



Halesowen College

Minutes of the Performance Review Committee Meeting

held Thursday 17 November 2009

Present: Liane Purnell (*Chair*), Phil Osborne (*Vice Chair*), Corinne Crannage, Neil Hobson, Brian Mitchell, Daniel Willetts, Alan Taylor

In attendance: Keith Bate (*Principal*)
Pam Thomas (*Chair of the Corporation*)
Paul Bridgewater (*Director of Teaching and Learning*)
Mary Higgins (*Director of Planning and Development*)
Di McCathie (*Director of Student Services*)
Timothy Shaw (*Observer*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

Presentation on Revised Ofsted Handbook and the Common Inspection Framework:

- Paul Bridgewater gave a comprehensive presentation of the revised Common Inspection Framework drawing out the areas of substantial change. A common evaluation schedule was now being applied to ensure consistency across all providers. Four key grading scheme areas remain the same but with new limiting grades for Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity having impact on overall effectiveness. Both Framework for Excellence and Every Child Matters contribute to the assessment with an overall judgement being adequate or inadequate. Many areas contribute to overall effectiveness and capacity to improve which fall under the categories of outcome for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management.
- Members discussed the impact of the scheme on current inspections with all areas graded, sampling of high and low performing curriculum areas and a new inclusion of points of action to be addressed.
- It was noted that the College Self Assessment Framework required revision to align with the new framework.
- Members discussed in greater detail the implications of the limiting grades of Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity noting the training, promotion and monitoring of performance achieved and being further developed by the College. Training all staff to Level 2 in Safeguarding as a pre-requisite to achieve outstanding in safeguarding; capacity of authorities to meet training requirements was discussed.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Claire Smith, Gloria Smith and Leslie Williams.

2 Declarations of Interest

Liane Purnell declared a standing interest in relation to partnership working arrangements between the College and Newman University College.

3 Minutes of the meeting held 11 June 2009 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held 11 June 2009 were approved as a correct record.

Under Matters Arising; item 8 Quality Improvement Plan 2009: In relation to improvement of catering Keith Bate reported that the student governors had attended meetings with the catering staff. Daniel Willetts responded that it had been a positive experience where staff had listened to comments and made improvements.

4 Full-time Student Enrolments – September 2009

Di McCathie reported an increase of 554 students in comparison to the previous year spread across A Level and Vocational provision. The main cohort of students remained 16-18, with more females than males and the largest increase in white British students. More students completed information on disability with a slight increase on the percentage of students without a disability. The top fifteen postcode areas for students remained the same.

Phil Osborne asked about the impact of increased student numbers on resources, quality and retention. Paul Bridgewater responded that the College continued to recruit staff in key areas where it was preferable to reduce class sizes and that further consideration of capping would be required if growth continued. Daniel Willetts asked about ideal class sizes. Mary Higgins explained that this varied according to course levels and type but that the College aimed to teach smaller groups than schools to enable differentiation and good support.

Neil Hobson asked if the College was reaching a key point regarding staff levels. Keith Bate explained that staff levels were managed with recruitment to address need and employment of sessional staff. Staff were also supportive in undertaking overtime to meet current high levels of students. Keith Bate also explained that the College continued to develop staff by taking on trainees.

The report was received.

5 Student Retention Report 2008/2009

Di McCathie reported that full time retention increased to 87.4% in the previous year and outlined variation according to gender, ethnicity and postcode.

Entry level course retention had declined and this together with all areas with 80% or below retention would be monitored for trends and student performance to enable staff to act on potential under achievement.

Di McCathie explained that further research was being undertaken on the calibre of jobs attained by students leaving courses to take up employment.

Neil Hobson asked about correlation between students leaving and course dissatisfaction. Di McCathie explained that there was no course trend relating to dissatisfaction and that the College undertakes supportive advice and guidance to reduce incidents of students being on the wrong course.

Brian Mitchell asked about retention on NVQ2 Animal Care. Paul Bridgewater explained that though the College supports students in finding placements a number of NVQ2 Animal Care students had not gained a placement which was a course requirement. Where this occurred students were offered alternative courses.

The report was received.

6 Full-time Student Attendance Report 2008/2009

Di McCathie reported that most course level attendance had been within 5% of the College total percentage. The only group outside this was the 25-50 age group.

Access to Higher Education presented an area of concern with the College now considering a pre access course to provide a more gradual lead into the demands of Higher Education.

Phil Osborne asked about comparison with previous year attendance and Di McCathie reported that overall attendance had been slightly higher.

Di McCathie indicated the actions to continue to improve attendance in particular the role of the Central Attendance and Pastoral Support Team.

The report was received.

7 Full-time Student Disciplinary Report 2008/2009

Di McCathie reported on the disciplinary action taken over the year with two expulsions in comparison to eight the previous year.

Di McCathie outlined the actions to be undertaken to reduce disciplinary action arising from absences and plagiarism. Members noted action to identify course, level or area trends correlating with ethnic groups identified with a larger percentage of disciplinary action above level 1.

Liane Purnell asked about discipline in relation to repeated lower level issues. Keith Bate responded that this usually became a problem to be addressed through the procedure.

In response to questions from Timothy Shaw, Di McCathie explained that students are encouraged to bring another person with them to disciplinary and appeal hearings.

The report was received.

8 Full-time Student Achievements 2008/2009

Paul Bridgewater presented the comparative data on student achievement for the previous year noting that the A2 pass rate had remained constant at 96%. The high grade pass rate had gone down 2% to 27% but the AS pass rate had correspondingly increased by 2% from 80% to 82%. Paul Bridgewater emphasised some outstanding vocational pass rates and high grade profiles.

Paul Bridgewater commended improved performance in Biology and Human Biology. Mathematics had caused concern which was being pursued through internal inspection and an external consultant had further recommended remedial actions.

Phil Osborne asked about high grade achievement and increased student numbers. Paul Bridgewater outlined work required to increase differentiation and the potential to increase streaming.

In response to a question from Pam Thomas, Paul Bridgewater outlined language provision through the International Baccalaureate and recruitment.

The report was received.

9 Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2008/2009

Di McCathie outlined the range of work undertaken through curriculum, tutorial and enhancement activities to promote Equality and Diversity and noted the importance of evidencing this. The importance of College Values was emphasised.

Members further noted staff training, listening to the learner and staff voice, statutory compliance and achievement of award schemes.

The report was received.

10 Personal Skills Development Report 2008/2009

Paul Bridgewater reported on the detailed monitoring information. Students who received support achieved as well as or better than those who did not. Ofsted had recognised Personal Skills Development as outstanding in their recent visit.

Pam Thomas commended the report which enabled the College to measure the impact of support on student performance.

The report was received.

11 Collegiate Annual Report

Mary Higgins reported on the Collegiate model which was aimed at more able and motivated students and which included a contract to engage in additional activities. The 2009 intake comprised 145 students for AS and A2.

Retention and attendance was noted as good with a marginal increase in overall achievement.

Actions for the current year included all students taking the Extended Project Qualification, extending the enrichment programme and reviewing the marketing and recruitment process.

In discussing extension activities Daniel Willetts reported that visits such as that to Centre Parks had enthused and bonded the group who had learned more about each other and how to work together.

Mary Higgins reported on the successful launch of the Halesowen Education School Collegiates with delivery and support across the schools and the College.

The report was received.

12 International Baccalaureate

Paul Bridgewater reported on retention of the first cohort of students taking up the International Baccalaureate including good attendance and academic performance, additional support and enrichment activities. One student had been appointed as an Ambassador and two students had been appointed as Learning Advocates.

Slightly lower recruitment numbers to the course in the current year were noted. Marketing arrangements were being considered to increase recruitment to further support delivery of subject range. Members noted arrangements regarding the course leadership for the next academic year.

Mary Higgins outlined discussions with another local IB school about the potential transfer of students to Halesowen College.

Paul Bridgewater further reported the introduction of a bridging course for Modern Languages involving both AS and IB students.

The report was received.

13 External Verifiers Qualifications Reports 2008/09

Paul Bridgewater reported that awarding bodies were increasingly using distance sampling to verify work both electronically and by post. Subsequent feedback comments were being received in more restricted formats.

Paul Bridgewater confirmed that most College vocational courses met national standards of sampling and that there were no courses without centre accreditation.

The report was received.

14 Higher Education Destinations – September 2009

Di McCathie gave an initial review of student progression to Higher Education. The College development of Personal Coaches and the use of 'Aim Higher' activities had contributed to continued increase of students achieving a Higher Education place with 678 in 2009 compared to 639 in 2008 and 538 in 2007.

The ten most popular institutions remained the same as did the most popular course areas.

Members commended student achievements.

In light of increased Higher Education applications across the country Di McCathie explained concerns for students who had not achieved their favoured course offer to realise a placement with their second choice provider. To meet this issue the College had provided places for eight students on a new progression course. Members noted that this problem could increase in 2010.

The report was received.

15 College Performance Report (CPR) 2007/2008

Keith Bate presented the report illustrating the College performance against the national position, drawing attention to the data provided under section three, 'Equalities Performance'.

The Performance Review Committee received the report.

16 Committee Terms of Reference

The Clerk presented the committee terms of reference for consideration.

Liane Purnell suggested that the committee's role in relation to Equality and Diversity should be made explicit in the remit.

The Clerk agreed to address this for consideration at the Corporation Annual General Meeting.

Action: Jenny Sunter

17 Any other business

There was none.

18 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 11 March 2010.

Closed: 8.05pm