



**MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (56)
OF THE CORPORATION OF BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

Date: Tuesday 1st December 2009
Venue: Sixth Form College
Room: Committee Room
Time: 1630hrs - 1815hrs

Present: Dr D Sanders (Vice-Chair)
 Mr J Boyle
 Mr G Curry
 Mr A Goodinson
 Ms F Greeves
 Dr A Mohan
 Mr R Weaver (for the last item only)

Mr A Boden (Director of Teaching Learning and Assessment)
 Mrs JA Trainor (Assistant Clerk to the Corporation)
 Dr J Burgess (Clerk to the Corporation)

In the absence of the Chair, Dr Sanders welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Mr Boden for deputising for the Deputy Principal.

		Action
50.2009	<p>Apologies for Absence Cllr. D Clapham, Mrs C Tyler, Miss S Lightowlers and Ms K Kirkwood.</p>	
51.2009	<p>Declaration of Interest None</p>	
52.2009	<p>Consideration of any items of urgent business The Principal advised that she would like to raise the issue of the designation of Sixth Form Colleges. It was agreed to discuss this item immediately. New legislation, the Apprenticeships, Skills Children and Learning Act, now facilitated a separate Sixth Form Sector, distinct from general FE Colleges, to which all 93 Sixth Forms and other eligible institutions can elect to be designated within. This feature recognises that from April 2010, after the machinery of government changes, Sixth Form Colleges will be in a new relationship with their home local authority, who will have statutory responsibility for commissioning all 14-19 education.</p> <p>A briefing document prepared by the Sixth Form Colleges Forum was tabled which outlined the rationale and advantages for this development. A number of disadvantages were noted, however, on balance Governors believed it was appropriate for the College to designate and the Committee agreed to recommend this to the next Corporation meeting. The final decision would be taken at the forthcoming Board meeting in two weeks time.</p>	

52.2009 D1 Resolved: that the decision to designate the Blackpool Sixth Form College as a *Sixth Form College* be recommended to the Corporation.

53.2009 Stakeholder conversation – BTEC provision

The Chair welcomed seven teaching staff from various Departments within the College to the meeting, and after introductions invited them to form small groups to participate in a 20 minute interchange with Governors about teaching, learning and assessment on BTEC courses.

Governors found the exercise particularly useful in enhancing their understanding of the College's BTEC provision and its distinctive teaching, learning and assessment strategies. The new accommodation facilities were an important key to effective delivery of this type of programme, as was the extensive training given to staff. A number of benefits to students from undertaking BTEC units were highlighted including team working on live or realistic case study material to commercial standards which mirror workplace requirements.

The Chair thanked the teaching team for their commitment to the exercise and their very apparent enthusiasm for BTEC programmes.

54.2009 Minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2009.

(Paper A)

54.2009 D1 Resolved: that the Minutes be approved.

55.2009 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 29th September 2009

38.2009 Holidays in Term Time

The Principal thanked Governors for their active support at the last meeting on this topic, as there had been a number of very strong challenges in recent weeks from parents wishing to take holidays with their children during term time.

The College had a clear policy on this matter, which was being firmly enforced for the benefit of the student, the course and the College. Last year 117 cases were considered; to date there had been 64 applications, of which 10 had been refused and 3 students had lost their place at College. The 47 that were approved were holidays of less than 8 days or granted on compassionate grounds.

Governors echoed their full support of the policy and the actions of managers to enforce the policy.

37.2009 – College re-branding

The Principal reported that the final presentation would be made to the forthcoming meeting of the Corporation, having been agreed with students, staff and managers.

42.2009 Examination Results 2009**(Paper B)**

The Principal provided a clarifying statement regarding the number of qualifications achieved at A2 in 2009 in comparison to the previous year. A number of reasons had been identified, including a move away from General Studies to an increased number of more specifically related alternative courses.

It was agreed to use the '3 passes or more' benchmark in future years and to re-format the presentation of data in a more user-friendly manner.

**Principal
To action**

45.2009 Beacon award 2009

Governors were delighted to learn that the College had been Highly Commended in the LSIS Award for Leadership of Innovation in Curriculum Development. The Deputy Principal was congratulated for her work on the submission.

56.2009 Practical Examination Results 2008 - 2009**(Paper C)**

Governors were pleased to learn that College managers were actively investigating the achievement of students in some practical examinations to identify strategies for improvement. They noted that there appeared to be some persistent problem areas that needed to be fully investigated and proactively addressed.

56.2009 D1 Resolved: that the Practical Examination Results 2008 - 2009 be received.

57.2009 Value added Performance Report 2009**(Paper D)**

The Principal was pleased to report that the College has achieved Grade 3 in all of its main course areas confirming that it is in the top 25% of providers nationally. Governors congratulated the teaching team. They sought re-assurance that the specific subject areas which appeared in the blue shading, i.e. to be below the benchmark, were being supported to improve, either through alternative curriculum routes, changed teaching and tutorial systems or staff training. Mr Boden evidenced the range of initiatives he was engaged upon and was very hopeful of a step change next year.

57.2009 D1 Resolved: that the Value added Performance Report 2009 be received.

58.2009 Overall success rates

The Principal provided Governors with information relating to the overall college success rate for 2008/9 (excluding key skills), which had risen 1.5% to 88.3%. Governors noted the achievements and the increased target for the coming year.

58.2009 D1 Resolved: that Overall Success Rates 2009 be received.

- 59.2009 Key skills results 2009**
The Governors sought to understand the reasons for some of the under-achievement and wondered if the staff were effectively prepared for the specialised work in teaching key skills. Managers acknowledged that they were investigating the issues and that additional training was being given and students were being supported in a range of ways.
- 59.2009 D1 Resolved:** that the **Key skills results Report** be received.
Mr Curry left the meeting.
- 60.2009 Annual Equality and Diversity Report 2008 - 2009**
(Paper E)
Governors were impressed with the College's achievements over the year, and particularly the feedback from OFSTED. They welcomed the section on multi-faith and the related items featured in the weekly newsletter. The achievements in the action plan were acknowledged as a positive indicator of distance travelled.
- 60.2009 D1 Resolved:** that the **Annual Equality and Diversity Report 2008 - 2009** be approved.
- 61.2009 Review of the Strategic Plan 2008 -2009**
(Paper F)
Governors welcomed the new traffic light colour indicators adopted for this review and scrutinised in depth the achievements claimed. They were impressed with the progress achieved, in some cases, feeling that the overall judgement could have been more positively shown as 'green'.
- 61.2009 D1 Resolved:** that the **Review of the Strategic Plan 2008 - 2009** is approved.
- 62.2009 Self-assessment report 2009**
(Paper G)
The status of this interim report was clarified, as the validation panels are scheduled to meet later in the week. The majority of the grades, including the Leadership and Management Grade, were validated by OFSTED in the Inspection in May 2009. Any amendments will be shared at the forthcoming Corporation meeting.
- 62.2009 D1 Resolved:** that interim summary **Self-assessment report 2009** is received.
- 63.2009 liP Gold Award**
Governors were briefed about the liP 3 day assessment visit next week to judge the College's submission for a Gold Award. Governors were very supportive of the initiative and wished the staff well in their interviews.

64.2009 National Challenge Trust

The Principal introduced the National Challenge as a key strand in the Government's School Improvement Strategy designed to transform schools, raise results in English and Maths and tackle under-achievement by young people. An interim target is for every secondary school to achieve a minimum of 30% of its pupils achieving five good GCSEs including English and Maths by 2011. Within Blackpool, two Schools had been identified as under-performing, and it was proposed to re-designate Collegiate High School as a National Challenge Trust, with Blackpool Sixth Form College as the lead partner to support the High School in its transformation. An interim Head Teacher has recently been appointed to drive forward the improvement strategy. The College would be providing support, guidance and consultancy to the new management team, replicating the turnaround that had occurred at the Sixth Form. Significant budgets, up to £700k over two years, could be available for the project.

Last week the College Management had consulted with the Administration and Finance Committee and received their approval to proceed with the statement of intent.

Governors reflected upon the opportunity and confirmed their commitment to driving forward the educational improvement strategy for the whole area and to raise aspirations of all young people. They recognised the synergy within the proposal and particularly the emergence of a large federated campus. There was discussion of the potential risks, both in reputation and through management's distraction from the main task at hand at the Sixth Form. The Principal observed that she was currently working at least half a day per week on the Project. Governors were concerned about the tight timescale for the turnaround.

Mr Boyle and the Principal considered the initiative offered considerable benefits for the College and a number of staff. There would be further opportunities to consider the initiative at the December Corporation meeting and at the Residential Conference in January 2010.

65.2009 Estimation of Risk

The meeting reflected on the items discussed and observed that two important risk areas had been highlighted during the meeting:

- 1) The inherent risks in participating as a lead partner in the National Challenge Trust
- 2) Improving the quality of delivery of some courses to reflect the College's overall outstanding designation.

66.2009 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee was confirmed as **Tuesday 16th March 2010 @1700hrs.**

Members
Note start time

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....