



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD**

Minutes of the Standards Committee held in the Boardroom at the Derby Road site on Thursday 17 November 2011 at 6.00 pm.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Kate Allsop (Chair)
Nigel Cooper-Fowkes
Professor John Holford
Asha Khemka
James Stafford

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal Teaching & Learning
Nicky Witham, Head of Quality & Performance
Julian Walden, Staff Observer

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
11.64	<u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ANY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA</u> The Chair reminded members to declare at the start of the meeting interests held in any matter to be considered. No interests were declared.		
11.65	<u>WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies for absence were received from Diana Gilhespy. The Clerk to the Corporation confirmed that the meeting was quorate with five Members of the Committee present at the start of the meeting.		
11.66	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2011</u> The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting and were approved and signed by the Chair. AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2011.	Chair	17 Nov 2011
11.67	<u>ACTIONS OUTSTANDING AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</u> The action progress schedule was noted. There were no matters arising.		
11.68	<u>COLLEGE SAR 2010/11 DRAFT</u> The Head of Quality & Performance introduced this item and confirmed that all Further Education colleges are required to complete an annual self-assessment document, and that the SAR		

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

presented is produced against the OFSTED Common Inspection Framework 2010. She explained that the review undertaken is against five identified categories and that when the category scores are amalgamated, this produces an overall quality judgement and the ability for the College to assess its capacity to improve.

She confirmed that the self assessment report:

- a) is an evidence and data based summary evaluation of strengths, processes, achievements and areas for improvement against set objectives and targets,
- b) analyses and reports on what is working well and what is not,
- c) implicitly identifies potential and real threats,
- d) is the basis for SMART action planning, and,
- e) is at the core of all quality improvement activity.

She reminded Governors that under each strand of the self-assessment report there is a Quality Improvement Plan, these plans inform and guide objectives for the 2011/12 academic year.

She drew members` attention to the summary of grades proposed, these were:

- Overall effectiveness – Outstanding
- Capacity to improve – Outstanding
- Outcome for Learners – Good
- Quality of provision – Outstanding
- Leadership and Management – Outstanding.

To support these findings, the School of Learning grade profile is:

- Grade 1 – 4
- Grade 2 – 5
- Grade 3 – 0
- Grade 4 – 0

Business Support Grade profile is:

- Grade 1 – 6
- Grade 2 – 3
- Grade 3 – 0
- Grade 4 – 0

She confirmed that the gradings determined show a very positive profile with School of Learning grades showing an improvement on the 2009/10 academic year and that Business Support grade profiles were an improvement on previous years.

She drew members` attention to the content of the full self-assessment report and confirmed that the time commitment and detail in preparing and evidencing the statements was significant, it was acknowledged that the report looks at both strengths and weaknesses.

Signed : _____ Chair

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The Head of Quality & Performance then went on to explain the validation process. She confirmed that a review of the statements and the gradings had been undertaken on a number of occasions both internally and externally. She explained that validation panels had been drawn together which included both the Committee Chair, the Student Governor and a representative from a college in the League for Excellence and Innovation at various points, and that these panels assessed the presented documents in incredible detail, with very thorough scrutiny and lengthy probing discussions. Members were advised that the validation panels had a supportive yet challenging role and that it was a very robust process undertaken.

The Committee were advised that on an overall basis there was a consistency in grades year on year but that the College had seen a variation in grade profiles on an individual School of Learning basis for 2010/11. She confirmed that the Schools of Learning had graded themselves in line with the findings of the validation process which was very pleasing to note and meant that each School of Learning had approached self-assessment on a very realistic basis. Each area had been able to assess its weaknesses, areas for improvement and strengths. She confirmed that there were some areas where the College had seen a decrease in grades and that these Schools of Learning have detailed plans in place to bring about improvements required.

Members questioned how assurance could be achieved regarding the accuracy and reliability of the grade profiles. The Head of Quality & Performance confirmed that the College has hard evidence to support the grades proposed and that if a grade is given as 'outstanding', then the College and the Executive Team are fully confident of the evidence base that exists to support this. Members were assured that where there are areas for development, the College has been honest and open about it and has put in place action plans to address.

One member of the Committee questioned how the overall grade for the College could be deemed to be 'outstanding' when only four of the five component parts under the OFSTED Common Inspection Framework have been determined to be outstanding, with one being 'good'. The particular area graded as 'good' is outcomes for learners, the question posed is that surely if all of the other of areas were outstanding, then the output/impact which was 'outcome for learners', would have to be outstanding. This question was accepted and in fact the Principal confirmed that she had raised the same issue. The Head of Quality & Performance indicated that the College has seen a dip in retention and success rates in some areas but increases in others, leading to a 1% increase in the overall success rate. She indicated that in terms of leadership and management, it is certainly the case that the Management Team, Executive and Board are ambitious and know what needs to be done to address any areas for development.

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These areas for development are transparent, and that these issues, combined with many others, have contributed to the grade profile of outstanding for leadership and management.

Members` attention was drawn to page 10 of the report where it was acknowledged that `outcomes for learners` is not just about their success rates, and in fact includes a significant number of component parts. It was acknowledged that there is a current weakness in the system in that the College cannot capture data in a sophisticated manner and that this prevents them from fully explaining and evidencing `outcomes for learners` in terms of progression/destination data. It was explained that using the current systems, College could only evidence a very small part of learner outcomes and that this has led to the proposed grade of good rather than outstanding in the component part `outcomes for learners`. The Principal confirmed that one action for development is the introduction of much more sophisticated system of capturing data and that this was imperative given the move to funding and inspections being more outcome based.

Members reviewed page 10 information and acknowledged that the outcomes for learners grade is made up of four component parts, two of which were graded as outstanding and two of which were graded as good. It was explained that this grade profile is in fact better than that seen in the 2009/10 SAR when three of the component parts were graded as good and one as outstanding. This evidences an actual improvement in this area.

One additional point raised by the Committee was the fact that the economic environment is set to get more and more challenging, they questioned whether the measure of `outcomes for learners` will reflect this. The Principal explained that if the College can evidence that it is in fact doing all that it can to support students, even in such a difficult economic environment, then it is unlikely to be penalised for failing to secure employment for students when it is simply the case that jobs do not exist.

The Principal indicated that she did not feel that the College has the systems in place at the current time to prove that the College is in fact doing `all that it can`, and that this is a priority area for development in 2011/12.

Having reviewed the document in great detail, members were happy to approve its presentation to the Corporation for approval.

AGREED to:

- a) note the content of the College Self Assessment Report and grades of 2010/11, and
- b) recommend that the College Self Assessment Report and grades for 2010/11 be approved by the Corporation.

Signed : _____Chair

Date:

11.69 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

11.70 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk to the Corporation confirmed that the next meeting was scheduled for 26 January 2012.

Meeting closed at 6.30 pm.

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

Signed : _____Chair

Date: