

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 APRIL 2013

1. PRESENT

Mrs H Wright (Chair), Mrs L Ladds, Ms I Lebedowicz, Mr N Percy, Mrs A Mosek and Mr R Stanley.

Also in attendance: Mrs J Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Mr A Fulbrook (Headteacher, William Lovell), Mrs F Grady (Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality) and Mrs L Griffen (Partnership Manager).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr B Wright

2. OBSERVER

Amanda Mosek advised that Andrew Fulbrook of the William Lovell School was attending the committee as an observer on this occasion with a view to possibly becoming a member at a later date.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 23 January 2013 were reviewed and approved.

4. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2012-13

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on Key Performance Indicators. It was noted that the Indicators presented were as at 28 March 2013 but there had been no significant changes since that date.

The committee were reminded that there was a question over the lesson observation grades in the light of the Ofsted feedback which would affect their validity for the current year. An issue with which the College was particularly concerned was attempting to improve attendance rates where performance was struggling to better last years. It was noted that adult attendance was generally lower than that for 16-18 year olds and the committee considered that it might be worth reporting separately on part-time and adult attendance. A discussion took place about how adult non-attendance was followed up and whether there should be a differentiated policy on this. Consideration could be given to looking at competitive incentives to improve retention.

The College AS module results had been disappointing and action was in place to support the grades for the summer. In the modules the number of higher grades was a little better than previously.

A general discussion took place about lesson observations and a question was raised about how the quality of observations were evaluated. Members were advised that paired evaluations were carried out but that the lesson observation structure was changing with further training due in May 2013. The College was changing to a smaller team of observers and moving to two day notice of observations as in the Ofsted model. Programme Managers would no longer be carrying out observations because

of the possibility that other factors could influence gradings. It was the intention also to carry out drop in visits to classes which would not be graded. The College was reviewing issues of consistency particularly with the unannounced visits.

It was noted that the current observers were Curriculum Leaders, Programme Leaders and Quality Managers and that the new team would consist of Advanced Practitioners, Heads of Quality and the new Heads of Curriculum posts. An issue that the College was looking at was the quality of the observation reports. The committee view is that the purpose of this process is the College's own quality assurance rather than simply satisfying Ofsted. Discussions took place about the possibility of using peer review which the College had done in the past and it was noted that the College was hoping to be able to look at the management of A-Level performance in sixth forms.

5. IN YEAR RETENTION

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on in-year retention. The report had a particular focus on data which was causing concern which included a number of areas highlighted within the report. Concerns about some partnership performance had been addressed. A general discussion took place about the strategy to improve retention and the steps being taken to address areas of low retention. These actions were identified in quality improvement plans. Particular discussion took place about problems relating to Work Based Learning Electrical courses. It was noted that the courses concerned were demanding and long but were satisfying industry requirements. It was noted that the MIDES data showed that the College's performance was better than previously and the committee was interested to see what the next report shows.

6. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on the Quality Improvement Plan and Post Inspection Action Plan. It was noted that the College was expecting to get another inspection in about a years time and that there was a lot to be done before this visit took place. It is essential that outcomes are improved to above grade 3 and staff are committed to achieving the desired improvements. The committee noted that some management restructuring was in progress to secure greater consistency, improve communication and improve outcomes.

A question was raised about whether succession planning for governors should be identified as an issue on the Quality Improvement Plan.

7. POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on progress being made with the Post Inspection Action Plan.

The actions taken were reviewed and a particular discussion took place about the increased entry criteria and robustness of processes for recruitment of international students at A-level. Members were advised that AS World Development had been removed from the offer because of poor performance.

It was noted that the College was using LSIS support regarding improvements required to teaching and learning. The College was also gathering information on improving English to share good practice since this would support the delivery of learning. A

discussion took place about how the standard of the English of learners wanting to do non-ESOL courses was assessed and members were advised that a number of full-time ESOL referrals arose for those whose English was not strong enough for main courses. The committee noted that as a result of the actions being taken the numbers of learners on A-levels was likely to drop.

8. PARTNERSHIPS

Members received a report from the Partnership Manager on the College's management of Partnership. A discussion took place about the risks of Partnerships and about the checks carried out and processes followed for the creation of new partner contracts. It was noted that most of the College's quality systems applied across Partnerships but that there were some specifics relating to what was mostly Work Based Learning. The College was actively working to enhance the monitoring of the contract value profile. Particular discussion took place about the options facing the College in respect of a partnership which had found itself in financial difficulties and which had been the subject of discussion at the main Corporation meeting.

The Partnership Manager was thanked for delivery of a comprehensive report.

9. FEEDBACK FROM OBSERVER

The Chair thanked Andrew Fulbrook for his attendance at the meeting and his input into the committee's considerations. He advised that he had found the content of the meeting and the discussions very interesting.

8. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would take place on 11 June 2013.