CS15/1

Priestley College

Minutes of the Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting
held at 4.30pm on Thursday, 5 February 2015
in the Conference Room (P1.16)

PRESENT:	Mrs D Stead	Chair
	Mr D Cathie	Student Member
	Mr B Craven	Student Member
	Dr M Hartill	
	Mrs K Hope	Staff Member
	Mr L Horrigan	
	Mr Y Shaikh	
	Ms K Simcock	
	Mr P McMellon	Clerk to the Governing Body
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr M W Grant	Principal
	Mr G Contos	Vice Principal – Curriculum & Standards
	Mrs F Evans	Director of Student Services (Items 7 & 8)
	Ms J Costello	Director of Performance Man. (Item 6)
	Mrs J Grant	Study Support Manager (Item 7)
	Mr G Callan	Study Support (Item 7)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs C Owen.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2014 were accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Item 7 : College Self Assessment Report (2013/14)

The Principal reminded the Committee that**,** when the draft SAR had been approved (December 2014), national data (for benchmark/comparison) was still awaited. The national data had now been received (see Item 10 below) and, as a consequence, it would now be appropriate to consider changing the grading of the ICT Curriculum Area from Grade 2 to Grade 1. The Committee noted the relevant sections of the data tables.

RESOLVED : That the Governing Body is recommended to approve the changing of the SAR grading for the ICT Curriculum Area from Grade 2 to Grade 1

The Chair asked the Principal to pass on the Committee's congratulations to the staff in the ICT Curriculum Area.

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5. "THE COLLEGE COUNCIL"

The Student Members (Mr B Craven and Mr D Cathie) gave a short presentation on the operation and achievements of the College Council. A document – 'College Council Declaration' – was distributed and discussed. The Committee noted the membership, roles and responsibilities of the College Council. Methods of communication and contact were also noted. The College Council blog was discussed, and other topical matters (eg bus services, smoking arrangements) were noted.

The Committee asked the Student Members to comment on some of the *positive* features of the Council's work although it was recognised that most of the dealings would inevitably tend towards areas of dissatisfaction.

Mr Y Shaikh congratulated the College Council on the production of an impressive document (the Declaration) and all agreed that Mr Craven and Mr Cathie had given a very good and informative presentation.

6. QUESTIONNAIRE : PARENTS – AUTUMN 2014

Ms J Costello (Director – Performance Management) presented the report summarising the results of the survey of the parents of current students conducted in the Autumn Term. It was noted that considerably more parents had contributed compared to the previous year. It was also pleasing to note that the scores were also more positive than before.

The Committee then examined the scores for each question, noting where there were differences between first year and second year parents.

A summary of the narrative comments by parents – positive and negative – was discussed, and it was also noted where/how issues raised in the previous year now seem to have been resolved.

In agreeing with the overall assessment – that the results indicated that there were no significant issues, and that there were, in fact, a great many compliments - the Committee then considered how such a positive picture might aid recruitment of future students from local schools.

The Committee thanked Ms Costello for her work and the report.

7. SEND POLICY

The Committee had received a draft SEND Policy covering the College's obligations where special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified or anticipated.

Mrs J Grant (Study Support Manager) and Mr G Callan (Study Support) gave a presentation which elaborated on the background of the new Code of Practice and the implications for the College in meeting obligations and expectations.

The importance of the College's general student course admission requirements was noted, along with the role of the local authorities in providing places for prospective students. The Committee then discussed the College's plans and expectations with regard to the 'best endeavour' (to anticipate and to meet student needs) obligation, including the obvious cost implications. As an example, the suitability of many of the doors on campus was discussed. The Student Governors commented on their own experiences and those of other students who had reported problems with existing facilities. The requirements of wheel-chair using students were also discussed.

In noting the facilities (access) grading scale which the College had adopted, it was agreed that the objective should be to attain 'Grade 3' status as soon as possible.

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The arrangements for the training of staff and Governors were noted, with details of the on-line package circulated. The training of Governors would be considered at the Governing Body meeting on 5 March 2015.
Regarding the actual document, it was felt that there should be some amendments to the format so as to distinguish more clearly between 'policy' and 'procedure'. It was, however, noted that, with the draft already compliant with authoritative external guidance (as to content, coverage etc), any re-draft would need to retain most if not all of the current document. It was agreed that the revised version would be distributed to Committee members in advance of submission to the Governing Body.

8. POLICY REVIEW : BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

Mrs F Evans (Director of Student Services) presented the draft Policy following the recent review by College Management. She drew attention to where amendments to the current version were proposed, and in particular, to the emphasis given to the need for vigilance on the part of staff, not least with regard to student absence/attendance patterns.

The Committee discussed at some length how College Management would apply the Policy, particularly with regard to those areas where the perceptions of individuals (as to what does/does not constitute bullying or harassment) would inevitably vary. The need to respect the *perception* of victims, and to balance this with the *intentions* of perpetrators presents a range of challenges, and the Policy document can only, therefore, serve to offer examples of the types of behaviour that *may* constitute bullying/harassment.

In the light of this discussion, note was made as to where the wording should be changed, but, in general, it was agreed that the revised draft was suitable and it was

RESOLVED : That the revised Bullying and Harassment Policy is approved.

In line with the Committee's delegated powers, it was agreed that there was no call for further referral to the Governing Body.

9. COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mr G Contos (Vice Principal – Curriculum & Standards) presented the latest version of the College Improvement Plan, updated to reflect the 2013/14 Self Assessment outcomes.

He reminded the Committee about the range and nature of remedial activities which had been introduced in the light of the SAR outcomes. Mr Contos then went through each issue, reported in line with the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework. He provided details of the specific actions undertaken for each issue and indicated how effectiveness of the actions was being measured.

Under the 'Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment' item on the accuracy of assessment and grade prediction in some subject lines, the Student Members commented on their own experiences and those of other students.

RESOLVED : That the College Improvement Plan is approved.

Mr Contos confirmed that, with the Plan and its identified issues/actions now approved, future reports to the Committee would include updates under the 'Monitoring' heading.

10. QUALIFICATION SUCCESS RATE REPORTS / COLLEGE TARGET-SETTING (SUCCESS RATES, RETENTION, ACHIEVEMENT)

The Principal presented the revised Target-setting tables which now included the latest QSR figures. He drew attention to where the document had been further refined (in line with the Committee's request) to provide a clearer indication of 'improvement' or 'decline' in the College's 2014 performance. He also identified where there had been changes in the way data had been collated nationally (and how this necessitated improvisation in comparison between College

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data and the national picture for 2013/14). In particular, he explained how the Headline Success Rates under 'All 19+' now needed to be interpreted.

The Committee concurred with the Principal's assertion, that 2013/14 had been a very good year for the College in academic performance terms. This was reflected in the 'improvement'/'decline' arrows indications (with 'improvements' vastly exceeding 'declines'). The Committee again noted how, on receipt of national comparative data, the change of ICT Curriculum Area grading was clearly justified.

The Committee then went through each line, discussing targets for 2014/15. On a number of lines, there was debate on how to ensure that targets were realistic as well as challenging. The Committee then assigned targets for recommendation to the Governing Body.

RESOLVED : That the Governing Body is recommended to endorse the Committee's approval of the targets for 2014/15.

11. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND DESTINATIONS – 2014

The Committee examined the student destinations data for the 2013/14 academic year. In particular, the Committee reflected upon the key message from the 'Student Destinations by Courses' table, which was that the great preponderance of 2013/14 student leavers secured futures in the 'positive' destination categories. Measures taken to minimise those in the 'Other' category were noted.

RESOLVED : That the report on 2013/14 student destinations is accepted.

12. STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND CURRICULUM UPDATE

(i) Curriculum Update

The Principal advised that all governors would receive a comprehensive update on curriculum changes which the College was considering at the Annual Governance Seminar (6/7 February 2015). This would include consideration of the AS/A2 reform possibilities (for September 2015), but would also cover new subject lines/courses under consideration

(ii) Student Recruitment

The Principal advised that there was some concern at the drop in visitor numbers at the Open events, and with a small reduction (c.40) in applications for places in September 2015. The probable explanations were suggested, but, again, there would be full information and proposals at the Annual Governance Seminar commencing the following day.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 4.30pm on Thursday, 26 March 2015.

PMcMellon
9 February 2015

Accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair

***Signature* …….**

***Date* ……**

Initials of the Chair:

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