

External Board Review



**CHRIST THE KING SIXTH
FORMS COLLEGE**

Reviewer: David Wright

JULY 2026

Version	Approved by Board Reviewer	Date
Draft	10/07/2026	
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Executive Summary

The process for AoC's External Board Review is based on the statutory requirements set out in relevant government legislation and the DfE conditions of funding. The review approach is aligned to national expectations and is continually refined through extensive sector experience to ensure it remains rigorous, credible, and up to date. AoC has developed and updated the framework following completion of the initial pilots and the first round of reviews. The framework considers, but is not limited to, principles from the Codes of Governance, the Education Inspection Framework, Office for Students requirements, and the Department for Education's guidance on External Board Reviews.

The objective of the Review is to identify the strengths of the colleges governance arrangements and where there are development needs, identifying actions based on sector good practice, to bring about governance improvement.

An initial scoping meeting was held prior to commencement of the review to outline the review process and to identify any key areas of focus. Reference is made to the outcomes of the most recent external review and actions taken to address areas for development.

Emerging findings have been discussed throughout the review in a developmental and inclusive approach that supports college improvement and seeks to share best practice. An initial findings meeting was held prior to completion of the draft report to ensure factual accuracy.

Following moderation, a draft report was shared with the Co Chair's, Clerk to the Corporation and senior leaders on 29 July 2026 to ensure factual accuracy and this report includes their feedback.

Recommendations and action for consideration are set out in this report and should be reviewed as part of the current Governance Development plan which will be considered and updated at the end of the academic year and is intended to be the subject of further discussion at the 2026 autumn Board meeting. A meeting to present this report to the Board has been arranged for 15 September 2026.

The full report sets out the main findings made against the 3 Board dimensions in the Framework along with the key evidence that informs those findings.

The following table summarises the headline strengths and areas for development:

DIMENSION	STRENGTH	AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT
BOARD COMPOSITION	- Experienced and committed governors with wide-ranging skills and experience - Good and effective use of governors' particular skills in different committees and working groups to provide supportive challenge to senior leaders. - Commitment to the principles of good and effective Governance	- Maintain a regular and robust review of Board membership and search with FE, Accountancy, Legal and IT/AI expertise as a focus for future appointments - Consider further use of co-opted members to widen the knowledge and skills base of the current board
BOARD STRUCTURE	- Good alignment of key strategic decisions with core values, vision and strategy - A robust, transparent and professional format for reporting key information to the Board - Challenging, conscientious and	- Keep under review the Board operating structure by extending the delegation of responsibility and scrutiny at Committee level - Seek to implement a stronger and improved upon local board focus in addressing current and future needs

	objective in seeking assurance in all areas of risk. • Effective governance practice via Committee structure and strategy meetings	• Consider whether further refinement of Board papers is possible with greater use of cover sheets to maximise Governor attention on key issues arising from any paper
BOARD INTERACTION	• Good visible team ethic, spirit of inclusion, support and engagement • Strong engagement that creates impact on how the college offer meets student and community needs • Collective responsibility demonstrated at Board and committee level allowing for joint ownership of decisions	• Board to consider the introduction of informal "How did we do" checks/evaluation on Governance papers and presentation reflection • Consider if appropriate the inclusion of team/peer development/knowledge-based update sessions to improve Governor understanding, confidence and effectiveness in role. • Continue with and develop process for individual Governor and Chair's reviews considering external support if appropriate

Fig 1

Concluding Judgement

The overall conclusion on Board effectiveness is that: there is strong evidence the Board is highly proficient and consistently impacts positively on college strategy, effectiveness, and outcomes

The board demonstrates strong behaviours' and characteristics associated with a high performing board (committed, confident, curious, challenging, collaborative, critical, creative) is innovative and transparent with a strong mix of skills, experience and understands collective responsibility in decision making. The board has developed strong and effective governance with back-office systems in place to support overall college improvement and continues to adapt to change over time and in response to feedback.

The reviewer has examined the way in which you observe the Nolan Principles and your adopted Code of Governance and the extent to which the culture of the Board focusses on outcomes. The Board demonstrates integrity and responsiveness.

The board mission ethos and vision as a Catholic sixth form college is evident across the College at all levels. Values are strongly represented through the catholic life at all three sites. There is a strong focus on strategic objectives and priorities in all areas of planning, documentation and in engaging the board with key strategy review days

The Board takes time to consider the student experience, quality of provision and evidence-based decision making, all governors see the student as central to all their decision making; clear collective responsibility operates and there is attention to what is required to be done.

There is much that is strong and positive about governance arrangements at Christ the King Sixth Forms, with robust and professional Board interaction. Whilst there would be benefit in the Board continuing to keep its Board structures under review for the future, there is transparency of information and a healthy approach to evaluating how governance is operating in seeking further improvement, with the Board consistently measuring impact on college strategy, effectiveness and outcomes. It was evident throughout the review that there is a clear drive towards continuous improvement demonstrated at meeting observations, individual board members interviews, Governor survey responses and in the quality of reports tabled at all committee and board meetings

The Governing Body is inclusive, well informed and equipped to actively oversee its strategic objectives. Governors understand its context well and monitor its progress closely, offering senior managers both support, scrutiny and challenge in equal measure. They monitor performance and students' achievements closely and are open with views on college strengths and weaknesses. They

receive regular updates on local and national issues. Their expertise in curriculum, finance, audit, strategy, human resources, marketing, and estates management is used to support the development of the College in a productive way.

The Board gives strategic leadership to the College, works carefully in reviewing the progress against strategic ambitions and has taken a strong and successful approach in ensuring financial sustainability.

Our Approach

This External Board Review was undertaken by David Wright over the period April to July 2026. The methodology followed a ten-stage approach:

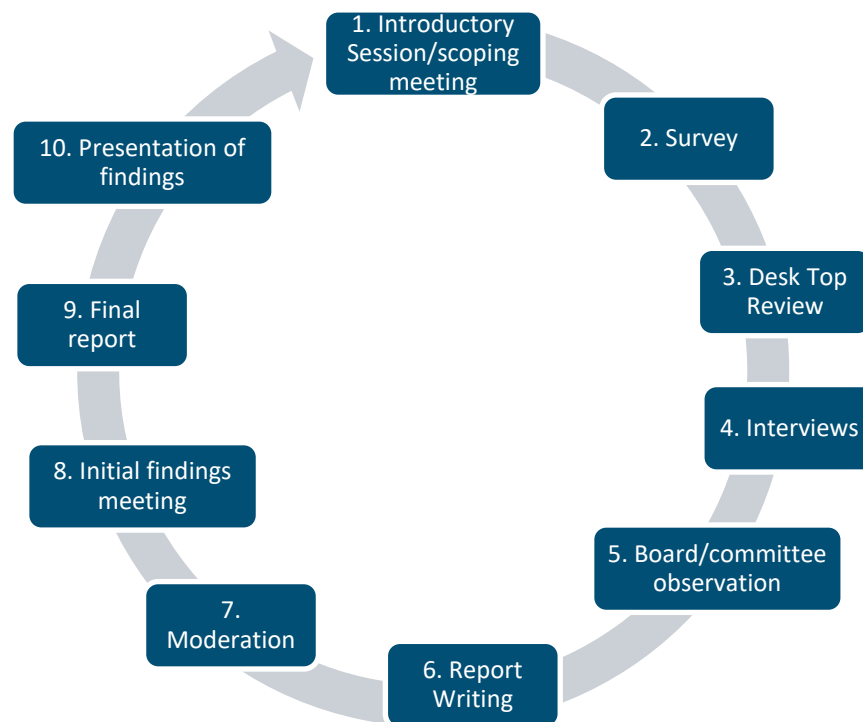


Fig. 2

The Review process used with the Board of Christ the King Sixth Forms was as follows:

- An initial planning and scoping meeting was held on 26 March 2026 with Chairs, Clerk to the Corporation and Executive Principal to agree the approach, set the timeframe for review activities. It was agreed at the meeting that the focus for the review would be to apply the standard framework and identify high level strengths together with key areas of development. In addition, the reviewer was invited to review the catholic character, ethos and mission of this sixth form college.
- An online survey was issued to all Board members on the 06 May 2026. The survey produced an excellent return rate of 100% from Board members
- A desktop review of selected board and key college documentation was undertaken evidenced from Board portal/website, relevant board papers policies and processes as well as a review of the governance section of the College website
- A comprehensive series of face-to-face or on-line interviews took place with a total of 16 people (over a four-week period) identified and agreed by the college and reviewer
- The Reviewer attended the College's Board meeting in person on 23 June 2026. The Reviewer also attended Audit Committee in person on 03 June 2026, Curriculum and Quality Committee via Teams on 09 June and Finance and Resources committee via Teams on 16 June 2026
- Following completion of the evidence gathering phase, the first draft of the report was written and shared at an initial finding meeting where factual accuracy was checked and agreed amendments made
- The report was subject to AoC moderation
- The final report including recommendations and actions was issued to the College on XXX and will be presented to the Board on 15 September 2026.

The remainder of this report is structured to set out key messages across the following Review Dimensions and Board Outcomes:

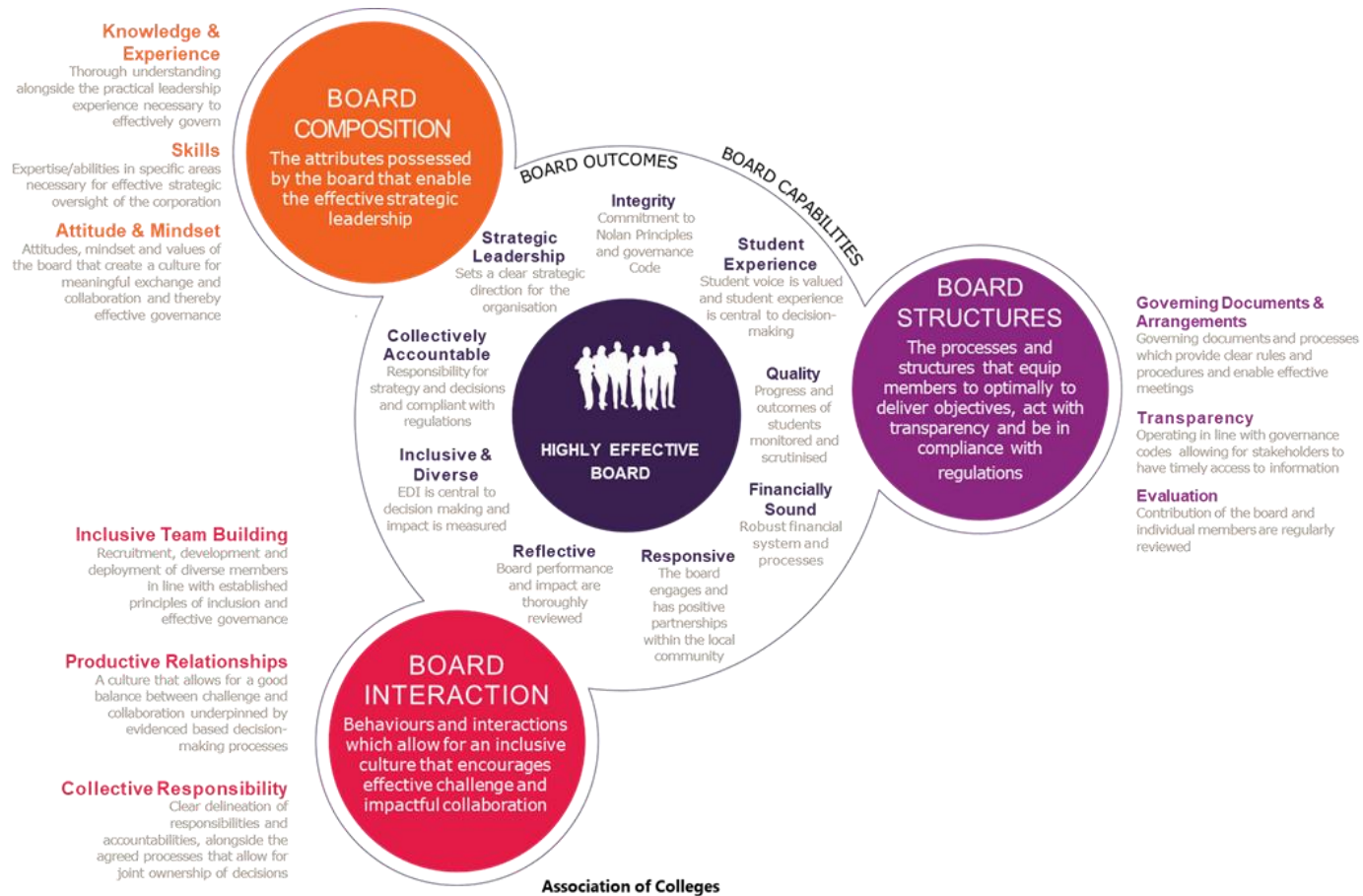


Fig. 3

Background to the College

Christ the King is an incorporated Catholic Sixth Form college providing education exclusively for young people aged 16-19 (circa 2200) across three sixth forms located in Southeast London. Established in 1992, Christ the King was initially set up as the shared sixth form for seven local partner schools. Subsequently the College has established two further sixth forms in Brockley and Sidcup and attracts students from partner schools and from a wide area across London. In the intervening years, through several inspections, Christ the King has been consistently graded as good or better. The latest Ofsted inspection 2023 graded the college as Good with areas of outstanding performance noted.

Christ the King successfully delivered on the strategic objective, to reconfigure all Sixth Forms to provide a comprehensive sixth form curriculum offer through a focused approach at each site. Collectively the Sixth Forms offer an academic and vocational curriculum for students at Levels 1-3, through this strategic specialised approach.

Aquinas, located in Brockley, has a highly academic focus, delivering A Level qualification. With a strong emphasis on subject knowledge and academic rigor, courses are intensive and challenging.

Emmanuel, located in Blackheath, has a vocational focus, delivering applied academic and technical qualifications, each in a specific occupational context. These are demanding programmes framed by leading universities and employers and there is a strong emphasis on the occupational knowledge and academic skills required to achieve the top grades.

St Mary's, located in Bexley on the London/Kent border, has a combined academic and professional studies focus and delivers both A Levels and Applied Technical qualifications. There is a strong focus on academic rigour and occupational standards and students can specialise or combine their studies.

Governors recognise that equality, diversity, and inclusion is a fundamental value of the Board. Many referred to the Lewisham, Bexley, Sidcup area being one of the most diverse communities in the country. They noted an aspiration for the College to be seen as a sector leader in EDI and recognised that there was further work to be undertaken both within the Board and the wider College.

This review evidenced significant progress in several areas of Governance arrangements stemming from the last external board review undertaken in July 2023. All Governors were positive with comments on governance change, development and progress

arising from the previous review recommendations in areas of composition, structure and interaction which have now been fully implemented.

The College retains a strong financial position with a current financial health grade of outstanding

Board Composition

The attributes possessed by the Board that enable effective strategic leadership

Background

Board composition refers to the attributes possessed by the Board that combine to enable effective strategic leadership. An evaluation of the Board's composition involved an analysis of the knowledge and experience of members that are essential for effective governance and strategic oversight and the attitude and mindset that fosters independent thought and a commitment to the principles of good governance.

Findings

What attributes (skills, knowledge, mindset/attitude) does the Board possess currently and what additional attributes would it need to meet its objectives?

The Board has places for 16 governors, currently comprising 10 Foundation governors, the Executive Principal, two staff governors and three student governors. The Board membership and composition currently has one Foundation governor vacancy and is supported by co-opted and associate member places. The board has been significantly refreshed providing an inclusive, balanced group with a mix of skills, experience and backgrounds. The AoC Code of Good Governance in English Colleges has been adopted and is followed. Governance self-assessments have been regularly carried out and form part of the college wide SAR each year. The Governance survey and meeting observations highlighted the good working relationships between governors and the senior leadership team, and this has been further developed with the revision and expansion of Link Governor roles evidenced during the review. The continued practice of informal discussion sessions involving Governors with staff and students is yet further positive evidence of progress in this area.

The Board comprises a strong mix of people with wide-ranging skills and experience in its membership, including good curriculum and education, finance including qualified accountants with a range of private/public business sector backgrounds. The Board operates clear policies concerning Governor appointments and terms of office which are adhered to, allowing for refresh. The work associated with the alumni (former students) in recent appointments to the Board was noted as part of the review.

The Board has no immediate needs in terms of number of Board members but recognises that additional finance, Legal, FE and IT/AI Management member appointments would be useful additions (provided suitable Governors can be identified) and as a result

widen the experience, knowledge and skills of the current Board. Maintaining the skills gap analysis, talent spotting and greater use of co-opted or associate members/Governors is an area the Board could address as part of the wider Board development plan.

The Board understands its context well, is aware of what needs to be done and monitors its progress closely, offering senior managers both support, scrutiny and challenge in equal measures. The Board scrutinise performance and students' achievements closely and are open with views on college strengths and weaknesses. They receive regular updates on local and national issues. Their expertise in curriculum, finance, Audit, HR management is used to support the development of the college in a productive way.

The Governing Body utilises an efficient committee structure. Some responsibilities are delegated to committees; others are reviewed in detail by committees before decisions are made at Board level. A robust structure is in place for all committee meetings demanding a good deal from Board members. The ability to develop additional ad hoc working groups, for example where CTK sixth forms best fits has enabled the Board and senior leaders to maintain progress on specific developments without losing focus on core board responsibilities and activities.

In addition to the main Corporation, the Board is supported by five committees, each with defined membership levels and meeting at varying frequencies:

- Audit and Risk – 4 times pa
- Curriculum and Quality – 4 times pa
- Finance Resources and Business – 4 times pa
- Search and Governance – 3 times pa
- Remuneration – once pa.

To supplement the above, the Board and Committees have three local Boards which meet regularly throughout the academic year, and two advisory Boards meet three times per academic year. This is a very demanding schedule of meetings on an annual basis and Governance workloads must be managed accordingly.

All governors expressed appreciation for the work of the Clerk in support of them both individually and collectively. She is seen as being fully informed, available, and responsive to requests and highly diligent and efficient in the administration of all Governance arrangements. Committee chairs were particularly grateful for the support received. She is readily contactable and reliable in responding to requests.

As part of a strategic governance initiative, three Local Boards were introduced at each site, in 2020/21, each one is chaired by the site Deputy Principal and supported by a Foundation Governor. Local Boards continue to focus on stakeholder engagement and

strengthening relationships with Employers, Universities, and local communities and for reviewing the appropriateness of and strategic focus and progress internal and external.

The current Strategic plan 2025 to 2030 is now in place. Strong evidence was available during the review on the process of construction, implementation and review of this plan at Board level. Governors demonstrated during meetings positive engagement and understanding of strategic drivers and objectives within the current plan but also recognising the College must remain agile and flexible in addressing external changes which may impact on aspects of college development into the future.

The Board was actively involved in shaping the current Strategic Plan from early 2025 which was seen by all Board members as a tangible benefit in increasing knowledge, strategic oversight and providing focus for Board performance and review.

While the Board has informed much of what has been achieved certainly over the last strategic planning cycle there remains much to do with a landscape of both external and internal change. The Board remains focused on avoiding complacency and has ambitious and constructive strategic plans in place which are seeking to develop the college into the future. A managed focus on college performance and key performance measures at board level is essential to continued success.

More emphasis on Curriculum planning, estates strategy and a student marketing plan will be required in support of this new strategic plan and in emerging key trends around Curriculum change, Qualification reform, Ofsted framework of inspection, Catholic life inspection and student enrolment, retention and attendance. The board are aware that an Ofsted inspection is anticipated at some point soon which will provide further evidence to enable the board to shape future strategic priorities.

Environmental sustainability is a fundamental element of the current strategic Plan. Governors were engaged in the development and refinement of this. It sets out the College's ambitions both in reducing its own operational environmental impact and raising student awareness of sustainability through course content and enrichment activity. Several examples were provided on positive change to the carbon footprint at the College linked to infrastructure improvements.

In line with this strategy key performance measures and milestones are well documented and understood at all Committee meetings and sufficient time is evidenced in minutes and discussion in meetings produces a strong level of challenge from members.

The Board's mission, ethos, vision and strategy is evident across the College at each site and all levels. Values are strongly represented and evidenced through daily life on each site. The College and Board have a clear vision of being committed to the principles of good governance, being ethical and mission focused and very aware of the community it serves. Governors seek to carefully balance this role with the need to ensure the financial sustainability of the College. Governors pointed to the regular debate over provision for students' learning needs. The health and wellbeing of students is very important to the board and strong examples

of learning support were provided during the review. The Board's view has consistently been that it is part of the College's mission and ethos to provide education and care for all students, if the financial health of the organisation can support it. This was clearly demonstrated during the review and observed at meetings retaining the Board's integrity in adhering to its stated mission ethos, strategy and values.

Board structural change and succession planning is an area which is kept under review by the Chair and key Board members within the search and governance committee. Further engagement, discussion, and decisions with Board members on succession planning are both essential and necessary. A managed plan is in place and reviewed to support the board with implementation and transition when appropriate.

Board members are aware that the next 12 months in terms of the management of change is important. A carefully managed transition of responsibilities at board/senior leader level is essential to continued success. Interim senior management restructuring arrangements have been agreed at board level in July and will take effect from September 2026.

Board/College structural change and succession planning is an ongoing area for further consideration with action and planned implementation by the end of the 2027 calendar year. Further engagement, discussion, and strategic decision making with Board members is planned.

The Board are acutely aware of the need to avoid complacency and to build upon the current Governance structure and arrangements including further Governor team development.

Where CTK sixth forms best sit in the future, with schools or remain in the FE sector, is an important development for the Board. This has been a priority for the Board for the past three years. Should academisation be the chosen route, consideration must be given to the impact, and benefits this might bring

The College Board has recently undertaken an annual self-assessment review and graded Governance as very strong but is not complacent and seeks to challenge all aspects of college wide governance arrangements with a robust internal review process in place.

Conclusions

The Review has identified that **Board composition currently is strong** necessary for the effective strategic oversight of the corporation, strategic thinking, analysis and synthesis of information and communication

BOARD COMPOSITION	
STRENGTH	AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT
1. Experienced and committed governors with wide-ranging skills and experience	1. Maintain a regular and robust review of Board membership and search with FE, Accountancy, Legal and IT/AI expertise as a focus for future appointments
2. Good use of governors' particular skills in different committees and working groups	2. Consider further use of co-opted members to widen the knowledge and skills base of the current board
3. Strong evidence on the commitment to the principles of good and effective Governance	

Fig. 4

Board Structures

The processes and structures that equip members to optimally deliver objectives, act with transparency and be compliant with regulations

Background

Board Structures include all the arrangements for governance and the documents and processes that provide clear rules and procedures for conducting effective meetings. Operating in line with an approved code of governance and ensuring stakeholders have timely access to information to support transparency is key to good governance. This section also considers how the board evaluates and reports on its performance and that of its individual members.

Findings

Do current Board structures equip Governors to optimally engage with each other to deliver the College objectives effectively, with transparency and in compliance with Regulations?

Currently governors appreciate the wide exposure they have in Board meetings to the key aspects of quality and finance and these being the clear responsibility of all, which is valued.

Governors generally felt that, while decisions were all made within the framework of both the Nolan Principles and the College's vision, ethos, mission and strategy, cross-reference to these fundamental values would help. The Board might consider whether to directly confirm and record the alignment of key strategic decisions with core values, vision and strategy within Board papers.

A robust structure is in place for all Committee meetings demanding a good deal from Board members and senior leaders to maintain progress on college developments without losing focus on core board responsibilities and activities. Committee structures should be kept under review including Chair of committee roles.

Governors have a widely held view that student experience is at the heart of the running of the College. The Board shares this and is conscious of testing all decisions and plans against the impact on students. It was noted during discussion that Governor participation in Link roles and learning walks have been strengthened and Governors are well informed of, and encouraged to participate in, learning walks and other college activities to triangulate the student experience and performance information provided to the Board. The wider use of Link Governor roles and the possible introduction of professional conversation sessions involving Governors across the College with students and staff may add value to the strategic alignment and engagement at board level. Both chairs of committees and the full Board are recognised for managing discussions in an inclusive manner. Attention is given to drawing out relevant comments from staff and all governors. From observation of meetings, it is seen that there is a tendency for

Board members who have accessed the meeting remotely to be somewhat removed from the discussion. It is inherent in hybrid meetings that those not in the room occasionally are less confident to contribute as effectively as those present. This is an area the Board may wish to keep under review and monitor effectiveness in the future.

The key to successful operation of a committee-based governance structure is to have an honest, open and transparent process. Instances of significantly divergent views expressed within the Board appear to be rare. Where they have occurred, the Chair, together with key committee chairs, have sought to resolve the issue sensitively through patient debate, further detailed work in advance of further discussion and decision at the Corporation meeting and to reach an acceptable position with which all are prepared to agree.

There is evidence that strategic decision making happens at whole Board level is student centered whilst scrutiny and monitoring is the focus for committees, with careful delegation to enable this to work. It is suggested that the Board considers and keeps under review whether further delegation of scrutiny would be the appropriate way forward for all the Committee and groups that currently operate. It may, for instance, be valuable to test out specific delegation and then to review how these delegations operate over the course of a year, considering in the longer term both Board engagement on the range of issues and providing more space at the Board for strategic discussion. It would also seem to make sense for the Board to continue with the formation of ad hoc working groups as necessary to strengthen strategic direction and decision making.

Board meeting agendas are concise in length and comprise of detailed papers. Each Board meeting starts by reviewing the current risk position, which provides a very useful overview and sets a helpful context for discussions. This good practice has been developed further to influence Governors' focus on the constructed agenda by including executive summaries at the head of each paper which directs Board members to key areas for discussion and decision. There is currently a strong system of reporting from key managers. Papers are well focused on strategic ambitions.

The performance of the College is reviewed against key performance indicators and targets mainly at committee level. Curriculum matters are considered within Curriculum and Quality, and financial performance is scrutinised at Finance and Resources, Audit and Risk address all matters relating to the risk management framework and assurance college wide. It was observed that committee members challenge performance and quality data presented to them by senior leaders and subsequently report to the Board at the following meeting. Governors have a full understanding of this delegated structure and exhibit trust in the quality of work undertaken at committee level. Additional ad hoc working groups report in a similar manner and are consistent with their remit and terms of reference.

The Audit Committee has a strong focus on assurance which guides its considerations, and it commences with a review of the current risk management framework and analysis, setting the tone for its work.

The continued input from advisory groups on Audit and Risk and Compliance and Safeguarding provide ongoing assurance, introducing aspects of best practice sector wide and in meeting regulatory requirements.

Executive summaries to each Board paper continue to significantly help identify key points for discussion which were evidenced by Governors throughout the review process. The ongoing review of the intended content of reports could be developed further, which should help with focus, judgements and decision making.

There would also be benefit in reviewing a framework for authors writing reports which encourages presentation around the actions being requested of governors and making sure that 'so what' factors are considered to develop this college's framework.

The Governors portal is well used, and several Governors commented on the effectiveness and efficiency gained from the use of this resource.

Board agendas do have intended timings published to governors and agreed by the Chair. Meetings are chaired well and generally keep to time, no doubt assisted by the indicative timing agenda, providing this to everyone attending is a good indicator to all, both of progress through a meeting and the relative importance being given to various items.

Terms of reference are clear for the standing committees. If any of these Committees are given wider delegation of scrutiny functions, then what they take on will need to be carefully recorded within the terms of reference.

The instrument and Articles of Government and the Standing Orders are reviewed together with other key Governance documents as part of the annual cycle of business for all Committees. The use of practices such as written resolutions was evidenced during the review improving efficiency of working.

Governance information on the website is easy to find and updated as appropriate.

The College has adopted a risk management strategy that seeks to continuously monitor and mitigate risks to the College. The Audit and Risk committee is robust in its challenge of the risk management process and believes it to be fit for purpose. A robust Board assurance framework is in place, and this view was reinforced by the internal and external auditor's annual reports, minutes of meetings and documentation provided during the review process. There is evidence from meeting minutes that the Audit committee regularly challenges the risks and mitigation measures appropriately and is fully engaged in the development of the internal audit programme. Issues for the programme are brought forward by the management team, the internal auditors and governors in response to pressures within the college and more widely in the sector. Internal audits are used to review the suitability and integrity of internal controls.

Governors stated in discussion that the Audit process is both robust and effective and have confidence that actions arising from Audit reviews are promptly acted upon and reported to the committee/Board as evidenced in minutes.

Governors are acutely aware of the key activity and the attendant risks that pose both financial and reputational challenges.

Some new governors were not always clear on how key strategic risks are considered at Board level and importantly how the whole board appetite for risk is established. The Board should consider how it might improve communication and understanding of its risk appetite. Perhaps a thematic session addressing this topic would be appropriate in developing understanding from a maturing board.

Minutes of meetings currently record accurately both discussion and challenge arising from the questions that governors ask, and the answers provided. The use of a challenge log to monitor follow up and impact could be a useful development of the current process.

The Board and senior leaders recognise that stakeholder engagement is an ongoing challenge, but evidence was provided and noted during the review of a concerted effort made by the Board and senior leaders to improve this area. The progress with Parent forums was one such example of good practice and impact at board level. Local boards are now well established but now necessitate further review in line with the current strategic objectives. With the increasing requirement in the sector to demonstrate that colleges are meeting the local, regional, and national needs of employers, it is important that governors are involved in both the promotion of the College to external stakeholders and in gaining the assurance that these needs are met. Local boards can and should play an important role within stakeholder engagement.

Conclusions

The Review has identified that **Board Structure currently is strong** with further areas of development identified.

BOARD STRUCTURES	
STRENGTH	AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT
1. Good alignment of key strategic decisions with core values, vision and strategy	1. Keep under review the Board operating structure by extending the delegation of responsibility and scrutiny at committee level
2. A robust, transparent and professional format for reporting key information to the Board	2. Seek to implement a stronger and improved upon local board focus in addressing current and future needs
3. Challenging, conscientious and objective in seeking assurance in all areas of risk.	3. Consider whether further refinement of Board papers is possible with greater use of cover sheets to maximise Governor attention on key issues arising from any paper
4. Effective governance practice via Committee structure and strategy meetings	

Fig. 5

Board Interaction

Behaviours and interactions which allow for an inclusive culture that encourages effective challenge and impacts on collaboration

Background

Board interaction looks at the recruitment, development and deployment of diverse members in line with established principles of inclusion and effective governance and how productive board relationships can support collective responsibility and accountability.

Board meetings take place in person and committee/other group meetings take place currently through hybrid or online arrangements. There is good attendance both for meetings in person and online. There is a clear governor engagement, and governors understand their role and responsibilities. Governors support a range of college activities and events outside of formal meetings and engage in their link roles. Regular meetings are scheduled between the Chair and Principal in addition to Chair of Committee meetings. The triumvirate of Chair, Executive Principal and Clerk to Corporation is a mature professional and effective working relationship.

Findings

Are planned interactions between Board members organised to allow for the most effective deployment of individual and collective skills to meet College goals?

Key to guiding the behaviours and interaction of the Board are the Nolan Principles for service in public life. All governors were aware of these principles and believe that the Board abides by, and exemplifies them in its decisions, individual behaviours and actions between effective support and challenge and the demands put on governor's time and commitment to the college.

Governors clearly enjoy their engagement and support of the college and are committed and enthusiastic. Personal attendance at meetings is high, with most governors having an 85% plus attendance record. Governors overall share good working relationships, which are assisted by the opportunities to socialise and interact before Board meetings. A strong and mature, respectful and inclusive culture of collective responsibility is evident with the Board.

Board meetings are well chaired, and all governors are encouraged to take part, with questions or comments invited by the Chair as a routine part of meetings. There is good engagement with students and staff via governor meetings and regular opportunities are provided to hear from the student community. Other committee meetings observed were purposeful and there was good interaction

between members in working online. Chair meetings facilitate information sharing and planning of governance business effectively and this works well.

The Board has worked well with the senior leadership team in developing strategies to take the college forward and there is evidence of a collaborative spirit.

An effective and professional working relationship is well established involving the Chair, Executive Principal and Clerk to the corporation which continues to be refined subject to college needs. A combination of formal and informal meetings is regularly timetabled as part of the cycle of business. Given the changes planned for September 2026 these arrangements should stay in place.

The Board has agreed to move towards a paperless system for Committee and main board meetings. The reviewer recognised that significant efforts have been made to streamline the Board and committee papers with the use of executive summaries. However, from observation at meetings as part of this review, further refinement is still possible, which may provide yet more focus for Governor's contributions at meetings resulting in better informed decision making.

The Board has a thoughtful and conscientious Co-Chair arrangement with excellent strategic, Education/FE and Board experience who have served as governors, vice Chair and Chair for the last six years. Board members rightly value the work in the role and the caring, careful and responsible way in which they carry out the role is apparent and effective.

The clerk could usefully request feedback from governors, either at the meeting or immediately thereafter, about the quality of papers and presentations, using this to provide guidance to the senior management team. At the same time, a quick "How did we do?" self-assessment survey to governors would encourage them to reflect on their own individual and collective performance at each meeting.

In seeking to run efficient and time-limited meetings it is important that delays in accessing remotely are avoided. This can be because of either technology failures or user unfamiliarity. It is advisable that anyone accessing remotely is requested to log on well before the start of the meeting to allow for any issues to be resolved. Additionally, with the system in use currently at different locations, any member accessing a hybrid meeting remotely can receive a very restricted view of the meeting room and other participants. This limits their ability to effectively contribute to the meeting.

The Search and Governance Committee takes care to consider a range of factors in governor recruitment. Care is taken to review the induction arrangements for new governors and to consider training and development for all. Governor induction should be reviewed on an annual basis and indeed a revised Induction programme with handbook is planned for 2026/27. All new governors reported that their induction had been effective and so clearly the current arrangements do meet needs but should be regularly monitored. There are several governor development activities provided throughout the year in association with meetings and opportunities to take part

in external events are regularly offered. These were evidenced from the survey and individual meetings with Governors, but consideration should be given towards reviewing Governor training in role with specific reference to the FE 16-19 sector and college wider needs.

Conclusions

The Review has identified that **Board Interaction currently is good** based on a clear delineation of responsibilities and accountabilities alongside agreed processes that allow for joint ownership of decisions.

BOARD INTERACTION	
STRENGTH	AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT
1. Good visible team ethic, spirit of inclusion, support and engagement	1. Board to consider the introduction of informal “How did we do” checks/evaluation on Governance papers and presentation reflection
2. Strong engagement that creates impact on how the college offer meets student and community needs	2. Consider if appropriate the inclusion of team/peer development/knowledge-based update sessions to improve Governor understanding, confidence and effectiveness in role
3. Collective responsibility demonstrated at Board and committee level allowing for joint ownership of decisions	3. Continue with and develop process for individual Governor and Chair’s reviews considering external support if appropriate

Fig. 6

In assessing overall Board effectiveness, the reviewer has focused on the core functions of a Governing Body:

- setting and communicating the College educational character, strategy and goals
- holding executive leaders to account for educational performance and quality of the College and performance of staff
- exercising effective control to ensure that funds and assets are protected and legal obligations are met

Key Board outcomes are shown below:



Fig. 7

Finally, my thanks and appreciation are recorded to all those who have engaged in this review including all governors and staff who gave up their time to meet with the reviewer. Thanks, are also expressed to Linda Harrison Clerk to the Corporation who has worked tirelessly in providing documentation and ensuring that all arrangements have been both smooth and efficient

Concluding Judgement

The overall conclusion on Board effectiveness is that: there is strong evidence the Board is highly proficient and consistently impacts positively on college strategy, effectiveness, and outcomes

Recommendations

This Review has drawn several conclusions about the strengths of the College and areas for development.

These recommendations and action for consideration as set out in this report should be reviewed as part of the current Governance Development plan which will be considered and updated at the end of the academic year and is intended to be the subject of further discussion at the 2026 autumn Board meeting. A meeting to present this report to the Board has been arranged for 15 September 2026.

The reviewer makes the following recommendations:

Summary of Recommendations *(taken from each of the 3 dimensions)*

1 To update the process of Governor Induction and continuing professional development including team development for all Governors to improve overall Board effectiveness.
2 Introduce a review of the Link Governor function and engagement to strengthen relationships with senior leaders and foster improved communication and strategic innovation.
3 To expand the role of local boards to support and influence strategic changes at Board level in a positive manner.
4 To consider further use of co-opted members to widen the knowledge and skills base of the current board in addressing short-term needs or on a task and finish project basis
5 To review the frequency with which the Board undertakes evaluation of individual, and board performance aligned to future strategic need and board operations