

SANDWELL COLLEGE

**Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting
held on Monday 15 October 2018
in Room 5F/43, Central Campus at 4.00pm**

Present: Mr K Ellis (Independent) (in the Chair)
Mr N Johal (Independent)
Ms P Murphy (Independent)
Mr G Pennington (Principal)
Dr K Shaikh (Independent)
Mr M J Uddin (Independent)
Supt R Youds (Independent)

Apologies: Mr G Bassi (Independent)
Mr J Britton (Independent)
Mr D Chuhan (Staff – Teaching)
Ms R Jenkins (Independent)
Mr T Mahmood (Independent)

Absent: Ms R Goodby (Independent)

Also in attendance:

Mr D Holden Vice Principal
Mr S Morom Interim Executive Director for Finance and Resources
Ms R Pal Director, Information Services, Exams & Funding Data
Mrs A Sheridan Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Student Services
Ms J Stevens Executive Director, Quality & Academic Standards
Mr T Pollitt Eversheds
Mrs E Scotford Clerk to the Corporation

		Action
B18.96	<u>Welcome, Apologies and Introduction</u>	
	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and introductions were made. The Chair explained that the main focus of the meeting would be the Cadbury College merger. Apologies were received from Gurvinder Bassi, Jan Britton, Dharminder Chuhan, Rebecca Jenkins and Tariq Mahmood and were accepted by Governors. Raffaella Goodby did not attend.	
	The Chair proposed an amendment to the Instrument & Articles to the effect that Board vacancies would not be counted in the total number of Governors required to determine the quorum to enable important business to be conducted in the worst case scenario that a number of apologies were received. Whilst acknowledging the other calls on Governors' time, the Chair encouraged Governors to maximise their attendance.	
	RESOLVED: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That apologies be accepted • That Board vacancies would not count in the total number required to determine the quorum. Clerk to amend Instrument & Articles. 	Clerk

B18.97	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
B18.98	<u>Principal's Report</u>	
	The Principal presented his report. Key points highlighted included:	
18.98.1	Recruitment is paramount at present: over 4900 students have enrolled this year. The College grew by 300 students over the previous year against a landscape of declining student numbers.	
18.98.2	The Ofsted inspection had recognised the College's quality ranking. Merging colleges lose their grading so it is likely that the College will be required to undergo a full inspection again at which point the quality rating might be affected.	
18.98.3	The number of A2 high grades, B and above, has increased which is positive but this position needs to be sustained. Consistency of approach is part of the Quality Improvement Plan.	
18.98.4 NFP		
18.98.5	Finance remains a challenge for the sector. The trade unions have joined with the AoC to lobby government for increased funding for FE. The College is being asked to highlight the issue within its own networks. A rally is due to take place this year.	
18.98.6	The Teachers Pension Fund is subject to revaluation and it is likely that employers' contributions will increase. The West Midlands Pension Fund (WMPF) has increased its rates over recent years but college growth and the extra revenue realised has helped to cushion this position.	
18.98.7 NFP		
18.98.8	Governors asked if the College's financial rating remained Good. The Interim Finance Director confirmed it did as it was measured on earnings before tax, interest and pension. The College is a strong Good bordering on Outstanding from the ESFA's definition of financial health.	
18.98.9	Referring to recruitment, Governors asked if numbers had grown because the market had increased or if the College had taken market share. The Principal confirmed it had taken market share. Governors speculated that some colleges might be weakened to the point of closure in such a market and queried if the College might be opportunistic and grow still further by taking over such institutions. The Principal could not confirm the College's stance as there were too many variables at this point.	
18.98.10	Governors asked if Ofsted's new approach to inspections from September 2019 would affect the College. The Principal advised that it was too soon to comment if the College would benefit from this change. The Chair advised that constant hard work was needed to attract students to the College and thanked the Principal and the College staff for all their efforts and achievements.	
18.98.11	The Vice Principal gave an update on success rates. All levels across all ages were above national average. Sustaining current levels is a	

	<p>challenge.</p> <p>The College needs to improve its apprenticeship provision: It is above national average but there is a slight downward trend.</p> <p>GCSE English and maths results were outlined: English was comparable to last year but English not being some students' first language had an impact; maths had dipped slightly but was still around national average. Maths had dipped because it was the first year of the new revised linear syllabus. Maths GCSEs across FE had fallen nationally by about 5-6%.</p> <p>The Vice Principal highlighted the College's achievement in the number of students achieving English and maths GCSE who had previously failed the exam multiple times at secondary school: 400 achieved a grade 4 (equivalent to a C in the former grading structure) – this would have a huge impact on their employment possibilities. The Vice Principal pointed out that the overall percentage was affected by the increased number of students now taking English and maths.</p> <p>In response to a Governor's query, the Principal confirmed that the College was funded based on number of students enrolled rather than success rates.</p>	
18.98.12	<p>Governors asked if the College was in a strategic position to tackle the challenges in apprenticeships. The Principal advised that the College was looking to revise its employer engagement strategy but this would require investment in staff so it needed to be confident it was viable to make this financial commitment. Apprenticeships income has now stabilised but the College would need to be convinced the investment was worth the risk. Nationally, the number of apprentices have reduced by 60% which suggests the Government's approach could be flawed. Some colleges' exposure is very high.</p> <p>Governors asked if the College believed apprenticeships were a benefit to the community or was it now taking a harder line. The Principal advised caution at this time. Larger companies were rebranding the levy for in-house training and for others it was in effect simply viewed as another tax.</p> <p>Employer engagement will be important in T levels and work placements will be the greater focus. It was noted that over 90% of the College's students have the opportunity to undertake high quality work experience placements.</p>	
18.98.13	<p>Governors asked if the College was auditing and rebranding its approach to ensure it was seen as a 'business friendly' college. The Principal advised that there may be an opportunity to expand the number of employers it works with.</p>	
18.98.14	<p>An Employer Advisory Board is in place to advise and guide the College on its curriculum offer, examples given.</p>	
18.98.15	<p>Governors gave an overview of the Sports Department's presentation to the LQCC meeting on 3 October 2018 which included a student presentation. This had clearly demonstrated the success of the College's support and approach to its students. The College has recently been ranked the 10th most popular college for students: its employer ranking also improved last year; it is the strongest growing college regionally and nationally which is a testament to the quality of the student experience. Governors recommended that this information be published and promoted widely.</p>	

18.98.16	The Principal suggested that the Link Governor Day was reintroduced on the Annual Strategy Policy and Discussion Forum Day which would help Governors to see the curriculum in action and the overall student experience. The Chair strongly encouraged Governors to attend at least one college celebration event each year to see the impact their decisions had on the lives of young people, despite many of the challenges some face as outlined in the Annual Safeguarding Report.	
18.99	<u>Cadbury College</u>	
NFP		
	CONFIDENTIAL SESSION	
B18.100		
NFP		
B18.101		
NFP		
B18.102	<u>Determination of Confidential Items</u>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal's report – confidential items • Cadbury College • Remuneration Committee 	
B18.103	<u>Date and time of next meeting</u> Monday 10 December 2018, 4.00pm	

The meeting ended at 6.05pm