

Standards Committee 9 February 2009 in Ashington

	<p>Present : I Todd (Chair), T Shirley, R Ellis-Jones, R Casson</p> <p>In Attendance: Clerk, P Cook, H Wright</p>	
	<p>Apologies received none note M Rossi appointment expired</p>	
<p>Check numbering</p>	<p>The meeting was agreed to be quorate and the minutes from the last meeting were agreed to be accurate and approved and the items to be actioned had been completed the Clerk noted that the self-assessment review of governance had been carried out.</p>	
	<p>Matters arising: a virus had attacked the College computer systems causing problems with delivery of papers. The SAR had been well received by OFSTED and this showed the the objective of the committee in producing a robust document was achieved.</p>	
	<p>5. Review of Quality Improvement Plan: P Cook noted that the SAR had been revisited in the light of all actions since 2006 to ensure that these were reflected in the SAR. These new areas are shown shaded in the table. The use of post codes has been made to highlight problems with male learners. Documentation issues are improving and the audit trail is more robust. There is widespread implementation of the changes and the HoD all have taken the implementation on board. P Cook noted that he now felt confident that the SAR was final. It was agreed that it may be useful for all Governors to have the QIP for interest. The Chair summed up that this was very good news and a good piece of work.</p>	
	<p>6. Retention: P Cook noted that there was no systematic reporting on retention last year. Although there had been some improvement in retention it was still an issue, the improvements were in the region of 1-2% or stable. The graphs were showing live figures so the rates would be expected to go down by the year end. There is now action to register at risk students and actions can be taken by HoD and tutors to keep them at College and these actions can be monitored. P Cook outlined the RETAIN programme at use in the College and that this had been successful in the work based learning areas helping students achieve. In response to a question about the Additional Learning Support budget P Cook noted that the ALS and RETAIN programme were not related at this time, the RETAIN programme was more about psychological well being rather than the more practical focus of the ALS assistance. The Chair asked if thought could be given to using the ALS in this strategic way.</p> <p>R Casson noted that success was underpinned by a better flow of</p>	<p>P Cook to produce paper on retention/school info and ALS budget</p>

	<p>information from schools feeding the College and that the local authority can help in improving the links and quality of information. It was noted by the Chair that sometimes a large retention could be due to people not being removed from the register who had left. It was agreed that a paper on the link between school information, action and retention and the ALS budget would be useful for the next meeting .</p>	
	<p>7. Staff Development: P Cook commented that he would like to improve the data in this area to show qualitatively how measures taken were affecting results. It was agreed that in failing areas staff development could be a strategic tool.</p> <p>P Cook noted that the roll-out of Blackboard had been a success with some courses getting very involved in using it. It was popular with the LBI courses as well. Considering the hits on Blackboard was encouraging and the use patterns were interesting. They could be used strategically to see if there were hotspots of too much homework on certain nights etc. it may be used in this strategic way to support student attendance and achievement. The governors agreed that this type of technology needed to be considered for the new build at the planning stage.</p> <p>The Chair noted the committee’s approval of the strategic thinking in staff development and asked for a demonstration before the next standards committee. The Clerk to organise this with David Ferguson.</p> <p>P Cook noted that a learning technologist had been employed to make exemplar lessons with the new technology and this was very interesting for the staff.</p>	<p>Clerk to organise Blackboard demonstration prior to next committee meeting</p>
	<p>8. Student Attendance : P Cook noted that this was being maintained but that rates were not increasing. There was a pilot project of notifying learners who were not in class. It was encouraging that the levels from last year had been maintained. There was no LSC goal on attendance as such they usually took a measure from lesson observations. There was now a move to bring e-registers together with the call centre to improve the system of notification. R Ellis- Jones noted that there was a possibility of purchasing an SMS service that would be used for college updates and messages as well as attendance issues and this would be cheaper than phone calls. The Chair noted that the figures were good and maintaining gains was good news.</p>	
	<p>9. Ofsted update: H Wright noted that the Ofsted findings were only verbal at this stage and so must be treated with caution until confirmed in writing. The inspectors did indicate that these results were unlikely to be changed. The focus of the inspection was strategic leadership and management. Their verbal findings were that the leadership mark was reasonable, FE was reasonable, improvements to teaching and learning was reasonable, and quality improvement reasonable. Work</p>	<p>Work Based Learning Barbara ???? to come to talk about her work</p>

	<p>based learning showed significant progress and data capture showed reasonable progress.</p> <p>The meeting agreed that this represented a very good result for the college and the team were congratulated on their hard work in preparing. The measure was taken from Jan 06 which was difficult to meet as it was so far in the past of the college and so much had changed since then. Looking at the categories in more detail:</p> <p><u>Strategic leadership and management:</u> The change in the governing body had had a significant impact with a wider range of skills and expertise, there was a new clerk and there had been the launch of the strategic plan. The strategic plan was viewed as very focussed and with a high quality of objectives. They noted that the staff felt more supported by the SMT and the finance was a clear objective.</p> <p><u>FE:</u> there was progress and the college was now focussed on improvement there was good progress on the rates of success and retention. It was noted however that this was improvement in line with the sector and that the rate of improvement needed to accelerate.</p> <p><u>Teaching and Learning:</u> There were new observations being carried out and a good infrastructure for carrying this out. The staff development programme was good with tailor-made training. The risk with Blackboard had been managed well and had been successful in its use.</p> <p><u>Quality Improvement:</u> There was a more rigorous SAR and staff saw it as a spur to improve. There was a need to show learner feedback more effectively. The CAM meetings were very useful and there was improved use of data to monitor the QIP.</p> <p><u>Work based learning:</u> this was showing significant progress which was an excellent indicator. The Chair noted that it would be interesting to hear from the manager as to how she had obtained these results. The distance travelled in this area was very encouraging to go from a 36% to 64% success rate which was now 1% below benchmark.</p> <p><u>Data:</u> Staff training on the use of data and management was very good and data had improved. The SAR was more accurate and robust.</p> <p>The Committee all agreed that the inspection and preliminary results were very good. R Casson noted that some thought should be given to using this type of result for schools to show how the college was changing. H Wright noted that the LSC would have had some input into the LSC preparation for inspection and so must be pleased with the improvements. REJ was to take this to the full Governing Body.</p>	
	<p>10. Update on improvement to Land Based Industries:The Chair noted that this item should go on every future agenda. He raised a question that lesson observations were not mentioned</p>	<p>Improvements to LBI to go on future agendas</p>

	<p>in the paper, the reason for this was that the policy for grade 4 areas was being revised. Prior to the lesson observations there would be an audit of all course documentation, the Unions had to be involved in this process.</p> <p>The management in the area had initiated a pilot programme to review documentation. There was a need to look at the curriculum issues and for the LBI staff to understand that the timescales needed were much smaller and to increase progress. P Cook and H Wright noted that the issue was on the SMT every week and that the LBI position was considered very seriously. R Ellis-Jones noted that it was important that governors recognised that the poor results in LBI was holding the whole college back and their results overall would be downgraded.</p>	
	<p>Other business: T Shirley noted that he had seen agenda where there was a code for cycle of business items and that this helped to identify recurring items. The Clerk agreed this could be considered for college agendas.</p>	<p>Clerk to consider change to agenda</p>
	<p>Action points:</p> <p>P Cook to produce paper on ALS/school info/ retention</p> <p>Work Based Learning Barbara ? to come to future meeting</p> <p>Blackboard demo for future meeting</p> <p>LBI to go on every agenda</p> <p>Clerk to consider change to agenda to show cycle business itmes.</p>	