

**ST JOHN RIGBY COLLEGE  
MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD  
HELD AT 6PM ON TUESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024  
AT THE COLLEGE**



**MINUTES**

*The core functions of the corporation board include:*

- *Preserving and developing the college's educational character*
- *Setting and communicating the college's strategy and goals*
- *Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance and quality of the college, and for the performance of staff*
- *Exercising effective control to ensure that funds and assets are protected, the organisation remains solvent and legal obligations are met*

*The meeting opened in prayer.*

Business commenced at 6pm.

Meeting closed at 8pm.

The meeting was quorate.

<b>Governors present:</b>		
Pamela Catherall	Foundation Governor	Yes
Philip Collier (Vice Chair)	Foundation Governor	Yes
Mark Higgins	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Pam Tate (Chair)	Foundation Governor	Yes
Catherine Morgan	Foundation Governor	Yes (from 6.28pm)
Mark Dumican	Foundation Governor	Yes
James Gresty	Foundation Governor	Yes
Kate Watts	Staff Governor	Yes
Chris Chandler	Staff Governor	Yes
Peter Cudlip	Parent Governor	Yes (Virtually)
Meghan Clayton	Parent Governor	Yes
Anne White	Co-opted Governor	Yes
Peter McGhee	Principal	Yes
Jenson Grady	Incoming Student Governor	Apologies
Madison Bryan	Outgoing Student Governor	Apologies
<b>In Attendance:</b>		
Allan Keating	Associate Member	Yes
Paula Nolan	Vice Principal	Yes
Victoria Brown	Vice Principal	Yes
Dominic Jones	Vice Principal	Yes
Jim Winstanley	Finance Manager	Yes (until 6.36pm)
Sophie Gardiner	Clerk to the Governing Board (Wigan Governor Services)	Yes

## 1. Apologies and consideration of consent to absence

Apologies from Madison Bryan, Jensen Grady and Mark Higgins were **received** in advance of the meeting and were **accepted** by the Board.

Catherine Morgan was expected to join the meeting.

## 2. Any other Urgent Business

- Confidential item.
- Risk Register.

## 3. Declaration of Interest

Staff would withdraw for Part B.

## 4. Minutes of the previous meetings held on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**Approved** and **Authorised** for publication.

Confidential minutes – **Approved**.

## 5. Matters Arising – *addressed on this agenda*

- Governing Body Membership.
- Governance Review.
- Strategic Conference.

## 6. Minutes of the Committee Meetings

The Board received verbal reports from the Committee Chairs.

### 6.1 Quality and Standards Committee – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

Philip Collier provided an overview of the salient points of the committee meeting:

- The committee welcomed new staff and Governors.
- Actions reviewed and recorded as completed.
- Ofsted inspection - verbal feedback received.
- Curriculum reform presentation – enlightening to see the challenges facing the college and noted the government’s ten-year plan, the implications of funding and the demands for staffing.
- Pastoral structure - impact of losing staff around the tutorial programme. Implementation of Progress Coaches and how the delivery of tutorial programmes would be beneficial to students. Governors had been pleased to see that the staff team had been involved in the discussion and review of the programme.
- The committee discussed the development of the model, capacity within the curriculum teams and noted some uncertainty around the curriculum.
- Safeguarding roles - the committee discussed the counselling service and the significant increase in referrals. Case studies were shared prior to the meeting. Governors discussed the use of social media, attendance, initiatives, and the importance of early identification.

- The committee questioned and challenged leaders throughout the meeting and there had been good involvement from student Governors who had provided a fresh perspective to the discussions and had been very open and honest.
- Action updates from SAR's - highlights celebrated - Business and Economics – impact of enhanced monitoring and review had led to a 24% increase in high grades. Coaching in English, Media and Film was evident.
- Approval granted for a repeat of an overseas trip.
- The risk register had been reviewed.
- Staff had been thanked for the informative presentations.

## 6.2 Finance and Resources Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 & 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Pam Tate provided an overview of the salient points of the committee meeting:

- The committee had received and reviewed the annual HR report which had shown the staff movement since the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023.
- Sickness was in line with benchmarks – the committee noted that there were no concerns.
- PDR – submission rate was 89%. This was discussed by the committee, and it was confirmed that mid-year reviews did take place.
- The committee received and approved the disciplinary procedure.
- Budget - surplus was better than budget.
- Income better than budget. Pay was worse than budget (due to pay award not having been previously included and the 6.5% pay award being back dated).
- Cash was on target.
- Compliance with covenant - ESFA health score was currently 'outstanding' but would move to 'good' by the end of the year.
- The committee reviewed the 2024/2025 budget.
- Key financial risks were highlighted and discussed, these were around the recruitment of students, transport and marketing costs.
- Benchmarking report – this was subjective in terms of how the data was reported by other colleges but was a useful exercise. The committee agreed that there were no concerns in this area and noted that due to the size of the college, it did not benefit from the economies of scale that larger establishments would.
- The DfE benchmarking report would be shared when available.

Jim Winstanley reported that the 2024/2025 budget allocation had been received and was slightly better than forecast. Cost modelling would be undertaken to include pay awards.

6.28pm – Catherine Morgan joined the meeting.

Pam Tate continued:

- The committee received the accommodation report and noted that the fire compartmentalisation work was in the process of being tendered. Some snagging on building works was still underway.
- The committee discussed the risk to the fire compartmentalisation programme being delayed. Leaders confirmed that there was no risk.
- Boiler and safeguarding projects updates - both been successful.
- Risk register – loss of key staff was a single point of failure (HR) implications for payroll process. The committee had requested to review mitigations at its next meeting.

### 6.3 Audit Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Anne White provided an overview of the salient points of the committee meeting:

- External Auditors had provided the committee with an update on severance pay and confidentiality issues as previously discussed.
- The committee reviewed the risk register.
- Internal Auditors had presented a report on cyber security. The report concluded that cyber security at the college was substantial.
- Staff were thanked for their ongoing work and contributions to the work of the committee.
- The college benchmarked favourably against other organisations in this area.
- The external audit plan would be presented at the next committee meeting.
- Fire risk assessments and actions had been received and reviewed.

Q What topics would the internal audit next address?

A Financial controls and recruitment, due to take place in May.

The Principal extended thanks to Jim Winstanley for his work on the submission of the CIF bids (Boiler replacement and safeguarding (entrance) which had both been successful.

*6.36pm – Jim Winstanley left the meeting.*

## 7. COLLEGE ITEMS

### 7.1 Principal's Report

The Principal drew the Board's attention to the salient points and responded to questions.

- Retention – marginal improvement on this year's retention relative to last year. Since the report had been circulated, additional leavers and challenges were also to be noted. The Quality and Standards committee had discussed the retention work being undertaken to support students.
- Education visits – significant and substantial experiences and trips provided to students.
- Six Oxbridge offers had been received and celebrated.
- Significant amount of un-funded provision to encourage attendance and retention.
- High School liaison and marketing – continued positive indicators around applications for next year resulting in 2,120 applicants (previous year 1,829). Reduction expected in terms of accepted offers. Currently 12% up on last year. Direct messaging around the outcome of the Ofsted inspection may encourage further enrolment.

Q In terms of the retention data, wider sector issues were mentioned, would there be any benefit in putting in benchmarking figures within the report to highlight that the college were doing a good job in a difficult situation?

A Last year the overall retention was 2% above the national figure. We expect this year's national average to be reduce but hope that the college would remain in the region of 2-3% better than average.

A Governor commented that they were aware that there was now a significant increase of funded SEND pupils who had accepted places.

The Principal explained that previously, 60 students had been funded for high needs. Due to recent reductions in high needs learners, the College will receive 41 funded places in 2024/25. This predicted number was supported by the Local Authority.

Q There had been a terrific amount of information within the report, was there any merit in including the skills agenda information and information around the work continuing with parents?

A The work with employers was reflected within the careers academies and within the curriculum section reported to the Quality and Standards committee. All Governors had access to the reports.

## **7.2 Ofsted Inspection**

The Board celebrated the receipt of a letter of congratulations from The Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education (21<sup>st</sup> March 2024).

The Principal shared that the publication of the Outstanding Ofsted report had received a lot of positive attention, locally and nationally. Education professionals across the sector, the DfE, ESFA and SFCA had all recognised the significance of the achievement, and to have been judged outstanding within the new framework was a cause for celebration.

The college had shared the outcome of the inspection and the report at the recent open day and would publicise the outcome widely.

Governors were thanked for their support during the inspection process.

Q The promotion of the outcome to parents and messages to students were noted but was there anything else that the college could do to support the conversion strategy to encourage students to accept offers?

A The current sequence included direct messages, and specific targeting of those students who had not yet accepted a place. Also, students who had applied but did not come forward for a course discussion would be targeted.

## **8. GOVERNANCE ITEMS**

### **8.1 Strategic Conference Report**

The Chair thanked Governors for their attendance and enthusiastic and positive contributions during the strategic conference. The risk register had not been reviewed in full and it was proposed to arrange a separate meeting to cover this item. The Vision, Values and Mission would be reviewed with staff at the INSET day with involvement from Governors. Dates to be confirmed.

No conclusion had been reached around the times of committee and Board meetings. The Chair would circulate a survey to gauge Governors' preferences.

There was no further update on the Governance Review. A scoping meeting for the Principal, Chair and Clerk was to be held in April. Following which a questionnaire would be circulated to all Governors. The external reviewer would attend the committee and Board meetings next term to observe governance in action and would likely speak to committee chairs and new Governors.

Governors were reminded to complete the feedback for the strategic conference and the recently circulated skills audit.

**8.2 Academisation – Confidential item.**

**8.3 Governing Board Membership**

The following appointments were noted:

Jame Gresty – Foundation Governor appointed with effect from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024.

Meghan Clayton – Parent Governor appointed with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Allan Keating – Associate Member appointed with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

There remained two vacancies for Foundation Governors.

**Committee Membership**

James Gresty appointed to the Finance and Resources Committee.

Meghan Clayton appointed to the Quality and Standards Committee.

Allan Keating appointed to the Finance and Resources Committee.

From September, Mark Dumican would return to the Quality and Standards Committee.

**STANDING ITEMS**

**9. Urgent Items**

**9.1 Confidential item – Part B (Non staff).**

**9.2 Risk Register – covered at item 8.1 (meeting to review to be arranged).**

**10. Confidentiality**

Items 8.2 and 9.1 were deemed confidential.

**11. Date and time of next meeting committee meeting - Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024.**

*7.46pm - there being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked Staff and Governors for their attendance and contributions and staff withdrew from the meeting.*

8pm – the meeting closed.