

SANDWELL COLLEGE

**Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting
held on Monday 11 March 2019
at Sandwell College at 4.00pm**

Present:	K Ellis	(Independent)	(Chair)
	D Chuhan	(Staff – Teaching)	(not items B19.19-25)*
	B Edwards	(Staff– Support staff)	(not items B19.19-25)*
	N Makin	(Independent)	
	G Pennington	(Principal)	(not item B19.23)
	M J Uddin	(Independent)	
Apologies:	G Bassi	(Independent)	
	J Britton	(Independent)	
	J Francis	(Prospective Independent Governor)	
	R Jenkins	(Independent)	
	N Johal	(Independent)	
	P Murphy	(Independent)	
	K Shaikh	(Independent)	
	R Youds	(Independent)	

Also in attendance:

B Beaty	Executive Director, HR and Organisational Development	(not item B19.23)
X Foster	Prospective Student Governor, Sandwell College	(not items B19.19-25)*
D Holden	Vice Principal	(not item B19.23)
S Griffiths	Executive Director, Apprenticeships and Skills Division	(not item B19.23)
S Morom	Interim Executive Director for Finance and Resources	(not item B19.23)
A Sheridan	Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Student Services	(not item B19.23)
J Stevens	Executive Director, Quality & Academic Standards	(not item B19.23)
E Scotford	Clerk to the Corporation	(not item B19.23)
J Tew	Prospective Independent Governor	
N Wood	Prospective Student Governor, Cadbury College	(not items B19.19-25)*

*Present for item B19.22

		Action
B19.1	<u>Welcome</u>	
	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and introductions were made.	
B19.2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
B19.3	<u>Apologies</u>	
	Apologies were received from Gurvinder Bassi, Jan Britton, Rebecca Jenkins, Ninder Johal, Peta Murphy, Kamran Shaikh and Richard Youds and were accepted by Governors. Apologies were also received from prospective Governor, Cllr Jayne Francis.	
	RESOLVED: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That apologies be accepted 	

B19.4	Board membership	
4.1	Governor appointments	
4.1.1	Student Governor – Sandwell College - Xavier Foster	
	Following the Student Governor election process, Governors approved the appointment of Xavier Foster as Student Governor for a 5-month term of office to 31 July 2019.	
4.1.2	Student Governor – Cadbury College – Nicholas Wood	
	To aid the period of transition for the remainder of the current academic year, Governors approved the Search Committee's recommendation that the former Cadbury Board Student Governor be appointed to the Board to represent Cadbury College. Governors therefore approved the appointment of Nicholas Wood as Student Governor for a 5-month term of office to 31 July 2019. The usual process for appointing a Cadbury Student Governor would operate from the next academic year.	
4.1.3	John Tew - Independent	
	The Chair outlined the background, skills and experience Mr Tew would bring to the Board. Mr Tew brought significant experience as a previous serving Governor and former Chair of the Board of Sandwell College.	
	Governors approved the appointment on a 3-year term of office of John Tew as Independent Governor.	
4.1.4	Cllr Jayne Francis - Independent	
	The Chair outlined the background, skills and experience Cllr Francis would bring to the Board. By virtue of her appointment to the Sandwell Board, Cllr Francis would also take up the role of Vice Chair of the Cadbury College Advisory Forum.	
	Governors approved the appointment on a 3-year term of office of Cllr Jayne Francis as Independent Governor.	
4.1.5	RESOLVED THAT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors approved the appointment of Xavier Foster as Student Governor for a 5-month term of office to 31 July 2019. • Governors approved the appointment of Nicholas Wood as Student Governor for a 5-month term of office to 31 July 2019. • Governors approved the appointment of John Tew as Independent Governor on a 3-year term of office to 10 March 2022. • Governors approved the appointment of Cllr Jayne Francis as Independent Governor on a 3-year term of office to 10 March 2022. 	
	JT and XF joined the meeting	
4.2	Board composition	
4.2.1	The Search Committee recommended an increase to the composition of the Board by one Staff Governor to accommodate a Cadbury Staff Governor. At such time that the next term of office expired for a Staff Governor, the Board composition would reduce by one and the two Staff Governor posts would be allocated one to Sandwell and one to Cadbury, with no distinction between teaching and non-teaching representation.	
4.2.2	RESOLVED THAT: the Board composition be increased by one Staff Governor at this time to accommodate a Cadbury Staff Governor.	

B19.5	<u>Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on 10 December 2018</u>	
	RESOLVED THAT: the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair:	
B19.6	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
	There were no matters arising.	
B19.7	<u>Principal's Report</u> The Principal presented his report. Key points highlighted included:	
7.1	Recruitment has gone well this year. Recruitment now incorporates Cadbury.	
7.2	Apprenticeships and adult funding numbers are on track.	
7.3	Applications are slightly down on last year but are progressing well. The College has tightened up its application procedure with entry requirements being higher now.	
7.4	Recent student achievements were highlighted in the report.	
7.5	The recent meeting with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) was positive. The WMCA might be able to provide funding for certain minor initiatives.	
7.6	Julia Stevens has been appointed as Principal of Cadbury College. The recent Ofsted monitoring visit of Cadbury was more like a 2-day inspection with the outcome being 'reasonable progress', a good outcome given the short period of time since merger.	
7.7	Cabinet Office meeting regarding T levels - the Principal has been asked to produce follow-up information. It has been proposed that the College delivers T levels from the 2021/22 academic year.	
7.8	Office for Students (OfS) has rejected the College's application for registration which is disappointing. The College only has a small number of students who study at HE level. The OfS registration system makes it difficult with that size of student body. Other colleges have also been unsuccessful. The College has other routes through which it can deliver HE for its students, i.e. through the existing arrangements with Wolverhampton University, so it is in discussion about moving provision over to them to be delivered by the College through a franchise arrangement. The Chair pointed out that many colleges were turned down on the first application as the decision was based on out of date figures. The College is keen to provide access to HE for students and is passionate on ensuring that continues.	
7.9	Looking ahead, the review of post-16 qualifications is the main concern as it has the potential to decimate colleges. The policy of promoting T levels is not mature with no clarity on their delivery. They are also occupational not vocational qualifications. The Government states that T levels are the only qualifications that will be funded and this could push some colleges into insolvency. Governors acknowledged the large degree of frustration around T levels. The Principal advised that he had written to Tom Watson last year who challenged the relevant person as it did not make sense for Sandwell	

	<p>Academy to be in the pilot while the College was not as many of their students are A level students. There are political reasons behind the decision to take this approach, outlined by the Principal.</p> <p>Governors asked if there was any collaborative approach the College could take with others. The Principal advised of the difficulties in doing so as the College was not in the pilot. Dudley and Walsall Colleges are taking steps but there is little to draw from their knowledge as they are in the pilot. There is not enough information to make proper judgments. The situation is challenging.</p> <p>Consultation takes place this year on the funding of other qualifications: the fear is that BTECs will disappear. T levels are much more like apprenticeships and are very occupational.</p> <p>Governors asked if the College's 4,000 adult learners were mainly on vocational courses. The Principal explained that they were mainly on ESOL and basic skills provision. The College helps students into jobs. There are increased numbers in the Health and Social Care curriculum area.</p> <p>The Chair reminded that the Cabinet Member had advised she was keen that similar provision ran in the Cadbury area.</p>	
7.10	Pension costs are also set to rise which adds to the difficult times ahead for colleges.	
7.11	Governors asked why AEB results were slightly down. The Principal advised that enrolment for AEB was phased and took place throughout the year: the current position was ahead of the same time last year. The College reminded Governors that funding was received monthly with 20% being based on achievement: the College is confident it will hit target by the end of the year.	
7.12	Governors asked what the implications of the WMCA devolution were for the College. The Principal explained that there was unlikely to be much difference for the next 24 months. There might be opportunities on specific programmes but it was difficult to predict how the situation would evolve. The WMCA is taking a more sensible and less radical approach than others. The College will keep a watching brief.	
7.13	RESOLVED THAT: the Principal's report be received and noted.	
B19.8	<u>Cadbury College Monitoring Visit and Quality Overview</u> Presented by the Principal of Cadbury/Executive Director of Quality.	
8.1	The final report of the Ofsted monitoring visit has now been received. It focuses on progress since 1 November 2018 against areas identified by inspectors the previous February.	
8.2	<p>5 themes were identified by inspectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Progress of L3 learners • Quality of teaching, learning and assessment • Quality Improvement Plans being put in place • How the curriculum offer had been developed to meet the needs of the local community. • 	

8.3	<p>The College already had a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) in place which was timely. Governance fared well, with recognition by the inspectors that a good understanding was in place.</p> <p>Good progress is being made with A level learners with a focus on supporting them through their exams. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment which are now starting to be addressed. The action plan highlighted the need to look at milestones. The curriculum offer has been reviewed again with Birmingham City Council, local Head Teachers, staff and students with a good curriculum offer being developed for the future. Ofsted agreed reasonable progress was being made in this area.</p>	
8.4	<p>The Student Governor advised that, in the short period of time since merger, many learners had noticed the difference in the quality of teaching in class with more challenge in place for the more able students. Some classes are doing very well, others less so. A wide range of classes have commented they have seen a significant change so far and have an idea of how teaching will look and know that support is to be put in place for exams. Preparation for the exams was explained.</p>	
8.5	<p>The Chair gave an explanation of how Cadbury College is reported through the LQCC committee at present. Ofsted wanted to hear that the systems that worked at Sandwell would be duplicated at Cadbury, e.g. how Governors test and monitor improvement. The Chair stressed the importance of students feeding back on any inconsistencies to the Cadbury Principal. The Student Governor confirmed that students had been taught how to raise any issues with teachers.</p>	
8.6	<p>The quality systems in place at Sandwell came out well and are being aligned across the 2 campuses.</p>	
8.7	<p>A quality management review has been undertaken by Pearsons with Sandwell and Cadbury receiving a clean bill of health.</p>	
8.8	<p>Observations had now concluded across both sites with a very strong grade profile of effective lessons at Sandwell. There are some inconsistencies at Cadbury but the position is improving.</p>	
8.9	<p>Learning walks continue as they are an important aspect of quality management.</p>	
8.10	<p>Overall curriculum quality is being reviewed through VLEs and schemes of work at both campuses. The results of the review will be taken to SLT in April before being presented to the next meeting of the LQCC.</p>	
8.11	<p>Opportunities for staff development were highlighted.</p>	
8.12	<p>A brief update against the Quality Improvement Plan was given.</p>	
8.13	<p>Governors acknowledged the processes and systems which were being put in place at Cadbury and recognised the relentless determination to push through the improvements which will address the inconsistencies.</p>	
8.14	<p>The Principal highlighted the approach of the new Ofsted inspection framework which will be in place from September 2019 which will require management attention. There will be challenges in planning the curriculum. Ofsted will return for a full inspection by November 2021. Staff will be</p>	

	trained on how to address the new Ofsted requirements.	
8.15	RESOLVED THAT: the report be received.	
B19.9	<u>Teaching and Learning Report</u> Presented by the Vice Principal.	
9.1	The report's format focuses on performance this time.	
9.2	In-year retention at Sandwell of 97-98% is exceptionally high which will lead to higher success rates. Cadbury's retention rate is 88%. The drop-out in 2017/18 will impact on retention in 2018/19 because there is no AS break in the middle.	
9.3	Areas of focus are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance travelled – i.e. pushing students up from one grade to the next • Attendance – particularly English and maths – a number of initiatives are in place. 	
9.4	Weak areas are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Beauty – reasons being the number of part-time staff in the department leads to fragmented availability and a resulting difficulty in implementing quality initiatives. An action plan is in place. • Apprenticeships provision – an apprenticeships expert has been appointed. 	
9.5	<p>Central campus operates in a difficult area with students facing a number of personal problems and behavioural issues which further demonstrates the strength of the College's attendance, achievement and retention rates. All area of the College support the students extremely well.</p> <p>Many colleges have noticed a deterioration in students' behaviour with more use of weapons. The College is ahead of others in its approach to tackling any issues – examples of initiatives were given which included: monthly meetings with police, councillors and the Head of Centre responsible for behaviour. A programme achievement management team is in place who chase and conduct home visits for those students not attending college. The Safeguarding Manager is exceptional.</p> <p>Staff Governors concurred that the College works with a number of vulnerable students and has to tackle the issues they bring into college outside the classroom and studies. The issue is that there is not enough external support to which to refer students for those matters on which the College is not qualified or equipped to handle.</p> <p>Governors asked that their thanks be passed on to all staff involved in supporting these students.</p>	
9.6	Governors noted that there had been a significant increase in safeguarding incidents in 5 months and asked if there were any general trends. The Vice Principal advised that the increase was down to a change in what is classed a safeguarding issue. More students come in with issues now rather than issues developing after starting college. The largest category is self-harm by female students. Students are also now more likely to report safeguarding concerns or self refer. There are also more categories for keeping children safe. The increase in safeguarding reporting should therefore be recognised as a result of the improved systems in place and the greater knowledge of the reporting systems in place.	

9.7	Governors asked if the lack of external support received was because external organisations did not have enough personnel or because students were not willing to engage with the provision. The College advised that much provision in the past had been received via the local authority or local authority related charities but this has reduced due to local authority funding cuts.	
9.8	The Chair advised that, in response to police and local authority's requests, the Vice and Assistant Principals as well as other members of the management team now had a presence outside the College and around the town centre to address the external perception of college students. The police do not have the manpower and it is believed that the College presence will have more impact as students are concerned about being excluded from college.	
9.9	RESOLVED THAT: the report be received.	
B19.10	<u>Budget setting timetable 2019/20</u> Presented by the Interim Finance Director.	
10.1	Budget setting has commenced. An update on progress will be brought to the next Board meeting. Governors asked that the Board meeting pack therefore be issued in good time to allow Governors enough time to read the information.	
10.2	RESOLVED THAT: the report be received.	
B19.11	<u>Risk Management Monitoring Report</u> Presented by the Interim Finance Director.	
11.1	There have been no changes to the Sandwell Risk Register. Cadbury's has been updated to reflect Julia Stevens' appointment as Principal and the outcomes of the Ofsted monitoring visit on the ongoing risk assurance schedule.	
11.2	The Audit Committee had asked for a separate Cadbury risk register for the first year following merger which would thereafter be absorbed into the main risk register.	
11.3	Governors asked that T levels be added to the Risk Register.	
11.4	RESOLVED THAT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the report be received • that T levels be added to the Risk Register 	
B19.12	<u>Financial regulations update</u> Presented by the Interim Finance Director.	
12.1	The Financial Regulations had been updated with minor changes only, namely: updates to names, titles, and legislation dates; the insertion of the updated Audit Committee Terms of Reference (approved by the Board on 16 October 2017); section 4.1.49, allowing the Executive Director, Finance & Resources to approve cash floats to be used for travel and subsistence claims when appropriate; and Appendix D, point 2, updating the period of appointment of the Internal Audit Services to 5 years.	
12.2	RESOLVED THAT: Governors approved the Financial Regulations.	

B19.13	<u>Insolvency Regime</u> Presented by the Interim Finance Director.	
13.1	Governors' responsibilities were clearly outlined on page 2. A copy of the full guidance to be circulated to Governors outside the meeting. Governors were encouraged to read the guidance.	
13.2	RESOLVED THAT: the report be received.	
B19.14	<u>Cadbury College Accounts and Regularity Audit</u> Presented by the Interim Finance Director.	
14.1	The 15-month accounts up to the date of merger had been signed. The management letter was included for reassurance that the Cadbury College accounts were in order with no concerns raised by the auditors.	
14.2	RESOLVED THAT: the Cadbury College accounts and Regularity Audit be received.	
B19.15	<u>HR Update</u> Presented by the Executive Director, HR and OD.	
15.1	Recent recruitment was outlined which included the Cadbury Principal, Executive Director, Finance and Resources and Head of Marketing.	
15.2	Employee relations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very constructive employee relations are being formed at Sandwell and Cadbury. • A working group has been set up to ensure the College can determine pay and conditions going forward. 	
15.3	Staff development – a management development programme has recently been launched and is progressing well. This was referenced by Ofsted as having real impact at Cadbury. The second stage has now commenced. Governors were pleased that staff had been given the opportunity to develop their potential. Governors thanked the Executive Director, HR and OD, for the positive impact she had made since her appointment.	
15.4	Staff communication has been strengthened by the introduction of a regular newsletter – examples included with the meeting pack. Governors had found the newsletter useful and informative.	
15.5	RESOLVED THAT: the report be received.	
B19.16	<u>Proposed schedule of meetings for the Board of Governors and its committees 2019/20</u>	
16.1	Governors received the draft schedule of meetings for consideration. The final schedule will be brought to the July meeting for approval.	
16.2	RESOLVED THAT: the proposed schedule of meetings for 2019/20 be received.	
B19.17	<u>Minutes of the LQCC meeting held on 23 January 2019</u>	
17.1	Governors received and noted the contents of the LQCC minutes.	
17.2	Governors had been impressed with the presentations made and the determination of staff to ensure students succeed.	

17.3	Governors asked if there was an improving trend in the 45% of students who arrive with neither English nor maths qualifications. The Vice Principal advised that students now arrived with lower achievement levels than before but achievement outcomes on leaving were even better than before. Governors acknowledged the amount of time and resources the College had to put in to ensure these students achieve but it was concerning if achievement levels for new students were deteriorating. The Vice Principal explained that English and maths achievement levels were static in local and West Birmingham schools. Standards are deteriorating because exams are harder. Concern has been expressed by local Head Teachers as this makes it harder for students to get on to A level courses. The College is confident in its systems which are working very well.	
17.4	RESOLVED THAT: the minutes be received.	
B19.18	<u>Minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 11 February 2019</u>	
18.1	Governors received and noted the contents of the Search Committee minutes.	
18.2	RESOLVED THAT: the minutes be received.	
B19.19-22 NFP	<u>Principal's report – Confidential items</u>	
B19.23 NFP	<u>Remuneration Committee</u> See separate confidential minute.	
B19.24	<u>Determination of confidential items</u>	
B19.25	<u>Date and time of next meeting</u> Governors Strategy and Development Day: Friday 17 May 2019, 9.00am Board of Governors meeting: Monday 8 July 2019, 4.00pm	

The meeting ended at 6.05pm