

LONGLEY PARK SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

**MINUTES of a meeting of the
CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE
held on 21 OCTOBER 2009 at 5.00pm
at the College, Horninglow Road, Sheffield**

Present: Nick Duggan (Chair)
Chris Mallaband
Mo Nisbet (Principal)
Carmel Page
Karen Squires (Vice-Chair)

In attendance: Sharon Langridge (Clerk to the Corporation)
Donald McLean (Vice-Principal)

Apologies for absence were received from Jeremy Lonsdale and Steve Robinson.

Action
Who By

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Clerk sought nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee. Nick Duggan was proposed as Chair and Karen Squires as Vice-Chair. The proposal was supported unanimously.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2009

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5 RETENTION, ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

Members considered the course data that had been circulated. The Principal explained that the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and OfSTED looked at the data in different ways.

Members asked if there was a reason for the lower number of students taking entry level courses. The Principal explained that more students were coming to the College having gained Skills for Life qualifications at school.

The Principal outlined the benchmarks used based upon a sample of twelve colleges designated as being 'widening participation' colleges. Members noted that there was no specific definition of a 'widening participation' college as the organisations in the group differed

significantly in their entry criteria and curriculum offer. Members agreed that it might be useful to establish which other colleges were included in the category.

The Principal highlighted the impact of retention on success rates, the greater emphasis that was placed upon the student experience and the introduction of the 'Y' schemes. Members were advised that Maths results had been adversely affected by adult numeracy qualifications offered in schools but which did not provide students with a full grasp of the subject required for GCSE Maths. The Principal drew attention to the Senior Management Team's concern regarding the dip in performance for some vocational courses. She confirmed that problems had been identified in certain areas and that action was being taken to address these and to make improvements. The Chair recommended that consideration be given as to whether public service qualifications were a realistic vehicle as access to work in many of the public services was not available to young people.

The Principal informed Members that each Directorate had reviewed the success rates and value added for each of their courses. Members noted that significant improvements had been made in some areas. The Principal reminded the Committee that the LSC Minimum Level of Performance (MLP) for A Level courses was 75% and that if more than 15% of a college's provision was below MLP then this became a matter of concern for the LSC and could impact on funding. She had serious concerns that in some cases the floor targets were higher than national benchmarks and therefore unachievable.

Members asked if a differential could be seen between Directorates. The Principal confirmed that Directorates were affected by the number of vulnerable students, the College's widening participation ethos and the moving benchmarks and changing national drivers. Members agreed that Governors needed to a further discussion on this matter and the implications for the future. Members discussed whether the City Council might be able to insulate provision that gave young people opportunities to achieve qualifications that they would otherwise not have access to, in light of its strategy to upskill the population of the City.

The Principal reported on some correspondence she had received that day from OfSTED and the LSC regarding manipulation of data by some providers and how this was being tackled.

The Committee was confident that the College was focused on outcomes and that relevant action was being taken to improve retention, achievement and success. Members were also pleased to note, from the enrolment data, that the College had maintained a balanced ethnic mix.

6

SAR DIRECTORATE BRIEFING

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item until the next

meeting.

7 **STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Principal apologised that, in the absence of the Deputy Principal, this item had not been completed and would therefore need to be deferred.

8 **LEARNER INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY: 2009-10 UPDATE**

The Vice-Principal talked Members through the elements of the Learner Involvement Strategy and outlined the proposals for expanding the means of capturing the learner voice in 2009-10.

The Committee agreed that it would be useful for Governors to have more feedback from learners particularly in respect of the measures being taken to improve retention and achievement. Members noted that the majority of activity would take place between October and December and requested that an update on progress be presented to the next meeting.

DM Jan '10

9 **COLLEGE CHARTER/STUDENT CHARTER REVIEW**

The Principal advised the Committee that she had referred this matter to the Equality & Diversity Steering Group for review and that a report would be brought back to a future meeting.

EDSG Apr '10

10 **SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS, DISCIPLINARIES AND APPEALS**

The Principal circulated a summary on student disciplinary cases. The reason for disciplinary action varied from returning students on a re-enrolment contract who then repeated poor behaviour to inappropriate remarks on social networking sites. Members noted that there had been one appeal.

The Committee was advised that, despite the increase in student numbers, the atmosphere in college was calmer.

11 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

The Committee considered a list of questions presented by the Clerk. Members agreed that the terms of reference were appropriate and suggested that it would be appropriate for the Committee to consider progression to Higher Education. In particular, Members would be interested to know the number of Level 1, 2 and 3 students going on to university and to get their views on their experience of life at the College.

The Chair requested that the Aim Higher report be presented to the Committee.

MN Apr '10

Members were happy that there was a comprehensive programme of

business in place and considered whether an additional meeting should be scheduled each year to accommodate the performance review and planning elements of the business cycle. The Clerk agreed to factor this when planning future schedules.

SL Apr '10

Members considered the input from the two Head Teachers to be vital and therefore agreed that they should be able to send a deputy to represent them at meetings they were unable to attend. They requested that the Committee's terms of reference be amended accordingly and recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

Govs Dec '09

12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 27th January 2010 at 5.00pm.

The Committee identified the following topics as potential agenda items:

The meeting ended at 6.45pm.

Signed: (Chair)

Date: