

Board

Final

9 October 2025

Members Carole Kitching (Chair); Mohammed Elias Ali; Maddalaine Ansell; Phillip Kerle; Kunal Parkash; Sarah Benjamin; Alfie Heaps; Laura Gladstone, Karen Redhead, Anuska Shantilal; Chris Taylor,

Attendees Maxine Deslandes (Deputy Chief Operating Officer); Matt Fawcett (Deputy Principal, Planning, Policy and Projects); James Taylor (Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality)); Owen Rees (Director of Governance)

1 Attendance

Apologies had been received from Cecilia Harvey, Adrien Ong, Suzanne Lyne, Shawez Mir and Anil Nagpal.

Denise Charles, who was due to present at the start of the meeting, was unable to attend and would present at the December meeting.

The Chair welcomed Mohammed Elias Ali and Anuska Shantilal who had been elected as student governors.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes and Matters Arising

Resolved, That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2025 be approved as a correct record.

Information regarding bootcamps and other bids had been circulated as required and was further covered in the CEO's report.

4 Chair's Action - Application of Seal

Resolved, That the Chair's Action, and the application of the seal to the Deed of Release from the LPFA Legal Charge, be noted.

5 CEO Update

The CEO & Principal presented her regular written update, which covered relevant strategic matters.

1. Start to the year

The CEO noted that, as set out separately in the Funding Update, initial 16-19 enrolment numbers were positive, and exceeded the previous year's, with 30% more new learners and 18% more leavers progressing. This was likely to mean that the College was eligible for in year growth funding, which would potentially offset part of the reduction resulting from the previous year's lower enrolment.

2. Budget Update

The CEO noted that a table within her report showed the income secured from Bootcamps, as well as from other potential sources of income. This table would be included in future iterations of the management accounts to allow governors to track the area. The total income target had been set as £800k within the budget plan, with £625k of that secured. The Board discussed the position in relation to the Bootcamps. The Deputy Principal (Planning, Projects and Partnerships) reported that the College had written confirmation of the award of £300k of Bootcamps, with 25% of this subject to successful outcomes. In response to a question from a governor, the DP (PPP) outlined the way in which the income would be received and the assurance that could be given.

The Board discussed the potential for shortfalls in income in this area. The CEO noted that she was reasonably confident that the overall target of £800k would be met and that potential variation would be within the normal range of risk in the College's budget.

3. Government Update

The CEO noted that there had been a number of external developments of note, including the release of the new Ofsted Framework, the report on the Further Education sector by the Education Select Committee and the announcements made by the Prime Minister at the Labour Party Conference. There would be further announcements including the Post 16 White Paper, the Curriculum and Assessment Review and the move of Adult Skills Funding into the Department for Work & Pensions.

Governors asked about the opportunities that could be open for the College and the wider sector. The CEO noted that the White Paper would

enable greater clarity for future planning, and the target of two thirds of young people at university or in a high-quality apprenticeship aligned well with the College's Higher-Level Skills Strategy. She also welcomed the reintroduction of maintenance grants and the potential increased focus from two Secretaries of State holding responsibility in relation to skills.

A governor asked about the College's plans to move towards a higher Ofsted grade. The CEO noted that there was a substantially different framework coming in to place, but there remained a strong focus on working with teachers to continuously improve what happened in classrooms, with the aim of reaching the higher outcomes in the new framework.

The CEO noted that the changes affecting the sector had been also been covered in the Governor Newsletter and would be the subject of the presentation by Julian Gravatt of the Association of Colleges at the January Development Session.

The Chair noted that with the College exiting intervention and achieving a Good Ofsted outcome, the Board should be seeking to be more outward facing and to spend more time on strategic discussions. She would also be seeking to bring other aspects of the college into meetings through short presentations and to increase the opportunities for governors to be in the College, by holding a lunch with students on each site for instance. Governors noted SEND provision to be an area of interest to learn more about.

ACTION Include SEND on list of future items for presentation to governors

6 Operational Plan 2025-26

The Deputy Principal (Planning, Projects and Partnerships) introduced the Operational Plan for 2025-26, which was attached for information.

Governors asked how the plan had been developed. The DP (PPP) reported that it had been cross-referenced with the 5-year Strategic Plan, and the previous year's Operational Plan (which had covered the first year of the Strategic Plan).

A governor asked what areas the Commercial Strategy would cover. The DP (PPP) reported that this would cover IELTS Test Centres and commercial EFL courses but also areas such as lettings. The main aim

was to achieve growth in commercial income as well as stronger monitoring of performance against commercial income targets.

The Board noted that a clearer account of what had moved in and out would assist scrutiny. The CEO noted that the Chair had asked for a clearer line of sight between the Strategic Plan, the Operational Plan and associated Key Performance Indicators in reporting. This would be an area of development through the year.

7 Funding Update

The Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality) presented an update on performance against the College's funding streams, including enrolment information.

He noted that the early data showed that 16-19 learner numbers were substantially above target at all 3 campuses, though further fluctuation was possible. New adult learner enrolment was also up overall; however, there had been a decline at Ealing, with a focus on recruiting to ESOL and Accounting to address this. He noted the effect of lagged 16-19 funding, where there was the potential for the College to receive partial growth funding in-year as well as full funding in 26-27.

A governor asked if the College followed up with learners who had been offered a place and did not attend. The DP (C & Q) confirmed that it did, noting that some younger learners might accept multiple places and make their choice later.

A governor noted that the number of learners progressing at the College had previously been an issue.

Governors asked whether there were any challenges from the increased intake, noting the balancing act between income and provision. The DP (C&Q) noted that there were some challenges for courses in practical subjects. The CEO noted that the College was expecting to receive, and would be pursuing, in year growth funding and that this would be used to ease pressures on resources and teachers where possible.

A governor asked when the reduction in the number of school age children was likely to affect the College. The DP (C & Q) noted that the 16 year old numbers would start to decline by around 2029/30. This would make it key for the College to increase its market share. The CEO noted that this was a priority included in the Operational Plan.

A governor asked where the reduction in sub-contracting would be shown. The CEO noted that this would appear in the Funding Update and

in the reports to the Curriculum & Quality Committee. The Board noted that, while the changes to subcontracting were positive, it would be a challenge for the College to deliver, particularly in the first year.

The Board welcomed the increased enrolment figures, and for hitting the 97% target for adult learners.

8 Management accounts

The Deputy Chief Operating Officer introduced the report, which covered the management accounts to the end of July 2025. The projected outturn for the year including FRS102 was a surplus of £254k with the operating surplus forecast at £101k, which was broadly in line with the figures presented at the previous meeting of the Board. The DCOO set out the measures take in response to in year pressures, including the controls around vacant posts and non-pay expenditure.

The Board welcomed the report and the strong predicted financial health score.

9 Safeguarding Annual Report (2024-25)

The Assistant Principal (Quality, Safeguarding and Learner Experience) introduced the report which had previously been presented to the Curriculum & Quality Committee. She noted that safeguarding at the College was robust and had been validated as effective by the May 2025 Ofsted inspection. Referrals were broadly in line with previous year. The AP (Q, S & LE) highlighted the number of Looked After Children (LAC) and care leavers, and their positive attendance and completion at the College. She also noted that mental health provision was being strengthened.

A governor asked the reasons for the increase in referrals at Southall. The AP (Q,S & LE) clarified this was in line with increased enrolment.

The Board welcomed the assurance provided by the annual safeguarding report and thanked staff for their work.

10 Safeguarding Policy (Children & Vulnerable Adults)

The AP (Q,S and LE), introduced the policy, which had previously been presented to the Curriculum & Quality Committee. She outlined the changes to the policy, which were in relation to AI and Online Safety, Misogyny and Sexual Harassment and strengthening areas including training and improved procedures for reporting, recording and

monitoring. Finally, following feedback from the Curriculum & Quality Committee, the policy had been amended and retitled to explicitly refer to Vulnerable Adults as well as children, in line with the practice covered.

Resolved, that the Safeguarding Policy (Children & Vulnerable Adults) be agreed.

11 Prevent Strategy and Prevent Action Plan (2025-26)

The AP (Q,S and LE), introduced the strategy, which had previously been presented to the Curriculum & Quality Committee. She noted that the updated Prevent Strategy reflected changes to the national threat level and the revised Prevent Duty Guidance for Further Education Institutions (December 2023). This included a greater emphasis on online radicalisation and self-initiated terrorism, with a focus on preventing risks through strengthened monitoring systems and staff vigilance. In response to a question from a governor, she confirmed that mandatory training for staff was completed in the summer and early Autumn; this had been well received, with the use of scenario-based learning popular with staff.

The Chair noted that the Committee had suggested removing the risk assessments from the action plan when this was updated for 26-27 and this had been agreed.

Resolved, that the Prevent Strategy be approved.

12 Membership Update

The Director of Governance introduced the report, which set out the current membership of the Board. He noted that there was ongoing recruitment for the Chairs of the Audit and Curriculum & Quality Committees; further recruitment would be necessary and would be discussed at the Search & Governance Committee on 6 November 2025.

Resolved, that Cecilia Harvey be appointed to a four-year term with effect from 9 October 2025 and that,

Cecilia Harvey and Carole Kitching be appointed to the Finance & General Purposes Committee pending a review of Committee memberships at the Search and Governance Committee.

13 Curriculum & Quality Committee 23 September 2025

Carole Kitching had chaired the Committee and summarised the outcomes of the meeting. She noted that two items in relation to safeguarding and one in relation to Prevent were covered elsewhere on the agenda.

She reported that 41 out of 42 actions on the Quality Improvement Plan had been completed, with improvements noted in first-time pass rates and work experience completion (94%). The Committee had also reviewed attendance, which reached 84.2%, exceeding the college target across all colleges and groups, particularly among 16–18-year-olds. The Committee had also received the final Learner Voice Survey for 2024-25. This showed an improved response rate, but the Committee had asked for further information about which categories of learners were completing the survey with a view to increasing this further. Finally, the Committee had reviewed the Teaching and Learning report, which showed 94% of lesson observations were meeting expectations or above, and discussed the likely areas of focus in the next Quality Improvement Plan.

14 Audit Committee 2 October 2025

Kunal Parkash summarised the outcomes of the meeting. The Committee had reviewed internal and external audit reports, risk management, and governance matters. Scrutton Bland presented three internal audit reports, with Reasonable assurance given for Business Continuity and Funding Assurance, but with Limited assurance for HR Performance Management. Governors were informed that a new appraisal and probation system was being implemented to address this.

TIAA would replace Scrutton Bland under the new contract, with the proposed Internal Audit Plan by TIAA reviewed, with procurement suggested for inclusion. Subcontracting was also reviewed, with plans to retain only specialist delivery by the Rhythm Studio discussed earlier in the meeting

The Strategic Risk Register had been updated, reducing risks from 10 to 9 with the summary paper included with the Board papers. The Committee would be initiating a deep dive on key risks.

It was noted that 25 audit recommendations remained outstanding. One external audit recommendation had been implemented, and no issues were found in the draft Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire. Governors discussed training preferences and recommended governance updates for Board approval.

15 Finance & General Purposes Committee

Phillip Kerle summarised the outcomes of the meeting. He noted that the management accounts had been presented elsewhere on the agenda, and that Estates would be discussed in more detail at the session planned for 21 October with Peter Marsh. The Gender Pay Gap and Annual HR Reports had been deferred

16 Terms of Reference: Finance & General Purposes Committee, Curriculum & Quality Committee and Audit Committee

The DoG introduced the report, which set out revised committee terms of reference (ToR). The ToR had been reviewed and agreed by the three committees. Changes were principally to bring references and titles up to date.

Resolved, that the revised Terms of Reference for the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Curriculum & Quality Committee and Audit Committee be agreed.

17 Cycle of Business (2025-26)

The DoG introduced the report, which set out the Cycle of Business for the Board and the three Committees. The Cycle of Business had been reviewed and agreed by the three committees to have met.

Resolved, that the Cycle of Business for the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Curriculum & Quality Committee and Audit Committee be agreed.

18 Code of Conduct (2025-26)

The DoG introduced the report, which set out the revised Code of Conduct. The underlying model code of conduct had been updated to reflect the abolition of the Education and Skills Funding Agency. In addition, a further amendment was proposed, which committed governors to attend one college event or undertake one visit per year; a programme would be provided to governors to assist with this.

Resolve, that the revised Code of Conduct be agreed.

19 Any other business

There was none

20 Review of meeting

The Board reviewed the meeting, and agreed that the

21 Next meeting

6.00 pm on Tuesday 9 December 2025.