

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON COLLEGE CORPORATION

DRAFT MINUTES OF STANDARDS & PERFORMANCE MONITORING COMMITTEE THURSDAY 4 JUNE 2009

PRESENT:	Jenny Andrews	Committee Chair
	Phil Krstic	Student Governor
	Julia Morris	Governor
	Martin Penny	Principal
	Andy Tyers	Teaching Staff Governor
In attendance :	Charles Anderson	Deputy Principal
	David Jackson	Clerk to the Corporation
	Hazel Skwirzynska	Director of Learner Services
	Rosie Herbert	Deputy Director of Learner Services (item 14 only)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Jayne Longfield, Lauren Wilcock and Tim Astbury.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interest in business to be discussed at the meeting, following which Julia Morris reminded members that she was Head of Kineton High School.

3. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

It was resolved **THAT:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2009 be regarded as correct and signed by the Committee Chair.

4. **PRESENTATION ON WBL AND APPRENTICESHIPS**

Peter Young, Deputy Director of SBS, introduced a paper on Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships and the work currently being undertaken on the Masons Road site. He indicated that, in the present economic climate, work placements had now almost dried up, particularly in relation to Engineering, and the prospects for next year were not good. The majority of current vacancies in the Stratford-upon-Avon area for apprentices were around catering whilst last year there was a waiting list for apprenticeships. Relationships with local companies remained good and he considered that the College was well placed to respond rapidly when the market picked up; however, he drew attention to the physical constraints of the Masons Road site. He informed the meeting that CAA (Construction Awards Alliance who, with City and Guilds, are the awarding body for Construction) had agreed yesterday to the College taking on Bricklaying apprentices and it was hoped that this would follow into Carpentry very shortly, particularly as there are signs of improvements in the construction industry. Peter then went on to talk about measures of success for E2E which was around 39% regionally, with the College score standing at 75% which made it one of the best performers in the country. He went on to talk about success rates more generally indicating that he hoped the College would move from Grade 3 to Grade 2 during the course of 2009/10, which was confirmed by the Deputy Principal. Peter explained that all staff were new into teaching in the last three years and, whilst the vocational training element was good and there was good communication with students, the paperwork and processes had not been so good. Staff had an empathy with the students and a desire to pass on their skills.

Julia Morris questioned whether the learners were making progress and was it built upon, to which the Deputy Principal indicated that it was.

Peter then went on to talk about the difficult backgrounds of some of the students and their view of education, in response to a question from Andy Tyers on retention levels.

The Committee acknowledged that the lower entry requirements provided a daunting challenge for the College which it had not shied away from, unlike many other providers.

The Chair summarised the discussion as encouraging against a difficult background and indicated that they would be keeping the SAR grades under review. She thanked Peter for his presentation.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Item 7.b), Grade 3 Curriculum Areas

The Chair opened the discussion and pointed out that there was not a huge amount of up-dated information in the latest report. She drew attention to a fall in some of the percentage information and would have liked to have seen comparative information, together with an overall summary on the way things were going. The Deputy Principal indicated that he was confident that the Maths results would improve. Predicted grades and modules were available but had not been included in the information. He considered, however, that the biggest concern was around the Sciences. He indicated that the College was looking carefully at entry criteria at the present time, together with options such as dropping Science from the curriculum to putting together an A Level package aimed at Sciences.

The Chair commented on a recent news article around General Science and enquired as to the relevance of this at Stratford-upon-Avon College. The Deputy Principal commented that students undertaking AS General Science had no progression to A2. However, he considered that one of the main challenges was around innovation in the classroom. A Level Sciences were difficult and there was a need to get the right students in the right classes. The possibility of working with other establishments was briefly discussed.

The Principal recognised that the report needed to be sharpened up with smart targets and up-to-date figures, including lesson observations.

Turning to ICT, again comparative data was lacking and no lesson observations had been done on this course. Again there was a need for a sharper report with quantified targets and progress to date against those targets.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Committee express its disappointment that the report, as presented, made it difficult to judge the degree of progress that had been made, particularly in Maths, Sciences and ICT, in moving the provision from Grade 3 to Grade 2. In future, it would like to see:

- a) Smart targets included in the report with up-to-date comparative data to enable judgements to be made around progress;
- b) The Assistant Principal Curriculum present the report at the next meeting;
- c) Lesson observations be undertaken in relation to the ICT course prior to the next meeting and the outcomes reported back.

5.2 Item 8, Value Added

The Deputy Principal introduced his report on Value Added for 2007/08 and difficulties in understanding and interpreting the data. He drew attention to problems comparing the LAT data, provided by the LSC, with that of ALIS but recognised that the LAT data is what the College will be judged on. He went on to indicate that the College had now recalculated all G scores for LAT.

Julia Morris questioned whether the information was shared with students. The Deputy Principal indicated that this had not happened in 2008/09 but it will from the start of 2009/10 and that the data would be available from the end of September.

The Student Governor enquired whether it was practical for the College to compare itself with other schools, including those in neighbouring authorities. The point was recognised as valid but, due to the differences in educational practices, it would not be a fair comparison at school level but it could be done at a higher level.

The Committee discussed with the Deputy Principal for some time the issues around the LAT data, the uses to which it would be put and the judgements made. They then went on to discuss the work currently being carried out to gain a greater understanding for both the staff and students of the College.

Julia Morris stressed the need to ensure that, if the LAT data was correct, the College fully understood the reasons and was able to counter the statistical data to present the College in the best possible light.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) For the next meeting the predicted and actual scores be presented to the Committee based on LAT data;
- b) A detailed worked example based on a sample student be presented to the meeting.

6. FRAMEWORK FOR EXCELLENCE

The Chair opened the discussion drawing attention to a recent workshop that she, together with the Clerk to the Corporation, had attended on Framework for Excellence at which a guide for Governors had been launched.

The Deputy Principal then went on to introduce the summary of the College's Framework for Excellence grades for the pilot year 2007/08 which had recently been published by the LSC. Although the College had an opportunity to challenge the assessments made, it considered them to be a fair reflection and these are summarised below:

- Responsiveness to learners – good;
- Responsiveness to employers – outstanding;
- Quality of outcomes – satisfactory;
- Quality of provision – good;
- Financial health – satisfactory;
- Financial management and control – satisfactory.

In terms of responsiveness to learners, the report indicated that the College was weak on acting on students' views and advice and guidance students received. These conclusions were drawn from a sample of approximately 1,100 students. He considered that some of the issues around advice and guidance students received were perhaps due to timing, particularly around vocational students. He indicated that the College had scored well in relation to the overall feel around the College and staff/student relationships.

Turning to the quality of outcomes, some of the information here was based on 2007/08 data and reflected success rates on Work Based Learning and A Levels and referred back to the previous discussion on value added. However, the College was moving forward, particularly on Work Based Learning, and a review of this year's data would indicate that the College would have been graded 'good' on the quality of outcomes. The Chair queried whether financial health and financial management and control were a matter for this Committee or the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the feeling was that these would be reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Standards and Performance Monitoring Committee receive the report on Framework for Excellence and encourage College Management to achieve at least a 'good' grade for 2009/10 in each of the four curriculum areas.

7. INTERNAL REVIEWS

The Chair recognised that the Internal Reviews followed the same format as that for Ofsted Inspections and indicated that it would have been beneficial to the Committee to have seen the Action Plans that would have been developed as a result of the reviews.

Julia Morris enquired whether the College uses the key strengths to develop other areas. The Deputy Principal indicated that this was currently not the case and, following a brief discussion, it was agreed that Lecturers could learn a lot by sharing information, especially around different learning styles and good practices.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) The College Management would consider how the positive strengths can be shared with other staff around the College and report back to the next meeting;
- b) In response to an offer from Julia Morris, Jill Hayward visit Kineton High School and observe how co-coaching works.

8. ATTENDANCE REPORT TO DATE 2008/09

The Deputy Principal introduced the report on Attendance to date for 2008/09. He indicated that the College was aiming for 90% attendance and the current figures showed 83.6% for the year to date, compared with an overall figure for 2007/08 of 85.6%. In response to a question from the Chair, the Deputy Principal was unable to comment on the reasons for the reduction other than the possibility of incomplete data.

The Chair went on to comment that it would be helpful for the information to be presented in columns side by side to make comparisons easier and that, in addition to the year-end data for the previous year, a column be included to show the position at the same time in the previous year.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) A further report be made to the next Committee meeting, together with a written executive summary;
- b) The data be presented in a revised format to reflect discussion in the meeting.

9. RETENTION/ANALYSIS OF WITHDRAWALS 2008/09

The report on Student Retention was presented by the Deputy Principal. The Chair drew attention to comments expressed in the previous agenda item around the future presentation of information to enable in-year comparisons to be made easily. Without this data, the Committee felt unable to make valid judgements.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The presentation of the data be reviewed for future meetings in line with the resolution under item 8.

10. TEACHER OBSERVATION GRADES

The Principal apologised for the lack of an executive summary on the Teacher Observation Grades and suggested that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The report on Lesson Observations be deferred to the next meeting and presented with an executive summary on no more than one side of A4.

11. TRAINING QUALITY STANDARD SUBMISSION

Attention was drawn to the TQS submissions for re-accreditation which had been circulated by email. The Deputy Principal stated that the paperwork was due to go before a Validating Panel on 18 June 2009 and he very much hoped that the College would be re-accredited with the possibility of gaining a full accreditation meaning that the College would not need to be reviewed again until 2011.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The outcome of the re-accreditation be reported to the Corporation meeting on 24 July 2009.

12. POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION AND SUPPORT OF YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKED AFTER BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The Director of Learner Services introduced the Policy for the Education and Support of Young People Looked After by the Local Authority. The Committee questioned the number of students that would be affected by the policy. The current number was around 20 but it was possible that there were students from other Local Authorities of which the College was not aware. However, the College does work hard with other partners to try and get them identified and provide assistance and support at the earliest opportunity wherever possible.

The Committee went on to review the documentation and considered that it would be beneficial to have a reference to the virtual school included.

It was resolved **THAT:**

Subject to the inclusion of a reference to the virtual school, the Policy for the Education and Support of Young People Looked After by the Local Authority be recommended to the Corporation for approval.

13. COLLEGE CHARTER REVIEW

The revised College Charter for 2009/10 was presented to the Committee by the Director of Learner Services. It was explained that the Charter had been brought up to date for 2009/10 and, whilst it would have been nice to have based it on the document that will ultimately replace 'Developing Destinies', this had yet to be agreed and it was not possible to do so. The Student Governor commented that he liked the format and felt that it was generally liked by students and had a good balance between pictures and text. After discussion, It was resolved **THAT:**

The revised College Charter for 2009/10 be recommended to the Corporation for approval, subject to the deletion of the big Charter logo and the inclusion of the Fair Trade logo.

14. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Deputy Director of Learner Services attended for this agenda item.

14.1 Support Available for Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

The up-dated College's Support Available for Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities statement was presented to the Committee by the Deputy Director of Learner Services who indicated that there were no major changes to the document currently in existence. Attention was, however, drawn to an increase in applications from students with disabilities currently in residential accommodation. To date, it had not been possible to accommodate any of the applicants. Under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act, the College would be expected to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. However, in the cases so far put forward, that has not proved possible and Governors were made aware of the possibility of a challenge to some of these decisions at some time in the future.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Support Available for Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities statement be recommended to the Corporation for approval.

14.2 Single Equality Scheme

The Deputy Director of Learner Services introduced a Single Equality Scheme which had been drawn up in response to the Equality Bill currently going before Parliament. The Single Equality Scheme had been developed from the existing Disability Equality Scheme to include the additional public duties of race and gender with references to age, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Single Equality Scheme be recommended to the Corporation for approval.

15. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ANNUAL REPORT (STAFFING)

The Committee considered the Equal Opportunities Annual Report on Staffing but felt that, rather than raw statistics, it would be helpful to see commentary highlighting any issues or matters to be drawn to the attention of the Committee. Comment was also made that the report should include reference to leavers to provide a balanced view.

The Committee enquired where this report was considered within the College Management structure. The Principal indicated that currently it was a report prepared for this Committee but, in future, it would be helpful for this to be received via the internal Equality and Diversity Committee and the comments of that Committee be reported within the executive summary.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) The Equal Opportunities Annual Report on Staffing be received;
- b) Future reports come to the Committee by way of the Equality and Diversity Committee, together with an executive summary.

16. REVIEW WORK AND EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMITTEE

The Clerk to the Corporation reminded the Committee that this was a standard agenda item for the Summer Term meeting, was used to inform the production of the Self-Assessment Report, as well as serving as a timely reminder of the effectiveness of the Committee.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Committee considered that it had:

- made a valid contribution during the course of the year;
- continued to monitor Grade 3 provision and Value Added, requesting that targets be incorporated in action plans and reported to the Committee;
- identified consideration of the SAR as a major issue and requested an additional meeting in the Autumn Term in subsequent years to give due consideration to its content;
- requested executive summaries of no more than one side of A4 to accompany reports, together with comparative data in relation to statistical information.

17. IDENTIFICATION OF REPORTS TO FUTURE MEETINGS

It was resolved **THAT:**

No further reports were identified that were not covered elsewhere in these minutes.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Student Governors

The Chair paid tribute to Phil Krstic and Lauren Wilcock for their valuable contributions to the work of the Committee throughout the year and wished them every success in their future careers.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Committee continue to meet at 8.30am and that the dates be published in the Annual Calendar of Corporation Meetings for 2009/10.