a true record.

13. Matters Arising from Finance, Personnel & Premises Committee Meeting held on 14 March 2024

There has been some debate with LA re premises / transition / level of expenditure. LA does not want to commit. Kerry Callaghan SBM dealing with this.

14. Recommendations from Finance, Personnel & Premises Committee Meeting held on 14 March 2024

- i. Proposal to capitalise £68,200 of revenue expenditure.
- ii. Proposal for ICT Development plan as per the costings outlined in the Cowley International College ICT Refresh Plans 2024 contained within the agenda pack.
- iii. Recommendation for SLA's and buy back as per draft budget.
- iv. Recommendation for approval of School Fund account.

Resolved: Governors approved the proposals / recommendations.

15. Local Authority Standard Items

LA Pay Policy still outstanding.

There were no other LA standard items for discussion.

Action: Defer LA Pay Policy to next FGB

16. Policy Review

- i. Provider Access Statement
- ii. Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy
- iii. Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC
- iv. Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy (RSHE)
- v. Safeguarding Policy Incorporating Child Protection Procedures
- vi. Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions Policy

Resolved: Governors approved all policies.

17. Financial Management

School Budget:

Governors noted 3 year projection as follows:-

	Total Resources £	Projected Expenditure £	Surplus / Deficit £
2023/2024	£13,099,250	£11,903,797	£1,195,453
2024/2025	£12,839,146	£12,120,649	£718,497
2025/2026	£12,239,945	£12,166,979	£72,966
2026/2027	£11,593,272	£12,162,726	-£569,454

Governors were advised that the budget for 2024/25 as contained within the agenda pack was gone through in detail at the Finance, Personnel & Premises Committee Meeting held on 14 March 2024. It is a much better picture than last time, SBM was credited for her work and for implementing strategies.

Chair proposed a vote on ratifying the budget as agreed at committee, Governors voted unanimously in favour.

Resolved: Governors approved school budget for 2024/25.

SLA's

This is likely for an interim period, as will happen again post-academisation.

Resolved: SLA's approved as per document at page 205 of the agenda pack.

18. Staff Performance Review Committee

Innes Arnold informed Governors that he wishes to step down from this committee. Number of members is 5, but quorum is 3. Governors agreed there can be 4 members until the start of next academic year, by when may have filled some vacant posts on FGB. Governors were invited to consider joining the committee.

19. Head Teacher's Report

Chair has suggested a verbal update from Mr Cormack on key priorities to avoid duplication.

Mr Cormack discussed the following points:-

Attendance

- This is a national issue.
- Cowley are below the national average for both absentees and persistent absentees (PA).
- Key areas identified to focus on are Y10 and FSM pupils.
- LA review has taken place. Ofsted guidance says schools should do everything in their power, we have received "lots of ticks." Then another review by LA is suggesting we do even more and more.
- Huge challenge and priority issue.

Outcomes

- No real updates.
- Last data drop for Y11 was today. Shows increase in progress and attainment, but this data is skewed by the PA students. Y11 are ready for exams starting straight after Easter holidays.
- Cannot fault the staff for the support they give to students.
- The students who are in and doing their work all are doing really well.

Behaviour

- Tough at the moment. Coincidentally there was a BBC news item on this subject today.
- We have a relentless focus on behaviour, but persistent disruption is a problem. Last term we took a positive step with suspensions, more this term. We are trying to send out a clear message about what is acceptable.

Permanent exclusions have gone up here, but are also up also nationally, across the borough and also at primary school level.

- There have been 6 x permanent exclusions this year so far, with a further 2 currently in process. Reasons for exclusions include drugs, persistent disruption, violent behaviour.
- Staff are trying to look forwards and change the culture, being consistent is key. The vast majority of students are great and love life at Cowley, but some students are trying to challenge authority and the school culture.
- Staff meeting – we are trying to build “the Cowley Way” and things that are going to start in September.
- There is a lot of extreme behaviour from both students and parents. This puts pressure on staff, particularly those on the front line. Parents have had to be removed from the school premises. Mr Cormack said he has received death threats.
- Mr Cormack thanked the Chair for the email he sent to all staff, this was greatly appreciated.
- Mr Cormack has visited all feeder primary schools recently and has communicated that transition from primary to secondary needs to be addressed. There seems to be a disconnect between students doing really well at primary school and then “the wheels fall off” when they get here. Mr Cormack informed Governors that at Cowley we now have more former primary school teachers.
- A transition strategy to deal with children with additional needs is also required.

Staffing

- It has been a difficult term, staff are concerned re school budget and implications of this. Staff consultation shows that staff do understand what the college is going through.
- Have made some strong new appointments recently.
- Still looking for Cover Supervisors and Maths Teachers, need to consider recruitment plan re Maths.

Sixth Form enrolment

- Still working hard.
- Numbers look up compared to last year - 186 have applied this year so far (compared to 126 last year). We are keeping them engaged and also targeting the ones who have not yet signed up.
- We are losing some students from Y12 to Y13.

Curriculum reviews

- All have taken place save for maths.

Question: All this disruption in lessons, does this discourage some students from considering Cowley as a Sixth Form? Is there a correlation?

Answer: This is a good question. Don't know a definitive answer as no data on this point. If you look at Y10 & 11 lessons, there is generally only a little amount of low level behaviour issues. Some students want to get away from "school culture." Pupils understand when they choose their options for A Levels and decide to stay that it is different as people at Sixth Form are choosing to stay. There are no real behaviour issues in KS4. Students are aware that the disruptive students will likely not be continuing at Sixth Form. A lot who left last year to attend other colleges said this was because they wanted a "fresh start" elsewhere.

20. International Trips

Return visit from Stuttgart is taking place.

There are now 16 students going on the trip to China. Mr Sheeran has negotiated with the organisers that they can go to Beijing rather than Shanghai, there is much more culture in and around Beijing – the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square etc, compared to Shanghai being a more generic high rise city.

21. Wellbeing of Students

Mr Hunt updated Governors:-

- Current Y7 cohort. This is a big group where challenging behaviours are taking over, e.g. saying NO to basic requests made by staff / SLT.
- Positives – Y9s were exemplary when we had the Holocaust talk. That is testament to the vast majority of students at Cowley.

Mr Cormack updated Governors:-

- Have had lots of sports successes: - 10s cup final – lots got in. Girls won hockey U15 Merseyside. Sporting successes continue.
- Y11 mocks – attendance was poor, but there was a lot of genuine illness at that time which skews the figures.
- Attendance remains an issue and this will reflect on outcomes. There are some Y7s with significant periods of absence.

Mobile phones

- There have been consultations with staff, students and parents.
- Following DFE guidance there are 4 options:- (1) No phones on site, (2) phones handed in on arrival, (3) phones stored in a locker or (4) no phones to be seen or heard on all sites.
- Gave the students a vote.
- A "soft launch" will take place, likely for option 4 – no phones seen or heard on site. There will be a trial this term.

- Parents views – about 20 or so were involved in consultation and had very polarised views.
- Habits need changing, which is difficult.

Question: How does this fit into behaviour policy?

Answer: Policy will need amending and we will also need a Mobile Phone policy.

- The students have had assemblies about it and we are starting to tell them when we see them with their phones “that will soon be a detention” etc. Will be a shock.
- “Cowley Line” once crossed it no phones to be used.
- Governors considered it was going to be difficult, phones are so entrenched in everyone’s lifestyles these days. Complaints are anticipated.

Question: Is there no DFE guidance re the positive use of mobile phones, incorporate their technology and usage into lessons?

Answer: No, the focus from DFE is very much that they are a distraction and we need to keep our children safe.

Question: What about young carers, if they need to speak to their parent / person they care for?

Answer: They would have to do this before they “cross the line.”

- Governors were concerned about how much time potentially teachers will have to spend enforcing the mobile phone ban rather than teaching.

22. School Newsletter

Governors noted the newsletter contents.

23. Governor Development

There were no updates for this half-term.

24. Time and Date of Next FGB Meeting – Thursday 23 May 2024 at 5pm

Governors noted the same.

25. Urgent Matters

There were no urgent matters.