



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held in the Vision Room, Derby Road on Thursday
4 October 2012 at 6.30 pm**

BOARD MEMBERS Kate Allsop, Chair
PRESENT: Asha Khemka
Diana Gilhespy
John Holford
Marie Oakton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal: Teaching and Learning
Nikki Witham, Head of Quality and Performance
Dawn Stewart, Head of School: Business, Professional and Cont. Education
Linda Gratton, Head of Student Support
Eleanor Taylor, Head of HE and International

13.01 APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIR 2012/13

Kate Allsop was nominated as the Chair of the Committee. This nomination was seconded and approved.

AGREED: to approve Kate Allsop as the Standards Committee Chair for 2012/13.

13.02 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded those present to declare any interests that they may have on any agenda items to be discussed. No interests were declared.

13.03 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Adrian Harpham. Marie Oakton and Dawn Stewart were welcomed to their first meeting of this Committee.

13.04 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Clerk to the Corporation reminded members that the meeting scheduled for July 2012 had not gone ahead. The Committee Chair had approved the content of the minutes as accurate and had directed Committee members to simply note items on the agenda for 'information'. Any items requiring a 'decision' have been rolled forward to this meeting and included within the agenda.

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

AGREED: to note the update.

13.05 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

Members reviewed the table, and noted that item 1, the internal processes - QIP will be presented at the next meeting as part of the self-assessment report.

Nikki
Witham

15 Nov
2012

13.06 DEPUTY PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and indicated that the most important element for review at this time is the post inspection improvement plan. Members' attention was drawn to page 5, which highlights the activity identified in detail. It was confirmed that all items are currently 'red' as progress towards them has been limited due to the fact that it is so early in the year. Throughout the year all items will move to amber and green once they are completed. Members' attention was drawn to page 13, where clarity is given regarding categorisation of red, amber and green.

Members reviewed the improvement plan and all agreed that the format presented was really helpful, it was agreed that an update on the post inspection improvement plan would be presented as part and parcel of the Deputy Principal's report at each meeting.

Deputy
Principal

Standing
Item

Other matters raised by the Deputy Principal for information were:

- A change made to the success rate measure is to calculate an additional success rate, which includes functional skill qualifications. The new success measure will only be used for illustrative purposes until a clear definitive statement in regard to the future of functional skills is provided by the data services. What the College intends to do is to show statistics both 'with' and 'without' functional skills qualifications.
- A review of FE Teacher training qualifications is to be undertaken within the FE and skills sector. BIS has asked LSIS to conduct the project. The current system has been criticised for being confusing and not taking into account previous professional experience. As a result the position of teacher training qualifications is a bit 'in limbo' until full development of the FE Guild.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

13.07 LEARNER RECRUITMENT – 2012/13 (TARGETS AND POSITION TO DATE)

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and confirmed that what was presented was an update following the report that was reviewed by the Board in September 2012, the following was noted:

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- Planned full time 16-18 enrolment is 3239, actual enrolled is 3029 which equates to 94% of planned. 72 Trackwork learners are still to enrol, this will take the college to a total of 3101 enrolments, which will equate to 95.7% of plan.
- Planned full time 19+ enrolments are 775, 854 have enrolled which equates to 110% of plan. Further groups of Hair & Beauty students are to enrol in January and April 2013.
- HEFCE funded new full time entrants to HE target is 211, with a secondary target of 186, the College has now enrolled 192.
- The secondary target for full time equivalent FTE HEFCE enrolments is 454, enrolment is now 462.22.

Members discussed the unusual .22% and were advised that not every part time Student in HE is a rounded 0.5 placement. Foundation degrees are about the number of credits, 0.5 is a minimum but Foundation degrees are normally .67.

Members were reminded that this report relates to full time enrolments only and part time statistics are separated out and includes enrolments that continue throughout the entirety of the academic year.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

13.08 EXAMINATION RESULTS 2011/12

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and drew members` attention to page 20, which summarises the key points. At page 29 the exam results are provided by subject. Members were assured that each area has an action plan in place to bring about improvements.

The following was noted:

- A2 overall pass rate shows a continuing improvement trend. Overall pass rate increased from 98.9% to 99.2%. Of the 17 subjects reported, 15 had 100% pass rates.
- The national pass rate increased from 97.8% to 98%, the College was therefore above national percentage.
- The proportion of passes at high grades (A* B) fell by 4% to 28%, the proportion of A* C grades also reduced from 69% to 62% compared with the previous year. All agreed that this was a disappointing position.
- The AS overall pass rate fell by 2% from 79% to 77%. Of the 19 subjects offered, 3 had a 100% pass rate and a further 5 pass rates above 90%, this however is still disappointing.
- The proportion of passes A to C grade reduced from 53% to 48% compared with the previous year.
- GCSE pass rates continue to improve, the pass rate improving from 98.5% to 99.4%.
- The proportion of A* C grade passes though reduced from 65% to 60%.

Signed : _____ Chair

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- Key areas for improvement in 2012/13 are:
 - a) Improvement in proportion of high grades A*B and A*C grades at A2 level.
 - b) Improvement in overall pass rate at AS level.
 - c) Improvement in proportion of A-C grades at AS level.
 - d) Improvement in A*-C grades at GCSE level, specifically in English and Mathematics, it was noted that the sciences had done very well.
 - e) Improve retention rates for GCSE qualifications.

Members reviewed the data provided in detail and agreed that whilst there were some improvements there were some clear disappointing slippages which have to be addressed. The Committee felt that it was their role to set challenging targets and clearly explain to staff the consequences of not hitting targets. There is an identified need to better listen to student feedback and how this will lead to changes in teaching, learning and curriculum delivery, particularly at AS level.

In relation to the A2 results, all acknowledged a desire not to see another year where high grades do not improve. What needs to be introduced are clear consequences for continued failure to improve. It was agreed that this Committee would look at an improvement framework and monitor activity and impact at each meeting. The Principal firmly expressed the belief that there is a need to monitor and put sanctions in place to bring about improved performance. The Management Team must intervene early and not leave too late in the day.

AGREED: to note the report presented.

Patricia
Harman

Standing
Item

13.09 HIGHER EDUCATION

1) HE Strategy

Eleanor Taylor introduced this item and drew members` attention to the HE Strategy 2012/13 to 2014/15. She explained that this document sets out the College`s strategy for the next three years and outlines how it will be achieved. Central to this strategy remains the principle that the HE strategy should be in line with the College`s Mission, Vision and Core Values and underpinned by a continued commitment to widening participation and increase local access to university level provision, including visibility of university provision and clarity of information on student finance.

She explained that the strategy has been rewritten in response to the national picture and challenges, particularly fees. The full strategy was reviewed at page 35. It was noted that the College has successfully changed university partners, from Leeds Metropolitan University to Birmingham City University for year 1 students.

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To develop HE provision further, the Team are:

- a) Reviewing the offer.
- b) Improving progression.
- c) Actively improving student engagement.

Members noted that whilst the key strategy objectives remained the same, they have been reviewed in light of the changing context for HE and that this should drive the provision forward.

AGREED: to approve the HE Strategy 2012/13.

2) Report from the Academic Standards Committee

Members' attention was drawn to the report from the Committee, it was noted that its last meeting took place on 11 September 2012. Key agenda items were HE enrolments against target, provisional success rates, national student survey outcomes, summary external examiner reports, draft HE strategy and annual monitoring update.

In general discussion, it was noted that the Academic Standards Committee also reviewed external examiner reports with no sanctions being identified and very positive reports. In terms of success rates, the College does not yet have a full picture, but expects to be in roughly the same position as the previous academic year.

Members reviewed the improved national student survey results, with 'satisfaction overall' rising from 80% to 91%. Explanations given for the increase were good teaching and learning and careful monitoring of previous year's comments and action planning.

One question raised by the Principal was - why is it that the College is doing so well in relation to student satisfaction in HE but not FE? Is there a way that we can compare the delivery models, as it is the same staff who are providing teaching and learning.

Members discussed the learner survey statistics at page 43 and questioned whether or not comparisons can be made with universities as well as HE in FE. Members were advised that comparisons can be made and the College is still performing well. It was noted that the College uses a selection of quotes from students in its marketing materials.

3) HE Quality Assurance and annual monitoring arrangements for 2012/13

Members' attention was drawn to page 45, which sets out an overview of the arrangements for quality assurance and annual monitoring arrangements for HE. College processes meet the requirements of the universities' and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) guidelines, and are published in the HE Academic Handbook, which is revised annually. The

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report outlines key changes to QAA guidance and review methodology and to College processes. It was noted that the annual monitoring process is considered at annual HE Academic Standards Committee, which also considers the College self-evaluation document before its consideration by the College Executive. In the new methodology there is a clear need to look at capacity to improve, and this will be graded on the basis of a 1-4 rating.

AGREED: to note the update provided

13.10 TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK 2012/13

Nikki Witham introduced this item and explained that the learning framework has been developed for 2012/13 to include guidelines and objectives that will provide a structure for the improvement of teaching and learning as has been identified through the classroom observation process. The College Post Inspection Improvement Plan reflects the guidance provided in the College Inspection Framework September 2012. It was noted that the framework has six key aims. In general discussion it was explained that when staff do apply the framework there is a clear impact, and that the focus for the 2012 year is on the 'learner' and not the 'teaching'. Members were advised that the effective application and impact of the framework will be monitored and measured closely throughout the year through teaching observations, support for improvement of teaching and learning, curriculum reviews, student services and the self-assessment process.

In terms of improvements, the following was noted:

- Lesson observations will clearly identify development required.
- Teaching and learning induction for new staff has set out clear professional expectations, this had been rolled out to all delivery staff.
- Learning Consultants are in place to support and coach staff.

Members all agreed that the key was to ensure that staff consistently apply the framework and that there needs to be clear mechanism to monitor implementation. Members were advised that the implementation and impact is measured by:

- a) learning circles
- b) professional squares
- c) 'how to' activities
- d) bespoke delivery

Members all acknowledged that there was a need to balance trust and monitoring and that a challenging, yet supportive environment needs to be established. It was agreed that in future reports the focus should be on impacts and evidence of progress, rather than just explaining the processes in place. It was noted that a full year mid year report

Nikki
Witham

Feb 2013

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Date:

illustrating the impact of the framework and the progress and impact on the success measures will be presented to the Committee in February 2013.

AGREED to:

- a) Note the update provided
- b) Approve the Learning Framework 2012/13

13.11 QA AND QI 2012 PLAN

Nikki Witham introduced this report and confirmed that the QA and QI frameworks have been amended to reflect the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection process. Members` attention was drawn to page 64, where it was explained that the framework for Schools of Learning include:

- Self-assessment
- Teaching and learning observations
- Curriculum reviews (undertaken by the Executive Team)
- Support for improving Teaching & Learning
- Learner Voice
- Internal verification
- Audit
- Regional and national sharing good practice

It was explained that the Quality Assurance arrangements differ between Schools of Learning, partner providers and business support areas. In relation to partners different measures have had to be introduced, these include:

- Self-assessment.
- New partner selection process.
- Partner quality, teaching and learning performance reviews.
- Teaching and learning observation process.
- Limited notice (2 day) performance inspections (approximately 20 planned).
- Support for improving teaching and learning.
- Mid year partner review.
- Learner voice/employer voice.

Business support areas are also encouraged to improve quality and these are assessed through self-assessment, customer voice, audit and regional and national sharing of good practice.

Members were advised that a mid year report illustrating the progress and impact of the QA and QI frameworks for all three areas will be presented to the Standards Committee at its meeting on 17 January 2013.

Nikki
Witham

17 Jan
2013

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13.12 INTERNAL REVIEWS 2011/12 END OF YEAR REPORT

Nikki Witham introduced this item and confirmed that the data presented provides a picture of the complete 2011/12 academic year. It was noted that in 2012/13 the College will not be undertaking internal reviews for on campus delivery in the same format. Members were reminded that the internal reviews had focussed on areas identified as having 'poor performance' in previous years, and that this had been a very intense mechanism to seek to bring about improvements. As with previous items it was agreed that it was important to focus upon impacts and outcomes, rather than the processes in place.

AGREED: to note the 2011/12 end of year report.

13.13 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REVIEW FRAMEWORK 2012/13

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and confirmed that the content of the report follows on from the presentation made to the College Board at its September meeting. In general terms, members were reminded of the Ofsted Inspectors' criticisms following review of procedures, particularly the fact that SARs are insufficiently self critical, some grades are too generous, self assessment process often fails to identify crucial areas for improvement, and Governors have not reviewed the SAR with sufficient rigour.

It was accepted that the College has always looked at the SAR, but going forward it is the intention of the Executive to review and challenge the process and grades more rigorously. A more critical process has been introduced.

Members noted the main changes to the revised process, which include:

- a) A requirement at every stage of the process for scrutiny, accountability and validation.
- b) Heads of School be more involved and accountable in driving through improvements.
- c) The Executive Team will be more involved in providing an external view and recommendations.
- d) External validation of the SAR will be extended to two members of the Standards Committee and two external representatives.
- e) A more obvious connection between the Schools of Learning and the Colleges SARs and QIPs.

Members of the Committee questioned how the staff had responded to the Ofsted report. It was felt that generally staff had accepted the findings and agreed that there were areas to improve and that a response would be needed quickly.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

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Date:

13.14 **SAFEGUARDING**

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and reminded Governors that Safeguarding was awarded Grade 2 by Ofsted due to some observed unsafe working practices. Some learners at Station Park wore lanyards around their necks whilst operating machinery and a chemical cleaning spray was used at the Academy when there was insufficient ventilation for learners.

The Safeguarding Development Plan for 2012/13 has been developed through the extension of the robust 2011/12 plan, continuing with the two themes of attaining excellence and reaching new heights. Under the theme of reaching new heights in Safeguarding there are three priority areas:

- 1) Partners
- 2) E-safety
- 3) Responsibility

Under the theme of obtaining safeguarding excellence, there are four priority areas:

- 1) Safe environment
- 2) Safe recruitment
- 3) Protecting young people and vulnerable adults
- 4) Governance and reporting

It was noted that Diana Gilhespy continues to be the Link Governor for Safeguarding and that two Learners are members of the Safeguarding Steering Group for 2012/13. Members reviewed the development plan for 2012/13 and thought that it was entirely sensible and self-explanatory.

Members were advised that two Safeguarding incidents were reported by partners during July 2012.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

13.15 **SURVEY RESULTS**

Linda Gration introduced this report and drew members' attention to page 99 which provided the following summary:

- When compared with national ratings QDP survey results 2 show all ten areas surveyed in the upper quartile.
- Two Schools of Learning have results significantly below College average scores.
- Learner voice continues to be effective to engage with Learners.
- Formal complaints increased by 21% on 2010/11.

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Members reviewed the data on a School-by-School basis and agreed that there were two worrying Schools (Construction and Building Services, and Engineering & Transport Skills), these are particularly of concern given that they score negatively against all indicators. One explanation for this is that the return rates for these two Schools is much lower than other areas, and that this will have had an influence, albeit that it will not explain the entire picture.

Members reviewed the data in detail and made the following comments:

- Page 104 – whilst the percentage rate of complaints looks high, it is actually not significant in terms of numbers.
- Page 109 – the statistics do not give the percentage response rate for each school, which make it a little difficult to compare.
- Learner strategy has been reviewed with much more focused use of ‘user groups’.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

13.16 GOVERNANCE ITEMS

1) Terms of Reference 2012/13

The Clerk to the Corporation introduced this item and confirmed that these were approved by the Board at the July meeting. Members were happy to move forward with these unchanged.

AGREED: to note the Committee Terms of Reference 2012/13.

2) Workplan for 2012/13

The Clerk to the Corporation introduced this item and again confirmed that this was presented as a framework starting point only. Items would be added as and when required throughout the year. Members were entirely happy to support continued use of the workplan.

AGREED: to approve the Workplan 2012/13.

13.17 AOB

There were no items of additional business.

13.18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Clerk to the Corporation reminded members that the next scheduled meeting was 15 November 2012.

Meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date: