



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held in the Board Room, Derby Road site on Thursday 3 October 2013 at 5.00 pm

GOVERNORS Kate Allsop – Chair
PRESENT: John Holford
 Rob Martlew
 Asha Khemka
 Diana Meale

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
 Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal: Teaching & Learning
 Nikki Witham, Head of Quality & Performance
 Linda Gratton
 Eleanor Taylor, Head of HE and International
 Elaine Martin, Director: Quality and Performance
 Louise Knott, Director: Communications, Marketing & Learner Engagement
 Brian Malyan, Head of School: Engineering & Transport Skills
 Paul Rana, Head of Student Support

13.79 APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

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

AGREED: To appoint Kate Allsop as the Standards Committee Chair for the 2013/14 academic year.

13.80 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.

13.81 WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

As there were some new faces, round table introductions were made. Paul Rana and Brian Malyan were welcomed to their first meeting of this Committee.

Apologies for absence were received from Marie Oakton.

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this department has lost some staff over the summer so is not currently over staffed.

In relation to the Ofsted learner review, members were reminded that responses are recorded within academic years. In 2012/13 there were insufficient responses to produce feedback. The response rates will continue to be monitored and reported to the Committee during 2013/14.

Student success – 2 students have secured places in the final heats of the World Skills UK competition to be held at the NEC in Birmingham in November 2013. Deanna Pitacco a holistic therapy student will compete in the aromatherapy competition and George Morris will compete in the Microsoft network administrator category. Members were also advised that the college's application for a beacon award in relation to media is looking promising. Assessors attended the college this week and were very impressed and the students performed exceptionally.

AGREED: To note the content of the update provided.

13.85 EXAMINATION RESULTS 2012/13

The Director: Quality & Performance introduced this item and drew members' attention to the following:

- The A2 pass rates show a continuing improvement trend. The overall pass rate increased from 98.9% in 2011/12 to 99.7% in 12/13. Nationally the pass rate increased slightly from 97.8% to 98.1%. There are 20 subjects reported and 19 had 100% pass rates.
- The percentage of passes at higher grades (A*-B) at A2 rose by 4% to 33%, the proportion of A*-C grade passes improved by 11% to 74% compared with the previous year.
- The AS pass rate increased by 8% from 78% in 2011/12 to 86% in 12/13.
- The percentage of passes at A and B grades increased by 16% from 22% to 38% and at A B and C grades from 19% from 50% to 69%.
- The overall success rate for A2 has increased from 89% to 96% resulting from a 7% increase in retention. The overall success rate for AS has increased by 11% to 80% this is due to an improvement in both retention and achievement.
- No subject at AS or A2 fell below 75% success rate.
- GCSE pass rates continue to improve, the pass rate improved to 100% from 99.5%
- The proportion of A*-C and A*-B grades passes reduced to 52% for both grade profiles representing a 7% and 6% decline respectively.
- Key areas for continued improvement in 13/14 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.

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- d) Improvement in A*-C grades at GCSE level to at least 60% in all subjects in 2013/14.

In terms of entries it was noted that there were 299 for A2, 609 for AS and 213 for GCSE.

In terms of the improvements seen, members were advised that the college is being more rigorous in relation to compliance with its entry criteria and this seems to be reaping the rewards. Teams are also more rigorous in relation to planning and setting homework, etc. There is a new head of school who is showing much improved leadership. It was confirmed that the increase in relation to higher grades is as a result of a targeted strategy. The Committee was advised that if individuals do not hit the entry criteria then they are offered alternative provision and no individual is ever turned away from the college.

Committee members all passed on a huge well done to the team given the improvements seen across the board.

In reviewing the report a number of points were raised:

- Page 23, paragraph 9.2 – it was confirmed that the college will not use the ALPS system to compare this particular cohort. It was explained that a lot of the GCSEs relate to adults and these are very hard to track back. It was confirmed that the college is using ALPS for the current cohort.
- Members all agreed that it would be useful to review the national value added report and compare where the college sits by comparison.
- Consultation is out at the minute regarding post 16 provision and changes to A-levels. It was thought that it would be useful to invite Joe Mercer from the AoC to give a presentation to this Committee on the sector changes. All agreed that they would like some discussion in this area.

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AGREED: To note the content of the update provided.

13.86 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORKS

The Head of Quality & Performance introduced this item and confirmed that her report is split into two elements a) an updated Quality Improvement Plan for the 2012/13 year and b) Quality Framework for the 2013/14 year.

In relation to the QIP update the report gives a position as at 7 September 2013. She confirmed that the college team is currently in the process of finalising the SAR for the 2012/13 year and once complete it will be possible to pull the QIP together for the 2013/14 academic year. She confirmed that the results show a similar good message as reported in the previous agenda item. All agreed that it was particularly good to

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see evidence of improvements in Hair and Beauty.

The Head of Quality and Performance confirmed that the college has an overall success rate at the current time of 84% for classroom based learning. This was compared with just under 82% for the 2011/12 year.

Members' attention was drawn to the report and the following was specifically brought to members' attention:

- The college QIP reflects the Common Inspection Framework 2012.
- The college QIP for 12/13 was formulated following the validation of the self assessment report. The key cross college areas for improvement were included in the QIP.
- The college QIP for 12/13 was supported by the college post inspection improvement plan which has a specific focus on outcomes from the Ofsted inspection in May 2012.
- A range of activities, strategies and resources have been used to support the areas for development.
- All actions for improvement have been achieved and have had a positive impact on the students' experience.

Members reviewed the performance in relation to partners and were advised that the college has, as a result of quality assessments, dropped 72 partners that were used in the 2012/13 year. However, it has also introduced new partners. It was explained that new partners, because they are not known to the college, are automatically RAG rated as high risk. This means that at any given point in time there are likely to be partners who are deemed to be red risks. Members reviewed page 27 paragraph 7.2 which sets out the quality improvement framework for partners. It was acknowledged that a full risk assessment is undertaken regarding each and every partner both at a quality and financial level.

Members reviewed the lesson observation statistics at page 29 and acknowledged that 100% of staff were not subject to graded observations. This is as a result of some long term sickness and/or maternity leave which has affected the ability to observe all staff.

Members agreed that it was pleasing to see that the Hair and Beauty observation profile is very much improved. It was acknowledged that the re-inspection could take place at any time. The Principal questioned how confident the quality team were in relation to the robustness of the observation grade profiles. It was explained that the team are more confident this year than in the last, particularly as a joint validation process has been undertaken this year. The Principal confirmed that the college really needs to see a high number of sampling exercises undertaken. All agreed that it was critical to invest in assurance in this area to avoid any shocks and disappointments. The Principal expressed a belief that it is critical to ensure that teaching and learning is right in this area to address any prior criticisms.

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Members reviewed the contents of the Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement Framework for employer response partners, provided for 2013/14 set out at page 34.

AGREED: To note the 2012/13 QIP end of year report and approve the 2013/14 Quality Framework.

13.87 HE

The Head of HE and International introduced this item and drew members' attention to page 37 which provides a HE update following meetings of the HE academic standards committee. She confirmed that the big target for the team for 2013/14 is to prepare for the QAA review which will take place in 2014/15.

Members reviewed the updated strategy set out at page 40. It was acknowledged that no significant changes have been made and that any amendments are simply to bring the strategy up to date.

Members were advised that the HE provision has now moved into a new hub which will be branded as the Vision University Centre. It was confirmed that really positive feedback has been given regarding the separate HE area from students.

In reviewing the documentation a number of questions were raised:

- Page 41, paragraph 3.1.1 – members questioned what the reference to 'broaden and widen' meant in real terms. It was explained that 'widen' relates to the widening participation agenda and 'broaden' means extending the breadth of the offer available to students.
- Page 44, paragraph 6.1 – members questioned the particular changes referred to in this paragraph. It was explained that a new study skills coach has now been in place for just over a year and her contribution is very positive. One of her foci is employability which is a very topical subject in the sector. The team has been realigned to match the skills gap evident.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided.
- b) To approve the HE QA procedure and processes.
- c) To approve the HE Strategy for 2013/14.

13.88 LEARNING FRAMEWORK 2013/14

The Head of Quality and Performance introduced this item and summarised the Learning Framework established for 2013/14. In reviewing the documentation members questioned whether there was a better phrase to be used rather than 'delivery staff'. Committee members questioned whether or not it was simply possible to say teacher. It was explained that this was not possible because there is a

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range of individuals who deliver e.g. teachers, trainers, and assessors. In discussion, it was felt that there was a better phraseology perhaps a) all staff delivering programmes b) all staff engaged in... c) Educators.

It was agreed that the team would review the phraseology and come up with an alternative in conjunction with discussions with John Holford. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal would provide John Holford with a list of titles/terms currently used so that a review and assessment of an alternative descriptor could be undertaken.

AGREED:

- a) To note the update provided.
- b) To approve the Learning Framework 2013/14.

13.89 STUDENT INTENDED DESTINATIONS

The Director: Quality & Performance introduced this item and drew members' attention to the following:

- The college surveys intended destinations of full time classroom based students at the end of their programme of study during the period between June and September of each subsequent academic year i.e. in this case 2012/13.
- Information on actual destinations is collected between October and January related to students' actual destinations.
- Intended destinations data was collected from 2117 full time classroom based students.
- Supporting students in their progression to positive outcomes is something the college does very well and is a key strength. Overall 95% of students progressed to a positive outcome in 2012/13.
- The highest proportion of students 47% progressed onto another courses at West Nottinghamshire College.
- The number of students progressing to higher education courses elsewhere at 10% is the second highest intended destinations category.
- The data shows very similar comparisons between male and female destinations.
- The data shows very similar comparisons in white British and other ethnicities destinations.
- Historically, the vast majority of students have achieved their intended destination with less than a 2% variation between intended and actual destinations.

Members' attention was drawn to page 63 which summarises the actions going forward and clearly indicates a proposed change in relation to collation mechanisms. She confirmed that the college has trialled a number of collection methods and it is intended to use the most successful. It was noted that HE data is collected nationally and the information is just being provided to the college in this area.

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The Principal questioned how the college verifies the actual destinations. It was explained that internal progression is easy as this data simply floods the ILR automatically and the same position occurs in relation to HE. Any student not falling into these two categories has to be contacted directly. It was acknowledged that this is not easy. In relation to this latter cohort it was noted that the college has found only a 2% variance between intended destinations and actual destinations and therefore there is a fair amount of certainty regarding progression onto intended destinations. The Principal indicated that the college needs to look at a system that can be used to assess sustainability of destinations and requested that the team investigate a sampling exercise. It was acknowledged that this would not be easy, but all agreed that the college needs to review how robustly it collects the data and it is an issue to be managed.

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Members reviewed the updated table at page 62 and suggested that for reporting purposes if the college was to take out the 46.9% of students who progress to further education at the college then the report would give a much clearer view of progression 'elsewhere' and would give a better idea of external progression.

In terms of future reporting the following was agreed:

- a) The Director: Quality & Performance to report in both ways (including and excluding further education at West Nottinghamshire College to ensure the clarity of the position).
- b) The committee to be provided with comparisons against national benchmark and year by year.
- c) For the next report statistics to be included in relation to work based learning.
- d) HE UCAS data to be provided when available in relation to courses and institutions.
- e) A further breakdown regarding the statistics is required as it is not currently clear what the college means by 'full time' students.

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One further comment was made in relation to the page 63 summary of analysis of actual destinations by student groups. The Committee questioned whether in reporting and collating the data as set out the college and the Committee were complying with their Equality and Diversity obligations.

AGREED: To note the content of the update provided.

13.90 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and confirmed that good progress was made against all aspects of the development plan in 2012/13. Some aspects of the work have been taken forward to the development plan for the 13/14 academic year as some areas of work require monitoring e.g. partners. The priority areas within the plan are:

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- a) partners, including vision work for skills
- b) safety and e-safety
- c) responsibility
- d) safe recruitment
- e) protecting young people and vulnerable adults
- f) governance and reporting

It was noted that a key focus remains the elements of safeguarding within partner provision and Vision Workforce Skills. The nature of this aspect of the business involves the movement within the partner cohort and includes both new partners working with the college and changes in staff within partners. These factors make this a potentially higher risk than college based provision.

Members` attention was drawn to page 67 which sets out the safeguarding plan for the year. It was confirmed that progress against this plan will be reported throughout the academic year.

AGREED: To note the content of the update provided.

13.91 TEACHING LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The Head of Quality and Performance introduced this item and drew members` attention to the following:

- 266 (78%) of staff received a grade 1 or 2, this figure increased to 304 (89%) following accessing support from improvement and re observation.
- 25 (7.5%) of staff received a grade 3 following re observation and 12 (3.5%) staff received a grade 4 following re observation.
- At least 85% of staff received a good or better grade within six schools of learning and the work related training area.
- Two schools of learning academic, public services and sports studies, and creative industries and digital technologies did not have any grade 4s following re observation.
- 19 staff who received a grade 3 or grade 4 were not available for re assessment due to long term illness, maternity leave, changes in timetabling or provision due to small numbers. It is the intention of the team to ensure that these staff receive an observation in term 1 of this academic year.
- 150 subcontracted partner provider (97%) staff received a graded observation in 12/13. 4 (3%) of staff did not receive graded observation because of changes in timetabled activity.
- 118 (79%) subcontractor partner provider staff received a grade 1 or 2 following re observation in 12/13. The percentage of observations graded good or better has improved by 18% compared with the prior year.

Teaching, Learning, Training and Assessment policy 2013/14 is currently out to consultation with staff.

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In reviewing the content of the report, members were advised that the update provides final observation results for the 12/13 academic year. Members were reminded that the observation process falls into two stages a) ungraded and b) graded. It was noted that 100% of staff were subject to an ungraded observation. However, not all staff were seen at graded observation. Any that were not will be a priority for the beginning of this academic year.

The Committee agreed that it was pleasing to see clear evidence of good or better teaching and learning across the whole of the organisation.

The Principal questioned the accuracy of the 89% observation profile. She commented that the college had had an 89% pre inspection profile and then this had come down to 50% at inspection which had been a huge shock. She questioned whether or not the college was really back up to 89% so quickly. The Principal explained that she would like to be able to very clearly track changes following observations. It was confirmed that this information is set out at page 76 in the bottom table which splits out observations by schools of learning.

Rob Martlew indicated that in the schools environment Ofsted looks at 'typicality' and schools use drop in sessions to get a better feel for what is a typical lesson. He questioned how the college obtains the same level of assurance. It was explained that using a standard observation process over an extended period of time gives more consistency and a greater correlation. The Principal expressed the opinion that it is critical for the college to really be clear that these observations are accurate. She requested that the quality team go back to basics and check compliance with all teaching and learning requirements i.e. lesson planning, marking, assessments etc.

As noted at the previous meeting, the Committee indicated that they would really like to see the introduction of key data being provided in a summary grid particularly in relation to areas of concern. This grid to include retention, teaching and learning, student feedback, etc.

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In reviewing the report a number of questions was raised by Committee members:

- Page 84 paragraph 21 what exactly is the further coaching provided? It was explained that this all depends on the individual needs and there is a 'pick and mix' selection of support and coaching available that is adapted on an individual basis. It was explained that there is, however, a cut off point where if development improvement is not seen then staff will fall into capability procedures.
- Page 77 members indicated that it would be useful to have bars showing percentages and not numbers.
- Paragraph 2.4 the Principal and the Committee would like to see reports provided on a curriculum by curriculum basis. All agreed

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that there needed to be better clarity regarding the presentation of information in this area.

AGREED: To note the update provided.

13.92 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PLAN 2013/14

The Director: Communications, Marketing and Learner Engagement introduced this item which was intended as a progress report. Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- Good progress has been made in relation to the majority of routine actions and in particular in terms of the first objective related to links with external agencies.
- Currently 24% of staff are outstanding in their mandatory training or refresher training in relation to equality and diversity – this is a worrying increase and will be picked up by the college's leadership team and executive.
- Whilst good progress has been made ensuring that our employer responsive provision and in particular our partner provider network demonstrates the same level of best practice that is seen within the college, it remains a key challenge and therefore a key priority for the 13/14 academic year.
- Slow progress has been made on the establishment of a staff LGB team network despite promotion and communication across the college. This has caused the senior team to rethink its approach to equality and diversity advocacy and will result in a re-launch of the college's equality and diversity objectives as well as the establishment of a series of staff groups that represent the protected characteristics within the equality act.
- The college has submitted an application to the stonewall equality index, this measures commitment as an employer with regards to LGPT issues – the results of this index will be available in November. It was noted that an updating report will be provided at the planned January meeting of this Committee.

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Members reviewed the action plan in detail and made the following comments:

- Page 91- the college is perceived as a powerful force for community cohesion and works in partnership with others to foster a sense of belonging and community. This is primarily done working in partnership with local primary schools and secondary schools at the moment.
- The college has made links with local faith groups and offers sessions for students via the head of student support and the chaplain. It was explained that the chaplain initially volunteered his time and has seen rapid growth in the level of interest in his tutorials. It was noted that he has undertaken approximately 50 tutorials to date and is now paid on a sessional basis.

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- Committee members questioned whether or not there were benchmarks alongside which the college could compare its performance in this area. It was explained that the college is able to measure achievement gaps and also measures equality and diversity incidents. It was confirmed that Ofsted does produce exemplar case studies which are also monitored.

In terms of developments members suggested a visit to Newham College who are in the Stonewall top 100.

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Reiterating a statement made in the earlier meeting, the Committee requested that a grid be put together on a course by course basis that covers all key data.

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AGREED:

- To note the content of the update provided.
- To approve the Equality and Diversity Plan for 2013/14.

13.93 SURVEY RESULTS

The Head of Student Support introduced this item and drew members' attention to the schedule of online surveys in place for students studying both on and off campus. She confirmed that, to reflect the national change in collating learner feedback, the college has now purchased survey manager and online software package that has been designed and built by QDP services. This new software allows the user to design, build and conduct surveys online and paper based whilst receiving real-time online reports at any point during the survey period. The online surveys will be made available to students via the college website moodle and partner portal and will take 3 minutes to complete. A schedule of online surveys has been developed to ensure that the college gains student feedback at pertinent times during the year thus enabling the college to actively use student views to make performance and improvement decisions.

Members reviewed the Learner Voice Strategy for 2013-16. It was noted that this has been updated with a sharper focus on employer provision. It was confirmed that the student union has representatives from each course and that training is provided to the representatives.

AGREED: To note the content of the update provided.

13.94 AOB

There were no items of additional business but the chair of the Committee took the opportunity to express the college's thanks to Nikki Witham and Linda Gratton who were unfortunately leaving the college. The Committee wished them luck with their future endeavours.

Signed : _____ Chair

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13.95 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk to the Corporation confirmed that the next meeting was scheduled for 14 November 2013 at 6.00 pm.

Meeting closed at 7.00 pm.

Signed : _____Chair

Date: