

**Priestley College – Quality and Standards Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6 March 2025**

Present: Amy Heald, Peter Kahn, Joanne Nuttie, Ian Rigby, Bev Scott-Herron, Carolyn Williams (Chair), Sheila Yates.

In Attendance: James Gresty, George Contos, Mark Eccleston, Carol Blinkhorn (Minutes)
Student representatives: Joseph Roxby and Sophie Colledge

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Mr Jenkins.

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of personal or pecuniary interest in the matters to be discussed were made.

3 Creative Arts and Sport (CAS) Faculty Update:

Overall Performance including actions for improvement

Mr Thompson, Head of Faculty shared and took the Committee through his CAS Faculty Performance Summary Report and highlighted attendance at PM3 was higher than PM3 2023/24 on 23 of the 28 courses.

Update on close monitoring lines:

3D Product Design

- Data analysis - High grades up significantly compared to the same point last year.

Actions:

- Delivery of 1-hour weekly revision sessions on top of 4.5 hours of lessons.
- Product Design Revision Google Classroom created.
- TLA Lead Practitioner working with the team.
- At College and national level the course struggles to serve the needs of the students. Alternative specifications have been investigated. Proposal for next year was to remove Product Design and replace it with EPQ artefact shaped in Product Design manner.

A Level Music

- Data analysis: Significantly less students studying the course this year compared to 2023/24. Consistently low numbers of students over the last 6 years.

Actions:

- First cohort to complete the revised UAL Certificate in Y1 progressing to A level Music in Y2.
- Various TLA actions in place around revision, exam technique, starters etc.
- Struggling to recruit for this course. Mrs Scott-Herron confirmed a similar issue at GCSE. Students not able to access A level without doing GCSE. Consideration given to the viability of the A level provision.

Governors asked the following questions:

Mrs Yates - commented it would be sad to have a curriculum without A level Music on it and enquired if Grade 5 Music theory would be available. Mr Contos noted Grade 5 Music theory is not on offer at the moment and Mr Gresty said it would be a good idea to offer Grade 5 Music theory as a specialism.

Mr Kahn - enquired if there was any flexibility to do an online Music qualification. Mr Contos responded there was no reason to say no but we would need to look at the offer package.

Mr Roxby - would not having A level Music impact on progression? Mr Contos noted Mr Thompson and the team are looking at possible impact.

Mrs Yates - is it acceptable not to have A level Music to get on to a conservatoire? Mrs Scott-Herron noted that the Royal College of Music is very much based on playing ability and looks favourably on A level Music. To access Grade 8 you need to have completed Grade 5 Music theory.

Ms Williams – if A level Music was not available at Priestley, where else in Warrington could students study it? Mrs Yates advised Great Sankey and Lymm High Schools. Mr Gresty asked how governors would feel if the College approached them. Governors agreed to this and noted that online might be possible as well, along with other qualifications ie vocational, Grade 5 Music Theory and EPQ.

Mr Thompson thanked governors for their contributions. **Action: Mr Thompson to follow up on the ideas proffered and would liaise with conservatoires around their requirements.**

BTEC Ext Cert Sport C&D

- Data analysis - Increase in student numbers and decrease in students predicted with High Grades.

Actions:

- This course has historically struggled in comparison to other vocational sports provision and tutor Mr Greaves has focused on improvements and alternative provision to this course. The proposal was a 2-year linear course which would remove the exam unit.

Governors asked the following questions:

Mrs Yates – the linear course Mr Greaves is proposing what qualification would one achieve? Mr Contos replied the Ext Cert, where there will be anatomy/physiology coursework but no exam.

Mr Thompson highlighted the actions from PM3 for all courses, faculty development actions and CAS faculty recruitment.

Mrs Yates - how has the staffing imbalance across Art and Digital happened? Mr Thompson noted that collectively we have the right number of staff but the challenges are about the right subject specialists. Uptake for Art has grown and Digital has declined.

Mrs Yates – if you have staff that can't teach a particular subject, how is this being addressed? Mr Thompson noted that he has completed a skills audit today. Mr Kahn advised skills training to help.

Ms Williams – will not having the right staff impact on grades? Mr Thompson reported that predictions at PM3 look positive, long-term sickness of staff has impacted but between now and the end of the year we have a cover tutor booked.

Mr Thompson reported the College gym needs some investment to enable staff to assess our CYQ fitness instructing course. Mr Gresty noted we have looked at leasing as an option and is following up with the Trust Chief Finance Officer.

Ms Nuttie suggested other gyms be approached which may allow students to use the equipment. Mrs Scott-Herron noted that Sir Thomas Boteler had recently purchased new gym equipment and we could look at options here.

Action: Mr Thompson to task Mr Howells to look at sponsorship or other gyms eg Chester University gym facilities at the Padgate campus.

Mrs Yates acknowledged positive high grade performance data across the majority of CAS courses.

Ms Williams thanked Mr Thompson for a thorough report and update on areas governors have been asked to focus on.

(Mr Thompson left the meeting)

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 January 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record and will be signed electronically by Ms Williams who chaired the meeting.

5 Matters Arising

Action Log - January 2025

| No | Description | Responsible | Completion |
|----|--|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Link Governor Visits Action: Mr Eccleston to share with Mr Bird - governor involvement in College events. Action: Mr Rigby to share his report at the next Quality and Standards meeting. | Mr Eccleston Mr Rigby | Actioned - Ms Nuttie met with Mr Bird today Actioned |
| 2 | Student Progress Monitoring Update including Retention and Attendance (PM2) Action: Mr Contos to revisit data and upload a revised version. | Mr Contos | Actioned |

6 Student Progress Monitoring Update including Retention and Attendance (PM3)

Mr Contos shared and took the Committee through the PM3 Report and highlighted the following:

- Analysis of approach to learning scores.
- Attendance - generally a strong picture and relative to 2023/24.
- Retention - dip compared to 2023/24 but still very positive.
Mr Rigby enquired about the L2 dip and the reason for this. Mr Contos noted we are in line with the national picture and that the L2 lead is doing some work around this and is scheduled to report back her findings to SLT.
- Y2 student by pathway - similar outcomes for A level high grade cohort.
Mr Roxby noted the drop off in T level and asked why this was. Mr Contos noted that this was a relatively small number of students and will look into this. **Action: Mr Contos to investigate the reason behind the T Level high grade dip prediction.**
- Priority areas update - even though there is a line missing from Maths, high grades are where they were in the summer. English attendance focus groups this week.
- Students at risk - slightly more this time than PM2 but manageable with interventions in place to support the students.

Governors asked the following questions:

Mr Kahn - Given the significant difference of average GCSE grades across subjects, does this pose challenges? Mr Contos acknowledged the spread of grade profiles and confirmed that it is a challenge. Mr Gresty noted that last year's leavers had a high average GCSE score when they left

school in 2022. We would hope the Alps score provides positive feedback and next week we begin the next cycle of QuIP meetings and we will look at the analysis.

Resolved – To examine the Performance Monitoring 3 Report

7 Link Governor Visits:

a. Humanities and Social Science - 9 January 2025

Mr Rigby had shared his report and noted priority areas were discussed and actions taken. Mr Rigby attended the Debating Society which was well attended by students. Student recruitment and conversion is a focus for the next meeting.

Mrs Yates reported on the high quality of student contributions to the 'Making History' publication, another enrichment in that area.

Mrs Scott-Herron reported that she, along with other governors, participated in the mock interview event organised by Mrs Heald. A very well managed event and enjoyable experience. Mrs Heald expressed her thanks to governors for their contribution. She noted the students were really nervous but accepted the feedback and logged this in their portfolios. Mr Gresty noted that we are looking to roll this out to Y13 students who have not applied to university.

Ms Nuttie reported she attended the most recent dance production which was outstanding and that the production at Christmas was also very good.

Mrs Yates noted she has spent two days in college with the Languages and Applied Social Sciences faculty, has written up her reports and will share with the Committee. **Action: Mrs Yates to share reports from recent College faculty visits.** Mrs Yates is next in college on 26 March, spending half a day with English.

b. Safeguarding - 13 February 2025

Ms Williams met with the College's Wellbeing Practitioner, College Counsellor, Deputy DSL and Mr Eccleston and explained that they were very generous with their time in terms of explaining what they were doing. The visit focused on three main areas: Carnegie Award and wellbeing support for students, Counselling support and a Safeguarding update.

Governors asked the following questions:

Mr Rigby – regarding student surveys, how often are they issued and are the findings shared with SLT? Mr Eccleston noted that we conduct an induction survey and an exit survey and work with an external organisation who provide comparison data with other colleges. Survey outcomes are shared with SLT.

Mr Rigby - on the College website there are links for the students to get health and wellbeing support but is it obvious for them where to go? Mr Roxby explained that accessing your Progress Tutor is very easy as their door is always open and they can point you in any direction.

Mr Gresty noted if any student asks any member of staff, they will be able to direct them to support.

Mr Rigby - how often do you meet with your Progress Tutor? Mr Roxby replied we have PDP once a week with our Progress Tutor and have a termly one-to-one meet.

Mr Rigby - what happens if a student doesn't attend? Mr Eccleston noted non-attendance is followed up by the Progress Tutor.

Mrs Yates - enquired about the 18.8% of referrals that had a really significant impact on the college and what impact referred to. Ms Williams confirmed she had asked Mr Edgington but had not as yet had a response but would check in with him tomorrow. **Action: Ms Williams to gather further clarification around data ie 18.8% of referrals that had a really significant impact on the college.**

8 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

Thursday 1 May 2025 at 4.30 pm

The meeting closed at 6.20 pm confirmed

Action Log - March 2025

| No | Description | Responsible |
|----|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | <p>CAS Faculty Update A Level Music - Action: Mr Thompson to follow up on the ideas proffered and would liaise with conservatoires around their requirements.</p> <p>College Gym - Action: Mr Thompson to task Mr Howells to look at sponsorship or other gyms eg Chester University gym facilities at the Padgate campus.</p> | <p>Mr Thompson</p> <p>Mr Thompson</p> |
| 2 | <p>Student Progress Monitoring Update including Retention and Attendance (PM3) Action: Mr Contos to investigate the reason behind the T Level high grade dip prediction.</p> | <p>Mr Contos</p> |
| 3 | <p>Link Governor Visits Action: Mrs Yates to share reports from recent College faculty visits.</p> <p>Action: Ms Williams to gather further clarification around data ie 18.8% of referrals that had a really significant impact on the college.</p> | <p>Mrs Yates</p> <p>Ms Williams</p> |