

CORPORATION OF KIDDERMINSTER COLLEGE

Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Thursday 4th February 2010 at 17.30 hours

ST 413 Present Sonia Farnaby , Chair
Andy Dobson
Jonathan Grice
Harry Grove
Stella Hammond
Kevin Sant
Chris Sheeran
Carol Warren

ST 414 Quorum 2

ST 415 In Attendance Angharad Hale, Clerk to the Corporation

ST 416 Apologies Annie Conway

ST 417 Declaration of Members' Conflict of Interests
No declarations made.

ST 418 Minutes of Meeting Held on 12th November 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2009, having been re-circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

ST 419 Matters Arising

i) NUS Regional Network

Further to discussions at the last meeting, the Student Governors and the Clerk have met with the Principal to begin exploring ways to ensure a more effective interface with students. This has included discussion regarding what is available regionally and Chris Sheeran has identified a contact at Dudley College. The Clerk will continue to work with the Student Governors in order to progress ideas and it is proposed to bring a paper to the Corporation meeting in May to update Governors.

ii) End of Year Questionnaire Results 2008/9 (female toilets)

Estate Management are looking into the issues with the toilets. The problem with water pressure will be investigated as a minor works issue in the summer.

iii) Under achievement of females in the Wyre Forest

It was noted that the imbalance in achievements between male and female students at the College seemed to have corrected itself in 2008-9. However, there remains a concern over the aspiration of females in Wyre Forest and the Continuum consortium are working on a raising achievement plan with a specific focus on the issue of girls' achievement and high pregnancy rates. A conference is planned for Year 9 girls next summer in conjunction with Aim Higher and schools are looking at the possibility of jointly employing a liaison officer to work with girls.

The College's role was discussed and one possible contribution that could be made was for girls from Continu schools who succeed at the College to go back in to their former school as positive role models.

Carol Warren noted that many women who come into contact with the Wyre Forest Asha Centre have left school with low level qualifications and are lacking in confidence. There appears to be an issue around self esteem which needs to be tackled alongside attendance issues.

iv) Catering Contract

It was reported that the latest information from Mitie indicates that they are now operating close to budget.

ST 420 Success Rates 2008/9

The Principal explained that the circulated report differed from the LSC report which is based on an earlier submission rather than the College's final position. Due to a small technical error relating to the file name, the Data Service declined the January submission from the College and the Principal is working with LSC and the Data Service to resolve the matter.

Overall, figures for 16-18 year olds are in a good position. Adult figures reflect issues that the College is aware of, e.g. the transfer of some high performing NVQs programme over to the 'employer responsive' strand, changes to the structure of the MAS records programme and poor success rates at the Stourport IT Centre. The LSC push to get students onto a full Level 2 qualification has impacted retention at the Stourport IT Centre, as many leave before completing the qualification. The contract with Ricide is up for renewal in October and options will be reviewed at the next Corporation meeting.

Key skills figures continue to go up and are mainly above the national average. Functional skills are slightly lower but are still in an encouraging position as this is a new area where the qualifications are being piloted.

ICT is the only area that seems significantly lower and may be linked to the way it is taught and assessed. There seems a problem nationally in this area.

Apprenticeship success rates are still being affected by the removal of programmes in previous years.

Train to Gain figures were noted to be 10% above the national average.

An issue was raised regarding how involved Governors should be in monitoring poorly performing courses. Traditionally the level of detail brought to Standards meetings has not been broken down into specific courses. It was queried whether overall statistics could potentially mask issues. The Principal stated a willingness to work with Governors to ensure they have all required information and pointed out that information on all courses is available in the Self Assessment Report. It was agreed that further detail could be worthwhile if an area is underachieving and to revisit the level of information required once governors have debated their roles and responsibilities further.

ST 421 Teaching & Learning Observations 2009/10 – Autumn Term Monitoring Report

Details had been circulated. It was noted that the focus has been changed this year to be more proportionate to risk. An encouraging picture is emerging at this stage of the year with a high proportion of 'good' lessons. Standards seem to be improving across the College.

There has been one 'unsatisfactory' lesson. The tutor has been referred to colleagues within the same department for support.

It was confirmed that an average of 20-30 staff are undertaking the teaching programme at any one time. All FE teachers have to undertake the basic Preparing to Teach in Life Long Learning (PTLLS) qualification and most are encouraged to undertake the full teaching qualification.

Feedback was requested from the Student Governors present. It was noted that students don't like the teaching style on some course, e.g. too much reading off power point presentations. On a positive note tutors are generally seen as approachable. Kevin Sant reported that he acted as a representative for other students on his course to discuss issues with the tutor.

The Principal endorsed the need for opportunities within courses for feedback from students. It was noted that whilst end of year reports are helpful for preceding students, it would be useful to receive earlier feedback from current students.

ST 422 Cross College Standards & Targets 2009/10 – Autumn Term Monitoring Report

Details having been previously circulated, it was noted that many areas are performing well. The 2 red areas were discussed and it was noted that there have been staffing problems in the Examinations section. The red area in Learning Support is being addressed as outlined in the report.

At 6.45 Harry Grove left the meeting

ST 423 Learner Withdrawal Analysis 2009/10 – Autumn Term Monitoring Report

It was noted that figures are slightly up on the previous year (0.4%) but that there are not very many courses with a retention rate of below 80%.

Retention tends to be lower on 2 year courses and potential reasons for this were discussed. One of the Student Governors highlighted the fact that 50% of the females on his course are currently pregnant.

The Principal confirmed that the College do all they can to enable students who become pregnant to complete their course in some form including the option of leaving with a 1 rather than 2 year qualification or working from home where appropriate.

It was noted that the pregnancy rates highlighted under this item link back to the earlier discussion regarding aspiration of females in the Wyre Forest. It was also noted that the national trend is for higher underachievement in males, therefore we have an unusual local situation.

ST 424 Any Other Business

None raised.

ST 425 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 10th June 2010 at 17.30 hours
The meeting closed at 18.55 hours

Chair _____ Date _____