



**Minutes of the meeting of the Quality and Curriculum Committee on
Thursday 4 March 2010 at 5.00pm in Room 3F099, York College**

Present: Alison Birkinshaw
Kevin Deadman
Lynne Marston
David Maughan Brown
Andy Mendus (Chair)

In Attendance: Richard Coultas, Quality Manager
Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body
Graeme Murdoch, Deputy Principal Quality Assurance &
Support (DPQA&S)

The meeting started at 5.05pm.

Action

10.01 Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Elizabeth Fenn and Andrew Lindsay.
There were no declarations of interest.

10.02 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 11 November 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2009 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

10.03 Matters Arising

a) Action Summary Sheet

The action summary sheet was considered and it was noted that all matters had been actioned. It was **agreed** that the Clerk to the Governing Body would circulate the up to date record of Governor Curriculum Link activity to Members for information. Discussion took place about whether the effectiveness of the scheme should be an element of the College's Self Assessment Report (SAR) and it was explained that there was already a section in the staff curriculum area SARs relating to staff relationships with Governors. It was noted that there was a standard Activity Record sheet to be completed and signed after each visit to record what had been undertaken.

Clerk

Members considered the revised Terms of Reference for the Committee and proposed a number of further revisions.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to recommend the Governing Body to approve the Committee's Terms of Reference, subject to further amendment.

b) Any Other Matters Arising

None.

10.04 Student Success 2008/09 Update

a) FE Qualification Success Rates (QSRs)

The Deputy Principal Quality Assurance and Support (DPQA&S) presented the report which had been lodged on the Provider Quality Gateway on 26 January 2010. It was explained that it was based on the College's final success rate data submitted on 15 January 2010 (FO5) and it concurred with the College's SAR (at College Level) approved in December 2009. Three Divisions had outcomes which were 1% lower than the College's SAR (Health & Social Care, Engineering, and Science) and two Divisions had outcomes which were 2% higher than the College's SAR (Skills for Life, and IT & Computing). None of these outcomes affected the self-assessment grade that had been approved.

It was noted that the College was making a significant improvement in narrowing the gap between the results achieved by males and females, which did not reflect the position in York generally. For the College's 19+ provision the success rate was virtually the same for males and females, and for 16-18 provision the differential had reduced to approximately 2%.

Discussion took place about the College's Stand Alone Full level 2 and Full Level 3 Qualifications. It was explained that the College had identified this area of provision as an area of concern and was investigating the situation further.

The Deputy Principal QA&S circulated updated targets set by the College for attendance, achievement and success. It was explained that these had been updated the previous day in light of the College's 2008/09 success data and the 2007/08 percentiles which were the most recent figures used by Ofsted. Members were reminded that one of the College's strategic aims was to have success rates in the top 10% for all lines. The original targets for 2009/10 had been set two years ago and as a result of this review most had been increased. It was noted that the targets for Level 2 and Level 3 Adult provision were very much aspirational. Members were pleased to see many lines of provision already in the top 10% of success rates.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

b) Minimum Levels of Performance 2008/09

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report showing the College's performance in light of the Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) set by the LSC. It was reported that with FE significant improvements had been made over the last three years and no College provision was to be removed. With Apprenticeships, despite the Advanced Apprenticeship in Hair being below the MLP, no provision was to be removed. With Train to Gain, Dental was unlikely to be offered in 2010/11, although no provision was to be removed. Where issues had arisen, the College had looked very closely at the reasons for this and was taking measures to bring about improvement. It was confirmed that the College still issued

its own internal Notices to Improve where provision was not below MLP but was viewed to be under-performing. Members acknowledged that the general trend shown was one of improvement.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.05 Student Success 2009/10 Update

a) Employer Engagement

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report showing the current position and predicted out-turn for Work Based Learning and Train to Gain success rates for 2009/10. With Work Based Learning, it was reported that Apprentice Frameworks were predicted to be 8% up on the previous year's out-turn. Advanced Apprentice Frameworks were predicted to be 7% up on the previous year's out-turn. With Train to Gain, performance in 2009/10 was predicted to be a 2% improvement on the previous year's out-turn. Targeted improvement strategies were proving to be effective with success rates projected to increase from 2008/09. Discussion took place about the terminology used in the report and whether "Predicted Maximum Success Rate" for 2009/10 was correct. It was acknowledged that the data related to the maximum possible success rate and ***agreed*** that it should be re-labelled.

DPQA&S

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.06 Attendance and Retention to Date

a) On Programme/End of Course

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report on the current position regarding overall attendance and retention for 2009/10 to date. It was reported that the College's current attendance level was 86% against a target of 88%. With retention, seven lines were above target, three lines were below target and one line was at target. The area of most concern was Adult Level 3 provision and this was being investigated.

Members considered the reasons for student withdrawals and it was noted that no new trends had emerged. It was felt that the snowy weather at the start of the spring term had had an impact on retention. It was noted that Adults withdrawing because they had lost their job was a significant factor. Concern was also expressed that the number of distance-learning students withdrawing because they had lost their jobs was having a disproportionate effect on the College's figures. It was also queried whether the level of Information, Advice and Guidance to International students was a factor in three of them withdrawing due to the course being unsuitable.

It was reported that more students had been asked to leave the College this year than in previous years – fourteen in total. This was said to reflect a more efficient disciplinary process, and the fact that the College had more Level 1 and Level 2 students, some of whom had been very challenging.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.07 Lesson Observations 2009/10

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report and circulated a supplementary report which was considered by Members. It was reported that 210 Observations of Teaching and Learning (OTLs) had been carried out against an all staff number of 423. This included all full-time, proportionate and part-time variable hours (PTVH) teaching staff. Concern was expressed at the number of OTLs that had not been carried out to date. It was explained that at the start of each year Divisions were asked to produce a schedule of OTLs and requested that these should be done as early on in the year as possible. With the information received it had become clear that this had not always been the case. However, it was noted that not all of the relevant data had yet been put on to the system, and the data itself didn't not make allowance for teaching staff who were consistently delivering sessions which were graded as "Good" or "Outstanding" who did not need to be observed. These members of staff were often utilized in helping to support other staff who did have a development need. A mechanism to capture this was currently being considered.

DPQA&S

It was reported that the proportion of "Outstanding" sessions observed had increased to 21% from 12% last year. The proportion of "Good" sessions had decreased to 62% from 66% last year. The proportion of "Satisfactory" sessions had decreased to 15% from 20% last year, and the proportion of "Inadequate" sessions had remained the same as last year. The majority of "Good" or better lessons took place at Level 3 or above. The "Inadequate" sessions occurred with Levels 1 and 2, all of which had been identified during the College's own Internal Reviews.

It was confirmed that all staff observed delivering "inadequate" or "satisfactory" lessons would be re-observed as soon as possible following a period of supported development. All new-starters were required to undertake a preliminary qualification before they started teaching at the College.

It was acknowledged that the data showing the "number of staff observed" did not actually show how many individual members of staff had actually been observed. It was **queried** whether this information could be presented. It was suggested that the College's approach to OTLs should be that all observations should be targeted much more closely with targeted assessment and feedback to those who actually needed it. Members acknowledged this may be the case but **requested** that it should be made clear whether the College's approach had changed.

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The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.08 Internal Reviews

a) Key and Functional Skills (Oct 2009)

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

b) Skills for Life (Nov 2009)

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

10.09 Information, Advice and Guidance Report

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report showing the work currently being undertaken by the College and the City of York Council in respect of working towards a common Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) framework. Reference was also made to the similar activities being undertaken by North Yorkshire County Council.

It was reported that the City of York Council had created a Steering Group of interested parties (of which the Deputy Principal QA&S was a member) to recommend an appropriate system for implementation. The Steering Group had met three times and its recommendation had recently been approved by the Resources and Strategy Group of the City of York Council. It was now a question of the recommended approach being implemented. It was intended to seek to mirror Humberside's Information, Advice and Guidance Gold Standard.

Members considered the original action plan produced by the City of York Council in this regard, and concern was expressed at the slow pace of progress. It was noted that the Deputy Principal QA&S also attended the CEIAG Strategy Group of North Yorkshire County Council.

Members **agreed** that this was such a significant issue and the lack of progress was so concerning that a summary report should be presented at the next meeting of the College's Governing Body for discussion.

DPQA&S
/ Clerk

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.10 Student Destinations 2008/09

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report identifying the known destinations of full-time students who had completed a qualification at the end of July 2009. It was noted that the survey accuracy had improved significantly again this year to give a known destination for over 95% of all such full-time students.

The proportion of students who progressed onto "positive" destinations was 82.9% (79.7% in 2008, 81.3% in 2007). If deferred HE entries were included this rose to 86.4% (82.7% in 2008).

The number of "unknown" destinations was reducing and was very low compared to other colleges. The number of students opting for voluntary

work, or a gap year (i.e. "other" category) had also reduced.

Members wished to commend the College on the level of information that had been gained in this regard, and on the success of the results.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.11 Student Surveys 2009/10

a) First Impressions

The Quality Manager presented the report on the College's First Impressions Survey for 2009/10 which was considered by Members. It was explained that the survey was issued to all the College's new starters – full-time and part-time in mid-November 2009. The following key points were noted:

- Levels of satisfaction were high, although there had been little improvement over the last 4 years.
- New Student Days in 2009 were not well received, although subsequent Student Focus Groups indicated that they were.
- The Divisions showing lower or reducing satisfaction levels were Science and Business & Professional.
- Apprentices showed lower levels of satisfaction than other groups.
- Train to Gain students were more satisfied than other groups.
- Neither the age nor ethnicity of respondents had a bearing on satisfaction levels.
- Females showed slightly more satisfaction than male students.
- Responses from students with a declared disability did not highlight any trends different from responses generally.

Discussion took place about the response rate to certain questions, and about measures being proposed to address any issues raised.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.12 Notes of Visit – City of York Quality Assurance Visit 19/20 January 2010

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report produced by Hugh Porter, 14-19 Consultant, on behalf of the City of York Council. It was explained that the visit was part of an overall, city-wide quality assurance exercise on all schools and colleges providing specialist diplomas. The key findings of the report on the College were that: "The advanced diplomas are strongly supported at York College. There is much good practice and a real desire to make them a success. There are issues which managers are proactive in tackling." It was reported that the College was very pleased with the outcome of the report and this was acknowledged by Members.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.13 Items for Information

a) SU Exec/ SMT Meeting Minutes

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report and explained that only one meeting had taken place since the last meeting of the Committee. This was because the meeting scheduled for January 2010 had been cancelled due to bad weather. However, informal dialogue between the SMT and the Student Union Executive had continued. The meeting on 16 November 2009 had considered a number of issues including Student Council meetings and updates on Safeguarding, bullying, and Equality & Diversity.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

a) Progress With Quality Improvement Plan 2009/12

The Deputy Principal presented the report showing the progress made with the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) associated with the College's Self Assessment report for 2008/09. Discussion took place about the target for Child Protection Training. It was also noted that there was only around 50% attendance at the Safeguarding training that had been provided for Governors. It was **agreed** that this needed to be addressed and that the Chair would liaise further with the Chair of the Governing Body in this regard. It was **noted** that Governors would also be requested to undertake the College's online Safeguarding training, and that they should be asked to provide copies of certificates relating to any relevant external training that they had undertaken.

Chair

Clerk

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

a) Progress with Strategic Plan 2009/12

The Deputy Principal QA&S presented the report on progress made with the sections of the College's Strategic Plan overseen by the Committee. The relevant sections considered related to Portfolio Management; Teaching and Learning; Recruitment and Marketing; Support for Students; and Quality Assurance. It was noted that overall progress to date was good.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee resolved to note the report.

10.14 Any Other Business

None.

10.15 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 28 April 2010 at 5.00pm

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed (Chair):

Date:

Name: