

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held in the Board Room at the Derby Road site on Thursday 27 January 2011 at 6.10 pm

COMMITTEE Kate Allsop (Chair)
MEMBERS Asha Khemka
PRESENT: Diana Gilhespy (attended till 6.45 pm)
 James Stafford
 Professor John Holford
ALSO IN Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
ATTENDANCE: Tricia Harman, Deputy Principal
 Graham Lewis, Head of Web Technologies
 Janice Hill, Director: Curriculum and Standards
 Nikki Witham, Associate Director: Quality & Performance
 Diane Lacey, Associate Director of Learning: Hair and Beauty

	ACTION by whom	DATE by when
<p>11.01 <u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ANY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA</u></p> <p>The Chair reminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting interests held in any matters to be considered. No interests were declared.</p>		
<p>11.02 <u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Steve Carroll. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.</p>	Clerk	27 Jan 2011
<p>11.03 <u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2010</u></p> <p>AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2010. There were no matters arising.</p>		
<p>11.04 <u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2010</u></p> <p>AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 of December 2010.</p> <p>As a matter arising, members reviewed page 15 and, in particular, the first area for development noted at the bottom of the page. At the last meeting it was reported that retention for 19+ long qualifications is 7% below the national benchmark. Members were advised by the Deputy Principal that progress has now been made and the College has identified all of the Schools of Learning who contribute to this retention issue and that all Schools of Learning have action plans in place to address the concerns raised.</p>		

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

ACTION by whom	DATE by when
Deputy Principal	2010/11

11.05 ACTIONS OUTSTANDING PROGRESS REPORT

Members reviewed the schedule of items at page 18 and agreed that it accurately monitored ongoing progress.

11.06 DEPUTY PRINCIPALS REPORT

The Deputy Principal introduced her report and drew the following to Members attention:

- Framework for Excellence
 1. The Framework no longer grades the overall performance of the provider and the grades for the success rates, learner destinations, learner views and employer views have been removed.
 2. Although titled the Framework for Excellence 2009/10, the information is drawn from three academic years. The Learner Voice survey is from 2009/10, students success rates are from 2008/9, and the destination data is from students who completed in 2007/8. It was noted that the scores are always based on historic data, which has been one of the criticisms of the scheme.
 3. The College was not given a score for learner destinations, employer rates and learning rates. These scores were determined from a telephone survey undertaken by the Skills Funding Agency. Less than 15% of the learners were contacted, therefore no score was calculated. In terms of performance, the survey gives a higher than national average score in relation to learner views and the same as the national average scores in relation to employer views. Members reviewed table two on page 21 and it was acknowledged that in all categories in other than AS and A2, the College is above national average. In relation to AS and A,2 the College does have plans in place to continue improvements.

Members indicated that use of historical data was somewhat confusing and that, in the future, reports on the Framework should state clearly what was historical data and then compare it with the known current position.

- Ofsted Inspections in 2009/10 - 81 general further education and sixth form colleges were inspected, of these six were outstanding. Of 9 previously outstanding colleges, 3 maintained their overall effectiveness grade and 3 previously good colleges improved to outstanding. John Hayes and Nick Gibb have both announced that outstanding FE and sixth form colleges will be exempt from inspection unless their performance drops. The triggers for a risk assessment regarding a drop in performance are notices to improve, success rates below national average, below average scores on progress measures, concerns about data integrity, mergers with colleges deemed not to be outstanding and serious concerns expressed by stakeholders. In relation to the criteria, the only one that applies to the College is a decrease in success rates (long course) below national averages for similar colleges. West Nottinghamshire College has seen a slight dip in the rates, but it is unknown how big a dip would be needed to trigger the assessment process for inspection. If it is deemed to be a trigger, Ofsted will carry out an initial desk assessment of the individual learner records, HMI will review the evidence, and where concerns are confirmed, a monitoring visit to gather further evidence, possibly leading to a future inspection, would take place.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

ACTION by whom	DATE by when
Janice Hill	14 April 2011

- Learner Destinations – the College is now tackling the inability of the external surveyor to gather the data, it was noted that the external company is not as good at obtaining information through surveys as the College is. At the next meeting it was confirmed that Janice Hill would be providing a College destinations data report and this could be done on a School by School basis.
- Minimum levels of performance – there is a 3% increase to most of the thresholds for learner responsive provision, apart from AS/A2. The minimum levels of performance in MLP thresholds are now short 65%, long level 1, 2 and 3 63%, long level 4 61%, A2 75% (unchanged), AS levels no longer have a MLP.

AGREED: to note the report provided.

11.07 SUCCESS RATE REVIEWS 2009/10

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and drew members' attention to the following:

- Learner responsive success rates for 2009/10 for all ages, all levels and all durations was 79%. The achievement rate of 92% was maintained but a 2% reduction in retention contributed to a decline in success rates. It was acknowledged that there were a significant number of 19+ retention issues to address.
- 16-18 very short qualification success rates improved by 4%. Short qualification success rates declined by 3% due to a drop in achievement rates. It was confirmed that the College is investigating this.
- Success rates for 16-18 year olds on entry, long level 1 and 3 qualifications and short qualifications improved.
- Success rates for 16-18 on long level 2 and short qualifications declined slightly.
- For 19+ long level 3 success rates remained constant, success rates for long level 4 qualifications improved significantly.
- Success rates for 19+ long entry, level 1 and level 2 qualifications declined, this was in the main, due to a reduction in retention due to the pressure on adult learners to gain employment or due to redundancy, they were therefore unable to gain evidence to complete qualifications. This is the area of main concern for the College and it has to be improved.
- Success rates on HEFCE funded higher education programmes continue to improve.
- The number of apprentices has grown significantly during 2009/10, both overall and timely success rates have fallen but are above the national averages.
- Train to Gain overall and timely success rates have improved.
- Each School of Learning has a detailed breakdown at course level of their success rates, and have improvement plans to address success rate issues.

Members' attention was drawn to the improvement focus areas in 2010/11 and of particular concern was the planned withdrawal of EMA. The Principal indicated that this will significantly affect a large number of students currently at College and she explained that at Ashfield, the Inspire

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and Achieve Foundation was looking to develop a campaign where employers are invited to sponsor a student. Another option to explore to address the impact on students, is free transport and the possibility of extending this service further. The College will also be given funds to set up a hardship fund and these will be targeted to support the individuals in real need. It was noted that EMA students are better at attending than non-EMA students, and that the withdrawal of EMA may have a significant impact on retention and the College is now planning how best it can narrow the gap. Members discussed the position and acknowledged that the hardship fund will not replace the EMA and that, on a national basis, it is believed that withdrawal of EMA will lead to a dip in recruitment and retention, and this will be across the whole sector.

It was noted that improvement in the retention rate of 19+ students is a key area of focus. Members questioned why this particular cohort had such a high level of retention problems. Members were advised that the Schools of Learning have recorded all reasons given for withdrawal and a lot were where a partner had been made unemployed and there was a need for the student to go out to work. In some cases, students have had problems with their benefits payments as some courses prevented them from ongoing benefit claims. Because of this they had chosen to leave the College to protect their benefits. It was also acknowledged that in some instances the College simply does not get the provision right, and there are ongoing reviews. In relation to the withdrawals seen, it was noted that a couple of Schools in particular raised concerns, and that in this area the call centre is contacting the students to ask why they were unable to remain at College and the reasons will be assessed once known. It was accepted that this position is a real concern for the College because if there are currently 19+ retention issues when this cohort receives free courses, what will the impact be when the students have to actually pay for the courses themselves?

Members all agreed that this was an area to monitor and requested regular reports on how both the withdrawal of EMA and 19+ retention rates were being addressed.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

11.08 QUALITY ASSURANCE & IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Associate Director: Quality & Performance introduced her detailed report and confirmed that the purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the progress of the Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement Frameworks 2010/11 (referred to as the Frameworks in the report). The following was specifically drawn to members` attention:

- The Frameworks have been fully embedded across the Schools of Learning, partner providers and business support areas.
- Support and guidance has been provided to teams, individually and managers across the College to ensure that the Frameworks are embedded and used to support the College`s capacity to improve and shape its provision.
- A number of business processes have been introduced or amended to improve and underpin the Frameworks ensuring that the Framework is fit for purpose and contributes to the rigorous coherent and accurate requirements of the College, and meets the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework.

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- The implementation of the Framework is in the early stages, however, outcomes of the various processes within the Framework have been used by Schools of Learning, Business Support areas and the Quality Teaching Learning and Performance team to share practice, identify areas for improvement and plan for future provision.
- QAQI team has been instrumental in shaping the apprenticeship programme for the College and partners. At this stage the team know clearly what is working well and the extent of the provision. It is clear that the team have full and very accurate data.

Members were advised that at the meeting in the summer term, the Committee will receive a report illustrating the impact on the teaching and learning process 2010/11.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

ACTION by whom	DATE by when
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Nikki
Witham

14 July
2011

11.09 HE

Members were advised that the College has now received the draft report following the IQER summative review. The College has one week to respond to the factual accuracy of the document and thereafter the final version will be published. The provisional judgements of the review team are as follows:

- Core Theme 1 - Academic Standards - confidence
- Core Theme 2 - Quality of Learning opportunities - confidence
- Core Theme 3 - Public information - reliance on the accuracy and the completeness of the information.

There is one provisional advisory recommendation relating to succession data and the annual monitoring processes relating to the SAR, this was something that the College had already identified as an area to address in its SED. There are provisionally four areas of good practice that will be identified within the report. It was confirmed that the four areas of good practice relate to a) information advice and guidance before a course starts, b) study skills support, particular over the summer, c) strong leadership and management and, d) clear strategy in place. Members were advised that the final report will be placed on the Governors` portal for review. It was also noted that minutes of the Academic Standards Committee are also available on the Governors` portal.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

11.10 LEARNER VOICE STRATEGY – FIRST TERM RESULTS

The Head of Web Technologies introduced this report and confirmed that over 3000 learners had completed the student induction survey which covers the period prior to the students joining the College, their induction and the impact of teaching and learning in the first term. He confirmed that results for the survey can be compared to the same period in 2009/10 and against the national benchmark. Members' attention was drawn to page 44 and the results seen followed by the QDP service. The following points were noted:

- An 85% response rate was seen, this relates solely to on campus students.

Signed : _____Chair

Date:

	ACTION by whom	DATE by when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College saw an increase in relation to the percentages for teaching and learning and the support that students received, but there was a decline in relation to the responses regarding accommodation, equipment and across College. • Quality Assurance remains in the national upper quartile and was an improvement on the previous year. • Any areas for improvement were identified and placed on the School or Course quality improvement plan. • The national learner survey commenced on 5 February 2011 and closes on 27 February 2011, the final results will be presented to the July meeting of this committee. <p>College Complaints – Term 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the months August to December 2010, 31 formal complaints were received via letter, telephone or website, this volume is not untypical for the period in question. The complaints were 16 female, 15 male, 23 were made by 19+ adults and 8 by, or on behalf of 16-18 year olds. • The majority of complaints relate to enrolments, late applications and clearing. • The highest number of complaints in this category is linked to late applications for high demand adult programmes where waiting lists were in force at this time. • Other more recent complaints concerned perceived issues with teaching standards and student behaviour. • One formal complaint has been received. <p>Activities through Schools of Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main mechanism for gathering learners is through the course representative structure. Every School of Learning should have course representatives in place. • 141 course representatives exist across all Schools of Learning. • A training day was held on Monday 25 October with 75 learners from across College attending. • Issues vary across each School of Learning, however, there have been consistent issues around the buses, wearing College lanyards, lack of chairs in classrooms and lack of seating in West One at Derby Road. Individual solutions for these requests are being explored and feedback communicated through the 'you said we only went and did it' campaign available on the Learner Voice notice boards situated across College. The full breakdown of topics and outcomes are available on the Governors` portal. <p>Student Focus Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been one meeting with Asha where 17 Students attended, the feedback was that they enjoyed face to face sessions, therefore three lunches have been planned for 2011. Unfortunately the Freshers` Fair due to be held in September did not go ahead because of the unplanned closure of the College. The removal of EMA has led to a national campaign supported by the NUS to petition against the changes. This will be a big challenge for students. <p>Students` Union</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year the Students` Union has established a formal executive and holds meetings on a regular basis. A Students` Union survey has been undertaken to gather specific feedback on issues relating to the buses. 	H Web Tech	July 2011

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- The Students` Union has organised a range of events and has taken part in a number of activities, in particular Children in Need which raised £1200. The Students` Union campaign for this academic year is Respect & Responsibility, with a key focus supporting and encouraging learners to wear lanyards and improving behaviour in student recreation areas.

Members reviewed the information received and agreed that it was a considerable amount of data, they questioned whether it is broken down on a School by School basis, it was confirmed that yes it is, and the student survey goes back to each School of Learning and reports are given to students through the 'You said we did' campaign which closes the loop.

The Principal questioned whether the College is actually objective enough regarding the Student feedback and surveys and felt that there was a culture of trying to 'justify' the College`s current position, but she said she would be happy to be proved wrong in this area.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

11.11 **SAFEGUARDING**

The Deputy Head introduced this item and drew the following to members` attention:

Safeguarding Policy Statement

- Following the mock inspection feedback from Clive Blanchet (reported at the Standards Committee July 2010), one area for improvement was that the College should have an overarching policy in relation to Safeguarding. The Safeguarding Policy Statement has been developed which encompasses all elements of safeguarding within the College. This document has been considered by the Executive Team and agreed by JCLP. Members reviewed the Safeguarding Policy statement at appendix A.

AGREED: to approve the Safeguarding Policy Statement.

Self Assessment 2009/10

As part of the self-assessment process for 2009/10, a separate grade was attributed to Safeguarding, as is the case during an Ofsted inspection. Members are reminded that this is a limiting grade within the Common Inspection Framework 2009/10. Based upon the evidence within the SAR (approved by the Standards Committee on 9 December 2010), both areas - outcome for learners and leadership and management were judged to be outstanding, leading to an overall grade for safeguarding in the SAR being grade one outstanding.

Safeguarding Action Plan 2010/11

This was developed under the strands of safe learning, safe environment, safe recruitment, protecting young people and vulnerable adults, governance and reporting. Good progress has been made against the actions identified (reviewed in appendix B) and the College is on target to achieve. All students have been issued with a green lanyard in order to aid identification of all campus users.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

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11.12 RETENTION & WITHDRAWALS

The Director Curriculum & Standards introduced this item and drew the following to members` attention:

- The data presented relates to enrolments rather than students.
- Whilst there is a slightly higher proportion of females enrolling to courses, the number of withdrawals is significantly higher than that for males. However, the proportion of withdrawals attributed to each gender has narrowed from 15.6% difference in 2008/9 to 13% in 2009/10. Members reviewed the table on page 68 and agreed that the concern areas were where the percentage of enrolments was less than the percentage of withdrawals.
- There is a higher proportion of 19+ learners who withdrew from programmes than 16-18 year olds, however, the majority of enrolments are attributed to 19+ learners.
- Whilst the proportion of 16-18 withdrawals has decreased by 6.8% in 2008/9, the number of 19+ withdrawals has risen from 63.8% in 2008/9 to 72.1% in 2009/10 resulting in an increase of 8.3%. This has extended the gap in withdrawals by age from 27.6% in 2008/9 to 44.2% in 2009/10.
- The main reason cited for withdrawals are personal reasons and other, with the percentage of learners remaining fairly static in this category. The number of unknown outcomes has reduced from 19% in 2008/9 to 17% in 2009/10 and tutors are aware that every effort should be made to ascertain the reason for withdrawal to ensure that these categories are used less often, this is the case for both 19+ and 16-18 learners.
- In 2009/10 14.6% of those enrolled declared a disability compared with 15.7% in 2008/9. 16.5% of withdrawals relate to enrolments where students had declared a disability resulting in an increase of 0.7% compared to 15.8% in 2008/9.
- The proportion of withdrawals is broadly in line with the proportion of enrolments at each level of course. At level 3 the proportion of withdrawals compared to the proportion of enrolments has the most significant difference.
- In 2009/10 9.5% of the enrolments were attributed to those who declared their ethnicity to be other than white British, and 8.1% of the withdrawals were attributed to this group.
- The College has seen a year on year increase in retention for all SFA funded qualifications over three years in Academic Studies, and Computer Science, Construction and Building Services and Engineering and Transport Skills.
- There has been a continuing increase in retention for long qualifications within the Schools of Learning: Academic Studies and Computer Science, Construction and Building Services and Health, Care and Education.
- Data shows high levels of retention where 16-18 learners receive EMA with only one School of Learning having a retention rate below 90%. Retention rates for students not in receipt of EMA are significantly lower. It was acknowledged that the withdrawal of EMA will have an impact going forward.

Members reviewed the significant amount of data provided, and agreed that the key now is for a review of the actions in place to tackle the differences and the declining areas with clear ideas of what is working and what needs to be changed and improved.

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AGREED: to note the content of the report.

11.13 SCHOOL REVIEW TERM ONE

The Associate Director: Quality and Performance introduced this item and drew the following to members` attention:

- The School Management team is expected to take ownership of the review and engage with discussions, analysis of data, performance judgement and outline strategies for improvement. Each Head of School was invited to contribute to another School`s review.
- At the end of 2009/10 the process was reviewed with the Learners Directorate and in line with these recommendations the QIP for 2009/10 and 2010/11 and the internal review report for 2009/10 were included to facilitate discussion and provide the opportunity for the School Management team to present an update on progress and plans.
- The first School review is a review of performance within each School of Learning for the previous academic year, therefore the data to be reviewed at this meeting relates to 2009/10.

The School reviews play an important role in continuing to develop management`s capacity to improve and make a significant contribution to a collective raising of standard across the curriculum areas. Of particular note in relation to the outcomes of the review one, were the following:

- Success rates in seven of the Schools of the Learning were equal to or above the same period for the previous year. Business, Professional and Continuing Education had fallen by 2%. Success rates in Creative Arts fell by 1%. There were no significant variations in success rates when analysed by categories in the majority of Schools.
- The number of programmes showing below the MLP had reduced significantly, some courses have been withdrawn by Schools. Schools were asked to focus on programmes below the 75th percentile and to consider strategies to improve performance.
- Success rates for 14-16 programmes have risen in 6 Schools.
- Construction and Building Services has now introduced a pre-entry qualification for 14-16 learners to address the decline in success rates.
- Of the 8 Schools which offer HE provision, five Schools showed lower success rates than the previous year.
- Attendance has risen or remains static in all Schools with the exception of Health, Care and Education which showed a decline of 1%.
- Teaching and Learning observation grade profiles were considered by each School. All Schools confirmed that any tutors who received a grade 3 or 4 in observation in 2009/10 had received coaching to improve with most regraded at 2. Tutors new to teaching at WNC were enrolled to First Steps to Teaching and Learning and received a graded observation.

In terms of the future, the big challenges are:

- (i) the cessation of EMA,
- (ii) continued development of appraisal and appraisal review in each 12 months,
- (iii) improved capture of learner actual destination data and
- (iv) reinforcing the wearing of lanyards.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

11.14 TEACHING & LEARNING UPDATE

The Associate Director: Quality and Performance introduced this item and confirmed that the data covers the period September – December 2010, therefore the first academic term. She confirmed that additional observation processes exist, but are not reported here, these are line manager observations and peer observations. The following data was specifically brought to members` attention:

- The primary system of measuring quality is the graded lesson observations. All delivery staff will receive a graded observation in 2010/11. 407 staff have been identified as requiring an observation in 2010/11, alongside re-observations of staff following a grade 3 or 4 at their initial observation.
- There has been a significant increase in the percentage of observations graded good or better, and in the proportion of observations graded outstanding. There have been no unsatisfactory grades.
- In addition to observations of staff employed by the College, the College also carries out teaching, learning and training graded observations of delivery staff by our partners. This process currently operates on an annual cycle gathering graded observations for all our identified assessors and trainers in each company. In this area the overall profile has dropped compared with last year. It is hard to draw conclusions from this as each observation is so different and we are dealing with such a wide range of different companies and different trainers and assessors.
- The overall grade profile at this point in the year is significantly improved on last year's outcome for the same period. 79% of observed lessons were good or better in 2009/10 compared with 88% so far in 2010/11. The teaching and learning development team have provided a substantial amount of support across all Schools of Learning and the teaching and learning coaching strategy and through bespoke teaching and learning staff development sessions. The development of the 'making the grade' coaching sessions specifically focussing upon the component of building an outstanding session in line with the Common Inspection Framework criteria for outstanding teaching and learning, has impacted positively on the overall grade profile and the learners learning experience.

Members reviewed the data and questioned why so few observations of partners had been undertaken. It was acknowledged that this is a disappointing area and a target to address for the early part of 2011.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

11.15 ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

The Director Curriculum & Standards introduced this item and drew members` attention to the following:

- The ALS service employs 84 full and part time staff providing specialist support to learners accessing all levels of provision and across all sites. Five specific teams with specialist skills support learners having a hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability, literacy,

Signed : _____Chair

Date:

- numeracy and dyslexia, behaviour, mental health problems and autistic spectrum disorders.
- Support is delivered on programme by supported assistance on a one to one or small group basis with specialist teachers. Support for behaviour or personal care needs is provided at breaks.
 - The team has strong links with external agencies and local schools to ensure smooth transition into College.
 - Additional needs of learners can be identified at pre-entry, at interview stage and whilst on programme as well as through disclosure or whilst they are studying for their qualification.
 - BKSB diagnostic assessments are being used to identify learners who need literacy and numeracy support while quickscan is used to identify learners at risk from dyslexia.
 - The exceptional needs panel has convened to assess the adjustments required for any applicant who has exceptional needs. There have been occasions when an applicant has been refused admission, as even with reasonable adjustment, the College has been unable to meet his or her needs. No learner has been refused a place based on the cost of the support required.
 - The reduction in the ALS allocation over the last two years in line with national trends was expected to continue and a contingency plan was agreed. However, the allocation for 16-18's for 2010/11 increased by £422,112 whilst the allocation for ALR remained the same as 2009/10.

Members reviewed the financial detail provided at page 89. In terms of planning for the future, members were advised that the College is looking to move away from the assumption of one to one support and move to one to two as this will be a better use of staff time.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

11.16 AOB

One member raised the issue of staff development and the fact that the Committee and the Board do not seem to get any impact reports linking the investment with the outcomes. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal would speak to the Director: HR with a view to providing an annual or bi-annual report. It was agreed that this was an item to be placed on the July Board meeting agenda.

Deputy Principal

July 2011

11.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Clerk to the Corporation confirmed that the next meeting was scheduled for 14 April 2011 at 6.00 pm.

Meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date: