



**Minutes of the meeting of the Quality and Curriculum Committee on  
Wednesday 11 November 2009 at 5.00pm in Room 3F099, York College**

**Present:** Alison Birkinshaw  
Kevin Deadman  
Elizabeth Fenn  
Andrew Lindsay  
Lynne Marston  
David Maughan Brown  
Andy Mendus (Chair)

**In Attendance:** Richard Coultas, Quality Manager  
Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body  
Louise Lawrence-Crockford, Assistant Principal Employer  
Engagement  
Graeme Murdoch, Deputy Principal Quality Assurance &  
Support (QA&S)  
Bob Saynor, Assistant Principal Lifelong Learning & HE  
Clare Wareing, Assistant Principal 14-19 Vocational

The meeting started at 5.05pm.

**Action**

**09.47 Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest**

Apologies were received from Glyn Jones. There were no declarations of interest. Lynne Marston and Richard Coultas were introduced and welcomed to their first meeting.

**09.48 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 17 June 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2009 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**09.49 Matters Arising**

a) Action Summary Sheet

The action summary sheet was considered. It was noted that the further discussion on Information, Advice and Guidance had been deferred until the March 2010 meeting, so that the impact of the group recently established by the City of York Council could be considered. With regard to the Curriculum Link scheme, the Clerk was **requested** to provide an update to the next meeting showing the Governor visits that had actually taken place. It was also **agreed** that the significance of focusing on progress with relevant areas of the Strategic Plan should also be reinforced. An update on the position relating to Teaching and Learning observations was provided and it was **noted** that a further report would be provided at the next meeting on 4 March 2010.

Clerk

Clerk

DPQA&S

b) Any Other Matters Arising

With regard to ongoing concerns about the LSC's recording of Train to

Gain success rates, it was reported that the College had been liaising with the LSC in this regard but the LSC had just announced that the data had been processed inaccurately nationally and that they were therefore having to re-produce it. It was not yet clear what impact this would have on the College but it was hoped that, in view of the College's strong success rates, the impact would be minimal. The Principal had expressed her concerns to the LSC in relation to these delays.

**09.50 Committee Terms of Reference and Schedule of Business**

The Clerk to the Governing Body presented the report with the Terms of Reference for the Quality & Curriculum Committee. It was explained that they had been revised and presented in a new format as previously requested by the Search & Governance Committee. The Quality & Curriculum Committee's proposed schedule of business for 2009/10 was also presented and it was stressed that this schedule of business was not fixed and other items would be presented to the Committee as necessary during the course of the year. It was **agreed** that the minutes of the SU Executive and SMT meetings should be included as an agenda item for each meeting. Members reviewed the Terms of Reference and **agreed** that the "purpose" of the Committee should be strengthened. A number of further revisions were also proposed to more accurately reflect the Committee's responsibilities.

Clerk

Clerk/  
Chair

***The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to approve the schedule of business for the Quality & Curriculum Committee for 2009/10, subject to agreed amendment. The Quality & Curriculum Committee further resolved to recommend the Governing Body to approve the Committee's Terms of Reference subject to further amendment.***

**09.51 Learner Success 2008/09**

a) AS/A2 including Value Added

The Assistant Principal 16-19 A Level presented the report on the College's A Level and AS Level success rates, which were again above national and City of York averages.

The following key strengths were identified:

- A-E achievement was 98.5% for all A-Level students. This was a rise of 0.9% from the previous year's 97.6% and well above the national average of 97.5% and the York average of 98.0%.
- A-E achievement at AS Level had risen to 90.2% from 89.5% in 2008

Key concerns identified were that high grades (A-B) in fifteen A2 subjects were below benchmark; and the fact that overall high grades had fallen in A2 from 45.5% to 44.5% and in AS from 35.5% to 32.1%.

Members also considered the ALPS data and the subject specific concerns for particular areas. Consideration was given to those areas where performance was not at the desired level, and to the proposed

actions to bring about improvement.

It was noted that a key area to focus on for further improvement included a "Value Added" strategy to improve students' achievement of high grades.

***The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.***

b) 16-19 Vocational (including 14-16)

The Assistant Principal 14 – 19 Vocational presented the report on student success with the College's vocational provision in 2008/09. The following key points were explained:

- There had been significant improvement on 16-18 success rates at all levels during 2008/09.
- A number of Divisions showed very good or outstanding success rates.
- NEETS provision had been very successful.
- Very good or outstanding Under 16s success rates.
- Some outstanding Value Added results and high grades for BTEC nationals.
- A number of Divisions had poor vocational success rates at some levels.
- Significant volumes of untimely achievements in some Divisions.
- Some poor Value Added results for BTEC Nationals.

Members considered these strengths and weaknesses in depth, and detailed discussion took place about the College's new Diploma provision. It was reported that the College was no longer offering new Diplomas at levels 1 or 2 but was continuing to offer them at level 3. The problems experienced with the new Diplomas at levels 1 and 2 were explained, and the differences with such provision being taught in schools were also noted. It was emphasised that these Diplomas were still at the pilot stage, and that further revisions could still be made nationally. Further consideration was given to the other proposed actions to bring about improvement in the College's vocational provision where necessary.

***The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.***

c) Adult Students, Higher Education and International Students

The Assistant Principal Lifelong Learning and HE presented the report and explained that with Adults outcomes for 2008/09 showed a continuation in improvements over previous years, and that this had been the result of targeted student support and closer attention to data accuracy. Some achievements were still being processed so it was anticipated that overall success rates should improve further. Given that the College's strategic objective was to have all lines in the top 25% of all colleges by the end of 2009/10, progress had still to be made on Long Level 1 and 2 provision. Current actions being taken in relation to further improvements included continued improvement of individual student

tracking; ensuring students were on appropriate programmes; ensuring a range of support strategies were put into place to support achievement and success; and ensuring qualifications on offer matched student needs.

It was reported that recruitment for the current year was similar to the previous year but that the College had almost already met its funding target. If the College were to over-recruit it would not get paid for the excess.

With regard to HE, it was reported that overall success rates had improved from 69% in 2007/08 to 72.3% in 2008/09. Retention for 2008/09 was 85% and achievement was at 89%, with an expectation this would improve due to some students re-submitting work due to mitigation. The areas where further actions were being undertaken were considered by the Committee.

It was reported that success rates for International students overall were high. This was due to high outcomes in both retention and achievement.

The main programme of study for international students was the International Foundation Programme (IFP) accredited by the University of York. Of the 43 who started the programme 40 had completed. This represented a 93% retention rate, a 100% achievement rate and an overall success rate of 93%. The areas with lower success rates were considered together with the measures being taken to try and bring about improvement.

***The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.***

c) Employer Engagement

The Assistant Principal Employer Engagement presented the report showing the continuing improvement in Work Based Learning (WBL) and Train to Gain success rates for 2008/09.

In relation to WBL it was reported that there may be just one area - Health, Public Services and Care - which was below Minimum Level of Performance (MLP). This area was currently showing an overall success rate of 45.45%, against an MLP of 50% for "overall success".

In relation to Train to Gain the MLP was 65%, and projections for the year end showed that this would be met for all of the College's sector subject areas. It was noted that the success rate for the College's plumbing provision - acknowledged to be a very difficult qualification - was 100%. The College also received bonus payments for the first time from Construction Skills - the body which holds the contract for apprenticeships in this area. It was also explained that in spite of the College's improved success, it was anticipated that the national trend would show a decline in 2008/09.

***The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.***

**09.52 Student Surveys 2008/09**

a) On Programme/End of Course

The Deputy Principal Quality Assurance & Support (QA&S) presented the report with the trend analysis showing how the College's satisfaction survey outcomes had improved over the last three years. Outcomes had been analysed by gender, age, mode of attendance, college brand, ethnicity and learning difficulty/disability. A set of recommendations had then been considered by the College's SMT and a resultant action plan produced which would be steered by the College's new Quality Manager. A "You said, we did" response to students was also being prepared.

It was noted that there had been a 64% response rate which was an improvement on the previous year. With the on-programme survey, all questions had showed increased satisfaction levels from 2007/08, and the most improved areas were the ones that had been the lowest rated in 2007/08. This was said to be due to improvement actions that had been taken although some further work was still needed. With the end of course survey, the responses to ten out of eleven questions relating to Charter promises showed improvement and the responses to all questions relating to Facilities and Services showed significant improvement on the previous year.

It was acknowledged that overall the results were very positive and encouraging. The Deputy Principal QA&S reported that a round of Student Focus Groups was just starting, at which the survey findings would be discussed. It was noted that a distinct Focus Group would be set up for the College's Osbaldwick site.

Discussion took place about one of the findings relating to the availability of computers at College. It was reported that two utilisation surveys had been carried out last year which had shown that at no time had there been 100% utilisation of all available computers. A further survey would be carried out this year. It was also noted that it was now possible for students to bring their own laptops in to College to work on. Despite this, Members expressed concern at the continuing low percentage score in relation to this area.

***The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.***

b) National Student Survey (HE)

The Assistant Principal Lifelong Learning & HE presented the report on the Higher Education National Student Survey (NSS). It was explained that this provided an annual assessment of student satisfaction for graduates leaving HE courses. This was the second year in which HE in FE had been included and Members considered the analysis of the College's performance which was based on all responses to the 21 questions in the survey. It was noted that the College had been ranked as seventh out of 67 colleges. Discussion took place about how this

could be used in the College's marketing but it was noted that the College had already recruited sufficient numbers in any event. It was felt, however, that communicating the results to internal students would be useful in promoting progression routes within the College. The Assistant Principal Lifelong Learning and HE explained that he had set up six meetings to discuss the findings of the survey and consider further improvement with staff prior to Christmas.

The Deputy Principal QA&S reported that the College had recently undergone its Matrix re- accreditation exercise and that the students interviewed had provided very positive feedback.

***The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.***

#### **09.53 Attendance and Retention to Date**

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report on the current position regarding overall attendance and retention for 2009/10 to date. It was acknowledged that it was still very early in the academic year but it was reported that current attendance was 89% against a target of 88%. With retention, 5 lines were above this time last year; 2 lines were the same as this time last year; and 4 lines were below this time last year. The areas where being below this time last year was most prevalent were with Adults and HE, both of which were being investigated. Discussion took place about the College's data cleansing and improvements that had been and were being made in this regard.

***The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.***

#### **09.54 HE Strategy**

The Assistant Principal Lifelong Learning & HE presented the College's proposed Higher Education Strategy 2009. It was explained that the Strategy provided an overview of the main elements which had an influence on current and future higher education activity. The requirement to submit an HE Strategy applied to all FE colleges, whether directly or indirectly funded by HEFCE, and the Strategy had to be approved by the College's Governing Body before being submitted to HEFCE by 11 January 2010. It was explained that future HE funding was dependent on the College having a coherent Strategy like the one presented. It was also explained that the Strategy primarily comprised of various elements from existing documents, many of which had already been reviewed by Governors.

Members considered the Strategy and advanced a small number of revisions to be made before being presented to the Governing Body at its next meeting.

***The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to recommend the Governing Body to approve the College's Higher Education Strategy 2009, subject to final amendment.***

**09.55 Internal Reviews**

a) Carried out in 2008/09 and Schedule for 2009/10

This item was treated as confidential and a separate confidential minute produced.

b) Health & Social Care

This item was treated as confidential and a separate confidential minute produced.

**09.56 SU Executive/ SMT Meeting Minutes**

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report and explained that this was to be a standing agenda item for each Quality & Curriculum Committee meeting. The idea behind this was to broaden Members' knowledge and understanding of student issues generally at the College. It was explained that these SU Executive/ SMT meetings took place each month. Members considered the minutes provided of the meeting that had been held so far this year, and an update of subsequent actions taken was also provided. Discussion then took place as to how representative the Student Union Executive was of the full student body, and it was noted that the Student Union had organised a number of events to raise its profile and encourage a wider range of students to become involved. It was also noted that there was an International Student Officer, who had just been elected.

*The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.*

**09.57 Any Other Business**

None.

**09.58 Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 4 March 2010 at 5.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

**Signed (Chair):**

**Name:**

**Date:**