

# JOHN RUSKIN COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Curriculum and Standards Committee held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009 in the Meeting Room E60 at John Ruskin College, Selsdon Park Road, South Croydon, Surrey CRO 8JJ commencing at 6.30pm.

### **Present:**

Dr Robert Fairbrother      Chairman  
David Twigg  
Alec Stow  
Barbara Prior                      Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality

### **In Attendance:**

Jennifer Sims                      Principal  
Barbara Maude                      Clerk to the Corporation

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Timing of the Agenda</b> Apologies had been received from Judith Bennett. The Chairman gave indicative timings for the agenda which were agreed. There were no items of urgent business and no new declarations of interest.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b> The Committee received the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2009. The Chairman requested that the word order should be amended in the second paragraph on page 4. The paragraph was not factually incorrect but it was felt that the word order would benefit from being revised. Save for that amendment, which was agreed, the minutes were approved as an accurate record and approved for subsequent signature by the Chairman.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters arising</b> There were no substantive matters arising which would not be covered by the present agenda.
<b>4.</b>	<b>The Learner Voice</b> The Committee received a paper setting out the results analysis of the Teaching and Learning and Cross College Questionnaires presented by the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality.  This was a new style of questionnaire and the Committee welcomed the graphical representation of the results. The Committee reviewed the Teaching and Learning Survey overall results first; then the Student Survey results for 2008/09 and finally the Every Learner Matters survey.  Overall, College management were pleased with the results although there

	<p>were elements in each survey that raised concerns. For example, in the Teaching and Learning Survey, management had been concerned to note that in response to the question “I am kept interested in all my classes,” whilst 36.5% had answered “good,” 31.1% had responded “satisfactory”. In addition, in response to the question “Learning activities are varied and cater to the way I learn,” 44.2% had responded “good” but 29.8% had responded “satisfactory”. Management were actively reviewing these areas to seek to address the concerns. In addition, management were also seeking to ensure that the response rate increased for 2009/10 as the current response rate was only 59%.</p> <p>In response to a question, it was confirmed that poor responses were examined and the course identified. It was then possible from there to drill down to teacher level to identify precisely the cause for student dissatisfaction.</p> <p>In relation to the student survey results for 2008/09, it was confirmed that College management would be reviewing the wording of some of the questions before next year’s survey was undertaken. For example, question 2 asked “If I don’t come to college someone contacts me to offer support”. This had produced a varied response with the single biggest response being “satisfactory” at 26.6%. It was felt that this question had been confusing and possibly ambiguous.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Committee felt that the section on support for a disability should be reviewed as the response to one question appeared to directly conflict with the response to another.</p> <p>In respect of the Every Learner Matters survey then the Committee were pleased to note that the feedback from that survey had already been implemented with 14 items identified as things that learners were happy with and 7 things that learners said could be improved. Those 7 points had been put into an action plan entitled “7 steps to reach the stars”. Promotional literature had been placed all around the College showing what was being done to address these specific points. This included for example the improvement of the enrichment programme for girls as 51% of females were shown not to take part in enrichment compared to 25.7% of males.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the format and presentation of the survey results. To aid the Committee’s monitoring role it was considered helpful if in future the report could include comparison data for the previous year (s).</p> <p><b>The Committee resolved:</b>  <b>To receive and note the results analysis of the Teaching and Learning and Cross College questionnaires.</b></p>
5.	<b>Classroom Observation Report</b>

	<p>The Committee received an interim report on the College’s Classroom Observation Scheme for 2008/09 as at March 2009. The report had been prepared by Louis Strover, Director of Learning (Innovation and Capacity to Improve) and was presented by Barbara Prior, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality.</p> <p>The report focused on the lesson observations from Cycle 1 and 2 and within that cycle 108 observations had been completed. This involved a central team of trained observers undertaking a variety of unannounced observations across the College. The observations were completed within the new OfSTED guidelines and all observers had received one-to-one training to national standards by a Senior HMI Consultant. In addition the report included benchmarking data taken from a cross sector survey completed by Thames Valley University.</p> <p>In terms of a summary of grades then the College had achieved Grades 1-2 in Cycle 2 of 72% compared to a sector benchmark of 73% and a Sixth Form College benchmark of 78%. The College had received Grade 3’s in 22% of observations compared to 34% as the sector benchmark and 19% of Sixth Form College’s benchmarks. Grade 4’s accounted for 6% of College observations, which was slightly higher than the sector benchmark of 3% together with the Sixth Form College’s benchmark of 3% as well.</p> <p>The Committee also reviewed the improvements in grades with 11% of staff having improved by 2 grades in their observations. All of these staff had undertaken a formal structured programme with Teaching and Learning Mentors.</p> <p>It was also confirmed that the lesson observation process was a key part of the College’s Quality Improvement Plan with teaching and learning mentoring support for staff accessible for all staff. The College had also continued to develop the skills of staff through a wide range of CPD activities in 2008/09. The bitesize (CPD) sessions have been at the heart of upskilling staff and this year an increased differentiated programme of targeted CPD opportunities was available to staff. The data showed an increase of up to 40% uptake in attendance at bitesize sessions for staff.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the action plan for lesson observation development which identified the issue, the action, the timescale and the person responsible.</p> <p>The Committee considered that the action plan was rigorous and the timescales realistic.</p> <p>The Committee <b>resolved:</b>  <b>To receive and note the interim Lesson Observation Report for 2008/09.</b></p>
6.	<p><b>Preparing for Inspection</b>  The Committee received an oral summary of the revised OfSTED</p>

	<p>framework for inspection and the Annual Monitoring Visit from the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality.</p> <p>The Vice Principal confirmed that the new inspection framework was due to be published in August 2009. OfSTED were currently still running pilot schemes but it was clear that the one of the key aspects of the new framework was going to be a much greater involvement and use of the Learner Voice.</p> <p>In addition, it was anticipated that there would also be "themed" observations such as looking at the specific use of ILT across the curriculum offer and ensuring that the lesson observation scheme was accurate and accorded with the correct procedure, protocol and levels.</p> <p>The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality also confirmed that the College had just had its annual monitoring visit. Assessors had reviewed three specific questions and the College had been judged to have made "reasonable progress" in addressing each area. The available responses were confirmed as either significant, reasonable, insufficient or no discernible progress.</p> <p>It was confirmed that further and more specific details of the results of the Annual Monitoring Visit would be available by the first meeting of the Corporation in the autumn term and then in turn could come to the Committee at its next meeting.</p>
7.	<p><b>Revised Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>The Committee received and reviewed the Committee's suggested new Terms of Reference. It was confirmed that the Clerk had sourced Terms of Reference from outstanding colleges and these had been circulated to both the Principal and the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality prior to the meeting. In consultation, the new terms of Reference had been prepared.</p> <p>The Committee considered the Terms of Reference and were agreeable to the Committee being referred to as the "Curriculum and Quality Committee" as opposed to the "Curriculum and Standards Committee." The word "standards" had been largely superseded in the sector by the reference to "quality".</p> <p>It was noted that two additional items would now fall under the Committee's remit. These related to the Committee now having a monitoring role on the progress of Every Child Matters and the review of an annual report on the analysis of complaints and the actions being taken to address them.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the report on complaints would cover the whole range of complaints received (and not just limited to the curriculum offer) as the issue was to review the service that the learner receives. For the avoidance of doubt it was confirmed that the complaints if they related to</p>

	<p>staff would be covered under the remit of the report but not complaints that may be brought by staff. It was further felt that the analysis report should be presented at the first meeting of the new academic year and would look at the previous academic year to assess the range of complaints received and what action had been taken.</p> <p>Management confirmed that the number of complaints received annually was minimal.</p> <p>The Committee <b>resolved:</b>  <b>To receive, approve and commend to the Corporation the suggested new Terms of Reference.</b></p>
8.	<p><b>Governance Self Assessment</b></p> <p>The Committee received the proposed Governance Self Assessment Action Plan for 2009/10 which had been prepared by the Clerk.</p> <p>Arising from consideration of item 3, which related to the average Corporation attendance rate of 64% it was requested that the Clerk confirm by way of a footnote the basis of that calculation. Members wished to be clear as to whether that attendance rate was based on the actual membership of the Corporation as existed at the time or was calculated against the agreed composition of 17.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Clerk would include a footnote to that effect and the Action Plan would be presented to the Corporation for approval.</p> <p>The Committee <b>resolved:</b>  <b>To receive, approve and commend to the Corporation the draft Action Plan subject to the inclusion of an explanatory footnote in the terms agreed.</b></p>
9.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>There were no other items of business.</p>
10.	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at 6.30pm.</p>