

SANDWELL COLLEGE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee
held on Wednesday 2nd December 2015,
in room 6F/39, at Central Campus,
commencing at 4.30 p.m.

Present:-	Mrs. T. Hurst	(Independent)	(in the Chair)
	Mr. K. Ellis	(Independent)	
	Mr. B. Javid	(Independent)	
	Mr. G. Pennington	(Principal)	
	Mr. J. Tew	(Independent)	(part of meeting)

Also in Attendance:-

Miss J. Berry	Corporation Secretary
Mrs. S. Wood	Student Member Nominee
Mr. D. Holden	Vice-Principal
Ms. K. Lord	Assistant Principal
Ms. A. Llewellyn	Director for Adult, Community and Foundation Learning

L15.58 Welcome L15.58

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Ellis to his first meeting of the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee, and Mrs. Wood, Student Member Nominee.

L15.59 Declarations of Interest L15.59

There were no declarations of interest.

L15.60 Apologies L15.60

Apologies were received from Mr. Uddin and Ms. Pal, Director for Funding, Information Services and Exams and Ms. Sheridan, Director for Quality, Learner Studies and Innovation.

L15.61 Minutes of the Meeting of the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee held on Wednesday 7th October 2015 L15.61

The minutes of the meeting of the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee held on Wednesday 7th October 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: that the minutes be approved.

L15.62 Matters Arising L15.62

There were no matters arising.

L15.63 Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee - Membership L15.63

The Corporation Secretary informed members of recent changes to the Committee's membership.

RESOLVED: that the verbal report be received.

L15.64 Success Rates 2014/15 L15.64

The Vice-Principal presented a report detailing final success rates for 2014/15 and reminded members that provisional success rates had been presented to the previous meeting of the Committee and the Board of Governors.

Members were pleased to note that overall success rates for 16-18 and 19+ learners were above the national averages and had increased compared to the provisional success rates previously considered. The combined overall success rate was above the College's target.

The Vice-Principal informed members that the success rates included English and maths provision, which had been a condition of funding in 2014/15. Changes to this condition of funding for 2015/16 were explained. Members were also reminded of the ways in which English and maths were embedded into the curriculum and the Student Member nominee outlined her experiences of these initiatives.

Success rates for 'A' level provision were unchanged from the provisional rates previously reported. The Principal suggested that 'A' level results should be compared with sixth form colleges rather than national averages.

A discussion then took place regarding apprenticeship success rates, particularly with regard to 24+ learners, level 2 provision, Sandwell schools' GCSE results, attendance rates, particularly in relation to GCSE learners, GCSE exam re-sits, ways in which student surveys could be more practically focussed, and early drop-out rates.

RESOLVED:

- a) that a report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to Level 2 provision.
- b) that a report on attendance rates be presented to the next meeting of the Committee
- c) that the report be received.

L15.65 College Self-Assessment Report 2014/15 and Quality Improvement Impact Statement

L15.65

The Vice-Principal presented the Executive Summary of the College Self-Assessment Report 2014/15. The Vice-Principal explained the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the Summary of Judgements; Teaching, Learning and Assessment, and Leadership and Management.

With regard to teaching and learning, members were reminded that a further external review of a number of curriculum areas would take place during the year. In response to a query, it was confirmed that mechanisms had been developed to address any areas of weakness that were identified. The Vice-Principal outlined the risk based approach that had been adopted in determining the timetable for teaching and learning observations.

In response to a query, members were informed that a work-placement team had been established with regard to securing work experience opportunities for students. The relationships that had been developed with employers, including the local authority, were outlined.

Changes that had been made to the curriculum management structure were explained and members were reminded that all curriculum areas were required to produce a self-assessment report. Work being undertaken with the Leadership Training Organisation to support and develop managers was outlined.

In response to a query, the Principal updated members on staff surveys and also on a benchmarking survey in relation to the Strategic Plan. Members noted that the establishment of a Staff Council was being considered.

The College had graded itself 'good' overall. A recent visit by OfSTED had recognised the work that had been undertaken to move the College to 'outstanding'. This was supported by members of the Committee. The Principal outlined further work that would be undertaken.

The Principal suggested that it might be useful for the Committee to meet with FE Associates to discuss their view of the College following reviews it had undertaken and also to share good practice they had identified in other colleges. A discussion then took place regarding the possibility of peer reviews with other colleges. The Vice-Principal outlined work that had already been undertaken in this respect.

The Assistant Principal outlined the work being undertaken by the Innovation Task Group with regard to curriculum developments and innovation.

RESOLVED: that the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee recommend the College Self-Assessment Report 2014/15 to the Board of Governors for approval.

L15.66 Student Services Annual Report

L15.66

The Vice-Principal presented the Student Services Annual Report and outlined the Learner Support Funds (LSF) that were available to 16-18 and 19+ students.

The success rates for learners receiving LSF compared to the College's overall success rates were explained and members were informed that steps were being taken to ensure that students were aware of the support that was available to them. It was noted that student induction included information on welfare support.

The Principal reminded members that FE funding in cash terms had been protected in the Government's recent Spending Review, however, there was concern that savings were likely to be made elsewhere and might impact on LSF.

A member suggested and it was agreed that future reports should include trends with previous years.

RESOLVED:

- a) that future Student Services Annual Reports be amended to include trends with previous years.
- b) that the report be received.

L15.67 Student Survey – Term One

L15.67

The Vice-Principal presented a report detailing the outcome of the term one student survey. Members were informed that the aim of the survey was to gain students initial views on enrolment and induction, and their first experiences of teaching and learning. The Principal outlined actions that were being implemented to address matters arising from the survey.

In response to a query, members were informed of the way in which the student survey was undertaken. A number of alternative methods were suggested in order to ensure consistency of questions and learners understanding of those questions. It was noted that a review of the survey methodology would be undertaken.

The Principal reminded members that feedback was also gained from Student Focus Groups. It was intended that these groups would meet in all curriculum areas prior to the Christmas holiday.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

L15.68 Key Performance Indicators and Forward Forecasting 'At a Glance' L15.68

The Vice-Principal presented a key performance indicators report outlining 16-18 learner numbers against target, Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funding allocations, average class sizes and learner applications for 2016/17 compared to 2015/16.

With regard to 16-18 learner numbers members were reminded of the impact of lagged funding. It was noted that the College had written to the Education Funding Agency requesting in-year funding for the learners recruited above target. The College expected to achieve its SFA funding allocations.

A discussion then took place regarding average class sizes and the updated figures for new applications for 2016/17.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

L15.69 Withdrawals Report 2015-16 (16-18 year old learners) L15.69

The Vice-Principal presented a report detailing 16-18 learner withdrawals and non-starters in 2015/16. The role of the Attendance Officers was explained, together with the analyses that were being undertaken and the ways in which non-attendees were followed up.

It was agreed that, in future years, the format of the report should be amended to include trends from previous years.

The Principal explained the roles of a number of task groups that had been established. The Learner Journey Task Group would be considering learner withdrawals and non-starters and a report from that Group on findings and actions would be submitted to the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee.

RESOLVED:

- a) that future Withdrawals Reports include trends from previous years.
- b) that a report from the Learner Journey Task Group on learner withdrawals and non-starters be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.
- c) that the report be received.

L15.70 Inter-Faith Chaplaincy Report L15.70

The Director for Adult, Community and Foundation Learning presented a report updating members on the work of the Inter-Faith Chaplaincy Group. The membership of the Inter-Faith Group and its role within the College were outlined. Members noted the ethical framework for the chaplaincy, together with the activities that were undertaken.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

L15.71 Safeguarding Update L15.71

The Vice-Principal presented a report informing members of safeguarding matters that had arisen during the year-to-date. Members were informed that OfSTED would be undertaking a review of the College's processes and procedures in relation to Prevent on 13th January 2016. It was noted that two members of the Board of Governors had recently undertaken training in relation to safeguarding, Prevent, equality and diversity.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

Mr. Tew left the meeting during the above discussion.

L15.72 Risk Management Report L15.72

Members considered a risk management monitoring report relating to curriculum, quality, equality and diversity. The Vice-Principal outlined the additional mitigating actions that had been implemented since the previous report to the Committee.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

L15.73 Student Disciplinary Procedures 2015/16 L15.73

Members received a copy of the Student Development and Disciplinary Procedure 2015/16, which had previously been submitted to the Board of Governors.

In response to a query, the Student Member Nominee informed members of her experiences with regard to student behaviour and security within the College.

RESOLVED: that the Student Development and Disciplinary Procedure 2015/16 be received.

L15.74 Any Other Business L15.74

1. Mr. Basit Javid

The Chairman thanked Mr. Javid for his valuable contribution to the work of the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee during his term of office and wished him well for the future. Mr. Javid commented that being a member of the Board of Governors had been a very positive and enjoyable experience.

L15.75 Determination of Confidential Items L15.75

The Committee agreed that none of its discussions should be minuted confidentially.

RESOLVED: that none of the Committee's discussions be minuted confidentially.

L15.76 Date of Next Meeting L15.76

The next meeting of the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee was planned to take place on Wednesday 16th March 2016, at 4.30 p.m., at Central Campus.

The meeting terminated at 7.28 p.m.