

**MINUTES of
CURRICULUM STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE,
1 MARCH 2010**

Present: I Mason (Chair), G Davies Marshall, J F Duggan, J Greenhill, Mrs H Haroon-Iqbal, G M Humby, G Mason, M Winnington, Mrs V Woodward

In attendance: J P Charleton (Clerk), P Baker, Mrs J Gormley, R Jones, J Morris, Ms A Piercy, I Rigby

Apologies: S Willis

440.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded members of their duty to declare an interest, financial or otherwise, in any items on the Agenda. No interests were declared.

441.0 MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2009

(a) Minutes

It was RESOLVED:

that the minutes be confirmed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

(b) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

442.0 FACULTY ANNUAL REPORTS

(a) Faculty of Professional Studies

Mr R Jones, Head of Faculty of Professional Studies, presented the executive summary of his Faculty's Annual Report for 2008/09 including developments in 2009/10. The Faculty SAR (November 2009) had awarded grade 2 (good) ratings for all key categories with the exception of outcomes for learners which had been rated as grade 3 (satisfactory). The Sports Subject Sector Area (SSA) had been reviewed by OfSTED in November 2009 and had been graded as 'good'.

Key risks for the Faculty included the impact of new FE funding arrangements, increased part-time fee levels and potential competition from other providers. Next year's targets included maintaining the Faculty's rating for overall effectiveness as 'good' and improving the proportion of grade 1 provision.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

At this point Mr Jones left the meeting.

(b) Faculty of Technology

Mr J Morris, Head of Faculty of Technology, presented the executive summary of his Faculty's Annual Report for 2008/09 including developments in 2009/10. The Faculty SAR (January 2010) had awarded grade 2 (good) ratings for all key categories to reflect improved success rates, particularly for Work-Based Learning (WBL) and Computing. Engineering and WBL SSAs had been reviewed by OfSTED in November 2009 with grade 2 'good' ratings being awarded for both areas.

Key risks for the Faculty included the impact of the economic downturn on work-based activities and potential significant curriculum changes arising from the current Qualification Credit Framework (QCF) review of qualifications. Next year the Faculty would be working to maintain its rating for overall effectiveness as 'good' whilst closely monitoring the impact of off-site curriculum delivery as a result of the new build.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

At this point Mr Morris left the meeting.

(c) Skills & Support and Enterprise

Mrs J Gormley, Head of Skills & Support and Enterprise, presented the executive summary of her Unit's Annual Report for the year to March 2010. The Unit has a wide remit including the delivery of Skills for Life provision, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Offender Education and Employability Programmes for the Department of Work and Pensions. The Unit SAR (November 2009) had awarded grade 2 ratings for all key categories, reflecting strong success rates for Skills for Life and for learners accessing Additional Support including those with statements of educational need.

Key risks to the Unit included the impact of revisions to the Additional Support funding methodology and the potential removal of OLASS funding. Next year the Unit's targets would include working to maintain its overall grading for effectiveness as 'good' and the development of strategies to increase job entry rates for Employability Projects.

Following discussion Mrs Gormley confirmed that a business case would be submitted with a view to maintaining the College's OLASS contract.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

At this point Mrs Gormley left the meeting.

443.0 STUDENT COUNCIL

Mr J Greenhill and Mr G Mason, Student Members, presented the unconfirmed minutes of the Student Council meeting held on 8 February 2010. The meeting had considered a range of issues including student access to PCs in the libraries and the College's forthcoming first Learner Voice Conference.

The Council had also reviewed and agreed proposed minor changes to the revised Constitution of the Student Council as requested by governors at the Committee meeting in the Autumn term.

It was RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report be received;**
- (b) that the revised draft Constitution of the Student Council be approved.**

444.0 ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) highlighted the proposed revisions to the College's Accessibility Statement for 2010/11. Key proposed changes included a change of colour and design and the inclusion of information on the College's new Disability Forum which provides an opportunity for learners and staff with a disability to voice their views.

It was RESOLVED:

that the revised Accessibility Statement be approved.

445.0 COLLEGE CHARTER

Mr P Baker, Quality Manager, highlighted the proposed revisions to the College Charter for 2010/11. In response to an area for improvement from the recent OfSTED Inspection, a new section had been added to the Charter to highlight the College's commitment to the community.

It was RESOLVED:

that the College Charter for 2010/11 be approved.

446.0 STUDENT SURVEYS

- (a) Student Induction Questionnaire**

Mr P Baker, Quality Manager, presented a report which summarised the results from the Student Induction Questionnaire conducted in the early part of the Autumn term in 2009. Overall results had improved compared to the previous year, with the vast majority of rankings in the upper quartile of results compared to the national average position.

The Chair welcomed the report as evidence of the College's excellent progress in listening and responding to the views of learners.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

(b) Employer Survey

Mr Baker reported on the outcome of a national survey conducted via e-mail by IPSOS MORI on behalf of the LSC to seek the views of employers on the work of colleges in supporting skills development. An insufficient number of employers had responded to the survey about the College resulting, in common with many other providers, in no grade being published by the LSC.

Later this year the College plans to conduct its own survey of employers using the services of QDP, with a better response anticipated.

(c) National Learner Satisfaction Survey

Mr Baker reported on the outcome of an on-line survey conducted by the LSC to seek the views of learners on their learning experience at college. In common with many other colleges an insufficient number of College learners had completed the survey to achieve the minimum number of respondents set by the LSC. As a consequence the LSC would not be publishing a grade for the College from this survey.

Mr Baker confirmed that the College would not be disadvantaged through not having grades published by the LSC for the employer and learner national surveys. Following discussion members questioned the lack of flexibility of the LSC methodology for these surveys in contrast to the approach taken by the College for its own surveys conducted by QDP.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

447.0 ACCOLADES AND COMPLAINTS REPORT

Mr Baker presented the Accolades and Complaints report for May to December 2009, during which period 14 accolades had been received with 6 formal complaints upheld or partly upheld. The number of formal complaints for 2009 was similar to 2008 and low compared to the years prior to 2008, with no significant trends in types or areas of complaint.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

448.0 SUCCESS RATES

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the annual report on success rates for students who had completed their courses in summer 2009. Following changes to the LSC's methodology for the calculation of Learner Responsive success rates in 2008/09, it was no longer possible to show a trend in outcomes since the data for prior years had not been recalculated using the new formula.

Using the format required by OfSTED the tables in the report compared the College's success, retention and achievement rates against the current provisional national average position. Following steady annual increases in previous years the national average position had reached a plateau and in some cases had declined.

The College's overall success rate for long qualifications was satisfactory at 76% in line with the national average. Key areas for improvement included retention and pass rates for long level 3 courses, especially for learners aged 19 and above.

Employer Responsive success rates had increased significantly compared to 2007/08 with all targets for improvement having been exceeded. Timely success rates for apprentices had become one of the key strengths of the College.

Following discussion members acknowledged the good progress made by the College to improve success rates, retention and achievement and to target areas for improvement.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

449.0 STUDENT DESTINATIONS

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented an analysis of post-course student destinations for full-time students who had completed their studies in Summer 2009. The report highlighted the effective pathways between levels of study and confirmed that progression from level 3 courses to higher education remained at 51% in line with the government target.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

450.0 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 7 June 2010 at 5.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm.