

Brooke House Sixth Form College

Minutes of a special meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on 21 November 2008 at 1430 hrs.

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| Present | Sid Hughes (Chair) | Lisa Huggins-Chan | Jeremy Jennings |
| | Ken Warman (Principal) | | |
| In Attendance | Ralph Devereux (Clerk) | Phillip Eliot (VP (T&L)) | Dave Hampton (Head of Humanities)(Item 13/08a) |
| | Chidi Okolo (Head of ICT & Maths)(Item 13/08b) | | |

10/08 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND APOLOGIES

No notice had been received of any member becoming ineligible to hold office. The meeting was quorate and no interests had been declared.

11/08 WHOLE COLLEGE DATA

Benchmark data were considered and discussed and it was noted that the SFC – HWP national benchmarks were applicable when comparing results. It was noted that all 3 comparators (success, retention and achievement) had increased over the 2004/05 numbers and the steady improvement in retention had justified the attention which it had been given. Since success rate was the product of retention and achievement, poor retention could erode the higher achievements which had been particularly evident this year at A2 with a significant rise for overall success at 67%. This indicated sound progress with the drive to raise standards, however it remained well below national the benchmark of 81%. Success at Level 1,2 &3 was then considered and it was agreed that ESOL/Skills for Life and AS were areas for particular attention. There would also be some organisational changes in the arrangements for 2 year courses to improve success rates. It was agreed to circulate the statistics to allow comparison of individual department to whole college results. It was agreed that the improvements were now showing through as a result of the sustained and focused effort over the last 2 years and this was heartening.

The information was received.

12/08 COLLEGE SAR

The Key Questions elements of the draft SAR were considered in turn. Inconsistencies in presentational format, grammar, spelling and typographical errors would all be corrected in the next draft as individual inputs were edited. It was agreed that the whole element was too long and wordy requiring considerable précis of the text and removal of repeated issues in individual elements. Methods for correcting identified areas of inadequacy or failing would be fully detailed in the Quality Improvement Plan.

- a. College in Context (Grade 2). The College in Context element was clear and comprehensive; the only addition suggested was to strengthen the description of the scope and importance placed on the “Student Voice”.
- b. Quality of Provision. (Grade 3). The quality of Provision element was considered and after discussion it was agreed that a more positive tone should be adopted in some areas. For example, the numbers of qualified teachers had risen considerably over the last year and issues such as this should be included and brought to the fore. The section would also benefit from general sharpening and focus.
- c. How well are Learners guided and supported? (Grade 2). This section on “How well are Learners guided and supported” was too long and (as in para b above) was not insufficiently positive since this area is a strength; for example, to explain that although certain systems had not been in place that they were now established.

- d. Every Child Matters. (Not graded). It was agreed that the “Every Child matters” element needed much attention and was clearly a first draft.
- e. Leadership and Management. (Grade 3). The “Leadership and Management” element was comprehensive but would benefit from deeper analysis of the reasons behind the sustained improvements; for example, inclusion of an explanation of the culling of unsatisfactory teaching and learning.
- f. Capacity to Improve. (Grade 2). There was no doubt that “Capacity to Improve” was a strong area. Steadily rising success rates, establishment of a strong standards committee and close monitoring from the top down all contributed and could be well evidenced. More improvements had been made but outside the timescale of this report although the bases had been set within it.

The initial draft would be edited along the lines discussed and presented to the corporation at the next meeting and on this basis it was recommended to the corporation.

The amended SAR was recommended to the Corporation.

13/08 DEPARTMENTAL SAR

A sample of individual departmental SAR submissions would be considered and discussed.

The Head of Humanities joined the meeting.

- a. Humanities. The draft SAR for the Humanities Department was circulated and discussed item by item. 2007/08 had generally been a good year, especially in A2 subjects. However AS results had been unsatisfactory in law and psychology and remained generally below SFC-HWP benchmarks. Nevertheless in Value Added there had been notable success with results falling in the national benchmark top decile. Wider initiatives such as the QMU mentoring scheme and the Pembroke partnership were proving successful and popular. Retention was improving. The disappointing AS results had prompted examination of the issues and had identified difficulties and were dealing with them, for example peer assessments had been introduced. Staff were proud of the department’s improvement in A2 results and that most students now progressed to HE. Continuous monitoring of AS progress through the year would be established and early corrective action would be taken. The overall assessment for Humanities was Grade 3.

The Head of Humanities left the meeting.

The Head of Maths and ICT joined the meeting.

- b. Maths and ICT. The draft SAR for the Maths and ICT Department was circulated and discussed item by item. Some typographical errors in the tabulated data on page 1 were noted for correction in the next draft. 2007/08 had not generally been a good year and that was recognised in the department. Results were significantly below national averages although the trend was slowly positive. It had become obvious to the relatively new Head of Department that several issues lay at the root of the problems, for example, individual students capabilities had not been recognised and wide spectrum teaching had been applied when a differentiated approach would have been more appropriate. Other changes had also been introduced and these were considered, all were included in the QIP which was circulated. It was noted that the tabulated statistics were incomplete and, for this stage of the year, that was concerning, also they should have been shared with the staff at an early stage in the term to facilitate focus on weak areas. It was agreed that the Committee Chairman (and any other members who wished to attend) and the Head of department would have a further meeting in February to evaluate the success of the remedial measures. However improvement were beginning to show through and capacity to improve had been graded as satisfactory although the overall assessment for the department was grade 4.

The Head of Maths and ICT left the meeting.

14/08 URGENT BUSINESS

There had been no urgent business requested.

9/08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be 1500 on 12 March 2008.