



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND STANDARDS
COMMITTEE held at Bicton College on Tuesday 16 June 2009**

- PRESENT:** Dr F Harper - Chairman
Cllr J Berry
Mr M Ellingham (Items 1-7)
Mrs J Yung
Mr D Henley - Principal (items 1,2 &16)
Mr J F C Lowe - Staff Governor
Mr D Watson - Student Governor
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs A M Pearson - Vice Principal Quality and Learner Services
Miss J Townsend - Assistant Principal Learner Responsiveness
Mr K Bond - Head of Skills & Employer Responsiveness
Mrs G Beasley - Marketing Manager (Item 14)
Mr G R Copper - Clerk to the Board of Governors
- APOLOGIES:** Mrs C Bourne
Mrs D West
Miss C Hogan

1. MINUTES

1.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 February 2009 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

1.2 Matters Arising

Minute 3.2

The Chairman enquired whether any action had been taken to increase the marketing budget. The Principal recognised the need to ensure that marketing was adequately resourced for 2009-10. The Marketing Manager had been invited to join the Exeter College marketing away day and the two Colleges were working together. Noted the 'Bicton on Tour' marketing activity which was working very effectively, the new mobile display unit had been delivered, and radio advertising had been re-introduced. The Chairman wished to ensure that marketing activities were covering the whole of Devon.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

- 2.1** Received the quality assurance report. The Vice Principal Quality and Learner Services presented the report on the mid year learner survey conducted in February and explained the satisfaction rates. It was noted that there were some perception issues such as additional qualifications for HE learners, and catering continued to be an issue for some learners. Overall the satisfaction rate was acceptable, but HE learners were less satisfied than FE. The College had focused on FE and work based learning and the satisfaction results may have reflected this. The details of the report were examined and the Student Governor repeated his suggestion that learners who would not recommend Bicton be asked why they would not do so.
- 2.2** Received the lesson observations report which showed 71% of lessons observed had been good or better, but the number of outstanding lessons was still below the target of 20%. During the Ofsted inspection, there had been six observations where inspectors were paired with College observers. Grading was agreed in five observations but one differed. The Ofsted inspectors considered that overall the College observation grades were too generous. The Chairman stated that he was disappointed with the slow pace of progress towards the target for outstanding lessons.
- 2.3** Received the complaints report. Noted that the number of complaints was down from 2006-7 and 2007-8. 54% of complaints had been resolved within ten working days. Most complaints were customer care issues, but some were linked to the outcome of funding applications. The Committee was satisfied that complaints were being dealt with appropriately.

3. EXTERNAL INSPECTION REPORTS

- 3.1** Copies of the report from Ofsted on the inspection conducted in February 2009 had previously been circulated to all Governors. The College had received satisfactory grades overall. Two subject areas were graded as good and two as satisfactory. The key strengths and areas for improvement had been reported to the full Board. Governors questioned the Colleges employer engagement and responsiveness, and were advised that there was a lack of a formal and proactive systems to respond to employers and external organisations. It was noted that some events had been organised for invited employers such as breakfasts, which had been successful. Difficulty was being experienced in getting the right balance with small employers many of which were seasonal businesses. An employer database was maintained and employers were being brought into contact with course teams and feedback provided on curriculum plans.
- 3.2** The Committee was pleased with the outcome of the inspection and would monitor the implementation of actions in response to findings in the inspection report. Areas for improvement were noted, in particular the following areas for improvement.
- Success rates on long course, particularly for 16-18 year olds at level 3
 - The challenge and pace of teaching in many lessons

- the quality of feedback to learners following assessment
- the use of structured links with employers to develop the curriculum
- the capacity and effectiveness of financial governance

3.3 It was reported that the teacher training provision had been inspected as part of a re-inspection of the University of Plymouth. The outcome was satisfactory, but it was unlikely that Bicton would be specifically mentioned in the report. It was also reported that the College had undertaken the Matrix accreditation process which focused on advice, guidance and support for learners. A positive outcome with whole College accreditation had been achieved.

4. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

4.1 Received a report on the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan for 2008/9. Some changes had been made as a result of the Ofsted inspection to indicators and comments. The progress against action points was noted and Governors questioned why some agricultural learners would not recommend Bicton and why retention in floristry was poor. Explanations of the issues giving rise to the action items were provided. The Staff Governor enquired about keeping in contact with second year students on work experience and was advised that this had been taken over by the work based learning staff.

4.2 The Chairman raised the issue of improvements required to financial governance raised in the Ofsted report which fell within the remit of the Finance and Policy Committee and it was agreed that the matter would be raised at the next meeting of that Committee.

5. INTEGRATED QUALITY ENHANCEMENT REVIEW

5.1 The Vice Principal Quality and Learner Services reported on the IQER, which was applicable to higher education provision in further education colleges and was an evidence based peer review of college management of the student learning experience and academic quality and standards. Noted that the HE Co-ordinator was involved in the self evaluation.

6. ATTENDANCE, RETENTION AND ACHIEVEMENT

6.1 Received a report on full time learner attendance. Noted that overall learner attendance was 92% for FE and 88% for HE which was considered to be good. The retention and reasons for withdrawal reports for the spring term were received. A few areas of concern were identified and the reasons explained. Retention on level 3 courses was generally better than for level 2 courses. Retention on HE courses was a concern. Data on PGCE and CertEd courses was now being collected.

6.2 The withdrawal report showed a higher number of withdrawals at the start of the year than in previous years, but a marked decline in withdrawals thereafter. Comparative data back to 2005-6 were provided.

6.3 A report on value added measures would be provided to the next meeting when

data would be available.

7. ACADEMIC BOARD

- 7.1** Received a summary report of the Academic Board meeting held on 13 May 2009, which the Chairman had attended. There was nothing to add which was not covered by agenda items.

8. CHILD PROTECTION AND CARE STANDARDS

- 8.1** Received an update report. Noted the contents and that that the College policy had been renamed as safeguarding children, Young people and adults. Also noted that the nominated child protection Governor would be standing down on 31 July 2009 and a replacement would be required.
- 8.2** Received the Ofsted Care Standards report on the inspection conducted on 13 February 2009. It was reported that the grade for staying safe had been upgraded to good which recommendation that the College should continue to implement the ongoing programme of refurbishment of residential accommodation was particularly noted.

9. STAFF DEVELOPMENT REPORT

- 9.1** Received a report on staff development activities in 2008-9 and planned for 2009-10. It was reported that Ofsted had assessed staff development as good during the inspection in February 2009. Noted the development of the 'expert learner' concept aimed at developing skills in students to be good learners.

10. COURSE OFFER

- 10.1** Received the updated full time course offer for 2009-10. The new courses planned were highlighted.
- 10.2** Received an update report on full cost course enrolments. The Head of Skills and Employer Responsiveness reported that 2008-9 had been a year of rationalisation and had concentrated in courses that employers had demanded and could be run efficiently. Some new bespoke courses had been provided to meet specific demands. New income streams such as equine shows and events had replaced underperforming full cost areas to generate additional income. It was expected that the updated income budget would be achieved. 14-16 provision income had increased significantly in 2008-9. The College was looking at the provision of packages of courses, particularly for larger employers.

11. APPLICATIONS REPORT

- 11.1** Received the application reports for 2009-10. It was noted that the number of potential full time FE students was up from both 2007 and 2008, but the Committee was concerned that more needed to be converted to offer accepted status. The risk of under recruitment had been highlighted by management, and regular information was being provided to curriculum managers. The Staff

Governor enquired about follow up to applications and was advised that applicants were booked into career days. Overall applications were potentially good, but work was needed to ensure that applications were converted into enrolments.

12. ENROLMENTS REPORT

- 12.1** Received the enrolments report to 1 June 2009 and noted the College position against LSC student numbers and funding targets. It was reported that some work based learning and Train to Gain targets had now been capped by the LSC.

13. MARKETING PLAN

- 13.1** The Marketing Manager provided an update on marketing activities. It was reported that the marketing activities were focusing on outdoor leisure and countryside courses which were lower in student numbers for September 2009. The list of events being attended by the College was noted and Governors suggested other shows that might be included. The Chairman re-emphasised the need to ensure that Bicton marketed effectively to the whole of Devon.

14. EMPLOYER AND LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 14.1** The Head of Skills and Employer Responsiveness reported that there was a whole College approach to employer and local community engagement. Progress was being made with the new diplomas for delivery in Exeter schools from September 2009. Bids for delivery of diplomas in mid and north Devon for 2011 had not progressed due to the LSC notice to improve, but an appeal had been made as the notice was for financial reasons and not quality issues and it was expected that two bids would be approved. Discussions had taken place with the Forestry Commission to set up apprenticeships for forestry production. Also, a contract with the LSC was expected for provision aimed at the unemployed. Skills development with the RDA was being discussed which would open up bidding opportunities.

15. NATIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

- 15.1** The Principal reported that there were no significant changes to national and local priorities for 2009-10. The Government viewed FE colleges as the adaptive layer in education and there might be some incentive measures to respond to rising unemployment. Bicton would need to be flexible and responsive, and also work closely with Exeter College. The LSC funding was fixed apart from a possibility of some growth in the apprenticeship allocation. The College needed to be more proactive in seeking other sources of funding such as RDA funding.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 16.1** The next meeting scheduled meeting was planned for Tuesday 24 November 2009 at 2.00 pm, but an additional earlier meeting was considered to be appropriate which would be held on Thursday 24 September 2009 at 2.00 pm

Signed _____
Chairman

Date _____

**EDUCATION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
ACTION ITEMS ARISING**

MINUTE	ACTION	BY	WHEN
4.2	The issue of improvements required to financial governance raised in the Ofsted report which fell within the remit of the Finance and Policy Committee would be raised at the next meeting of that Committee.	Chairman	23.6.09
6.3	A report on value added measures to be provided to the next meeting.	JT	24.9.09
8.1	The nominated child protection Governor would be standing down on 31 July 2009 and a replacement would be required.	Clerk	24.9.09