

**SOLIHULL COLLEGE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9TH JUNE 2015 AT THE BLOSSOMFIELD
CAMPUS**

PRESENT: Bill Wanley (Chair)
Stan Baldwin
Chris Baranowski
John Bolt
John Callaghan (Principal)
Jane Coleman
Joe Kelly
Nick Mapp
Keith Marriott
Phil Mayhew
Alex Palethorpe

IN ATTENDANCE: Lindsey Stewart (Deputy Principal)
Pete Haynes (Vice Principal HR & Student Services)
Heather Evans (Vice Principal Finance)
Beth Selwood (Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment)
Theresa Lynch (Clerk to the Corporation)

1. Membership

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Noreen Akhtar.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2015 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2015 were **agreed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Confidential Items:

*It was **agreed** that the confidential item 8 Remuneration Committee minutes of 7th May 2015 and related items remain confidential, as they relate to individual members of staff.*

3. Strategy for 2015/16

3.1 Quality Improvement Plan and Post Ofsted Action Plan

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the QIP and Action Plan. Detailed discussion took place regarding the RAG rating and it was **agreed** that there should be 2 columns, one for progress and one for impact. This would show that an action had been completed and whether it had been effective. It was suggested that a BRAG system be used to demonstrate actions not yet in scope, but Governors were content with the existing system.

It was noted that the HMI had commented favourably on the Plan.

Q. How is impact measured?

A. Where it is quantifiable it will be shown or a commentary provided.

Afl 1: Success for adult learners on level 2 programmes:

Q. Why are level 2 programmes a problem? Is the only answer to close provision?

A. These programmes are not a priority area for SFA funding. Priorities are English and maths, full time provision and unemployed – these are being focused on. A number of the level 2 programmes were distance learning, which are more difficult to track. Some adult courses have been put into intensive care and it would seem that all are improving, except one. Further progress will be reported via the QIP.

Afl 4: Development of learners' English and math skills:

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that Ofsted had highlighted English, however, both maths and English needed to be a priority. Additional teachers were being recruited and existing staff English and maths skills were being reviewed. CPD opportunities would be available for all staff to support embedding of English and maths in vocational subjects.

Q. How is recruitment?

A. A graduate recruitment process had been undertaken, however, the candidate declined in favour of taking a role in a school. The standard adverts had attracted about 30 applicants. Shortlisting and interviewing would be taking place shortly.

Q. Shouldn't the target for English be above the national average?

A. The outcome for 2013/14 was 10% below the national average, so setting at the national average (28%) is a medium term target, which is hopefully achievable. The target may be slightly cautious as the number of students taking the exam is much higher for 2014/15, with 700 taking English and 500 maths. It has been logistically difficult running the exams and the cost has increased markedly.

Q. If a 16 year old student comes to the College and fails the GCSE in their first year, do they have to keep re-sitting it?

A. Yes – until they reach the age of 19. This is in line with government requirements.

Q. How accurate is the College in setting predicted grades?

A. The process is that head of subject sets the predictions through liaison with tutors and this is then aggregated upwards. The track record at predicting grades is good overall; however, it has been disappointing for maths and English. Lessons have been learned from previous experiences and it is hoped that this process is now more robust.

Q. Do you re-predict throughout the year?

A. Yes, each time students undertake assessment, predictions are updated and this information will be included in the QIP as appropriate.

The Deputy Principal noted, for example, that an issue had been raised regarding Functional Skills Level 2 and a difference between practice tests and the external test, which students had expressed concern about.

The Principal confirmed that strategies were being put in place for the new academic year to reinforce attendance and student commitment to the full study programme, including maths and English, as appropriate. Driving up the quality of teaching and learning should also encourage student engagement.

Afl 5: Work Experience:

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that there seemed to be a difference between Ofsted guidance and the expectations regarding the application of work experience and that experienced at our Inspection. The HMI had explained that what

was important was for the College to have a clear and specific strategy that articulates its approach to work experience.

It was noted that work experience would be co-ordinated centrally through the employment and skills section, using business sales advisers. Work was taking place with the Chamber of Commerce and the LEP to enhance the College work experience process.

All employability information for students would be collected on ProMonitor to keep a log of all opportunities and activities. This would record clear evidence and show the valuable experiences taking place.

Q. Can the College offer work experience opportunities?

A. The guidance suggests that work experience should be external, however, the important element is a real, valuable experience of working life, so further discussions would take place with the HMI to clarify and identify the full extent of opportunities that would meet Ofsted expectations.

It was noted that some HEIs were now offering work experience opportunities to their students and it could be possible to partner with other educational institutions to offer reciprocal work experience activities. This, however, would be after exhausting all other avenues.

The Principal explained that the induction letter to students would include a question about whether students already had work experience opportunities, which could be used to meet this requirement.

Q. Do you have a pack for employers?

A. A pack does exist, however, this was currently being reviewed. It was **agreed** that this could be circulated for input by Governors. **ACTION.**

Afl 9: Insufficient challenge for more able learners:

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that processes to evidence challenge would be strengthened through schemes of work, teaching observations and effective student target-setting and monitoring. Evidence and recording would also provide indications of value added for individual students. Pro Monitor will be used to record all information. This will ensure comprehensive data to evidence that students are being challenged and are receiving added value.

Afl 12: Self-assessment is insufficiently self-critical:

Processes for self-assessment are being reviewed and reinforced. A new post has been established, Director of Quality Improvement, and Patrick Geary had been appointed.

ProSAR will be used to underpin the process to allow staff to focus on the judgements, rather than the paperwork, which will hopefully lead to improvement. The relationship between course, school and College level self-assessment has been clarified to ensure a clear message is provided throughout. The HMI will be involved in the validation process.

Afl 13: Effectiveness of the evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement:

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that the lesson observation process was being reviewed.

One issue raised in the Teaching and Learning Survey was that the questions, relating to how well maths and English skills were developed and equality and diversity promoted, were not necessarily clear to learners and the questions would be reviewed to make them more clearly understood to learners when completing the survey.

RESOLVED to approve the Quality Improvement and Ofsted Action Plan, subject to RAG rating

amendments.

It was noted that the columns on the left-hand side of the report, relating to the QIP would remain confidential, indefinitely due to the potential commercial sensitivity of the contents.

3.2 Evaluation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that this would be broadened out to incorporate more than observations only, as evaluation of teaching and learning needed to triangulate a range of input and feedback to be effective in identifying improvements required. The HMI had spent a lot of time during his visit discussing the College's approach and he confirmed that he felt that the College was ready to move to an ungraded model. It was noted that an ungraded model had been piloted during the summer term and staff were responding well. Feedback included actions and development suggestions for individuals, which was felt to be more useful than a quantifiable grade.

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment explained that Helen Groves, who had been one of the Subject Inspectors, would be coming into College (June 2015) to deliver observation training to observers and that the Support and Challenge HMI would come in the autumn term to shadow observers to provide assurance that the new process is being implemented appropriately and consistently.

Models for reporting on an ungraded system were noted and it was confirmed that further discussion would take place with the HMI, prior to identifying the appropriate reporting model for Governors.

Detailed discussion took place regarding the advantages and disadvantages of an ungraded model. It was noted that one of the issues raised by Ofsted related to the over-emphasis on teaching observation grades and there was therefore a need to have a wider range of data to judge the quality of teaching learning.

Q. If the issue was the observation process, then changing the scoring mechanism may not resolve the issue.

A. The ungraded system is more granular and transparent. It is more likely that judgement will be accurate. There have been visits to other colleges to view their ungraded model. The VP will be attending a WM College event on 17th June 2015 to further consider ungraded models in the sector. Each member of staff will have an action plan, so it does not simply focus on those with a low score – it ensures good and outstanding teachers are continually improving and evolving their practice too.

Q. You could have score and action plan.

A. It is important to have qualitative judgements that ensure meaningful improvement and delivers for learners.

There will be training for observers in the autumn term to ensure effective calibration, which is key in being able to use observations as part of the evaluation of teaching and learning process.

It was **agreed** that an ungraded process be adopted, but with the caveat that resources be put into training and calibration to change cultural issues around teaching observation outcomes. It was further **agreed** that a review be carried out in November 2015, to ensure the new process is effective and that the HMI be invited to discuss this with Corporation at a meeting in November 2015. **ACTION.**

It was noted that there would be a new Ofsted CIF introduced in September 2015 and a

briefing would be prepared for Governors. **ACTION.**

Q. Is one HMI adequate – should there be further sources of assurance?

A. There is value in having such direct Ofsted support and with a variety of advisers the message could become diluted. It was probably important to have clear direction at the current time.

Governors expressed the need to ensure that the process for assuring the quality of teaching and learning is robust, with effective calibration and improvement plans for all teachers, as this had been raised previously and this seemed to be a key improvement need.

RESOLVED to approve the Evaluation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy.

3.3 Quality Improvement Strategy Update

The Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment presented the report and explained that the strategy would be finalised and submitted for approval in the autumn term.

3.4 Student Voice End of Year Report 2014/15

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services presented the report. It was noted that the teaching and learning survey would be done earlier in the academic year in 2015/16, as it provided some useful feedback.

3.5 Student Union Proposal

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that the constitution was still being developed, following a review of the NUS model. It was **agreed** that the constitution would be shared with Governors via a Task Group for feedback prior to approval. **ACTION.**

The Vice Principal HR and Student Services explained that although the President would normally be elected by the student body, for the first year it was proposed to appoint a President from within the Student Course Reps who would be returning in 2015/16, so that the President could assist with the setting up of the union from the beginning. It was **agreed** that a President be appointed on an informal basis, with no long term commitment in the first instance, so that they could attend the training scheduled for July 2015, but with the clear message that should the Student Union not go ahead their role would cease.

4. Principal's Briefing Items

4.1 Key Performance Indicators March 2015 - Dashboard

The Principal explained that the changes suggested at the last meeting were being incorporated into the Dashboard. Discussion took place regarding the timeliness of the information and it was noted that this needed to be clarified for each quadrant. **ACTION.**

Discussion took place regarding further enhancements that could be made to the system and it was **agreed** that a further Task Group meeting take place to resolve some of the outstanding issues. **ACTION.**

4.2 Bids and Projects Update

The Vice Principal Finance presented the report and explained that the LEP had confirmed that £170,000 could be spent under refurbishment costs, rather equipment. This, however, meant that the College needed to contribute an additional £113,900, due to the reduced funding offered by the LEP for refurbishment (33%, compared to 50% for equipment). Discussion took place and it was **agreed** to contribute an additional cash sum of £113,900

for the project.

Q. What is happening regarding the Cornwall ATA?

A. Three vacancies were being advertised and contractors were being approached.

4.3 Year End Financial Position Update

This item was deemed confidential.

4.4 Ofsted Dashboard

The Deputy Principal presented the Ofsted Dashboard and explained that it contained 2013/14 data. Future key measures for comparison with other colleges would include maths and English outcomes. Discussion took place regarding the comparison data circulated, that showed Solihull College compared very favourably to other local colleges.

4.5 IT Infrastructure Update

The Vice Principal Finance explained that the IT tender had been released and following some higher prices than expected, the specification had been narrowed and re-costed. She explained, however, that iPads had been purchased for all teaching staff and managers with a saving of £100k on budget.

5. Governance Planning and Arrangements for 2015/16

5.1 Committee Terms of Reference

The Clerk explained that the Terms of Reference for each committee needed to be approved annually. The only changes recommended related to title changes and minor amendments.

RESOLVED to approve the Committee Terms of Reference.

5.2 Proposed Dates for 2015/16

The Clerk presented the proposed dates for 2015/16 and explained that as the majority of meetings in the autumn term would focus on teaching and learning an additional meeting had been included after the Audit Committee on 20th October. It was **agreed** to trial this and confirm the dates for 2015/16, as set out.

5.3 Governance 2015/16

The Clerk presented the draft feedback report that set out the arrangements that were currently in place. It was noted that this report would be circulated for comments and feedback to all Governors in preparation for producing the Governors' SAR in the autumn term. **ACTION**.

6. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 7th July 2015 starting at 5.30pm at the Blossomfield Campus. This would be followed by the celebration dinner at 7.15pm.

7. Probationary Outcome for the Principal

The successful probationary outcome for the Principal was confirmed. The post had been made permanent.

Signed Al Shariq

Date 9 June 2015