

GOVERNING BODY

QUALITY AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 15th June 2010 at 6:15 pm at Parkshot, Richmond

Present:	Ms Sally Field (Chair) Ms Christina Conroy OBE, Principal and Chief Executive [Items 8 to 10] Ms Rohini Bhattacharya Mr Sylvester Olutayo Dr Mike Sevitt Mr Sebastian Scotney Ms Lesley Kirby, non-Governor member
In attendance:	Ms Gabrielle Flint, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) Ms Louise Ellis, Head of Quality Mr Paul Coveney, Clerk to the Governing Body & College Secretary
Apologies:	Ms Judith Potter, Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services)

Before opening the meeting, the Chair noted that this would be Sylvester Olutayo's last meeting of the Committee, as he had resigned as a Governor with effect from 31st July 2010. She paid tribute to his contribution to the Committee and its predecessor (the Quality & Standards Committee). The Committee joined the Chair in wishing Sylvester well for the future, and expressing the hope that he would not sever all his links with the College.

Part I: Non-Confidential Items

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 25th March 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair drew attention to the fact that the draft minutes had been very slow in reaching her after the last meeting. While recognising that there were extenuating circumstances (in particular the Ofsted inspection), she stressed that the minutes of meetings were important both to Governors, providing information as to the considerations and decisions of the Standing Committees, and to the management, in that they set out the actions that had been agreed for the management to take as a result of the meeting. She expressed the hope and expectation that future minutes would be submitted much more promptly to the Chair for approval.

Clerk

2. MATTERS ARISING

- Item: 4: the Clerk reported that the addition of class attendance to the Governor induction programme was on the agenda for the Search & Governance Committee in September 2010.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. CLASS OBSERVATIONS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Clerk reported that three members of the Committee (Sally Field, Sylvester Olutayo and Mike Sevitt) had observed classes during Adult Learner Week. Rohini Bhattacharya and Lesley Kirby had been scheduled to do so, but this had had to be postponed owing to their contributions to the College's Ofsted inspection that same week, and Sebastian Scotney had asked to attend, but it had not proved possible to schedule his availability for that week. The Committee requested that the Clerk should arrange for the remaining Committee members to be able to attend during the next Quality Week.

Clerk

The Committee noted that Governors who were not members of the Quality & Curriculum Committee had also attended classes and tasters during Adult Learners Week.

Committee members who had attended classes and/or tasters reported that this had been a very worthwhile experience, especially when related to a part of the College curriculum with which they had not been familiar.

The Committee noted the class observations update with pleasure.

5. OFSTED INSPECTION

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair congratulated the College on its achievement of a grade 1 Outstanding assessment by Ofsted during its recent inspection. She made particular mention of the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) and the Head of Quality. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) thanked the Committee, and reported that everyone in the College had made a contribution, and all had been very supportive and keen to do what was necessary to make the inspection a success for the College.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) reported that the achievement of grade 1 overall was particularly pleasing for the College in the light of the known previous problems with the RBS and the divisional structure: Ofsted inspectors had been very complimentary about the quality and honesty of the SAR, and this had contributed to the assessment of grade 1 for Capacity to Improve. Outcomes for Learners had also been assessed as grade 1: Ofsted had used broad and relevant measures in this area, reflecting the College's position within the local community as well as the standard measures for GFE colleges.

Leadership and Management had also received a grade 1 assessment: the College had been congratulated on its application of resources and use of partnerships. The limiting grades of Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity had both been assessed as Good (grade 2): to move this to grade 1 required the already existing good systems to be solidly embedded in all the College's operations.

Quality of Provision has been assessed as grade 2; this confirmed the College's own assessment in the SAR. Ofsted had commented that there were several areas in which teaching was outstanding, however, there remained areas where teaching was rather old-fashioned. This will be an area of focus in 2010/11 as it is of particular importance for the College's newer types of learners. Three subject areas which together accounted for approximately 50% of the College's provision had been inspected in detail: health and social care had been assessed as good; visual arts and media as outstanding; and Skills for Life as satisfactory (grade 3).

The Skills for Life area was graded by the college as a grade 3 and although this is not an uncommon standard for this area in other GFEs, the Vice Principal stated that there were clear areas identified for improvement and that standards set should not be lowered due to the learner group. Instead objectives and programme design needed to match learner needs. The College was determined to improve its provision in this area: the restructuring which was currently under way (and which had been considered by the Employment & Organisational Development Committee) included structural changes in this area. Staff feedback was positive about the proposed changes and improvement to the structure of this provision, despite natural concerns that the proposal included a redundancy.

Ofsted focused on the success rates of BME and 16-19 learners. This had also been identified by the college in the SAR. The Committee asked whether the pursuit of equality and teaching quality agendas was included in job descriptions, to which the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that it was, but the College recognised the need to enforce this requirement rigorously. The ability to do so required improvements in the College's HR systems and management information, and both areas were being addressed in the current restructuring.

The Committee asked whether there was evidence to show that teachers who obtained qualifications performed to a higher standard in the classroom. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that it was generally the case, with an observable impact especially for those who took their professional development seriously: what was intended was a whole College approach to the improvement of quality of provision, involving the support services (particularly HR and CIS) as well as the teaching staff themselves. The provision of timely learner management reports from CIS was still an issue.

IAG (information, advice and guidance) services were highlighted by Ofsted as an area for further improvement. The College had reduced the centralised IAG service in March, therefore, when Ofsted visited in May there appeared to be some gaps in service provision. However, the college had explained that we are embarking on a new approach to IAG that is differentiated to meet the needs of our 8 learner groups. We were then judged to be 'good' in this area but need to focus on implementing this new strategy in 2010/11.

Finally, the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) informed the Committee that the draft Ofsted report was complimentary about the governance of the College: in particular, it said that "many governors have close links with the college, visiting lessons, exhibitions and

other learners' events".

The Committee noted the report on the Ofsted inspection with pleasure.

6. **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Committee noted that the plan had been updated with a progress review of all the actions.

The Committee asked whether the QIP addressed the development of the volunteer base and enterprise. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that the College was currently developing a bid for funding to support developments in the volunteering area, and that enterprise was being approached mainly through tasters and curriculum development. The College recognised that promoting enterprise was not easy to monitor, but the development of enterprise skills could be indicated by the number of registrations on particular types of course, and the subsequent destination analysis. The Committee noted that the College's extended exploitation of e-mail contact with its learners was particularly effective in promoting short-course modules such as those developing business and administration skills.

The Committee noted the QIP update.

7. **LEARNER FEEDBACK**

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) reminded the Committee that the College's learner involvement strategy (required by the former LSC) had been reported to the previous meeting. The College had decided to extend its methods of communication with its learners beyond the traditional feedback forms: in particular, faculty forums had been set up. These had proved very successful: they were popular with many learners, and provided useful and sometimes challenging feedback to the College Management. More targeted forums had now been established: feedback was not always consistent, representing a range of views among the learner population, but the College was now using noticeboards and the student intranet to inform learners of the actions taken in response to their feedback.

The Ofsted inspection had also provided useful feedback on learner views. It had reported as things learners like:

- enrichment activities, especially projects outside the college,
- inspirational teachers who are passionate about their subjects and have experience in industry,
- additional learning support and support from everyone in the college,
- teachers and managers listen to our views and then change things where possible,
- making friends in college,
- enjoyable lessons and good feedback,
- good informative website, really easy to read and understand,

and as things learners would like to see improved:

- some courses are too expensive,
- more and longer courses,
- the quality of books and CDs in literacy provision,
- not enough computers and up-to-date software, and
- more information about the mistakes made in exams.

The Committee recognised the difficulty inherent in providing longer courses at lower cost, and asked whether the College used the LBRuT library facilities in respect of books and CDs. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that this was something that the College always considered, but there were some specialist areas (for instance easy reading) where the College needed to offer a wide range of content and literature types for different types of learners.

The Committee noted the report on learner feedback.

8. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

In considering the risk management report, the Committee noted that risk 2 (Teaching and Learning Excellence) and risk 4 (Supporting Learner Journeys) each reflected areas for improvement as reported under item 5 of this meeting.

The College Secretary reported that the SMT had recognised that the risk register section "Actions to contain" referred to the College's yearly operational plan: a SMT day (3rd September 2010) had been set aside for the development of the operational plan for 2010/11, and this would be reflected in an updated risk register. The SMT had also agreed to review the performance indicators associated with each risk: some of the current

indicators had proved less than helpful in practice.

The Committee noted the risk management report.

9. **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

In considering the complaints procedure, the Committee noted that anonymous and malicious complaints would not normally be investigated, and asked whether they would nevertheless be recorded, to which the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that they would.

The Committee noted the complaints policy and procedure and the student disciplinary procedure.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Principal reported that the College planned to hold a launch event to celebrate the Ofsted report and its assessment of the College as outstanding. The event would be at 5:30 to 7:00 pm on Wednesday, 7th July, and would be followed by the private viewing for the College's grade 1 art work summer exhibition. All Committee members would be welcome, and invitations would be in the post within the next few days.

The meeting ended at 7:35 pm

CHAIR