SANDWELL COLLEGE

Minutes of the Learners, Quality & Curriculum Committee meeting held on Wednesday 18June 2025 at 3.30pm

Present:	N Makin	(Independent & Committee Chair)
	L Capper MBE	(CEO & Principal)
	H Singh	(Independent)
	J Tew	(Independent)
Apologies:	None	
In attendance:	Tony Sharma	(Independent)
	Roxana Pal	Director of Funding, Data & Examinations
	Asa Gordon	Deputy Principal Curriculum & Skills
	Emma Brannan	Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success
	Caitlin-Lee Whitehouse	Student – Plastering Level 1
	Isaac Onwochei	Student – BTec Fdn Diploma in Engineering Level 3
	Archie Smith	Student – Level 2 Diploma in Carpentry

		Action
	Item1: Welcome and Apologies	
	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. The Committee was informed that the Interim Director of Governance was not available to clerk the meeting and thus it was agreed that the meeting would be recorded, the recoding being used to prepare the draft minutes. There were no other apologies.	
	Student Engagement Activity The three students from the Construction and Engineering departments present provided information on their courses, their experience of the College and their plans for the future. All were complimentary about their course, the teaching and the support they had received. In answer to a question from the Chair, they spoke of the softer skills development provided by the College and on their work placements, and on how these had developed their confidence. When asked what improvements could the College make, the response was that the staff were already very good at encouraging students, not letting them give up and were always ready to help. A Governor commented that it had been a privilege to be able to hear what the students had said about their experience at Sandwell and what they had achieved. The Chair thanked the students for their attendance and participation and wished them well for the future. The three students then left the meeting. 13.57pm	
	Item 2: Declarations of any new personal or business interest or conflict with any agenda item There were no new declarations.	
	Item 3: Minutes of the Learners, Quality & Curriculum (LCQ) Committee meeting held on 12 March 2025 The Chair commented that the minutes had recorded him as being present but also as sending his apologies. Noting the correction as above, the Committee	

	approved the minutes of the Learners, Quality & Curriculum Committee meeting held on 12 March 2025 as being a true and correct record.	
	<u>Item 4: Matters Arising</u> The CEO & Principal provided a brief update on the link governor visits, noting that the visit re apprenticeships and skills would be re-arranged. Feedback from the visits had been received and discussed at the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting, for example. The CEO & Principal thanked governors for giving their time to the visits, as did the Chair. The Chair of the Board of Governors commented on the need for the information on the cover paper on what the Board/Committee was being asked to do – e.g., scrutinise, monitor, etc did not always match to that on the agenda.	 College/ Clerk
	<u>Item 5: Applications 2025/26</u> The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Skills presented the paper which provided the Committee with information on the current application data relating to 16-19, T-Level and apprenticeships. The Committee noted that the majority of areas were positive against the 2024/25 position for the same period, and the work being done in those areas where applications were below previous years and to increase internal progression. The Committee noted that performance against study programmes would continue to be monitored by the enrolment working group and SLT and that weekly performance meetings with Apprenticeships would continue. Engagement campaigns to take to key apprenticeship sectors were in development, with the Committee noting the details of these. In answer to a question from a Committee member, the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Skills provided information on the local competition re apprenticeships, on the College's marketing plan and the one-team approach to actively engage with students – new or progressing. The Committee recognised the work being done and thank the Deputy Principal for his report.	
	<u>Item 6: Data Dashboard Report – January results</u> The Director of Funding, Data & Examinations presented the report which provided the Committee with information on current in-year retention and attendance data across the College. The strong performance in retention across all groups was noted and the monitoring of attendance patterns in those areas where further intervention remained necessary. The Data Dashboard provided the Committee with the detail for 16-18, 19+ and High Needs provision over the College as a whole, for each area and also by gender and ethnicity, this being for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 to date. Information on Apprenticeship in-year performance was also included. The Committee discussed the content of the Data Dashboard and noted the College's plans for this to be developed further in order to provide Governors with information which was clear and easily understood. The Chair of the Board of Governors commented that the information provided in the Data Dashboard supported the information provided by the other agenda items. A Committee asked how the significant improvement in retention had been achieved. The Director of Funding, Data & Examinations replied that this was as a result of the focus given to students, the pastoral support and the attendance strategies which had been implemented. The Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success also commented on the success of the targeted approach to the most at-risk learners. The College was also asked for and provided information on its EDI strategies.	

	<u>Item 7: KPI Report 2024/25</u> The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) report provided the Committee with information on the in-year performance against each KPI, and was RAG rated based on the actions which needed to be taken to deliver the year-end targets. The KPIs showed performance against the four key pillars of curriculum strategy. The Committee noted the predicted result in relation to English GCSE High Grades which was currently flagged as RED, with a detailed discussion taking place on the reasons for and mitigation in respect of. The Chair of the Board of Governors commented on the areas of over-achievement and information was provided on the work with Purlos which had resulted in the high % records regarding positive destinations. A Committee member referred to the curriculum review document and to construction in particular. The Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success explained how the performance review meetings helped to validate the predicted achievement which then fed into the KPI document, with it being suggested that the reviews be focussed on those curriculum areas which were most at risk.	
	<u>Item 8: QIP Update and Teaching & Learning Report 2024/25 inc. whole College QIP</u> The report provided the Committee with an update on progress made against the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) priorities, including a top-level summary of strengths and further areas for development for each priority. The Committee Chair congratulated the College on the amount of detail provided in the Whole College QIP and suggested that future reports could be more streamlined. The Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success explained that whilst the Whole College QIP was very detailed, the leaders of each section would be looking only at their areas and thus it was more manageable than it might appear. However, it was important that the Board received full details. The Term 2 report detailed the impact of actions and progress towards success measures and was scrutinised by the Committee. The Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success was asked for and provided information on the Skills Grid template – what it was and how it was used by the curriculum team. The Chair of the Board of Governors referred to QIP 5 – attendance, and whilst noting that GREEN rating, asked about the 90 priority at-risk groups which had been identified and on the number of students within those groups. The Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success provided a detailed explanation and informed the Committee that by campus, by curriculum area, the head of section would be focussing on around 7 learners.	
	<u>Item 9: Quality Strategy 2024/25</u> The report provided an update against each of the 16 points of the Quality Strategy for 2024/25, outlined the proposal for the 2025/26 Quality Strategy and provided an overview of the 2025/26 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. The Committee noted the proposal that the Quality Strategy points be reduced to 13. In terms of the update on the 16 points of the Quality Strategy 2024/25, the Committee noted that many were process driven but as an example of the scale of work undertaken, the Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success highlighted the numbers of observation of teaching, learning and assessment undertaken during the year and the focus of the themed learning walks on Skills for Industry and the Impact of enrichment, enhancement and Work Experience. The outcome of the on-programme QDP survey showed a 93% learning satisfaction rate and 97% re learns' perception on the inclusivity of the College. Work was being undertaken to address the satisfaction rate (81%) for gathering learner views.	

	The Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success then set out the proposals for the Quality Strategy 2025/26. Detail on the Teaching, learning and Assessment Strategy was provided, with the Senior Vice Principal Quality & Strategy taking the Committee through the 'Powerful Pedagogy – Transformational Teaching THRIVE'. The intention was to develop the whole of learning, including the wider social and personal skills required for learners' success in careers and next steps. The LQC Committee noted that the final Quality Strategy 2025/26 would be considered by the Committee at its meeting in the autumn term, with consideration being given to its recommendation to the Board of Governors for approval. In answer to a question from a Committee member, an update was provided on the latest position regarding the revised Ofsted inspection process	SVP Q&S
	Item 10: Apprenticeship Report The Committee scrutinised the report on the performance of the College's Apprenticeship provision against external benchmarks and the steps being taken to improve apprenticeship's outcomes. Information on the apprenticeship covered: numbers by level, age, gender and sector area; qualification achievement; destinations; Apprenticeship Accountability Framework; Teaching, learning and assessment and personal development; employer partnerships. The Committee Chair asked about the risk to the College were the apprenticeship provision not to be at the standard expected by the DfE re the minimum levels of performance metrics. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Skills assured the Committee that success rates were improving as a result of the quality improvements which had been put in place, and that the achievement target rate would be met. The Chair of the Board of Governors asked whether the market was sustainable geographically. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Skills stated that the business development team were working to expand in certain areas and to ensure that the College met the future skills needs. The Chair of the Board of Governors requested clarification on whether the Committee was being asked to make a decision or to scrutinise the report, as both had been included. It was confirmed that the Committee was being asked to scrutinise the report.	
	Item 11: Safeguarding Report	
	Governors scrutinised the contents of the report to be assured that the college had appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard students. Governors noted the increase referrals since the previous report, including those which were linked to mental health. In order to address the increase in mental health issues, the Committee noted that the reinstatement of the Student Support Officer stations was being considered and that training of the Student Support Officers be given to enable them to deal more effectively with low level well-being and mental health concerns. Mandatory safeguarding and prevent staff training completion was currently 97.3% (from 97.6% in the previous report), the Committee being assured that work with colleagues who were yet to complete was being undertaken. The Committee was pleased to note that the College had met the Incyte 'Gold Standard', and that the College was working on the key actions from that review in order to achieve 'Platinum'. The Chair of the Board of Governors – and as the Safeguarding Lead – asked whether students were still comfortable in reporting issues and whether the College was intending to increase the number of specialist safeguarding staff. It was confirmed that this was the case.	

	A member of the Committee asked whether reporting on the distribution of gender/diversity incidents in relation to achievement, including those from deprived areas, would assist the College.	
	<u>Item 12: Risk Register</u> The Committee reviewed the revised risks for LQC Committee, noting that the highest risk related to R16 – Inability to response in a timely way to policy changes and R21 – Failure to manage student attendance and retention. The control measures in place were noted. The Committee considered the new Risk Register format, noting that this had been considered in detail by Audit Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2025. The CEO & Principal provided the Committee with the background to the Risk Register, noting the inclusion of the Board Assurance Grid and the Heat Map. The risks which were to be monitored by LCQ Committee had been pulled from the full Risk Register and included in a separate spreadsheet (Item 12 Annex 1). The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Skills then provided an explanation of the risks which had been assigned for LCQ Committee scrutiny, and the information provided in the monitoring report on the control measures, actions required and the overall risk rating and risk direction. In answer to a question from the Committee Chair, an explanation was provided on the difference between risk and residual risk, impact and residual impact, etc. The way in which the Heat Map showed the spread of the risk was also explained. The Chair of Audit Committee, who was present as an observer, commented that the Audit Committee also looked at the revised Risk Register and had agreed that the changes would be beneficial. However, he felt that further Governor training was needed in order that all Governors were confident in its content. The CEO & Principal informed the meeting that consideration was being given to using PowerBI (or similar) to produce a more user-friendly document. The College was asked if the risk around getting a learner into a job had been included. The CEO & Principal replied that progression and not meeting skills need had been included, as it was these areas on which the College was funded. The College was then asked whether a destination target should be considered. The Committee agreed the risk assigned to it for scrutiny, noting that it would be considered by the Board of Governors at the meeting on 30 June 2025 and that a paper copy of the Risk Register would be made available.	
	<u>Item 13: Accountability Statement</u> The report provided the Committee with the draft Accountability Statement, it being noted that this would be considered by the Board at its meeting on 30 June 2025, signed by the Chair and CEO & Principal before submission to the DfE. The Committee considered the actions what would be taken to ensure the provision offered by the College was meeting local, regional and national needs, and the achievement details against the previous year's Accountability Statement. An error in the wording on page 4 of the Accountability Statement relating to Apprenticeships rates would be corrected, and the paragraph covering apprenticeships on page 18 would be reworded as it was felt to be uninspiring. The College was also asked to emphasise the four Skill hubs. The College would also ensure that a final review to correct typos would be undertaken.	
	<u>Item 14: Committee Terms of Reference and Schedule of Business 2025/26</u> The Committee considered the proposed changes to its Terms of Reference, noting that as the Interim Director of Governance had been unable to attend the meeting, suggestions on further amendments would be taken offline.	Chair/ IDG

	The Committee **agreed** to recommend the Terms of Reference to the Board for approval, noting the comment above. The Committee approved the Schedule of Business 2025/26.	
	Item 15: Review of Committee Effectiveness Committee members were asked to complete the self-assessment checklist and return this to the Interim Director of Governance.	Cttee
13	**Item 16: Any Other Business** There were no items of any other business.	
14	**Item 17: Review of Effectiveness of the Meeting** A member of the Committee commented that there were too many items on the agenda against the time allotted for them. As noted above, the College was asked to ensure that the purpose of the report was clear and consistent – e.g., for recommendation, decision, scrutiny, etc.	
15	**Item 18: Date and time of next meetings** Wednesday 12 November 2025 Wednesday 11 March 2026 Wednesday 17 June 2026 All start at 3.30pm	

The meeting ended at 6.30 pm