

CORPORATION OF KIDDERMINSTER COLLEGE

Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Thursday 12th November 2009 at 17.30 hours

ST 398 Present Sonia Farnaby, Chair
Jonathan Grice
Harry Grove
Stella Hammond
Andrew Miller
Chris Sheeran
Carol Warren

ST 399 Quorum 2

ST 400 In Attendance Andy Dobson, Head of Quality Improvement &
Information Services
Angharad Hale, Clerk to the Corporation

ST 401 Apologies None received.

ST 402 Declaration of Members' Conflict of Interests

No declarations made.

ST 403 Minutes of Meeting Held on 11th June 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2009, having been circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

ST 404 Matters Arising

i) Cross College Standards & Targets (Catering Operations)

The Finance & Personnel Committee will be reviewing the issue of the higher than budgeted for deficit. Derek Harrison will be presenting options to the Finance & Personnel Committee at their next meeting later in November.

Andy Dobson noted that Estate Management were not going to focus on the financial side of the catering operation in future but would use a different measure.

The question was put to the Student Governor present, Chris Sheeran, as to how students perceive the catering service. Chris stated that although the Student Council had considered the issues raised, not all students seemed aware of what was on offer and many preferred to go into town at lunchtime. It was noted that the location is not ideal as there is no obvious place to congregate and that there is tough competition with low prices at local supermarkets and other local food outlets.

Carol Warren suggested that, given the central location, the College need to take a radical look at whether to have the catering service at all. The Principal confirmed that this was one of the options to be considered and that a meeting was due to take place with Mitie to discuss current arrangements.

ii) Framework for Excellence 2009/10

The Principal reported that a revised and updated version has been issued for 2009-10. The College are included as last year and the LSC have indicated that grades will be published for 2009-10. Learner surveys have started, which staff are aware of and the survey will be available until February 2010. Work based / employer responsive courses are now included and from next year schools and sixth forms will be included.

ST 405 Key Quality Improvements Priorities 2009/10

Andy Dobson noted that many of the key issues for improvement have been picked up in the Post-Inspection Action Plan following the OfSTED report.

Generic issues have been picked up in the priorities including tackling poorly performing courses and the need for formal Management training. Teaching and learning observations will now focus on categories where improvement is needed and will not take place for the top categories this year which is thought to be more proportionate to the risk. Grades will be carried forward for statistical purposes, for 1 year if Grade 1 has been achieved for 1 or 2 years if achieved for 2 consecutive years. Grade 1 teachers will instead be involved in mentoring and carrying out refresher training / good practice workshops. Andy Dobson will oversee the referral process for mentoring but was pleased to note a positive response from staff.

Harry Grove wished to record his support for the supportive suggestions approach. The Committee added their agreement in support of the process.

ST 406 Initial Value Added Analysis 2008/9

Details had been circulated. It was noted that as the analysis was based on College data, there would be some differences when OfSTED publish their version, as we have included 19+ learners. Also, OfSTED have access to national data on GCSE results which are not available to the College.

A potential issue was identified around Health Studies and Andy Dobson confirmed that he is already working with the Section Manager to try to address the underperformance. There had been some staff absences which may have contributed to this. Additionally, it was noted that there may be a link to aspiration levels and that there appears to be a gender issue as females are not performing as well as males across the College curriculum. Schools data has showed that girls of all ages in the Wyre Forest are underachieving and a raising achievement strategy is being worked on by the Local Authority.

It was agreed that the College should continue to work with schools in this area to address the issue of aspiration and cater for diversity.

Andy Dobson confirmed that tutors receive the data in the form of a score for students and should be using it in target setting and building it into Individual Learning Plans in discussion with the individual student.

ST 407 Update report on Post Inspection Action Plan

Details having been previously circulated, the Principal highlighted the positive progress with the action plan and particularly with regard to the Learner Voice.

A query was raised regarding whether the College NUS is taking full advantage of the support and advice available from NUS nationally. It was agreed to explore the possibility of using the regional network, including the possibility of a Midlands NUS representative coming into the College.

The Committee noted the progress made and the next mentoring report will be discussed at the meeting in the Spring Term.

ST 408 Support for Students – End of Year Questionnaire Results 2008/9

Whilst overall levels of satisfaction remain high, there had been a slight decrease in the satisfaction with the College (1.4%) and courses (2.2%) which suggest we should not be complacent. Andy Dobson highlighted a particularly pleasing increase in the areas of Student Union and Attitude to Equal Opportunities.

IT facilities are a recurring theme in student comments. Chris Sheeran highlighted the need for students and some tutors to be made aware of the facility to plug their own laptops in, which could ease some of the computer access issues.

There is still an issue around achieving the Functional Skills element in the Diplomas. This relates to the quality of teaching and learning in schools and needs to be addressed by the whole sector.

It was agreed that the poor state of cleanliness in the female toilets is a legitimate problem and is made worse by the slow filling flush system. It was agreed to refer the matter back to Estate Management.

At this point in the meeting, 6.45pm, Harry Grove left.

ST 409 Cross College Service Standards – Final Report 2008/9

Details had previously been circulated. It was noted that most areas are on target, with one red area connected to the Catering contract which was being addressed.

It was also noted that BDU now have the software system in place to measure their target in relation to the speed of customer responses.

ST 410 Final Withdrawal Report 2008/9

It was noted that the number of courses on the below 80% retention list has dropped for the past 3 years with fewer 2 year courses now on the list. The main area for concern remains Stourport IT Centre. The significant withdrawal problems from last year are a cause for concern and improvement strategies are being discussed with the partner, Ricide Ltd.

A discussion was held regarding the College's strategy for supporting students to stay on courses. In particular, teenage pregnancies were noted to be at a high level in the Wyre Forest area. Options such as frontloading work, allowing students to work from home and moving them from a Diploma to a Certificate to enable them to leave with some form of qualification have been used. It was acknowledged to be more difficult to allow for a break in some courses and that the College could do more to be flexible for e.g. on-line facilities and part time options.

It was also noted that some of the part time courses under BDU are linked to employment and if a job situation changes this is a factor outside of the College's control.

ST 411 Any Other Business

None raised.

ST 412 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 4th February 2010 at 17.30 hours

The meeting closed at 19.15 hours

Chair _____ Date _____