

**BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD**

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on 7 November 2013 at 5.15 pm
Main Committee Room, Bispham**

Present: N. Farley (*Chair*)
H. Broughton
C. Mercer
B. Robinson

Together with: C. Hill, Deputy Principal
S. Hughes, Director of Quality & Standards
C. Thomas, Director of 14-19 Provision
M. Phelan, Director of Skills and Business Development (*Items 1-4*)
G. Winward, Clerk to the Board

The Chair congratulated and thanked all those involved (Management and Governors) in the recent Ofsted Inspection and associated excellent outcomes. It was noted that the formal report would be issued shortly. The Principal expressed especial thanks to C.Hill for the key contribution made to this result in both of her roles at the College in the last 8 years.

1. Apologies for Absence

L. Smith.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2013 were confirmed as an accurate record subject to the phrase additional phrase 'and were being considered for change' to the sentence relating to Item 3c (Matters Arising – HE SED Gender Categories).

3. Matters Arising

There were none other than relating to the agenda topics.

4. Outcomes 2012/13

Members considered a number of reports as follows:-

a) FE

The Director of Quality and Standards highlighted the key points from the circulated paper, including the 1% increase in overall success rates from the previous year and that 'long programme' results were in the top 10% in the UK.

Members suggested that future reports could perhaps be improved by the inclusion of RAG ratings and also information on 'actions in place'. The Director explained that internal management reports already utilised a RAG annotation. The Director also drew attention to the detailed tables of success rates by level, ages and SSA and

pointed out the areas that would equate to the requested 'red, amber, green' categorisation.

A detailed discussion followed and the Director responded to a question about the lowest performing areas and plans in place for any actions. The types of responses that had been made were explained and these included management restructurings, lesson observations and constant monitoring of performance. The Principal also informed Members of the existence of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) for all areas area (including high performing areas) and staff development activity.

Members also asked about short programme outcomes and the Director explained the design of programmes of learning that related students undertook.

A discussion ensued on other types of measures of success and Members were interested to know how the full range of abilities and backgrounds of learners could be adequately reflected in the sets of data and adjustments to these. The Deputy Principal recognised that there were different starting points for different learners and explained the concept of 'value added' data which is used for assessing progress made on Level 3 courses. The Director also explained Ofsted's current approach to a more holistic analysis, not just quantitative outcomes but also qualitative, for example improvements in life skills or self confidence. The Deputy Principal also described data used on socio economic backgrounds.

b) HE

The Director of Quality and Standards highlighted the trend of success rates, which were improving year on year. The main challenge continued to be learner retention.

In response to the question on information to be gained from exit interviews, the Director explained that these were included in the SED report which was presented to the Committee in the spring term. He then described some key actions that were in place for 2013/14. Members were also informed of some anecdotal evidence that adult learners were finding increasing difficulty in juggling studying and paid work/family commitments. The increases in tuition fees were also cited as causing problems for learners.

The Deputy Principal described some of the quality assurance processes that are used with FE work within College and that were now being harnessed within the HE area, especially attendance monitoring. During the discussion that followed, Members noted that non-attendance could also often be linked to expectations not being met.

Members paid particular attention to the appendix 3 that had been circulated, showing progression data from FE courses to HE. The Director also explained some of the internal work presently ongoing to improve the presentation of data.

c) Employer Responsiveness

The Director of Skills and Business Development explained, for the benefit of newer Members, the background to the different nature of employer responsive courses which embrace 'roll on, roll off' recruitment patterns rather than co-inciding with academic years.

Key points of the report were highlighted as:-

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- Work place training – excellent outcomes at 12% above the national average
- Apprenticeships – generally good results last year except for ‘timely’ success rates for 16-18 year olds, which had suffered an impact through changes to funding rules. This had particularly adversely affected football apprenticeships by causing delays to completion rates.

The Principal explained a current review of the College’s approach to apprenticeships to see if better ways could be found of managing the processes. The Committee also engaged in some discussion on other funding difficulties, including a government consultation document relating to possible further changes to the funding of apprenticeships.

The Committee **noted** all the reports and outcomes.

M. Phelan left the meeting

5. Value Added (Level 3) 2012/13

The Director of 14-19 Provision explained the background to this concept and drew to the Committee’s attention the key highlights emerging from the data.

Members’ attention was also drawn to the detailed tables of data showing analysis by each subject. The Committee were reminded that some subjects had only small numbers of learners and also that the tables were analysing ‘outcomes compared to predictions’ rather than absolute outcomes. Members noted that the key purpose of setting targets for grade achievement was for motivation, to raise aspiration and thus achieve higher grades.

After further detailed discussion and debate, the Committee **noted** the report.

6. Teaching Observations: 2012/13 Outcomes

The Director of Quality and Standards presented the report and emphasised that the internal assessments had recently been confirmed by Ofsted as ‘outstanding’. It was also aimed to further increase the number of observations undertaken.

The Principal informed the Committee that the Teaching Observations Policy had been revised and expanded during the last 12 months but emphasised that graded observations were just one part of the checks undertaken to ensure the high quality of teaching and learning. Some discussion ensued on the process of the observations systems and staff reactions to this and a number of questions were raised and answered. One of these related to the training and expertise of the observers and a concern was also expressed about the planned change to double the number of observations.

The Principal responded to the points raised including making reference to other changes made to the adjudged approaches, not just adjustments in volume. The Director also provided additional information and assurances, including staff reactions and responses to the changes, plus the need to respond to government expectations as expressed and applied through Ofsted’s requirements. Members were particularly reassured that the majority of staff welcomed the changes being made and the robustness of the system.

The report and the associated points were **noted**.

7. Student Satisfaction Data 2012/13: FE and HE

The Director of Quality and Standards summarised the key points as listed in the paper. During the ensuing discussion a number of points were raised:-

- A suggestion was made that expectations need to be clear in order for students to rate whether these were being met or not.
- The Deputy Principal confirmed that the inconsistency of questions across the range of surveys used was largely owing to the fact that some of the surveys were external/national and therefore the College did not have control of their content.
- The Director added some of the other design points and considerations that were taken into account, including the facility to benchmark College results against other colleges in the sector and also providing methods of triangulation of findings.
- Members were informed of incentives used in the past to encourage learner participation and the reasons why none were now offered. The most effective tool appeared to be offering support and explanation on how to complete the surveys when they were issued.

The report was **noted**.

8. Any Other Business

The Principal undertook to provide the Committee with the Summer 2013 GCSE results at the December meeting.

There was no further business.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 3 December at 4.30 pm in the Main Committee Room, Bispham Campus.**