

## SANDWELL COLLEGE

**Non-Confidential Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting**  
**held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 4.00pm**  
**Sandwell Futures, Central Campus**

Present:

A Frost	(Independent) – Chair
L Capper MBE	(CEO Principal)
G Amison	(Independent)
M Ashford	(Independent)
R Barlow	(Independent)
Bridgette Bennett	(Staff Governor – Sandwell)
Clare Boden-Hatton	(Independent)
Lucy Richardson	(Staff Governor – Cadbury)
J Shah	(Independent)
T Sharma	(Independent)
H Singh	(Independent)
S Smalling	(Independent)

Apologies:

N Edwards-Yesufu	(Independent)
S Lal	(Independent)
D Parrott	(Independent)

In attendance:

B Beaty	Executive Director Human Resources and Organisational Development
E Brennan	Senior Vice Principal Quality and Student Success
A Gordon	Deputy Principal Curriculum and Skills
I Oldacre	Director of Estates and Capital Projects (from Item 18.2)
R Pickup	Executive Director, Finance and Resources
J Tracy	Interim Director of Governance

		Action
	It was <b>agreed</b> that Item 3.1 would be taken as the first item.	
3.1.1	<b><u>Item 3.1 Appointment of Members of the Board of Governors</u></b> The Board noted the recommendation of Search & Governance Committee and <b>approved</b> the appointment of Clare Boden-Hatton as an independent member of the Board, her term of office being 6 October 2025 to 5 October 2028, and as a member of Learners, Quality & Curriculum Committee. Both appointments would be subject to a satisfactory outcome of a DBS and the usual pre-appointment checks.	
3.1.2	Ms Boden-Hatton was invited into the meeting, was informed of the Board's decision and was welcomed to the Board of Governors.	
1	<b><u>Item 1: Welcome and Apologies</u></b>	
1.1	The Chair introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the Staff Governors. The Chair also expressed her thanks for the opportunity to meet with all of the Governors.	
1.2	Apologies were received from N Edwards-Yesufu, S Lal and D Parrott and were accepted by the Board.	

2	<b><u>Item 2: Declarations of any new personal or business interest or conflict with any agenda item</u></b>	
2.1	The interest of R Barlow in the Confidential Item 24.1 was noted.	
2.2	There were no other new declarations.	
3	<b><u>Item 3: Appointment of Members of the Board of Governors:</u></b> <b>3.1 Independent Member</b> Minutes as recorded above.  <b>3.2 Staff Governors</b> 3.2.1 An election to appoint the Staff Governors had taken place and the Board <b>ratified</b> the appointment of Bridgette Bennett and Lucy Richardson as Staff Governor (Sandwell) and Staff Governor (Cadbury) respectively. Both appointments would be from 6 October 2025 to 5 October 2027. 3.2.2 At the request of the Chair, both Staff Governors introduced themselves to the Board.  <b>3.3 Student Governors</b> 3.3.1 The Board noted that the election of the Students' Union Presidents was taking place and that, as previously agreed by the Board, the successful candidates would be appointed as Student Governors. The Board would be updated on the outcome, with the expectation that the Student Governors would attend the December Board meeting and possibly the Strategy Day in November.	
4	<b><u>Item 4: Chair's Business</u></b> <b>4.1 Committee Membership</b> 4.1.1 The Chair reminded Governors current Committee vacancies, and whilst she appreciated that Governors would not wish to overstretch themselves, she asked that they give consideration to membership and to contact the Interim Director of Governance.  <b>4.2 Vice Chair Update</b> 4.2.1 The Chair asked that any Independent Governor interested in the role contact the Interim Director Of Governance. A meeting would then be arranged with the Chair. 4.2.2 The Chair thanked those Board members who had already put their names forward for the Link Governor/Curriculum visits. All other members were encouraged to do the same, noting that a member of the Executive PA Team had been asked to contact Governors.  <b>4.3 Change of Day re March &amp; July Board meetings</b> 4.3.1 An update would be provided at a later date.  <b>4.4 Reminder re Twilight session of Safeguarding</b> 4.4.1 The Chair reminded Board members of the Safeguarding session which had been arranged for Wednesday 8 October 2025 at 4.30pm. 4.4.2 In addition, members were asked to contact the Interim Director of Governance re their availability for the proposed Ofsted training session in order that the date(s) could be confirmed. 4.4.3 A training session on FE Funding would be arranged in December/January.	Board Members   Independent Board Members  Board Members      Board members
5	<b><u>Item 5: Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors held on 30 June 2025</u></b>	
5.1	The minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 30 June 2025 were reviewed and <b>approved</b> by Governors as a true and correct record.	

6	<b><u>Item 6: Matters Arising and Action Progress Report</u></b>	
6.1	Governors were assured that all actions were either complete or scheduled for reporting to the autumn term meetings.	
	<b><u>STRATEGIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL</u></b>	
7	<b><u>Item 7: Learner Voice Film and Learner Voice Report</u></b>	
7.1	A short Learner Voice Film was shown in which students spoke of their enrolment/induction experiences.	
7.2	The Senior Vice Principal Quality and Student Success then presented the Learner Voice Report which provided the Board with an update on further enhancement to Student Services and Learner Voice, on outcomes of learner voice activities for the 2024/25 academic year and on key achievements to date in the 2025/26 academic year.	
7.3	In answer to questions from members of the Board, the Senior Vice Principal Quality and Student Success confirmed that the student cohort was mainly 16-18, and on the ways in which student financial support could be accessed on the need to be able to manage expectations regarding such support.	
7.4	The College was asked if there were any recurring themes in terms of student feedback. The CEO & Principal informed the Board that the lack of common room space was raised, but noted that two new eateries had been opened and seating on Floor 1 had been provided in order to create more social space. Student Support Officers were in situ in order to ensure appropriate student behaviour in these areas.	
7.5	The Board noted the actions which would be progressed during the year.	
8	<b><u>Item 8: CEO &amp; Principal's Report</u></b>	
8.1	A detailed report had been prepared, with the CEO & Principal referring the Board to the Executive Summary which included the improved achievement for 2024/25, the growth in enrolment and that the College remained in a strong financial position.	
8.2	Capital projects were noted to be on track, with rigorous monitoring of expenditure continuing to take place.	
8.3	The CEO & Principal provided an explanation of the numbers relating to the allocation for 2025/26, the anticipated EHCP enrolments and the College's performance on enrolments against increased local competition.	
8.4	In answer to questions from members of the Board, the CEO & Principal explained the analysis undertaken on actual against target enrolments, and on the ways in which the College was looking to increase its enrolments.	
8.5	<p>The Board noted the detail in the report covering performance against metrics – finance and capital, enrolment, curriculum and skills, quality and student success. The CEO &amp; Principal highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £1m additional funding from WMCA and the adult campaign</li> <li>- West Mids Technical Excellence College for construction, with the College being a key player</li> <li>- Apprenticeships – covered later in the meeting</li> <li>- Sport organisation subcontract</li> <li>- Internship with ASDA</li> <li>- Employability Week work and partnerships</li> <li>- A College student was a nominee for AoC learner of the year</li> <li>- Incyte award for safeguarding and community cohesion</li> </ul>	

8.6	The CEO & Principal also provided information on the key policy changes – such as the Government's statement that two-thirds of young people should progress to FE, apprenticeships or universities (though there would be no new money), the Skills White Paper and SEND White Paper (both yet to be published) and the move of Adult and Apprenticeships to the Department for Work and Pensions.	
8.7	The CEO & Principal then provided an update on the new Ofsted framework, this being included at Annex 2. The differences and new features, implications and timings were highlighted, the Board noting that Leadership and Governance was now included. Inspections would begin from 10 November, with the calls to colleges being received on 3 November, and thus the College was preparing as if it were to be inspected in November.	
8.8	The following had been included for information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slide on enrolments to date (Annex 1)</li> <li>- Ofsted update (Annex 2)</li> <li>- Link to West Midlands Growth Plan and Skills England Growth and Skills report (July 2025)</li> </ul>	
8.9	A discussion took place on the timelines/link between the student plan and estates plan and on how the estates strategy reflected the long-term curriculum plan/	
8.10	The Chair commented that the report had been very helpful and thanked the CEO & Principal.	
9	<b><u>Item 9: Performance against Targets in the KPI Report 2024/25 and new KPIs for 2025/26</u></b>	
9.1	The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Skills presented the report which provided an update on the performance against targets in the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) report 2024/25, and the new KPIs for 2025/26. The report included analysis across curriculum quality, people and finance, with reference to strategic priorities and associated risks.	
9.2	The Board noted the update on those KPIs which had not been met and the work being undertaken to bring about improvements in the current year. The KPIs for 2025/26 were noted, with those around the skills agenda (work experience, for example) being key.	
9.3	A member of the Board noted that equality measures were not included. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Skills replied that these would sit within the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy. It was noted that an EDI report was also presented to the Board.	
9.4	The Board noted the challenges faced by the College in terms of internal progression relating to English and maths, and that whilst overall Apprenticeship rates were above the national rate, the College was looking to improve performance for those areas which were underperforming.	
9.5	As usual, termly updates would be provided to the relevant Committees on progress against each target, with detail on the actions to be taken and dates for monitoring for any areas of concern.	
9.6	The Board <b>endorsed</b> the proposed KPIs for 2025/26.	
10	<b><u>Item 10: Data Dashboard 2024/25 and Summary of Performance</u></b>	
10.1	The Board considered the report which provided an overview of the current position and project outcomes for 2024/25 in relation to retention,	

	achievement and attendance rates by key metrics for the four main funding streams. The Board noted that the final year-end position would be scrutinised by Learners, Quality & Curriculum (LQC) Committee and then by the Board at the meetings in November and December respectively.	
10.2	The Board noted the positive three-year trend in learner achievement, and that the outcomes for 2024/25 were notably higher than the latest national rates. Information was included on the Level 3 results, with significant improvements in A Level achievement rates, these now being 12.7% over the national rate, and the improvements at Cadbury being noted.	
10.3	T Levels had shown a strong outturn, with notably high grades being recorded in Childcare and Digital T levels and a 100% pass rate.	
10.4	The Board noted the information provided on GCSE resit results which remained strong and above national rate, and on the continuing improvement in Apprenticeship outcomes.	
10.5	The Chair requested that LCQ Committee, at its next meeting, look in detail at the areas of concern which had been highlighted in the report to the Board.	SVP Q&SS/ LQCC
10.6	The Chair thanked the Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success – and the Director of Information Services – for the report and acknowledged the hard work involved.	
11	<b><u>Item 11: Development of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)</u></b>	
11.1	The Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success provided an explanation of the SAR and QIP, it being noted that both were reviewed during the year and were RAG rated.	
11.2	The timeline for completion included the SAR/QIP process stage, and the target completion date and progress update for each stage. The Board was content with the College's decision that the SAR would continue in its current format, based on the previous Ofsted Framework, but that the QIP 2025/26 would align with the new Framework. The QIP would be reviewed on a termly basis, with progress reported to LQC Committee.	
11.3	The SAR would be brought to the Board for approval at its meeting in December and would then be forwarded to Ofsted.	
11.4	The Board <b>approved</b> the SAR and QIP timeline for completion and the proposed structure for each document in line with previous and new Ofsted Frameworks.	
	<b><u>FINANCE AND RESOURCES</u></b>	
12	<b><u>Item 12: Summary Provisional Outturn Accounts 2024/25 and Management Accounts</u></b>	
12.1	Governors received an update of the draft financial performance and financial position of the College (July 2025), noting that it was subject to potential adjustment before the position was finalised and submitted for audit.	
12.2	The Executive Summary included information on the operating surplus, noting that the additional funding from the £50m announcement had not been factored as this would be utilised in the next academic year in line with revised guidance, the cash position and that the KPIs remained on track for "Outstanding" financial performance.	ED F&R / IDG

12.3	A discussion took place on the costs of permanent and agency staff and it was <b>agreed</b> that a detailed report be provided to Finance & Strategy Committee at its next meeting.	ED F&R
12.4	The Board noted that capital spending could impact on the cash position, with the CEO & Principal noting that a discussion would take place at the next Away Day/Strategy Day.	
12.5	A member of the Board asked whether a report on recruitment and finance should have been included on the agenda. The Executive Director Finance & Resources explained that as the new financial year began in August, a report on M2 (month 2) would be considered at the next meeting. After further discussion and noting the demand on workload, it was <b>agreed</b> that the College would look to producing an M1 report for next year, noting that the M2 report would be considered by Finance & Strategy Committee at its next meeting	
12.6	Following consideration of the report and the discussions, the Board of Governors <b>received</b> and <b>noted</b> the 2024/25 P12 (Jul 25) Finance Report	
13	<b><u>Item 13: Human Resources and Organisation Development (HR &amp; OD) Report</u></b>	
13.1	Governors received the report on the work and impact of the College's Human Resources and Organisational Development functions, noting that regular reports were also considered by Finance & Strategy Committee.	
13..2	Information on recruitment, wellness, development and recognition, and employee relations activities was noted. Key people metrics were included together with context and narrative around these areas of work. As requested at the last meeting, further information was provided on the all-staff event held on 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 and included a summary of staff feedback (Annex 2).	
13.3	In answer to a question from a member of the Board, it was confirmed that in addition to the College staff survey, an external survey will be completed to enable benchmarking.	
13.4	The Chair thanked the Executive Director HR & OD for a full and positive report.	
14	<b><u>Item 14: Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework</u></b>	
14.1	Governors received the risk report, noting that there had been no change to the two high level risks and that the risk relating to Ofsted (R1) was being carefully monitored. Actions required had been updated since the Board meeting in June and were 'smart' to ensure timely and focused activity.	ED F&R
14.2	The Board also noted the information provided in the Heat Map and Board Assurance Framework and that a risk appetite workshop was planned for the Governors' Strategy Day on 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2025.	
14.3	In answer to a comment from a member of the Board on the cyber security risk, the Executive Director Finance & Resources confirmed that the report included actions which had already been taken and those which were to be taken. The Chair commented that she would like to understand more about the cyber risk at the College, with a member of the Board also commenting that it was important that the Board had confidence in the recovery plan.	
14.4	The CEO & Principal agreed that detailed scrutiny by the Committees of all actions included in the Risk Register would be valuable and would impact on the content.	
	5.53pm - Short Break	

	<b><u>GOVERNANCE</u></b>	
15	<b><u>Item 15. Board Review</u></b>	
15.1	The Interim Director of Governance presented the report which provided an overview of Board membership and performance for 2024/25. Information on the terms of office and current membership, attendance at Board, Committees and individual levels, curriculum/link visits, Governor training and development (Appendix 3). The Board also noted the actions from the External Board Review had now been completed.	Chair
15.2	Governors were currently updating their skills audit and the full survey would be used by Search & Governance Committee in consideration of future appointments/vacancies.	
15.3	Having considered the report, the Board <b>approved</b> the target for attendance for 2025/26 of 80%, it being noted that the Chair would follow up on with those Board members whose attendance fell below this figure.	
16	<b><u>Item 16: Committee Terms of Reference</u></b>	
16.1	The Interim Director of Governance provided an explanation of the proposed changes. The Board considered and <b>approved</b> the changes to Committee Terms of Reference as detailed in the report.	
17	<b><u>Item 17: Link Governor Scheme</u></b>	
17.1. 1	<b>17.1 Link Governor Feedback</b> The Board noted the feedback provided by the former Chair of the Board on visits undertaken in 2024/25 and that arrangements for curriculum/link visits for 2025/26 were in hand.	
18	<b><u>Item 18: Review of Policies and Procedures</u></b>	
.1.1	<b>18.1 Safeguarding Policy</b> The Senior Vice Principal Quality & Student Success presented the paper and noted the changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education released in September 2025. This would be covered in greater detail at the Governor training session to be held on 8 October 2025.	
.1.2	The format of the policy had been changed and was thus much shorter than previously. The policy defined the safeguarding responsibilities, etc., the roles of governors, leaders, staff and contractors with detailed guidance and flowcharts for day-to-day safeguarding practice included in the annexes.	
.1.3	The Board <b>approved</b> the Safeguarding Policy (Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults, including those with care and support needs including the Prevent Duty) for use in the 2025/26 academic year.	
	6.11pm – the Director of Estates and Capital Projects joined the meeting.	
.2.1	<b>18.2 Health &amp; Safety Policy</b> The Director of Estates and Capital Projects presented the paper and informed the Board that the policy had been strengthened to identity the College's commitment to ensure a high-quality apprenticeship training and successful outcomes, the wording added being included in the report.	
.2.2	An adjustment to rename COVID to 'airborne respiratory diseases' had been made in the policy.	
.2.3	The Board <b>approved</b> the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy 2025/26, noting that this would be reviewed in 12 months' time.	



.3.1	<b>18.3 Quality Strategy 2025/26</b> The Quality Strategy had been considered by Learners, Quality & Curriculum Committee at its meeting on 18 June 2025 and the Committee had agreed that the Quality Strategy be brought to the October Board following an Ofsted announcement on the new framework which was due in autumn.	
.3.2	The CEO & Principal informed the Board that the Quality Strategy had been amended to reflect the new Ofsted Framework and was similar to that which had been approved by the Board in December 2024.	
.3.3	The Board <b>approved</b> the Quality Strategy 2025/26.	
	<b><u>CONSENT AGENDA</u></b>	
19	<b><u>Item 19: To note for information:</u></b>	
19.1	<b>19.1 Written Resolution of the Corporation of Sandwell College – DfE Grant Funding/Offer Letter</b> circulated on 24 July 2025  <b>19.2 Written Resolution of the Corporation of Sandwell College – Nomination, Election and Ballot Procedure for the Appointment of Staff Members to the Board of Governors</b> circulated on 22 July 2025  The Board <b>noted</b> the information provided on the written resolutions.	
20	<b><u>Item 20: Review of Meeting</u></b>	
20.1	The Chair asked that Governors send their comments to the Interim Director of Governance following the meeting.	Board members
21	<b><u>Item 21: Any other Business</u></b>	
21.1	There were no items of any other business.	
21.2	6.20pm The Chair thanked the Staff Governors for their attendance; both then left the meeting.	
	<b><u>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</u></b>	
27	<b><u>Date and time of next meetings</u></b>	
	Monday 8 December 2025 4-7pm Sandwell College, City Campus Monday 23 March 2026 4-7pm Cadbury College Boardroom Monday 6 July 2026 4-7pm Central St Michael's Sixth Form, Room tba  <u>Governors' Strategy Days/Away Days</u> Monday 24 November 2025 10am-4pm Friday 8 May 2026 11am Sandwell College, Room tba	

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm.