

SANDWELL COLLEGE

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Monday 5 December 2022 at 4.00pm Sandwell College

Present: K Ellis (Independent) (Chair)
 A Khodavardar (Student Governor, Sandwell) (not B22.2-B22.101)
 N Makin (Independent)
 A Mohammed (Student Governor, Cadbury) (not B22.2-B22.101)
 S Powell (Staff Governor, Cadbury) (not B22.2-B22.101)
 G Pennington (Principal)
 T Sharma (Independent)
 P Stanaway (Independent)
 A Taylor (Independent) (not items B22.97, B22.98, B22.100, B22.101)
 J Tew (Independent)

Apologies: M J Uddin (Independent)

Absent: N Anhu (Staff Governor – Sandwell)

Also in attendance:

J Bailey Executive Director, Finance & Resources
 R Barrett-Price Director of Estates Development and Capital Projects
 B Beaty Executive Director, HR and Organisational Development
 N Bostan Associate Principal (not B22.94-B22.101)
 C Demetrios Associate Principal
 S Griffiths Director of Strategy and Projects
 D Holden Vice Principal
 M King Head of Creative Industries
 E Scotford Clerk to the Corporation
 J Stevens Executive Director, Quality & Academic Standards, and Principal, Cadbury College
 S Thomas Head of Section – Institute of Sport

		Action
B22.81	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u>	
81.1	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jalal Uddin. Nisha Anhu was absent.	
81.2	RESOLVED THAT: apologies were approved by Governors .	
B22.82	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest beyond the standing register of interests.	

B22.83	<u>Board membership</u>	
22.83.1	Student Governor appointments	
	RESOLVED THAT: Governors confirmed the appointment of: Adrian Khodavardar as Student Governor, Sandwell, until 31 July 2022 Ahmed Mohammed as Student Governor, Cadbury, until 31 July 2022	
22.83.2	Staff Governor (Cadbury) appointment	
	RESOLVED THAT: Governors confirmed the appointment of Sheridan Powell as Staff Governor (Cadbury) for a 4-year term of office.	
22.83.3	Governor resignation	
	RESOLVED THAT: Governors noted the resignation of Noel Grace, Independent Governor, w.e.f. 18.10.22.	
22.83.4	Audit Committee Chair appointment	
83.4.1	RESOLVED THAT: Governors ratified the appointment of John Tew as Acting Chair of the Audit Committee from 18.10.22 to 5.12.22.	
83.4.2	RESOLVED THAT: Governors approved the appointment of Tony Sharma as Audit Committee Chair w.e.f. 6.12.22.	
83.4.3	The Chair reminded Governors of the importance of filling the current Board vacancies. The skills areas of focus were: finance, legal, local business, education. Governors' suggestions were welcomed.	Govs
83.4.4	Governors were advised that Ofsted had commended the College's governance and thanked Governors, particularly those who had represented the Board at the meetings with inspectors.	
B22.84	<u>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 October 2022</u>	
	RESOLVED THAT: Governors approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 October 2022 for signing by the Chair.	
B22.85	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
	There were no matters arising.	
B22.86	<u>Principal's Report</u>	
86.1	Student recruitment for the year was positive, approximately 90 over target, but less than hoped for as the busy enrolment period had to be balanced against Ofsted preparation. Recruitment would be ongoing through the year and further enrolment was planned for January when there would be a focus on recruiting NEET learners, with a target of 150 additional students. Student applications for next year were looking strong with more vocational applications.	
86.2	Projects – update given, see also Capital Projects update.	
86.3 NFP		

86.4	Curriculum reform was now a key issue. A task group had been set up to look at options. T levels were an issue plus HE which the College was looking to offer in more defined way.	
86.5	ONS reclassification - key changes centred on borrowing. The fine detail was not yet known and the new financial handbook would not be released until the summer. The College was not exposed and retained its Outstanding financial rating. There looked to be few positives at present from the reclassification.	
86.6	Governors referred to the focus on increasing the number of T level students and apprentices in 2023/24 and asked what the increase in T levels was likely to be. The College advised that a realistic target was around 300 but that was optimistic side. The College was mindful of the notional target. The College was devoting its efforts into developing its apprenticeship offer at present.	
86.7	RESOLVED THAT: Governors received the Principal's report.	
B22.87	Ofsted Presentation by David Holden and Julia Stevens	
87.1	Governors received a debrief on the recent Ofsted inspection and discussion took place on specific points highlighted.	
87.2	Governors noted the result was an impressive achievement and was thanks to its continual journey of improvement since 2006 when the College had been classed as inadequate. The College had more than doubled in size in the last few years so it was particularly impressive to maintain a Good rating during such a growth period and all the change and work that entailed.	
87.3	Behaviour, attitude to learning, and students work had been highlighted as specific strengths. Students presented themselves very well during the inspection week. This was a great achievement given the size of the College and the number of students (6500). All had to be well prepared given that inspectors could approach and question any student. Their behaviour and feedback to questioning demonstrated they enjoyed and took pride in the College and were happy with support from teachers.	
87.4	Only one area was identified for specific attention: apprenticeships. Apprenticeships made up just 1% of the College's provision but this was an area of focus that was already being addressed and new staff appointed to improve the College's model. The current approach compared to the model preferred by Ofsted was outlined.	
87.5	All learners felt safe at the College and outside, assisted by the introduction of college ambassadors, which was particularly positive given its location and environment.	
87.6	Learners benefited from the course and links with employers – the College was one of the first inspected under new enhanced framework. This aspect was explained: inspectors make a statement rather than a judgment, which was that the College made a reasonable contribution to local skills needs. Definition of the Reasonable classification given.	
87.7	Governors recognised that staff prepared learners well and pointed out that almost all apprentices remained in employment.	

87.8	Governors noted the requirement to be able to monitor those learners were still making a contribution to skills needs in 10 years' time, but believed this was an almost impossible task.	
87.9	Other areas of strength were summarised: teachers had high ambitions for their learners and provided them with sufficient level of challenge; high needs; leaders invest heavily in students to achieve – there were aspects the inspector was particularly impressed with, e.g. support mentors; attendance; student support; cultural diversity; safeguarding; careers guidance; quality assurance arrangements; governance; staff development.	
87.10	The 2 Grade 1s for behaviour and attitude, and personal development, were awarded because the inspectors recognised how hard the College worked to keep learners on track. It was very difficult to achieve 1s in any area so this was a particularly notable achievement.	
87.11	<p>Governors congratulated the College on its excellent Ofsted result and asked if any of its competitors had a similar Ofsted result at this point and how did it promote its Good rating.</p> <p>The College explained it was not a specific marketing tool, it was of interest to certain stakeholders but was not the greatest driver for student recruitment. The positive result did however mean it could continue with its processes and activities and plans for the future.</p>	
87.12	<p>Governor asked if there would be follow up by Ofsted during the next 5 years before the next inspection.</p> <p>The College confirmed there would be no follow up. The next inspection would take place in 5 years but the College would commence its preparations after 3 years. Ofsted would apply the inspection framework in place at that time. The focus now was on further quality improvement, particularly apprenticeships.</p>	
87.13	Governor noted that the result was national recognition of the College's excellent work and an opportunity to acknowledge the work of staff, some of which was rated Outstanding.	
87.14	Governors recommended that the result be promoted to young people.	
87.15	<p>Governors asked Student and Staff Governors what Ofsted meant to them.</p> <p>Student Governors commented that, although the result was not particularly relevant for them as students, it did reflect that this was a college that invested in its students. Future education providers would look at their previous education providers so the Good rating was positive for them. The external verification of Ofsted increased the College's prestige and students were proud of the result.</p> <p>Students Governors commented that the inspection had been well managed, with staff feeling comfortable and confident but relieved when it was over.</p> <p>The College reiterated that its whole concept was that of a partnership with its students whom it sought to serve and maximise their life chances so welcomed their continued challenge to provide the best possible learning experience for them.</p>	

87.16	Governors who met the inspectors were surprised that no consideration was applied to the achievements set against the background of Covid and ongoing recovery so had highlighted the work and approach the College had taken during this time which had been exceptional so should be noted even if it did not affect the final grading.	
87.17	The College confirmed that an internal newsletter had been circulated to students which included examples of inspectors' comments particularly about students and thanked them for their support during the inspection.	
87.18	The Chair thanked Governors for their hard work and commitment to the inspection preparation, particularly those who met with the inspectors.	
87.19	RESOLVED THAT: Governors received a debrief on the Ofsted inspection and result.	
B22.88	<u>Teaching & Learning Report</u>	
88.1	2021/22 results should be compared to 2018/19, the last set of results with external assessment rather than TAGs.	
88.2	Recovery from the Covid period continued. Some students had secured places on courses based on TAGs which were more generous than actual grades would have been. For students who finished courses in 2021/22 these would have been the first set of external exams they had sat.	
88.3	Overall, 16-18 achievement rates were comparable with pre Covid levels at 85.8% and exceeded the 2018/19 National Average (NA), which was pleasing because the current cohort of students were suffering various issues including mental health issues and exam anxiety.	
88.4	Adult learners' success rates at L3 were similar to those in 2018/19, which was positive given the re-introduction of external exams and tests. L1 and L2 were impacted by 2 particular programmes: security guard training (delivered because of the Commonwealth Games) and mental health courses as a high proportion of students were transient and did not complete final tests.	
88.5	AS and full A level results exceeded 2018/19 NAs. The increased preparation the College had undertaken with A level students resulted in a significant increase in overall pass rates to 89.6%. AS students took formal exams for the first time and although not quite up to pre Covid levels provided a good platform going forward for their A levels in 2022/23.	
88.6	Governors were reminded that most schools and colleges had stopped running AS levels but the College continued them to help prepare students for their final exams.	
88.7	GCSE rates were good with the English GCSE pass rate of 34% being 4.5% up on 2018/19 rates. Maths was slightly down on 2018/19 but was expected to exceed latest NAs.	
88.8	Apprenticeship achievement rates at around 70% were down on 2018/19 but were still 12% above the latest NAs. This would partly have been because of the Covid situation but the College recognised Apprenticeships was an area for improvement.	

88.9	Governors noted this was a creditable set of results and asked that their congratulations be passed on to students.	DH
88.10	Moving forwards, the College intended to take the intensity out of QA but not the rigour and would continue with deep dives. Student feedback continued to be that they were happy with the College and their learning.	
88.11	Safeguarding remained the key priority and policies had been updated in line with the new KCSIE and training delivered at the start of the year. The profile of the Safeguarding team had been raised. A single sex discussion group had been set up to identify peer on peer sexual harassment.	
88.12	In response to a Governor's question, the College confirmed that the SAR should be available early in the new year – it had been difficult to prepare before the Ofsted result was known. All deep dives would be reviewed at the end of the academic year.	
88.13	Governors asked for a detailed breakdown of each department's result from the Ofsted inspection so that LQCC could monitor progress.	DH
88.14	Governors were reminded of the legacy issues facing FE for those students retaking GCSE English some of whom may have failed 2-3 times at school or achieved grades 1-3; some were ESOL; there were motivational issues for those taking practical subjects, e.g. Construction, who did not see the relevance of retaking GCSE English.	
88.15	RESOLVED THAT: Governors received the teaching and learning report.	
B22.89	<u>Health & Safety update</u>	
	RESOLVED THAT: Governors received the health and safety update.	
B22.90	<u>Policies</u>	
90.1	Data Protection Policy – there were no changes other than the policy date as the legislation had not changed. Training had taken place on internet safety and phishing.	
90.2	RESOLVED THAT: Governors approved the Data Protection Policy.	
B22.91	<u>Student Union Accounts 2021/22</u>	
91.1	Student Governors asked if coaches could be charged to the centralised budget rather than the Student Union as they benefited apprentices rather than just the Student Union. The College could not comment on specifics relating to coaches but the Finance team welcomed the opportunity to work with staff and students in the Student Union to ensure the money was well spent and activities maximised.	
91.2	RESOLVED THAT: Governors received the Student Union accounts 2021/22.	
	Staff and Student Governors left the meeting	

	<u>**CONFIDENTIAL SESSION**</u>	
B22.92 NFP		
B22.93 NFP		
B22.94 NFP		
94.2		
B22.95 NFP		
B22.95.6		
B22.96 NFP		
B22.97 NFP		
B22.98 NFP		
B22.99 NFP		
B22.100 NFP		
B22.101 NFP		
B22.102	<u>Determination of Confidential Items</u>	
	B22.86.3, B22.92-B22.101	
B22.103	<u>Date and time of next meeting</u> Monday 13 March 2023, 4.00pm	
	Next Board meeting to be held at Cadbury. Clerk to arrange.	Clerk

Meeting ended at 6.30pm