

**Minutes of Norton Radstock College Quality Committee Meeting
held on Tuesday 17 February 2009 at 6pm**

Present: Mr R Newbery (Chair)
Mrs S Arayan (Principal)
Ms S Barter
Mr J Cocks
Mr D Evans

In Attendance: Mr J Holland (Clerk)
Mr P Skinner (Senior Manager Quality)
Mr A Willcox (Quality Coordinator) until 7.30pm

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from David Protheroe, Sandra Seldon and Jane Winstanley.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 18 November 2008 for approval

The meeting unanimously agreed to approve the Minutes.

3. Matters arising

The meeting noted the Matters Arising sheet.

AW circulated, as requested, a chart showing the responses to areas of Student Services, ranking each service. There had been 545 responses to the Teaching Survey but the most responses were 195 to the Careers Guidance question.

Penny Routledge was looking into the results to tackle the areas of dissatisfaction. The meeting noted that the worst areas of dissatisfaction revolved around areas with financial impact. A lot of this was thought to be as a result of the strict rules that have to be followed with these areas and students not being able to access funding on occasions.

It was noted that these surveys are anonymous which does not allow feedback to individual students although this is possible through the College complaints procedures.

With regard to the Quality Improvement Plan, the meeting was happy that it had covered the main queries raised at the last Quality meeting with:

- A timescale for improving the grading of each curriculum area under the action headed from Good to Great being included in the Quality Improvement Plan.
- The other area of concern was why gradings in the Self Assessment Report had changed year on year. This was addressed in the final version of the Self Assessment Report which Governors approved at the December Governing Body meeting.

PS and AW had hoped to show some of the capability of Covalent tonight but Covalent is subject to an upgrade tonight and cannot be shown live. However, hard copies were available for circulation.

The actions in Covalent are a working plan which are being used at Heads of Schools Quarterly Reviews.

The meeting agreed it would be useful to have a standing item which gives a brief report and the actions being progressed by using Covalent.

Action: PS/AW Q2091

4. **Essential Skills Quality Pack for information**

The meeting noted the falling trends in success, retention and achievement which are unacceptable, but reasons for this have been identified and actions put in place. Earlier years' results had benefited from the ability to offer College Certificates which was no longer the case.

The meeting noted the trends in success, retention and achievement for key skills and that the 06/07 results had been boosted by the franchise arrangement put in place and improvements in achievement.

Upon query, SA expanded on how the School is being split. Because the School is so large and complicated, a new Head of School is being recruited with one Head of School responsible for 16-18 and one Head of School responsible for Adults. This would allow each Head of School to concentrate on the appropriate funding streams.

The work of Essential Skills School included key skills for other Schools, of which some classes may be taught by staff from the other School.

Processes are now in place in that progress is now measured from monthly reporting and Quarterly Reviews to pick up progress on additionality as well as main qualifications; details of actions shown on page 6 of the pack.

The meeting noted the positive responses on the Student Surveys but these were not correlating to final success rates.

The College now had a process to ensure the student is on the right qualification which should improve success rates.

The meeting highlighted that key skills was a compulsory element of achieving an Apprenticeship.

The College has emphasised that Heads of School must take a more positive interest where their own staff are not teaching the relevant 'key skills' and ensure appropriate communication channels are in place.

The problem was that Heads of School had been believed rather than adequate tracking at that time being in place to pick up the 'additionality' issues.

SA was able to confirm to the meeting that the Essential Skills School was in special measures but Engineering has come out of special measures.

Jane Winstanley had agreed to update the June meeting of progress being made.

The contents of the Quality pack was noted by the meeting.

5. **Key Question 1 – How well are students achieving including update on achievements and details of improvements with final 07/08 success rates showing national rates and targets for information**

PS took the meeting through the two reports. Generally, the finalisation of the unknown outcomes had been positive, increasing the overall success rate from 74% projected at October 2008 to 75% now. Since October 2008 there had been a fall off in Animal Care and Art and Design with Essential Skills holding the overall result back due to its large numbers. PS was confident that success rates this year would improve.

PS explained the main problems on the final 07/08 success rates were on the long Level 1 courses which the College is now tackling vigorously. Also, within Essential Skills, SSA14 suffered with success rates on preparation for life/work courses. SSA5 suffered with problems with the first year of setting up the Construction courses with SSA12 showing poor results with students not willing to sit exams on the language courses. Upon query, it was confirmed that franchising was included with the results explaining the good results in SSA8.

The meeting noted the two reports.

6. **Update on Action Plan following Ofsted Annual Monitoring Visit for information**

The meeting noted the content of the Action Plan.

The meeting expressed concern in the current economic climate at the practicality of obtaining work experience for all students. Also of concern was the College informing students that they would provide them with the appropriate skill but there may not be a job at the end of the course.

The meeting wanted the Annual Monitoring Visit Action Plan loaded onto Covalent.

Action: AW Q2092

7. **Updated Quality Improvement Plan and Covalent update for information**

As mentioned earlier, PS and AW had hoped to access live data from Covalent, but this was not possible due to a system upgrade. However, they showed a report that had been taken from Covalent earlier which had the capability to track % progress against departmental action plans.

It was still the aim to look at eventually using Covalent to track key performance indicators.

Heads of School have success, retention and achievement targets embedded as part of their Covalent Action Plans.

The meeting agreed it would be useful to have a brief report on Covalent and the progress being made at each meeting.

Action: PS Q2093

The licensing of the covalent software would not allow individual Governor access.

College staff are still learning about the full capability of Covalent in relation to capabilities, privacy, weightings etc.

8. **Recruitment figures for information**

As mentioned at the Governors meeting on 28 January, 16-18 and Learner Responsive are recruiting well. The College is pushing at the moment to maximise enrolments under the Employer Responsiveness stream. The College is meeting with the Unite Union within the Forward 4 Workforce Skills Consortium to offer training under the Employer Responsiveness strand.

9. **Observation Grades to date for information**

The meeting noted the report with 73% of observations graded 1 or 2 (outstanding or good). Where a grade 3 or 4 is given, support is available and the member of staff is re-observed during the year.

The meeting was concerned that some Schools had very few observations recorded for the year. Targets will be set to improve this.

Action: SA Q2094

AW left the meeting.

10. **Any other business**

PS showed a Powerpoint presentation on changes to Framework for Excellence which was noted. He has a letter from the LSC explaining the changes which will be circulated to Committee members.

Action: JH Q2095

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.35pm.