



Full Corporation Meeting

17th December 2025

Time: 6.00 pm
Chair: Mr N Horsfall

Present:

Nick Horsfall	Arshad Ashraf	Stephen Bamber
Mark Rigby	Karen Hon	Robert Coyle
Zahid Tapas	Stuart Merrills	Anna-Marie Watters
Sam Jackson	Glenys Hughes	Bashir Shama
Susan Wright	Rida Zafar	Dakota O'Hara

In Attendance:

Lesley Hart Deputy Principal	Joanne Smith Vice Principal	Nicola Sodano Assistant Principal – Teaching and Learning and Assessment
Andy Lythgoe Assistant Principal – MIS/Learner Administration	Mark Goodwin Assistant Principal – Student Experience	Sarah Ball Assistant Principal - Pastoral
Tracy Tunstall Clerk		

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted by Governors from Nannette Blackwood, Carol Davies and Munaza Muneeb.

The Chair informed Governors that Carole Swarbrick has resigned as a Governor with immediate effect due to personal circumstances. He reported that she has served as an outstanding Governor for over 10 years and wished her well.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Appointment of Student Governor

The Chair informed Governors that the Student Learner Voice had held an election for the post of Student Governor and that Dakota O'Hara, who is a first year student, was recommended for appointment as Student Governor for a term of 2 years or until such time as she ceases to be a student at the College.

Governors resolved to formally appoint Dakota O'Hara for the duration of her programme of study or until such time as she ceases to be a student at the College.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2025 were **approved** as a true and accurate record.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no specific matters arising.

6. Minutes of the Sub-Committees

(a) Governance and Search Committee

The minutes of the Governance and Search Committee held on 7th October 2025 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that the Terms of Reference of all Committees had been considered and were recommended for formal approval.

Governors resolved to approve the Terms of Reference for all Committees.

The Clerk highlighted the need for all Governors to undertake Governance of Safeguarding training which outlines leadership responsibilities for the College's safeguarding arrangements. She reported that a link to access the online training platform will be circulated in the new year but highlighted that all Governors will be required to carry out this training again at the start of the new academic year to fall in line with mandatory training for all members of staff.

(b) Curriculum and Quality Committee

The minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 16th October 2025 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that the Head of Marketing and Admissions had given a detailed presentation on the enrolment process and the improvements to be made in response to the feedback from the student surveys.

The Chair of the Committee reported that a lengthy discussion had taken place regarding the Examinations data and that he has since been into college to congratulate the staff on the

outstanding BTEC results. However, there was still work to do to improve A Level results generally but in Science in particular. He had met with the Vice Principal briefly prior to this meeting to discuss the progress to date at the Data Point Assessments which have just been completed. He informed Governors that the Vice Principal meets with all Heads of Department as a group on a weekly basis and meets with them individually every 2-3 weeks to discuss progress.

The Chair of the Committee stressed the need for consistency of Teaching and Learning across all departments and informed Governors that the Assistant Principal – Teaching and Learning would be delivering a presentation on this at the next meeting.

The Chair of the Committee reflected on the current data point assessment results and questioned what needs to be done if students don't achieve their target grades. He asked for more information to be presented at the next Curriculum and Quality Committee in relation to the number of subjects, number of students and how to manage things differently. The Vice Principal reported that the data point in May would give a higher level of accuracy to determine the predicted results in summer. The Chair of the Committee reported that the focus for the Strategy Event should be to look at what needs to be done differently to improve examination results.

The Assistant Principal – Pastoral informed Governors that a significant number of students are taking 6-8 weeks out of College to travel abroad which impacts on their learning. She reported that a meeting takes place with each individual parent regarding this, however parents state that the cost of travelling abroad during the college holiday closure periods is too expensive.

A Governor asked if there had been any impact on the results if the students take an AS Level rather than an A Level and the Vice Principal reported that the decision to enter a student for an AS Level will not be made until March.

Governors **noted** that the Mr Shama and Mr Jackson will be meeting with the Vice Principal to monitor assessment data each half term.

(c) Student Affairs Committee

The minutes of the Student Affairs Committee held on 19th November 2025 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that the Committee Terms of Reference had been considered and it was believed that these do reflect the work of the Committee and that the Principal's question to students gives opportunities to seek their views on a number of topics.

(d) Finance and Personnel Committee

The minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee held on 19th November 2025 were **noted**.

In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Chair of Governors reported that the Annual Report and Accounts had been considered and were recommended for approval. He drew

attention to the Investment, Treasury and Reserves Policy 2025/26 which had been discussed in detail and aims to maintain reserves of 3-5 months of operating expenditure and reported that this was recommended for approval.

Governors noted that the Annual Report and Accounts would be discussed as a separate agenda item later in the meeting.

Governors unanimously resolved to approve the Investment, Treasury and Reserves Policy 2025/26.

(e) Risk and Audit Committee

The minutes of the Risk and Audit Committee held on 3rd December 2025 were noted.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that the Auditors had attended part of the meeting and had given a detailed report on the external audit which had been carried out for the year ended 31st July 2025. He highlighted that there had been no recommendations raised in relation to the audit. The Letter of Representation and the Regularity Letter of Representation were recommended by the Committee for approval by the Full Corporation, along with the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire.

The annual report of the Risk and Audit Committee summarises the work of the committee during the year and was recommended by the Committee that this is submitted as part of the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st July 2025.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that the Audit Code of Practice has been replaced with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges. The changes had been reviewed to ensure continued compliance.

Governors resolved that the annual report of the Risk and Audit Committee is submitted as part of the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st July 2025.

7. Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts to 31st July 2025

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that the Annual Report and Accounts represents the published financial position of the College for the year ended 31st July 2025. She reported that these had been discussed in detail at both the Finance and Personnel Committee and the Risk and Audit Committee. She outlined the following documents which required approval:

(a) Letter of Representation

The draft letter to confirm that the Corporation has fulfilled its responsibilities and that the accounts give a true and fair view of the college's financial position had been considered and was recommended for approval by the Risk and Audit Committee.

Governors resolved to approve the Letter of Representation and authorised the Chair and Principal to sign the letter on behalf of the Corporation.

(b) Regularity Letter of Representation

The draft letter to confirm that the Corporation has fulfilled its responsibilities and that the accounts give a true and fair view of the college's financial position had been considered and was recommended for approval by the Risk and Audit Committee.

Governors resolved to approve the Letter of Representation and authorised the Chair and Principal to sign the letter on behalf of the Corporation.

(c) Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire is a standard format which is completed by the Deputy Principal and confirms that the Corporation has proper internal processes in place and is used to test the effectiveness of those internal controls and was recommended for approval by the Risk and Audit Committee.

The questionnaire was considered and Governors resolved to formally approve the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire.

Governors unanimously resolved to formally approve the Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 July 2025.

8. Management Accounts to 31st October 2025

The Deputy Principal presented the management accounts based on actual income and expenditure up to 31st October 2025 and projected to 31st July 2026. She informed Governors that the impact of the 4% pay award for all staff has been included in the staff costs and that the cash position remains healthy. The budget assumes £300k for High Needs Funding Element 3 pending local authorities' approval.

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that the bank loan has now been paid off.

Governors **noted** the projected budget outturn position as at 31st July 2026 is estimated at £849,778.

Governors resolved to approve the Management Accounts as at 31st October 2025.

9. Approval of Financial Regulations – Governance Level

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that the Financial Regulations is a large document which has now been separated into two. The revised versions outline clear separation between governance-level financial regulation and operational financial procedures and these have been considered at both the Finance and Personnel Committee and Risk and Audit Committee. She drew attention to the authorisation and threshold levels and the number of quotes required and reported that following the Finance and Personnel Committee an additional paragraph has been included to cover instances where items of expenditure have only one available supplier i.e. examination fees and therefore competitive quotations are not applicable.

Governors unanimously resolved to approve the Financial Regulations Policy 2025-27 – Governance Level.

10. Strategic Plan Update

(a) Monitoring of KPIs and Strategic Development Plan

The Principal presented the Strategic Governor Dashboard as at December 2025. He informed Governors that the Data Point (DP) is the current working point and is not a prediction for the end of the academic year. A Governor challenged the ALPs score against the target grade and again the Principal reported that this is the current working point. The Governor asked for an explanation of what the ALPs score means to be included on the Dashboard.

Governors **noted** the report.

11. College Annual Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

The Principal presented the Annual Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan and informed Governors that this has been prepared based on the new Ofsted Framework. He reported that until such time as there is evidence from other college inspections it is difficult to predict where the benchmarks are. He highlighted that there are some areas for improvement.

A Governor questioned whether or not an external adviser has been appointed to quality assure all processes and **noted** that no external adviser carries out this role. The Governor stressed the need for an independent external education adviser to be appointed to work alongside members of the SLT in a supportive capacity. The Assistant Principal – Pastoral informed Governors that there are no HMIs currently available to carry out this work. The Governor reported that the external adviser does not necessarily need to be linked to Ofsted and that networking with other colleges may be beneficial in order to find a suitable person. He highlighted the risks of not having an independent external adviser working with the Principal in the same way that a School Improvement Partner works with the Head of a school, he reported that evaluation processes have changed and stressed the importance of appointing someone to this role.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report

The Assistant Principal spoke to the report prepared by the EDI Co-ordinator. She highlighted the main patterns in achievement and the persistent achievement gaps between some groups and drew attention to the targets and key actions to address these.

Governors **noted** the report.

13. Safeguarding and SEND Annual Report

The Assistant Principal presented the Safeguarding and SEND Annual Report.

Governors **noted** the report.

14. Principal's Report

The Principal spoke to his report. He reported that there has been a slight increase in the number of prospective students attending open events and that admission interviews are going well.

The Principal drew attention to the continued uncertainty regarding the defunding of BTEC diplomas and extended diplomas in T Level areas and reported that the Post-16 Education and Skills white paper published during half term confirmed that funding for all qualifications in T Level areas will be removed in 2026 and 2027. The Government is currently consulting on the range of V Level subjects with a full rollout being scheduled for 2030/31. The Principal will continue to keep Governors updated.

The Principal drew attention to the new Ofsted Inspection Framework and highlighted the seven judgement areas along with the grading scale for six categories as Safeguarding will continue to be judged as 'Met' or 'Not Met' only. Inclusion will be a major area of focus. The Principal informed Governors that Ofsted will no longer issue an overall effectiveness grade but instead an inspection report card will summarise strengths and weaknesses across the judgement areas. Governors **noted** that the College is not due an inspection until 2027/28.

Governors **noted** the report.

15. Review of Risk Register 2025/26

The Principal informed Governors that all risks have been allocated to the relevant Governors' committee for monitoring purposes and the Risk Register has been updated following each meeting.

Governors noted the Risk Register for 2025/26

16. Link Governor Update

(a) SEND

The Clerk informed Governors that the Link Governor had met with the Learning Services Manager on 12th November. The Link Governor has asked for some training to enable her to fulfil her role more effectively. The Clerk will look for suitable options.

(b) Careers and Skills

The Link Governor for Careers and Skills informed Governors that he had met with the Head of Careers/Employability last week. He reported that the Gatsby benchmark criteria has been updated to reflect the current employment landscape and that the careers team are looking at ways to include better evidence of the impact which the careers programme has on students in terms of skills development, careers awareness etc. A meeting has been arranged with SLT in the new year to discuss the possibility of purchasing the Skills Builder licence which will be one way to gather evidence and better record information to show 'distance travelled'. There are further areas to develop in terms of parental engagement and staff CPD. All curriculum areas are now required to have a skills development plan to outline where in the curriculum students have opportunities to develop key employability skills.

(c) Digital and Technology

The Link Governor gave a brief overview of his recent meeting with the Assistant Principal – Teaching and Learning focusing on the continued development of digital learning and the use of Artificial Intelligence within the Sixth Form. He informed Governors that the Assistant Principal will continue to contribute regularly to Curriculum and Quality subcommittee meetings, with a specific focus on the role of technology in influencing attainment and progress. These updates will support ongoing evaluation of how digital tools can be used most effectively to strengthen subject areas where outcomes require improvement, and establishing this as a regular agenda item will enable governors and senior leaders to explore targeted, evidence-informed approaches to closing knowledge gaps and raising grades, using technology to support teaching quality and subject improvement rather than a standalone initiative.

His written report will be submitted to the next meeting.

17. Any Other Business

There was none.

18. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 1st April 2026 at 6.00 pm.

All staff and students, with the exception of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Vice Principal and the Clerk, left the meeting.

19. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

- (1) The Principal informed Governors that the impact of BTEC courses being removed and the uncertainty of suitable new courses being available, along with the agreed plan for the College to downsize, SLT have been re-modelling some areas of the curriculum for the next academic year and staffing requirements are being considered.
- (2) The Deputy Principal informed Governors that she is currently dealing with a sensitive HR matter.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.00 pm.