



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD**

Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held in the Boardroom at the Derby Road site on Thursday 26 January 2012 at 6.20 pm.

COMMITTEE Kate Allsop (Chair)
MEMBERS Diana Gilhespy
PRESENT: Professor John Holford
 Asha Khemka
 James Stafford

ALSO IN Jean Hardy (Observer)
ATTENDANCE: David Overton (Observer)
 Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
 Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal: Teaching & Learning
 Nikki Witham, Head of Quality & Performance
 Janice Hill, Director: Curriculum and Standards
 Julian Walden, Staff Observer

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
12.01	<u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ANY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA</u>		
	The Chair reminded members to declare at the start of the meeting interests held in any matter to be considered. No interests were declared.		
12.02	<u>WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>		
	Jean Hardy and David Overton were welcomed as observers to this meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Linda Gration. The Clerk to the Corporation informed members that unfortunately because of poor health, Nigel Cooper-Fowkes had resigned from the Board and therefore a position now exists as a vacancy on this Committee. Members requested that a letter of thanks be passed on to Nigel Cooper-Fowkes on their behalf.	Clerk	Feb 2012
12.03	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2011</u>		
	The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting and were approved and signed by the Chair.		
	AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2011.	Chair	26 Jan 2012
12.04	<u>ACTIONS OUTSTANDING AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</u>		
	The action progress schedule was noted. There were no matters arising.		

Signed : _____ Chair

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12.05 DEPUTY PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Deputy Principal introduced her written report and confirmed that section one of the document was provided following a request at the last meeting to provide greater information on HEFCE numbers and profile.

HEFCE - In general terms the Committee were advised that generally full time learners were the younger age group and part time learners were in the older category. She confirmed that each College has to bid for higher education additional numbers, and the following was noted:

- In October 2011 HEFCE invited Higher Education and Further Education institutions to bid for student places from a margin of up to 20,000 under a new student number control system for 2012/13.
- 202 bids were received for a total of 35,811 places by the deadline of 11 November 2011. Of these, 34 bids were from Higher Education institutions and 167 from Further Education colleges.
- The margin places are available to those universities and colleges charging an average, net annual tuition fee of £7500 or less and meeting other criteria.
- The College submitted a bid for 35 additional student places for 2012/13.
- Informal advice has been received from HEFCE and it is that the likely outcome of the bid following the assessment process, is that the College is likely to receive an indicative allocation of 25 student places for 2012/13.

16-18 Bursary – the Deputy Principal confirmed that a much lower number of applications has been received than originally envisaged. This is despite the withdrawal of EMA.

Ofsted Learning & Skills Annual Report – members attention was drawn to page 8 of the document, where key findings noted were:

- There is too little outstanding teaching in learning and skills providers inspected this year. Only 13 independent learning providers and two employer providers were judged outstanding for the quality of teaching. No colleges, adult and community learning providers or prisons received an overall outstanding judgement for the quality of teaching, due to a lack of consistency.
- A high proportion of previously good colleges selected for inspection on the basis of Ofsted's assessment have declined in their performance this year. In 2009/10 around a quarter of colleges previously judged to be good, declined compared with over 2/5ths this year.
- The slow progress of colleges that were previously found to be 'satisfactory' remains a concern.

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It was noted that under the new inspection framework 'satisfactory' may be rephrased and would read as 'requires improvement'.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.06 SUCCESS RATE REVIEWS 2010/11

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and drew members` attention to the executive summary detailing 2010/11 success rate data, the following was noted:

- Under 16 years old - 83%, an increase of 7% from the previous year.
- 16-18 overall success is 80%, an increase of 1% on the previous year.
- Adult overall success, 80%, an increase of 1% from the previous year.
- HEFCE funded provision, 67% success, an increase of 1% on the previous year.
- Apprenticeships – level 2 success rates, 78%, a decline of 2%, level 3 success rates is 85%, an increase of 13%.
- Timely success for level 2 apprenticeships has decreased by 1%, for level 3 timely success has increased by 23% to 82%.
- NVQ's in the workplace – overall success has increased by 3% to 90% and timely success rates have improved by 6% to 85%.
- For learner responsive provision, comparisons with national success rates show a mixed picture by age and level where the College success rates are above, at or below the national rates.
- A review of the gaps in success rates by gender, ethnicity and learning disability or difficulty, show in the main very narrow gaps, in many instances the gaps are narrower than the national rates.

The Deputy Principal reminded the Committee that the headline data has been presented previously and that what is provided to this meeting is more of a detailed analysis to allow in-depth review.

Members reviewed the table at paragraph 4.1 and noted that the results show that, in some areas, the College is above and some below national success rates. Of particular concern was the 2010/11 College success rates for Level 3 long, which is 73% compared to national statistics of 79%. The Deputy Principal confirmed that this figure has been influenced by 'A' level results and BTEC qualifications where problems relating to retention were experienced. She confirmed that significant work on retention has improved the statistics and that they are actually now looking much better.

Members reviewed table 4.4 and acknowledged that the College works well to support students with a disability.

Members reviewed table five, which related to learner responsive adults (19+), again patterns seen were that, in some areas, the College is above

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and some it is below the national statistics. Of particular interest was the level 3 long, for adults, this is above the national benchmark, (whereas the College's position for 16-18 year olds is down).

No particular gaps in relation to gender, ethnicity and disability were noted at table 5.4. The Deputy Principal indicated that there was some work to be done by the Equality & Diversity Steering Group, particularly in relation to success of non-white British. It was generally felt that the College has some improvements to make, particularly in relation to Polish, Latvian and East European students. This cohort may need some additional language support to assist in the improvement of success rates. Members were advised that there were no general curriculum concerns and that small pockets of a 'type' of provision have issues which have been identified and are being addressed.

Members reviewed the Higher Education data at section six and felt that, whilst statistics were still not good enough, they were, in fact, moving in the right direction. It was noted that there are no national benchmarks published for Higher Education and therefore the College can only monitor its performance by comparing previous years.

The data in section 7, which relates to Employer Responsive Apprenticeships, is good. The College has been able to report its own success previously, but the national statistics have now been published and the College is above in all areas. This is a very positive picture for the College.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.07 LEARNER RECRUITMENT – ENROLMENT, RETENTION & WITHDRAWALS

The Director Curriculum and Standards introduced this item and drew members' attention to the detail of the Executive Summary at page 21. Members then reviewed the data tables on pages 23 onwards where the following was noted:

- YPLA 16-18 learners – the College is currently at 94% of target and expects to meet 100% by the end of the academic year. Members were advised that data collected at the end of December 2011 already shows an improved position.
- SFA 19+ learners – the College's performance currently stands at 91% of target and again there are expectations that 100% will be met.
- Withdrawal profile by Schools as detailed at paragraph 4 shows a comparison between the numbers of withdrawals for the same periods together with a percentage of withdrawals against enrolments. Although there is a slight increase in the number of withdrawals, the percentage of withdrawals against enrolment decreased by 1%. It was confirmed that this data is available to all Schools of Learning and staff review it on a regular basis.

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- Members were advised that Schools of Learning have worked very hard this academic year to give applicants reliable and realistic information and that this has impacted positively on retention.
- It was not believed that the withdrawal of EMA has had as big an impact upon retention to date as originally feared, however January can be a key retention point.
- A slight increase in the number of withdrawals for learners aged 16-18 by December 2011 has nonetheless decreased by 1%, whilst a higher number of withdrawals for learners aged 19+ has led to an increase of 1% when compared to December 2010.
- There is very little difference when comparing withdrawals by gender, with both male and female reflecting a 1% decrease in December 2011, when compared with the previous year.
- Withdrawals of learners of 'other ethnicities' has increased by 2%, from December 2010, whilst withdrawals of white British learners have decreased by 1% over the same period. The number of enrolments by learners of other ethnicities remains low when compared with non white British learners.
- Despite the 1% increase in withdrawals by learners with a learning disability or difficulty, the data reflects the low numbers of those learners who withdraw having declared a learning difficulty or disability when compared to those without. Withdrawals for learners with no difficulty or disability have decreased by 1%.
- There is a significant decrease in withdrawals of learners enrolled to a level four programme by 80% with a slight increase of 1% against entry level 2 and level 3 programmes. It was acknowledged that this was very encouraging.
- All Schools of Learning are currently above the College's retention target rate of 92%, with five Schools having higher retention than the corresponding period in 2010/11. One School has remained static, Business Professional and Continuing Education has decreased by 2%.
- Comparisons with the same period in 2010/11 show retention in three Schools has remained static, three Schools reflect an increase of 1%, whilst one School shows a decrease of 3%.
- The gap in retention of 1% between male and female in 2010/11 has levelled in 2011/12 to 95% retention for each gender. Whilst the gender gap has narrowed from 7% higher to 1% higher for females, in Business Professional and Continuing Education, retention for males has decreased by 6% in the Lifestyle Academy.
- Retention has increased by 1% to 96% for 16-18 learners, and decreased by 1% for learners aged 19+.
- Significant decreases were in Business Professional and Continuing Education, where retention for 16-18 learners decreased by 5%, and Academic and Public Services and Sports Studies and Construction and Building Services where retention for 19+ learners decreased by 4% and 5% respectively.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

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12.08 QUALITY ASSURANCE & IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORKS 2010/11

This item was introduced by the Head of Quality & Performance. She confirmed that the College has seen a very positive ‘buy in’ from partners, which is an excellent position to be in given the significant number of partners that the College supports. It was believed that there was really good progress on external frameworks and results. She confirmed that the quality assurance and the quality improvement frameworks for 2011/12 have been established. A number of business processes have been introduced to amend and underpin the frameworks to ensure 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. Members` attention was drawn to the detailed update at appendix 1, which clearly splits out results for College core provision and partner contracts.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

12.09 TEACHING & LEARNING OBSERVATIONS – PROGRESS TO DATE 2011/12

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

- The primary system of measuring quality is the graded lesson observation.
- All College staff delivering learning will receive a graded observation in 2011/12.
- A risk based approach for targeting teaching and learning sessions within courses performing below the 75th percentile was introduced this academic year.
- To December 2011, 110 graded observations have been completed.
- There has been a decrease in the proportion of observations graded ‘outstanding’ and an increase in the proportions of observations graded ‘satisfactory’. It was explained that this was expected as the focus is on under-performing courses.
- The overall grade profile at this time of the year is similar to the last year’s outcome for the same period. 85% of observed sessions were good or better in 2010/11, compared with 81% in 2011/12.

In relation to teaching and learning observations off campus, a risk-based approach to observations completed with each partner has been applied in 2011/12. For high-risk partners, 100% of sessions and training will be observed, medium risk 50% and low risk 20%. 181 partner providers’ assessors and trainers have been identified for observation throughout 2011/12. This will be continually reviewed throughout the year to ensure that observations are completed where required. To December 2011, 42 graded observations have been completed. Members were reminded that the College currently has approximately 50 partner providers.

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Members reviewed the data provided and questioned the 100% achievement of good or better obtained by the Lifestyle Academy as detailed on page 39. Members were advised that the report presented was a snapshot only and could change over time. That being said, the Committee was advised that this School of Learning has really invested a lot of time as a team to get up above a previous grade 2 plateau. It was felt that the grading profile was a fair representation of the effort put in to improve teaching and learning.

To support the observation progress, members were advised that historically a two-week notice period for a one-week window was offered. This has been reduced to a two-week notice period for a two-day window.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.10 SCHOOL REVIEWS TERM ONE

The Director of Curriculum & Standards introduced this report and drew members' attention to the following:

- The College's overall retention was 90% in 2010/11, 2% lower than its targeted 92%. Care and Education Studies and Engineering & Transport skills met this target, compared to five Schools which were below the target.
- Whilst the grades have increased in retention (7%) was seen in Creative Industries & Digital Technologies, retention was still 1% below the target of 91%.
- In year retention has risen progressively over a three-year period within the Lifestyle Academy, although retention of 91% was 1% below the College's target.
- The College's overall success rate for all qualifications, ages and levels in 2010/11 was 82%, the same as 2009/10.
- Success rates have risen progressively over a three-year period within Engineering & Transport Skills to 88%, and to 81% Creative Industries and Digital Technologies.
- The College set and met a target of 91% attendance for 2010/11, 1% above Ofsted's rating of 90% being good, with attendance being 2% higher than 2009/10.
- Courses performing below the 75th percentile were discussed with each School's Management Team. The Management Teams were asked to identify any emerging trends between performance, attendance, age groups for full time programmes and teaching and learning observation grades.
- Within the revised structure, all Schools of Learning now deliver HEFCE funded programmes.
- The College's overall success rate for HE provision is 70%, which is 3% higher than 2009/10.

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- Business Professional and Continuing Education significantly improved success rates from 58% to 83% (25%) over the three-year period. Success rates within three Schools have fluctuated over the same period whilst three Schools have decreased.
- Functional Skills became the sole Skills for Life qualification for full time learners in 2010/11, with an overall success rate of 73%. Whilst this is 10% lower than the previous year, total enrolments were 3521 compared with 476 in 2009/10 when the majority of learners were enrolled to key skills. In this area, the College has reviewed its method of delivery and has increased the number of hours offered to support achievement.
- There has been a significant increase of 14% in success rates across the College in 2010/11 in relation to Schools who delivered apprenticeships.
- 60 teaching and learning sessions have been observed as outstanding, grade 1 during 2010/11 compared to 21 in 2009/10.
- Curriculum Managers shared themes that had emerged from their line manager during observations and their subsequent actions.
- Observations have been carried out during learners` induction at the beginning of 2011/12 and teams discussed what had worked well and where there were areas for development.
- The School Management Team informed the panel of their actions and progress relating to the QIP for 2010/11 and discussed their planned actions within the 2011/12 QIP.
- A synopsis of all external verifier reports was reviewed. School Management Teams were congratulated on the positive reports and confirmed that any action points had been addressed.

In summary, the distance each School of Learning has travelled in 2010/11 was evident throughout the reviews. Each Management Team is aware of their areas for development for the coming year and has clear strategies in place.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.11 HE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and confirmed that, at the recent meeting of the HE Academic Standards Committee, their higher education self evaluation document (SED) 2010/11 was considered in detail. She explained that this was similar to the SAR completed by the College. The SED focuses on course management, recruitment, retention, achievement, course development, student experience, external examiner comments, learning resources and quality reviews. The action plan relating to the SED was reviewed, with no real issues identified to address.

Signed : _____Chair

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ACTION by whom	DATE by when
Dep. Principal	26 Apr 2012

It was noted that the partnership arrangements with Leeds Metropolitan University are to end and a summary of proposed developments was discussed, in particular for an exit strategy as a validating university. It was agreed that a full report on this particular point would be presented at the next meeting.

The publication of the collaborative audit reports from Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Derby have been published with no particular issues arising from this documentation.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.12 LEARNER VOICE REPORT

This report was presented by the Director: Curriculum & Standards in the absence of Linda Gration. Members` attention was drawn to the detail of the written paper, with the following items picked out for attention:

- The outcomes for all College respondents, measured against national ratings for all 119 providers and all 15,000 respondents were in the top quartile for six of the key areas, and in the top 50% for the remaining two.
- The outcomes for all College respondents measured against national ratings for all colleges graded outstanding by Ofsted, 18 colleges and 78,000 respondents are in the upper quartile for three key areas, in the top 50% for a further three areas, and in the third quartile for enrichment.

Members discussed the issue of enrichment in more detail and were advised that funding has been greatly reduced in this area, and that there is a need for the sector to be more creative. Members questioned whether there was an issue regarding the actual question in the questionnaire and that it might not be specific enough as to what does and does not count as enrichment. The Principal confirmed that enrichment was an area that required full review moving forward as students who participated in the survey did not feel that enough was on offer.

- It is not possible to measure distance travelled for the Schools that are significantly different to last year following the recent restructure. However, Business, Professional and Continuing Education improved in six areas compared with last year. Construction & Building Services improved in five areas and remained the same in one and Engineering & Transport Skills dropped back in 7 areas and remained at the same level in one key area.
- There are no significant differences between satisfaction levels of male and female respondents.

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- 182 supported respondents are significantly happier with their college experience than non-supported students.
- 207 respondents with disabilities had higher ratings in each of the eight key areas than students who reported no disability. This links in with previous discussions which would suggest that the College works well to support students with additional learning requirements.
- Learner Voice activity continues to grow and be effective as a means of gathering learner views. Although it is stronger in some Schools than others, all Schools of Learning now have a representative. A training event was held in October to support this role. Across College, Your Voice and focus group meetings were well attended. The Your Voice meeting in December was attended by 84 learners and all Schools were represented.
- Participation in the Students` Union continues to grow, and the new Students` Union Room at Derby Road is very popular with students. Sales of SU cards in the first term reached 628, exceeding last years final total by 30. Eight SU Officers and one Student Governor were elected and three SU executive meetings were held.
- Communication with learners continues to improve with 526 on the SU facebook site, regular contributions to the SU website from staff and students and the planned publication of an SU magazine.
- There are three new clubs for learners supported by the SU with themes around the environment, books versus electronic media, friendship and a games club.

Members felt that Students` Union activities needed to be linked more closely to perception of 'enrichment,' as it is clear that there may be lots more on offer than students actually realise.

The Principal indicated that by attending the Learner Voice meetings, she was seeing students who are a lot more confident, ambitious and progressing well and that this is something to be developed further.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.13 SAFEGUARDING

The Deputy Principal introduced this report and explained the College processes regarding identifying potentially 'at risk' students. She confirmed that the level of support for individuals is tailored and includes one to one support, probation visits, youth offending visits, case review, advocacy with tutors, signposting to other teams, etc. Members reviewed the withdrawal and retention statistics for the 'at risk' students identified and noted that by comparison the percentage for current and ex-offenders was low. It was agreed that this is an area for the College to review further.

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In terms of the safeguarding development plan for 2011/12, it was noted that Diana Gilhespy was the Governor Link for Safeguarding. Members were advised that good progress has been made against actions identified and key areas of progress reviewed.

In general terms, all felt that the safeguarding framework in College was outstanding and that the aspiration is to move the existing good practice up another level.

Members agreed that safeguarding within partner provision was a key focus and that developments discussed earlier in the meeting would help to support this.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.14 **AOB**

There were no matters of additional business.

12.15 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk to the Corporation confirmed that the next meeting was scheduled for 26 April 2012 at 6.00 pm.

Meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

Signed : _____Chair

Date: