



**MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE (61)
OF THE CORPORATION OF BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

Date: Tuesday 15th March 2011

Venue: Sixth Form College

Room: Committee Room

Time: 1700hrs - 1850hrs

Present: Dr D Sanders (Chair)
Cllr. D Clapham
Mr G Curry
Ms K Edwards
Mr A Goodinson
Ms F Greeves
Ms K Talboys
Mr R Weaver (late arrival)

Mr J Boyle (Observer)
Ms K Kirkwood (Deputy Principal)
Mrs JA Trainor (Assistant Clerk to the Corporation)
Dr J Burgess (Clerk to the Corporation)

In the absence of a designated Chair, Dr Sanders, as Vice-Chair, chaired the meeting.

1.2011 Apologies for Absence

Dr A Mohan and Mr Hutchinson as an observer.

2.2011 Declaration of Interest

None.

3.2011 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair 2010 - 2011

Mr Weaver was proposed and elected as Chair of the Committee, and Dr Sanders agreed to continue and was duly elected as Vice-Chair.

4.2011 Consideration of any items of urgent business

The Clerk alerted Governors to tabled papers for:

- a) The January Module Results
- b) Two additional papers on the Marketing Plan
- c) An additional paper for the Careers & Employability Skills item.

5.2011 Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2011.

(Paper A)

5.2011 D1 Resolved: that the Minutes be approved.

Action

6.2011	<p>Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 30th November 2010 None.</p>	Action
7.2011	<p>Early Leavers and Persistent Absentees Report February 2011 <i>(Paper B)</i></p> <p>The Deputy Principal provided an overview to the Report, noting that whilst retention had improved by 3% compared to the same period last year, there had been an increase in the number of persistent absentees and the number of students deemed “at risk”. Some students were struggling because of difficult personal circumstances, and a number of upper sixth students had lost their way, in part due to the Government’s recent decision to raise university fees. Revised and better co-ordinated arrangements had been put into place in Student Services, and the team were actively working with students to improve their attendance. The current timetabling arrangements to accommodate the Phase 3 building works, which may have affected some students, will change in September.</p> <p>The Principal advised that OFSTED consider that a 93% overall attendance is seen as “Good” and that the College is focussed to moving to this as soon as possible. Clarification was provided to the chart showing persistent absences to Personal Tutor Departments. The teaching and assessment regimes on BTEC programmes provided students with improved opportunities to catch up on lost time and this issue was also explored.</p> <p>Governors stressed the importance of high attendance for success both in college studies and in the work place. They questioned whether employer-support / mentoring could assist and requested a detailed analysis of the reasons for the increase. They were re-assured by the strategies employed by the College and noted the good liaison with parents. The Principal warned that the Government’s decision to withdraw Educational Maintenance Allowances is likely to further impact on persistent absenteeism.</p>	Principal To action
8.2011	<p>7.2011 D1 Resolved: that the Early Leavers and Persistent Absentees Report February 2011 be received.</p> <p>January 2011 Module Examination Results <i>(Paper C)</i></p> <p>The Principal introduced the tabled results noting that an extra 200 students had participated in the A2 examinations in comparison to last year. Overall, the results were pleasing with a 2% increase in numbers securing high Grades and despite a slight slippage in the overall pass rate of 0.8%.</p> <p>There were a number of areas for concern in the AS results. Additional support was being provided for teachers in Mathematics and Chemistry. Heads of departments were undertaking an analysis to determine the reasons for the performance levels and Governors were re-assured that actions were in place to secure improvements.</p>	

The Principal reiterated her philosophy for using the January examination period to demonstrate to students the sharp and demanding reality of Sixth Form assessments. The Student Governor confirmed this view, noting that a number of her colleagues had been shocked and disappointed by the results and were now re-focussing their studies.

8.2011 D1 Resolved: that the **January 2011 Module Examination Results** be received.

9.2011 Update on the Marketing Strategy 2010 – 2011
(Paper D)

The Principal, who has direct responsibility for this area, explained that the Marketing Team had been enhanced with the appointment of an Events Co-ordinator and that an increase to the Marketing Expenditure budget had been approved. She confirmed that the focus for the remainder of the year was on building the College's reputation in the Fylde area, promoting the benefits of the new facilities and theatre, engaging with school staff in the Wyre area and highlighting the successful career destinations of former students.

Governors scrutinized the progress to date in each of the five sections of the Plan through the "traffic light" rating system and received assurances to questions regarding a couple of the red areas. Efforts were on going to secure a stronger promotion to the International Baccalaureate, particularly in the light of the newly designated English Baccalaureate.

Thanks were expressed to the Marketing Team for their hard work in progressing this Strategy.

9.2011 D1 Resolved: that the **Update on the Marketing Strategy 2010 – 2011** be received.

10.2011 Draft Strategic Plan 2011 - 2016
(Paper E)

The Principal introduced the updated draft noting that it was a slimmer version, designed to highlight the key messages whilst attempting to capture the very significant changes that had occurred with the election of the coalition government. It was structured over six priority areas, though only one area provided any detail over the five year period. The Chair wondered whether an overall vision for 2016 could be developed and if this could be further refined to illustrate likely stages in the planned development of the College. Governors reflected whether more emphasis should be given to:

- Staff, particularly their engagement and development
- Working with external agencies and services
- A safe and inclusive environment

10.2011 D1 Resolved: that the **Draft Strategic Plan 2011 - 2016** be received.

Mr Weaver joined the meeting

Principal
To action

11.2011 Mid-year Summary report of Complaints and Compliments

(Paper F)

The Deputy Principal observed that although there had been an increase in the number of complaints, these had all been addressed effectively and within the stated timescales. The College was always keen to learn from the feedback provided and change systems and staff behaviour to secure operational improvements. Governors reviewed the complaints schedule, and sought clarification about the follow-up actions, staff support and training.

The detailed report on the formal Compliments received was also received and discussed.

11.2011 D1 Resolved: that the **Mid-year Summary report of Complaints and Compliments be received**

12.2011 Student Survey 2011

(Paper G)

Governors were particularly interested to review the outcome of the Student Survey 2011, which secured a 72.4% response rate in comparison to the 50% response rate in 2010. Overall the majority of questions returned very high levels of satisfaction, some over 90%, which was a credit to all the staff. Despite a lower rated satisfaction level for the general catering facilities, the Principal commented that the catering facilities had significantly improved, as had the quality of the food and the level of sales. The problems of a lack of social space, (often private space) and car parking facilities were under review and will be partly addressed with the completion of the Phase 3 construction work. The Management Team is also taking forward a number of other concerns revealed in the Survey.

12.2011 D1 Resolved: that the **Student Survey 2011 be received.**

13.2011 Inspection of Provision Report on Science and Applied IT

(Papers H & I)

This first report of the new style of internal inspection of teaching areas covered four subject areas in which concerns had been raised and where value added was below a score of 5, (specifically, Biology, Chemistry, Forensic Science and Applied IT). Governors noted the range of lesson observation grades, the strengths highlighted and the areas for improvement, which needed to be addressed. They supported the new feedback methodologies (e.g. no overall grade, 1:1 interviews for Grade 4 observations, together with Video recordings of lessons) and the short time-scale for action plans from Heads of Department to address the shortcomings.

13.2011 D1 Resolved: that the **Inspection of Provision Report on Science and Applied IT be received.**

14.2011 Employability and Work Experience Report

(Paper J)

The Principal introduced the Report, which had been requested by a Governor, by tabling an over-arching map of the curriculum routes and how employability skills are introduced and cultivated, to best illustrate the College's current position on this increasingly important topic. A more explicit development approach had been introduced through personal tutorials, via enhanced enrichment opportunities and through the activities of the Career Academy.

After reviewing the Report, Governors questioned the level of careers advice and guidance which was currently available in respect of the new realities of the current job market, particularly geared for the A level non-university student. Also, it was recommended that students should start collecting and developing their evidence portfolios of the broader skills and experience that they have acquired. In order to sharpen the focus in this area, it was proposed that Departments be invited to consider the Curriculum and Employability Skills map and, along with the Report, start to populate the documents with specific strategies and examples.

Principal
To action

14.2011 D1 Resolved: that the **Employability and Work Experience Report be received.**

15.2011 Any other business

None

16.2011 Estimation of Risk

Governors noted the critical imperative of sustaining the improvement in students' achievements and drew attention to the need to focus efforts towards improving the AS results, particularly for the Spring entry. An emerging risk was the impact upon Absenteeism of the ending of Educational Maintenance Allowances.

17.2011 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee was confirmed as **Tuesday 14th June 2011 @1700hrs.**

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

Members
Note

Signed:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....