

SANDWELL COLLEGE

Minutes of the LQCC Committee Extraordinary SAR meeting held in Boardroom, Sandwell College 21 January 2025 10.00am

Present:

N Makin	(Independent) (Chair)	
J Tew	(Independent)	
H Singh	(Independent) via Teams	
L Capper MBE	(CEO & Principal)	
E Brannen	(Senior VP Quality & Student Success)	
A Gordon	(Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality)	

In Attendance: S Sinclair (Minutes)

		Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies	
	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. No apologies were received.	
1.1	The Chair welcomed Emma Brannen as Vice Principal for Quality and Student Success to the meeting. Emma started in post on 6 January, joining the CEO and Principal and Deputy Principal, who started on 4 November 2024.	
1.2	Harpinder Singh joined the meeting by Teams.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	There were no declarations of interest or conflict of interest with any agenda items.	
3.	Scrutiny of Self Assessment Report 2023-24	
3.1	Introduction to SAR	
3.1.1	LC explained to those present that the SAR had not been prepared by previous management and leadership and therefore this has been developed and worked on by the current leadership team from November to January. It has been verified and scrutinised by an ex HMI.	
3.1.2	NM challenged on if the HMI knew the College and it was explained that this was a fresh view from an HMI that has not worked at the College before. He asked if the previous SAR had been used as a basis. AG replied it was used but as a fresh view and scrutiny of areas to construct a more in-depth SAR to drive forward on skills and on consistency across areas. It has been a good exercise to understand the College and the impact it is making	
3.1.3	Governors asked why the skills judgement is reasonable and there was a discussion about the terminology used by Ofsted, the evidence that is available to the new team and the future developments. It was reasonable in 2022 and this is a developing area of work with clear role and responsibilities. It will get to strong in the next period.	
3.2 & 3.3	Scrutiny, support and challenge from LQCC members	
	AG presented the SAR sections in turn.	
3.2.1	The quality of the information on the local areas is felt to be strong. It was clarified that Cadbury merged with Sandwell College in 2018.	

3.2.2	<p>Learner Experience NM asked how this is measured. A range of measures are in place – learner survey, focus groups, testimonials, case studies. This range of measures will be developed further. We have standards around a charter and then we are introducing stronger measures and this is an area where the College can do well.</p> <p>LC stated partnerships will also be on a hierarchy of informal to formal partnerships.</p>	
3.2.3	<p>AG took the group through the overall strengths and weaknesses of the College as set out in the SAR.</p> <p>There was a discussion about progression – and LC and AG responded on the new approach to capture data where data has been hard to track such as adults and level 3 leavers where information has not been captured. This is a focused contract but helps to complete our picture on progression and understand the impact.</p> <p>There was a discussion on attendance – one governor asked what is the approach and how is this working. EB took the group through the strategic and focused work on attendance and will be bringing this to a future meeting.</p>	
3.2.4	<p>Apprenticeships judgement was discussed. AG stated it could achieve Ofsted level good as outcomes are good, however the new management wishes to spend more time on scrutiny of these, especially around consistency in a small number of areas such as engineering. There was a discussion about the grading and the 60 apprentices that were taken on last year by previous leadership. Whilst these were funded they give challenges on achievement and OOF (out of funding) thresholds. This is being addressed, but the data may impact down the line if they do not achieve well. AG also spoke about what is down the line on apprenticeships and LC interjected on the new initiatives on pre apprenticeships.</p> <p>NM asked what do we do with the 5% of learners who have not been counted in the survey as making good progress. AG responded on the strategies on teaching and learning, parent communications, starting points and objectives for learners reviewed and supported through the year.</p>	
3.2.5	<p>NEETs Discussion on NEETS and why the number appears low in Sandwell took place. The College would like to introduce Princes Trust type programmes which can pick up young people and get them on a road to mainstream College and or on 19 plus programmes as part of adult strategy.</p>	
3.2.6	<p>Quality of education section was seen to be good and there is a new quality strategy that is being embedded. The learner journey and the cultural capital created and the focus on progression is a key aspect of this. Achievement data is good and we also have developed a league table for the West Midlands and similar Colleges which is helping to benchmark.</p>	
3.2.7	<p>Maths and English strategy was discussed around GCSE, volumes and how GCSE and functional skills work. There was good feedback from Governors around this and further work will be managed to ensure rapid progress.</p>	
3.2.8	<p>Behaviours and attitudes – this was outstanding last year and Governors asked how will we maintaining this. Attendance will be a big part of this as discussed earlier. Personal Development section is similar approach and there was discussion on the areas where we can capture more impact e.g. extra curriculum activities.</p>	

3.2.9	<p>Work experience was an area for scrutiny and the team outlined the quality framework and the delivery for the coming year. T Level and HSC are areas where there is more depth.</p> <p>Peer mentors will be developed further on the College, with a focus on mental health.</p> <p>One Governor challenged that the curriculum is aligned to the skills priorities – there followed a discussion about the facilities and equipment to ensure we can continue to invest.</p>	
3.3	<p>Management and leadership</p> <p>Management and leadership was discussed and Governors gave reflection on their challenge and the papers they have been given. This session gave encouragement that the new team have given in-depth and honest reports in the first set of governance meetings and in the SAR. Governors provide informed challenge and this is clear from this meeting.</p>	
3.3.1	Action: The ex-HMI feedback was shared and this will be taken in to consideration for the final draft to go to Board.	LC
	Action: Governors and CEO agreed to look at some training for Governors on a refresher on apprenticeships.	JT&LC
	<p>HS stated he was happy to recommend the SAR and has had discussion on key areas such as attendance with the CEO and Principal. Very evident the new team has got its heads around the issues and this is reflected in the SAR.</p> <p>NM felt the document was very readable and well set out. The team brings fresh eyes to the SAR and it is encouraging to see the proactive approach and thoughtful and reflective approach. The SAR is balanced and honest and has a good delia of evidence and depth to it.</p> <p>JT felt the team had managed to get the right balance of critical eye and celebration of what is working well.</p>	
	<u>The committee agreed to recommend the approval of the SAR to the Board in the next week and to ensure this then submitted to Ofsted by end January 2025.</u>	LC
	Harpinder Singh left the meeting.	
	<p>Next steps – EB is working with teams on developing the Quality Improvement Plan and this will be on the March agenda for scrutiny and progress. She showed a first draft of the section in a new format.</p> <p>ACTION QIP to come to March LQCC</p>	EB
	Meeting finished at 12pm	