

External Board Review Summary



Loreto College

Reviewer: Sandra Prail

12 June 2024

Executive Summary

This External Board Review is based on the AoC external board review framework. The Framework considers, but is not limited to, principles from Codes of Governance, the Education Inspection Framework and the DfE’s current guidance on external board reviews. In discussion with you it was agreed to focus in particular on how the Board:

- provides strategic input and challenge to the College,
- models and promotes good diversity practice,
- conducts Governor recruitment, induction, development and succession planning,
- considers and responds to diverse viewpoints from staff, students and stakeholders, and
- ensures that the volume of paperwork is not overwhelming for Governors and environmentally sustainable.

Emerging findings have been discussed throughout the Review in a developmental and inclusive approach that supports College improvement and seeks to share best practice, The full report sets out the findings made against the 3 Board dimensions in the Framework with the key evidence that informs those findings.

The following table summarises the headline strengths and areas for development:

	STRENGTH	AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT
BOARD COMPOSITION	Governors have strong commitment to the college and share its values	Review skills data collection to ensure analysis informs recruitment and training and development leading to a rich blend of Governor skills and experience
	A pragmatic approach is taken to maximum tenure of office	Map Board profile against student profile to identify gaps and target recruitment appropriately
	Recognition of the benefits of a diverse Board	
	Chair succession planning and transition	
BOARD STRUCTURE	Student Governors are valued and their input welcomed by the Governing Body	Consider ways to reduce the volume of documentation at meetings and streamline agendas to focus on strategic decision making
		Develop the Lead Governor scheme ensuring that it delivers impact and is a robust means of triangulation and assurance. Develop success criteria and undertake post implementation review

BOARD INTERACTION	The triumvirate works well together	Design and implement an annual Chair appraisal scheme that ensures the Chair's performance is constructively evaluated.
		Continue 1-1 Governor/Chair annual meetings to reflect on individual contributions.
		Refresh the Governance SAR to create a SMART action plan that has clearly defined inputs, links to the College SAR and is evidence and risk led
		Review the capacity of the Clerk to deliver on the areas for development highlighted in this Review in particular governance arrangements

This Review makes the following recommendations:

R1 Consider ways to improve the efficiency of governance arrangements to ensure more focus on core Board functions. A workshop discussion for Governors and senior leaders (perhaps externally facilitated) might help Governors and the Executive to identify practical ways to move debate from an operational to strategic focus.

R2 Review the process of developing the governance SAR, clarify inputs and consider creating a single SMART action plan. Ensure that feedback from regular Chair/Governor 1-1s and Chair performance feedback informs the SAR.

R3 Review the skills audit data collection to ensure it gathers data on core skills and experience which can then inform targeted recruitment and training and development.

The overall conclusion on Board effectiveness is that there is evidence **the Board is proficient and has some impact on college strategy, effectiveness, and outcomes**. Following moderation, a draft report was shared on 2 May. The College made helpful minor changes which have been addressed in this final report. The College also stated that it felt that the Board has more than some impact in matters of effectiveness and outcomes. The Review highlights areas of strength of which the College should be proud. Implementing the areas for improvement will help the Board move from partial to consistent impact.

The Board is scheduled to review the report at its Board meeting on 3rd July and an action plan will be developed and adopted at the first Board meeting of the next academic year in October 2024.

Thanks and appreciation is recorded to all those who have engaged in this Review. Particular thanks to the Governance Professional, Alison Gould, who worked to ensure that arrangements were smooth and efficient.