BIRMINGHAM METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

**Minutes of the
Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee Meeting
held in the Boardroom at the Moat House (Sutton Coldfield Campus)
on Tuesday 29th June 2010 at 8.30am**

Present:

Dr J Rimmer (Acting Chair) (Chair)
Mr D Latham (DL)

In Attendance:

Dr C Braddock (Principal)
Mr R Minett (Executive Director of HE and International) (RM)
Ms K Pankhurst (Director of Quality Improvement) (KP)
Mrs S Banks (Interim Clerk)
Ms D Fletcher (Executive Director, 14-19)

Apologies for Absence:

Ms S Binning
Ms S Davies

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Mrs S Banks was Interim Clerk in the absence of Mrs C Bennett who was on maternity leave.

Item 1* - Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th March 2010

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2010 were a true and accurate record.

Item 7 – 14-19 Strategy Birmingham and Solihull (BMET response)

7.1   DF reported that the report showed the timelines for the next year of funding following the government changes. Her concern was that we would not get funding if the targets are not met. But we were responsive by participating in 4 active networks (Heads group, Curriculum Group etc).

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7.2   DF confirmed that the College was now removing any provision that was underperforming and also developing unique selling points (eg hi-Tech facilities, Academies etc). There had been a particular interest from neighbouring partners in our Medical and Digital.

7.3   The Principal felt that we needed to offer better sixth form provision than schools and promote our unique selling points.

7.4   DF reported that the academy was funded directly by YPLA (Young People's Learning Agency). RM felt that the setting up of Harborne Academy had been very timely and the Principal stated that it would be a good investment especially as the new academies would not receive any finance.

Resolved

There were no specific resolutions for this item although the Committee was asked to consider and discuss the report.

DF left the meeting

Item 2 – Student Portal

2.1   KP reported that this had been launched in April on the back of the Staff Portal which had been very successful. She talked through the document highlighting the various areas of the SharePoint where students are asked for feedback, for example – voting for favourite tutor, voting system on various aspects of college life.

2.2   KP stated that the next step was to provide staff and students with data reports. Also linking Moodle and the STAR system (student tracking). DL commented that the more information provided the better for staff and students.

2.3   The Chair felt it was important to include students' feedback on various issues and it was also important to respond to that feedback. The Principal reported that one of the big issues following merger was communication and this was a huge change in the IT infrastructure with the communication and information now available to everyone (including Governors).

2.4   It was agreed that the work put into this had been worthwhile, particularly for Learner Voice as the number of users was high. The Chair confirmed that this was a very sophisticated system and commended the use of this as a communication strategy.

Resolved

There were no specific resolutions for this item although the Committee was asked to consider and discuss the report.

Item 3 – Verbal update on Self Assessment Report

3.1   The Principal reported that the SAR had been completed in two parts (MB and SC).   The SAR had not yet been posted on the Portal because it did not reflect the new organisation.   She confirmed that work was in progress and this would be finished by November when all achievements were recorded for the first year of the new college.   The new SAR would show a huge improvement in performance.

3.2   The Principal reported that Tony Dennant had been put in charge of all the outstanding achievements and the plan was for this to be in by August.   This was being reviewed on a weekly basis.

3.3   KP confirmed that regular meetings were taking place between the curriculum and data teams and the data was far more accurate compared to the same time last year.

Resolved

There were no specific resolutions for this item although the Committee was asked to consider and discuss the report.

Item 4 – Quality Improvement Strategies and Safeguarding Impact of Actions Taken

4.1   KP reported that since September last year, following the Baby P case, safeguarding has become a major huge priority for the college.   Staff and Governors have been trained.   A Safeguarding Committee has been set up to raise awareness to all staff, including various members of staff and a nominated Governor.

4.2   The referral table was discussed.   This showed the increase in cases referred over the last 5 years.   This was not getting more serious but was raising more awareness therefore showing more activity.   The Principal confirmed that we were getting better at dealing with it and reporting it to appropriate agencies as a result of the actions we have taken.

4.3   KP stated that referrals were taking place by other agencies and she confirmed that we support and work with them to make sure the students feel safe.   An on-line survey and student focus groups confirmed that students felt safe.   KP reported that some students come back to the College because they do feel safe here.

4.4   The Chair felt that this was something that needed constant re-visiting and the Principal also confirmed that the Governors new Safeguarding representative would be Jane Williams.

Resolved

There were no specific resolutions for this item although the Committee was asked to consider and discuss the report.

Item 5 – Staff Development update

5.1   RM confirmed that he was updating members following a request at the last meeting. He reported that a great deal of training for staff had been undertaken including the College Staff Development Days (one in February and one scheduled for next week); Safeguarding – Level 1 and Level 2 (including catering staff and Governors) and a Level 3 Day was scheduled for tomorrow for 20 staff.

5.2   RM also reported that personal individual development had been undertaken for lesson observations.

5.3   The Principal reported on developments with pod-casting and ways of using 3-D videoing through Sharepoint. This was an innovative way of teaching particularly in Science. The technology was now available through our Samsung Digital Service Academy.

5.4   RM reported on other staff training including Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), personalised learning and functional skills.

5.5   RM stated that the intention was to make sure that staff record all training activities for their CPD (Continuing Professional Development).

5.6   Other aspects of training covered would include Equality & Diversity training for all staff.

5.7   The Principal commented that the management training had originally been requested by the unions and staff and a tremendous amount of work had been put in to make sure that all types of training had been offered to the managers. This has now helped to set performance measures for reviewing.

5.8   The Chair felt that this was a proactive way to move forward and he was impressed with the training programme offered to the staff.

5.9   *Amendment to item 5 No 3 Risk of report*: The document should read 'IT services and technology supports innovative teaching, training and learning and there is continual improvement to the infrastructure to facilitate this.'

Resolved

There were no specific resolutions for this item although the Committee was asked to consider and discuss the report.

Item 6 – BMET Achievement and Awards

6.1   KP reported that this was a summary of what we had achieved this year. She went through the key list (No 2 - Awards) but confirmed that there had been so many other achievements too.

6.2   KP also reported on the most recent achievements such as the Academy status for Health and Sciences, ESOL/International delivering programmes through the 157 China Skills Project, leading on the Skills for Climate Change and Sustainable Development ESF Project.

6.3   Future awards including the BCA Cleanability Award, where we had reached the final stages, was reported and KP confirmed that many more similar awards were being achieved on a regular basis.

6.4   RM also reported on a very successful teacher training inspection (in conjunction with Wolverhampton University) that had taken place recently.

6.5   The Principal confirmed that there were many achievements not included but that were still very important. She stated that the College attempts to capture all the good news (including all the awards and achievements) in the MET News including all the students' activities. She reported on a visit from Vince Cable MP last week and that it is not always easy to get high profile visitors to colleges. Students Sports Awards event and the Fashion show in the FEED studio last week were also two events that showcased the students achievements.

6.6   The Chair congratulated the staff and students on these achievements and commented that students do not always realise what contribution they have actually made to the community.

Item 7 - 14-19 Strategy Birmingham and Solihull (BMET response)

DF presented this item earlier in the agenda

Item 8 – Learner Voice – Impact of curriculum and focus groups

8.1   RM reported that focus groups had now been set up for learners at each campus. This learner involvement is known as Learner Voice.

8.2   Students have contributed to changes at directorate and campus level. They have also discussed changes with the LRC, Estates and Security.

8.3   RM confirmed that the focus groups were working really well and the Student Portal will enhance this.

8.4   RM reported that students were also presenting their issues to managers at the Management Development Programme.
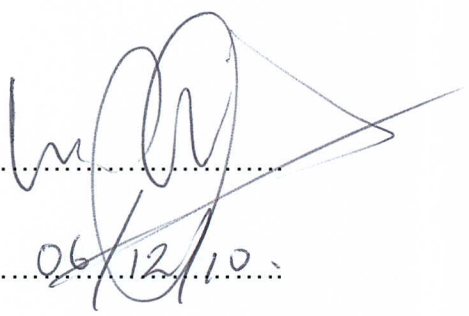
8.5   The Principal asked what changes had been made from what the students had put forward. KP gave an example of how the students had negotiated with Estates in sorting out the installation of a cash machine in the coffee shop.

8.6   The Chair commented that this was a valuable learning opportunity for students to develop their life skills.

Any other business

As this was the Chair's last meeting he thanked the Committee for the work he had been involved with and praised them on their energy and enthusiasm.

The Principal also thanked the Chair for his contribution saying that his advice on various reports had been invaluable. She confirmed that the new Chair of this committee would be Professor Ian Oakes.

Signed (Chair) ....

Date ......06/12/10....