



Halesowen College

## Minutes of the Special Corporation Meeting

held 10 January 2009, at Wood Norton Hall, Evesham

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Present: Pam Thomas (*Chair*), Keith Bate (*Principal*), Corinne Crannage, Paul Downing, Andrew Hanson, Neil Hobson, George Kasper, Alison Perks, David Prain, Liane Purnell, Alan Taylor

In attendance: Paul Bridgewater (*Director of Teaching and Learning*)  
Mary Higgins (*Director of Planning and Development*)  
Jacquie Carman (*Director of Finance and Administration*)  
Di McCathie (*Director of Student Services*)  
Angela Cross-Durrant (*Consultant*)  
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk*)

### 1 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Phil Osborne, Nicholas Ronan, Gloria Smith, Leslie Williams, Rebecca Miller and Priya Sheridhar.

### 2 Declarations of Interest

Liane Purnell declared a non financial interest as an employee of Newman College.

### 3 Self Assessment 2007/2008

Keith Bate reviewed the work undertaken at the residential in January 2008 focusing on 'sustaining growth and maintaining quality'. Keith Bate outlined Student Numbers, Demographic Trends, Increased Competition and Increased Benchmarks before reporting on Learning and Skills Council contract performance since 2004/05 and the current year contract.

Members noted that the College had progressed over the previous four years exceeding contracted provision.

Keith Bate reported on steady growth of success rates over five years resulting in a positive profile of 82% for 2007/08 against national benchmarks.

In addressing the College Self Assessment Report, Keith Bate first referred members to the College Planning and Accountability Cycle as illustrated in the Strategic Plan placing into context the College performance review, assessment and improvement process. Keith Bate reminded members of the strong internal inspection model on which assessment and development were based.

Keith Bate addressed the summary of grades inclusive of cross college and curriculum areas, high grade profiles and the headings under Every Child Matters. Members considered the analysis of lesson observation grades against benchmarks and further noted that underlying details of assessment were supported by the data that was considered by the Performance Review Committee.

Keith Bate highlighted information provided in the report on the College's capacity to improve and on movement since the last College inspection. Members then broke into groups to test and challenge the findings of the Self Assessment Report in relation to key questions, equality of opportunity, educational and social inclusion and meeting Every Child Matters outcomes.

Group One considered effectiveness of teaching, training and learning.

Paul Bridgewater outlined the mechanisms to assess performance then train and support and measure improved performance. Members agreed with the overall grades and through discussion of a number of key points recommended that further evidencing be included.

Members discussed measurable improvements such as improved grades following re-observation of lessons, the impact of training and the continual professional development scheme such as the impact of behaviour management training on lessons. Members indicated that concrete evidence of sharing good practice in teaching and learning should be detailed in the report.

Paul Bridgewater outlined the evidence of review, guidance and support for learners. Pam Thomas specifically asked about the high grade profile of students and members discussed support and challenge for all learners. Paul Bridgewater outlined activities such as targeted revision for more able students.

David Prain asked if there was a risk due to other providers targeting to high achieving school leavers. Members discussed in detail the College's value added performance and success in supporting students with modest GCSE results to achieve good results. Members specified that the support being given to students and good value added results should be highlighted.

David Prain asked if there was evidence of the emotional and psychological support provided to teachers. Members requested that both training and support should be recorded.

In relation to assessment statements for cross college areas of provision members suggested that references include partnership delivery for 14-16 and adults where relevant.

Group Two considered how well programmes and activities meet the interests of learners and how well learners are guided and supported.

Mary Higgins reported on the evidence to support the self assessment noting that there were a number of areas where more evidence could be included, examples being that the Summer Learning Festival and Work Experience alongside the College IT technical staff for National Diploma students was being provided for 120 students.

Members considered that the overall weight and range of evidence supported a grade one in relation to key question three.

With reference to student support, members noted that only few students change programmes indicating good guidance. Members also mentioned the significance of a praising and commending approach.

Group Three considered how well learners achieve.

Jacque Carman reported on the group discussion. Members had discussed opportunities and take up of extra learning and demonstrating if this had increased.

Members noted a strength in the level of student independent and semi independent learning through areas such as Moodle. Additionally the nature of the College value added performance in relation to both national and local benchmarked performance was noted.

In relation to Key Question 5, Jacque Carman reported that the College took a caring approach to students as rounded individuals and cited the importance of the new coaching scheme for teaching staff to look at wider issues.

Members noted that the College was working on more detailed student destination data to assist in addressing progression.

Strong communication, staff satisfaction and good value for money were also noted as contributing to the overall assessment of Grade 1.

Jennifer Sunter presented the Corporation's own Self Assessment Report detailing evidence of member involvement and impact across key governance areas. Members considered the report and indicated where additional evidence could be added.

Following the detailed exercise scrutinising the basis for overall assessment grades members agreed that the Self Assessment Report gave a detailed and substantiated position.

The Corporation resolved to approve the Halesowen College Self Assessment Report 2007/2008 and Quality improvement Plan 2009 subject to minor adjustments.

#### **4 Developing the Strategic Plan**

Keith Bate outlined the Current Trends projected under 16-18 enrolments and Adult and Learner Responsiveness noting that there was a need to focus on retaining those students who did not stay on at College.

Members noted the New Opportunities being embraced by the College and the influence of the Changing Landscape on the way that the College functions.

Keith Bate suggested that the College's response be, to continue to target full-time 16-18 numbers, to target growth in 19+ provision and to increase the Performance Indicators.

#### **5 Transformational Projects Update**

Keith Bate reminded members of the key projects including the staff development scheme and digital learning strategy.

Under Student Progression, Di McCathie reported on work to further support students through inclusive and integrated services.

With reference to early leavers the College was focusing on effective support in conjunction with other agencies, inclusive of gathering better information from schools, in particular where known learning and behavioural support was needed.

The work of personal coaches to raise aspirations and staff training to assist students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder together with a pilot project to work with all agencies for a more integrated approach to meet student needs were noted.

The effectiveness of the College Health and Environment week was reported as was focus on provision which stands outside a given course which could support employment, such as the introduction of coaching awards alongside Sports courses.

With reference to Collegiate Collaboration, Keith Bate reported on developments in the Careers Academy and emphasised that these were longer term projects.

Mary Higgins updated members on progression with Higher Education Pathways in particular explaining work aimed at Level 3 Learners who had not progressed to university.

Members noted progression with Higher Education Courses provided through the College and work with partners including new courses.

In addressing the Charitable Foundation, Jacquie Carman outlined the work undertaken towards realising a Halesowen Foundation. The wider charitable objects were presented for discussion.

Members discussed the advantages of the charity which would be for the benefit of students. Members also discussed the arrangements noting that the charity would stand independent of the College with separate financial arrangements.

Neil Hobson asked about monitoring of performance and was assured that there would be reports on performance measures and other documentation such as financial regulations and a memorandum of understanding.

The Corporation resolved that the charitable objects for the Halesowen Foundation be:

- to advance the education and training within Halesowen College and the wider community and to develop the talents and abilities of students by providing training, equipment or facilities including but not restricted to grants, loans, scholarships, bursaries and prizes not usually provided for by the statutory authorities;
- to support such charitable purposes as the directors may determine.

## **6 Review of Strategic Priorities and Mission**

Keith Bate referred members to the Strategic Priorities for 2008-2013, the current College mission and highlighted the relevance of the twenty five year old aims of the College as recently included in the Strategic Plan.

With reference to the mission statement, Keith Bate asked members to consider if the College was still striving for excellence or if it had achieved outstanding provision.

Members divided into two groups to review the College priorities against key strengths and to consider the wording of the College mission statement.

Both groups reflected on the College as a caring, supportive and inclusive institution which focused on developing individuals. The outstanding range of provision, an exceptional learning experience and progression were also key areas noted.

Keith Bate agreed to work on the feedback given and present the results to the special meeting of the Corporation scheduled for 16 May 2009.

## **7 Member Appointments**

The Clerk outlined the recommendation from the Search and Governance Committee regarding appointment of members.

The Corporation resolved to appoint Alan Taylor for a period of four years commencing January 2009 subject to set eligibility clearance.

## **8 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is the Corporation Annual General Meeting on 24 January 2009.

Closed: 4.30pm