



SOUTHGATE COLLEGE GOVERNING CORPORATION

Standards and Performance Committee

Minutes of the meeting of 6th November 2008

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Attendance

Members

Claude Pehrson	_____	Chair
Ann Zinkin	_____	Governor
Michael Blagden	_____	Principal and Chief Executive
Reshma Bell	_____	Staff Governor
Ola Fadoju	_____	Staff Governor (from item 6)

In attendance

Angélique Gainza	_____	Vice Principal Curriculum
Kit Davies	_____	Director of Skills for Life
Frances Evans	_____	Director of 14-19 Education and Student Support
Marie-Claire Williams	_____	Director of Adult and Vocational Education
David Chaplin	_____	Chaplin Frobisher Welling, Clerk

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 10th July 2008

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Received: minutes of the meeting of 10th July 2008.

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2008 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

2. Matters arising

Para 11: ~~the Clerk confirmed that the amended Terms of Reference for the Committee had been adopted by the Corporation Board.~~

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3. Apologies for Absence

Ola Fadoju would be delayed as he was teaching.

4. Declaration of Governor Interest

None received.

5. Notification of any items of urgent business

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None notified to the Clerk.

6. Attendance Data: September & October 2008

Received: attendance data overall and analysed by Section.

Noted: a significant apparent reduction in attendance rates overall and for every section compared to 2007.

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The Vice Principal apologised that the attendance data was still unreliable, chiefly because of delay in reconciling the number of registers for all class meetings of a course, and consequent difficulties in entering data onto the MIS system. In fact, anecdotal evidence indicated that general attendance levels and general demeanour of students was much improved on the previous year.

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Governors again expressed their concern at the inability of the College to collect comprehensive attendance data and for the MIS system to provide accurate statistics. Governors reminded management that at the previous meeting they had been assured that the new IT manager would work to a tightly prescribed brief to ensure that the 20 “mission critical” reports (of which the attendance report was one) were accurate.

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The Chairman asked about the importance of the attendance data; the Committee was informed that its importance lay in the fact that attendance problems were the most significant early indicator of teaching and learning problems.

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The Vice Principal assured the Committee that there were other mechanisms for obtaining ‘snapshot’ attendance statistics that would flag up attendance problems, most notably the scale and pattern of referral of learners to the Student Achievement Unit and also the evidence from lesson observations.

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Ann Zinkin asked that a full investigation of the problems of data collection and MIS be made by management, and reported back to the next meeting of the Committee, together with options for an early resolution of the problems.

7. Success rates 2007/08

Received: success rate (2007/08), for College overall headline (combined) and analysed by learner age and course level and type; and detailed breakdown relating to sections and qualifications.

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Michael Blagden reported that overall the success rate had increased, with the key long course rate improving from 64% to 69%. However the figures for 19+ level 2 long courses were very poor, this being almost entirely due to the problems with courses for the ITQ which the College had taken over from Tektra when that company collapsed.

Frances Evans, Marie-Claire Williams and Kit Davies provided a detailed analysis of performance in their respective areas of responsibility.

There was a general failure in the GCE/AS / A2 courses to achieve the LSC defined “minimum level of performance”, although performance against national benchmark was better in many

courses, particularly at A2 level.

Performance in the BTEC and other vocational provision was generally satisfactory or good; results on the ESOL and Basic Skills courses were excellent.

Ann Zinkin asked if the commentary, provided at the meeting, on the reasons behind particularly weak performance and the action being taken to remedy the situation could be provided to members in advance of the meeting at which results were to be considered.

8. **Integrated Quality and Enhancement review (IQER) (Higher Education)**

Received: notes of a workshop held at Middlesex University to explain the new mechanism for quality review of HE provision in FE Colleges – the IQER

The Committee noted the essential elements of the process and considered the implications for the College. The first Developmental Review of College provision under the new system was scheduled for Spring 2011.

9. **Complaints Monitoring September & October 2008**

Received: a statistical analysis of complaints by Division and Area, and by ethnicity, and a detailed report on complaint resolution in each area.

Members noted that although overall complaints were resolved speedily, there seemed to be ongoing problems in respect of the workings of the IT systems on which all students relied and which was fundamental to the College's learning strategy.

Members were not re-assured to hear that as each level of an IT problem was overcome a new one was revealed, or of the apparently sanguine view of the American contracting company that such problems were inevitable with the introduction of cutting edge technology.

10. **Lesson Observations to June 2008**

Received: an analysis, (separately for established and for agency staff and overall) by curriculum area of grades recorded for 210 lesson observations to 30th June 2008.

Michael Blagden reminded members of the protocols covering selection of teachers to be observed and observers with limited advance notice, introduced with the agreement of the Board. UCU considered the protocol unreasonable and had declared a dispute, as a result of which a number of teachers and observers were refusing to co-operate in lesson observations. The College had taken action by deducting pay from teachers who did not comply and taking disciplinary action against observers.

The system has been the subject of review throughout the year and it is now proposed to move to a protocol whereby lesson observations would be scheduled over 1 to 2 weeks on a division by division basis, along OFSTED lines, and with the same 3 – 6 week notice period given to the division.

The Committee endorsed this proposal.

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The Vice Principal reported that of the lesson observations that had been carried out and validated, the number of unsatisfactory lessons (2, both involving agency staff), and satisfactory lessons were both slightly higher than the College target. She reminded the Committee that management were expecting overall grades to be depressed compared to previous years by the decision to focus particularly on new staff, and those staff who had been graded poorly at a previous observation.

11. Any other urgent business

There was no other urgent business.

12. Date of next meeting

Thursday March 5th 2008, 4.00p.m.

The meeting finished at 6.05p.m

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