

New College Corporation

Student Achievement and Standards Committee

1 June 2009

Minutes

Present: Mr A Pickerin (Chairman)
Mr G Clark
Mr P Boulter

In attendance: Mrs E Vingoe
Ms A Rosser
Mr P Taylor (Clerk)

1 Apologies

Mr Hopkins, Dr Ali, Mrs Tyley.

2 Confirmation of Minutes

After the correction of minor typographical errors and one omission ('entrants' between 'college' and 'already', page 2, para 5 last line), the minutes of the Student Achievement and Standards Committee meeting held on 23 February 2009 were confirmed.

3 Declarations of Interest

None.

4 New Improvement Agenda

Mr Clark introduced the report (copy in minute book) for the Committee explaining that it provided the Committee with an update of several factors pertaining to student standards and improvements which together the College had termed the 'New Improvement Agenda'.

He began by providing an overview of the report's contents before considering the main features of each section in turn.

On the **Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)** he described the formation and strategic aims of the new FE development body, and noted with approval the active and mature engagement of sector bodies (including the Sixth Form Colleges Forum and the

Association of Colleges) in its development and priorities. He referred the Committee to extracts from LSIS strategic documents set out as appendices to the report, and drew members' attention to the welcome statement of recognition of the complexity of the context in which colleges operate.

On the **Framework for Excellence (FfE)**, Mrs Vingoe reported on the positive outcome for the College of the pilot phase (2007/08) of the FfE performance assessment carried over by the LSC. She noted that an overall performance rating will not now be produced, but that the College had achieved gradings of 'outstanding' in three of the eight elements reported on, with ratings of 'good' in a further four. She described for the Committee the data and mechanisms used by the LSC to determine the assessments. She reported that while this year's pilot phase results are not in the public domain, she understood that the New College results are relatively strong and that the outcomes for several other FE colleges had been received with some disappointment.

On the revised **DCSF Post 16 Performance Tables**, Mr Clark referred to Table 2 in the report setting out the aggregate post 16 performance figures for 2007/08 for post 16 state funded providers in Telford and Wrekin. He drew the Committee's attention to the significance of New College, and indeed TCAT, to the area with New College enrolments alone accounting for 44% of the Telford and Wrekin data. In response to a question from Mr Boulter on the 'average points score per student' data, Mr Clark noted the complexities of the data used and reported on some of the practices in other institutions, and noted unlike many others New College does not have a 'compulsory' addition element post 16, such as General Studies or ICT. Members noted with pleasure and appreciation the New College 'contextualised value added' score in comparison with other institutions. The Committee warmly congratulated all involved in the achievements displayed.

On **Peer Review and Development**, Mr Clark reported on the successful working with several other institutions on a number of emerging projects. He reported on the themes identified between the colleges which will be drawn together in a joint agreed action plan for implementation over the next 12-18 months. Mrs Vingoe and Ms Rosser reported on work undertaken in the College as an exercise to examine progress made by students when identified in different groups sharing a range of characteristics, not simply participation on a common course. Comparisons were made with data aggregated on a 'course' basis. Mid year performance was assessed and a number of interventions made. Year-end results will be used to assess the impact of the interventions. In response to questions and comments from Mr Pickerin and Mr Boulter, Mr Clark readily acknowledged that not all groupings were meaningful or useful in identifying the need for

intervention, and great care was needed when considering the interests of students as individuals or course members.

On **Preparing for New Ofsted and QAA Reviews**, Mr Clark and Mrs Vingoe summarised the expected changes in the Ofsted inspection regime and the new emphasis on tracking different 'cohorts' of learners who might share a particular characteristic and assessing their achievements. Mr Clark noted the two areas where the assessments were 'reasonable progress' in the October 2008 Ofsted annual monitoring visit and noted their key place in the College's Quality Improvement Plan considered elsewhere on the agenda. Mrs Vingoe described the principal changes in the approach to be adopted by QAA in their consideration of the College's higher education provision.

On **College Organisational Change**, Mr Clark reported on the organisational changes made in January 2009 to strengthen curriculum management through the creation of three new 'Areas of Learning' and the successful internal appointment of three designated Heads of Area to lead them. He reported on the recent retirement of Rob Mason, Assistant Principal Teaching and Learning, and paid due credit to his work, noting in particular his recent reviews of learning support and tutorial processes, the latter conducted with admirable energy in his last two weeks at the College. He summarised the progress made in making changes to the roles of middle/senior managers that will strengthen the management and co-ordination of: curriculum planning and development; student services; personal tutorial; achievement and learner engagement; and staff training and development. These changes are designed to ensure that the College is better placed to respond to the new improvement agenda and the unprecedented curriculum change facing the College.

The Committee resolved to note the report.

5 Quality Improvement Plan 2008/09 Monitoring Report

Mr Clark and Mrs Vingoe introduced the report (copy in minute book) explaining that it provided an update on progress in respect of the key actions identified to secure improvement in the main areas of the College's work. Mr Clark summarised the main features of the report and drew the Committee's particular attention to work and progress in two key areas: 'Basic Skills' (section 1.3.7) and 'Learning Support' (section 1.3.8). In the case of the latter he reported on actions taken and staffing changes. Ms Rosser reported on actions and progress in the area of 'Student Experience' (section 1.3.10) and noted the actions taken to engage student interest in participating in a new Student Council. Mrs Vingoe referred to the Key Targets and Success Indicators set out in section 2 of the report commenting that

performance against the targets and indicators will be reported at year end.

The Committee resolved to receive the report.

6 Areas of Concern: Update

Mrs Vingoe introduced the report (copy in minute book) for the Committee explaining that it provides an overview of progress made in each of the three areas identified as 'serious concern', six as 'some concern' and six as 'potential concern'. Mrs Vingoe summarised the intervention and support process and the progress made in the different areas. Mr Clark described the staffing actions taken in specific areas designed to strengthen teams and secure improvements. Members commented favourably on the progress made in areas such as Maths and Physical Education which had previously appeared regularly in reports as areas of 'serious concern' or 'some concern'.

The Committee resolved to receive the report.

7 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Student and Achievement and Standards Committee will take place at 6.00pm on Monday 28 September 2009.