

MINUTES

Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Minutes of the Board Meeting
held on Tuesday 12th February 2026
at 18:00 at Barnet Campus

Governors

Present:

Adam Goldstein, Chair
 Neil Coker, CEO/Principal
 Cait O'Riordan (from 6.20pm)
 Tara Jayaratne
 Becky Willis
 Phil Harding
 Mark Taylor
 Amy de Campos
 Omid Mehrizi
 James Edsberg (Teams)
 Amy Cooper
 Jasmine Rosewell Walters
 Adam Morley (Teams)
 Alex Middleton
 Dominic Abbott (Teams)
 Fitwe Kebede (Teams)

In attendance:

Tracey McIntosh, Deputy Principal
 Simon Evans-Evans, COO
 Sarah Surrey, CFO
 Mandi Osoba, Chief People Officer
 Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance
 Kam Nandra, Deputy Principal
 Matthew Kelly, Eversheds (from 6-6.25pm)

Item	Description	Action
1	Preliminary items 1) Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from Thomas Streater, Jenny Jarvis, Diane Moore, Tara Jayaratne and Tulay Rashid-Grant. 2) Declarations of interests Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted. 3) Quorum	

	Director of Governance provided confirmation that the meeting was quorate.	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting 1) Minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2025 The minutes were reviewed, and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions. AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2025. 2) Matters arising and actions tracker Board was happy to note the content of the action progress report provided.	
3	Legal Update – Board Statutory Compliance The Board received a detailed presentation from the External Legal Adviser on statutory compliance, assurance, and the respective roles of governance and executive leadership within the further education regulatory framework. Key Discussion Points The presentation emphasised that compliance is fundamental to protecting learners, maintaining public confidence, and safeguarding the College’s funding and reputation. Particular emphasis was placed on the College’s statutory obligations under safeguarding, health and safety, funding rules, data protection and education-specific regulatory frameworks, and the potential severity of consequences where compliance failures occur. The External Legal Adviser outlined the different but complementary responsibilities of the Governing Board and the Executive Leadership Team. The Board’s role was described as one of strategic oversight, scrutiny and challenge – commonly articulated as operating on an “eyes on, hands off” basis – while the Executive is responsible for operational delivery, implementation of systems and controls, and providing timely and accurate assurance to governors. The Adviser further highlighted the central role of investigations in responding to potential compliance issues. Investigations were described as an essential mechanism for establishing facts, demonstrating transparency and fairness, preserving the integrity of decision-making, and providing defensible evidence to regulators or, where necessary, to the courts. The importance of legal privilege in certain investigations was also noted.	

	The Board discussed the concept of assurance in some depth, recognising that effective assurance supports governors in understanding the real position of the organisation, beyond headline data, and in discharging their statutory responsibilities with confidence. Regulators' expectations around assurance were noted, together with the need for triangulation across reports, data, audit findings and external feedback. Questions and Responses A governor questioned how well placed the Board currently was to carry out its assurance role and whether there were examples of recognised good practice from across the sector. The External Legal Adviser responded that the Board was well positioned, citing the strength of governance structures, the quality of information flows, and the breadth of professional experience around the table. He stressed that effective governance relies not solely on information provided but on governors' ability to test, probe and challenge that information through a strategic and questioning mindset. The Chair thanked the External Legal Adviser for a comprehensive and accessible presentation, noting its value in reinforcing governors' understanding of their statutory responsibilities. AGREED to note the content of the update provided. (Cait O'Riordan joined the meeting at 6.20pm) (Matthew Kelly left the meeting at 6.25pm)	
4	CEO's Report – Strategy Execution <i>(Including Matters of Strategic Importance (MSIs) and Strategic Partnerships)</i> The CEO introduced the report, setting it in the context of the College's 2030 Vision and the systems in place to ensure consistent strategic execution. The report was presented as a mechanism to support effective Board-level scrutiny and assurance while maintaining appropriate operational autonomy. Matters of Strategic Importance (MSIs) The CEO explained that the MSIs are intended to provide a focussed lens through which the Board can monitor transformational change, rather than routine operational performance, which is scrutinised primarily through committee structures. The Board discussed how this framework supports prioritisation, avoids dilution of oversight, and aligns Board attention with the College's strategic pillars. Governors reflected on the extent to which the MSIs give sufficient visibility of progress, challenge and risk, noting the	

	importance of clear success measures and tangible evidence of movement over time. Assurance was sought that 'business as usual' areas, particularly those carrying statutory or financial risk, continue to receive robust oversight through committee work plans. Strategic Partnerships The CEO provided a narrative update on partnership development across higher education, employers and the creative industries. He emphasised that meaningful partnerships often require sustained relationship-building over extended periods and that progress should be viewed within that context. Specific discussion focused on higher education partnerships and the relative positioning of local and non-local providers. The Board explored financial sustainability, reputational considerations, and the importance of partnerships creating clear learner progression pathways rather than carrying unintended risk. Governors considered how they might best support partnership development. The CEO welcomed governors' ambassadorial role, particularly where personal networks could help broker introductions or open conversations at senior levels. The school sector was particularly highlighted. He also invited governors to act as sounding boards for emerging ideas, outside formal meetings where appropriate. Board received an update on the partnership being developed with Boreham Wood FC and agreed to delegate contract signing on behalf of the board to the CEO/principal. Reputation and Student Perception The Board discussed evidence that learner outcomes and achievement are improving and how these improvements can be better leveraged to strengthen the College's reputation. Governors noted the value of individual learner stories and case studies, particularly where headline comparative data can be misleading. Positive feedback from school leaders following campus visits was highlighted as a powerful driver of perception change. The Board recognised that advocacy from trusted school leaders is likely to have greater impact than marketing alone and supported a continued emphasis on proactive engagement with feeder schools. Action: Bring forward options for a deeper dive on employer and business partnerships, either as part of the Board Development Day or at a future Board meeting. (CEO)	*
--	--	----------

	AGREED to note assurance provided on overall strategic progress.	
5	Lead Governor Updates (i) Safeguarding The Safeguarding Lead Governor provided a comprehensive narrative update on her initial period in role, outlining both her approach to assurance and early findings. She described using the Governor Safeguarding Audit Tool and the Education Inspection Framework to structure her work, combining a focus on legal compliance with a strong emphasis on safeguarding culture. Reports to the Quality, Teaching and Student Experience Committee were described as detailed, data-rich and well-evidenced, providing a strong basis for assurance. Positive learner feedback was highlighted as a key indicator of safeguarding culture, with students consistently describing the College as welcoming, inclusive and supportive. The Governor noted the importance of triangulating this qualitative evidence with operational data and policy compliance. Areas for development were also identified. In particular, the need for a refreshed and coherent Safer Recruitment Strategy was emphasised, bringing together policy, practice and culture. The importance of a whole-college approach to safeguarding was reiterated, with reference to intersections with HR, IT, digital safety and learner services. The Executive confirmed that a refreshed Safeguarding Strategic Board has been convened, alongside strengthened reporting lines and senior oversight. (ii) Sustainability A written report from the Sustainability Lead Governor was provided in the Board pack. No additional questions were raised. (iii) Skills The Skills Lead Governor reported on discussions with senior leaders and reflections on recent committee papers. He highlighted strong levels of employer engagement activity across the College, while noting variability in depth and impact between curriculum areas. Assurance was taken from the increasing emphasis on translating employer insight into tangible curriculum design changes, learner progression and placement opportunities. The Board discussed the highly complex and fast-moving skills landscape, particularly in London, acknowledging that the volume of overlapping initiatives presents a challenge for both	

	planning and assurance. The importance of consistency and repeatability in employer engagement was emphasised as a key risk area. (iv) Health and Safety The Health and Safety Lead Governor summarised recent assurance activity, including a detailed discussion with senior leaders and internal audit findings. He reported that internal audit had provided reasonable assurance and that governance arrangements and team capacity had strengthened. Particular assurance was taken from the increased formality of risk assessment, clearer structures of accountability, and a growing organisational engagement with health and safety as an enabler rather than a constraint. The Board welcomed the establishment of a regular reporting rhythm aligned with Board cycles and the intention to focus future updates on trend analysis rather than isolated incidents. AGREED to note the content of the updates provided.	
6	Student Governor Report The Student Governors presented highlights from their written report and reflected on recent enrichment and engagement activities. They described the significant positive impact of external speakers and enrichment events in helping students gain clarity, confidence and direction regarding future careers. Particular emphasis was placed on the value of hearing authentic personal journeys, which students found both motivating and reassuring. The Board heard strong feedback regarding students' sense of belonging, inclusion and community across campuses. Student Governors noted that students feel supported by staff and value the structure and high expectations placed upon them. Discussion also explored barriers to student-led activity, including clarity of process, timeliness of responses and access to modest practical resources. Governors reflected that removing low-level barriers could significantly enhance engagement and ownership among learners. Action: Review and clarify processes for student-led groups and enrichment activities, including available support and resources, and report back to the Board via QTSE Committee. <i>(Executive / Student Services)</i> AGREED to note the content of the update provided.	*

7	2025/26 Accountability Statement – Update The Deputy Principal provided an update on progress against the current Accountability Statement and outlined the planned approach to the next submission. She reported significant growth in provision aligned to priority skills areas, particularly for 16–18 learners, while cautioning against over-concentration at the expense of broader curriculum balance. The Board discussed the increasing tension created by strong demand for adult provision alongside capped funding. Governors were advised that employer engagement in curriculum planning is being strengthened, with industrial partners increasingly involved in validating curriculum intent and identifying gaps. Alignment with labour market intelligence and Local Skills Improvement Plans remains a key focus, although the complexity and fluidity of the external landscape was acknowledged. AGREED to note the assurance provided on direction of travel and progress made.	
8	Governor Re-Appointments The Director of Governance presented proposals relating to the re-appointment of three governors whose terms of office were due to conclude. She reported that each governor had expressed a strong willingness to continue, citing the Board’s collective effectiveness, the quality of executive leadership, and the significance of the College’s current phase of development. AGREED to approve the re-appointment of: Diane Moore from 14.7.2026 to 14.7.2030, Mark Taylor from 15.5.2026 to 15.5.2030, and Alex Middleton from 14.7.2026 to 14.7.2030 The board formally recorded its thanks for their ongoing commitment and contribution.	
9	Committee Reports and Papers (i) Quality, Teaching, Student Experience (QTSE) The Board received a summary of recent QTSE business, noting improvements in learner achievement outcomes and the openness and transparency of associated reporting and challenge. Ongoing work on safer recruitment and cohort-level analysis was highlighted as contributing to improved assurance. AGREED to note the content of the update provided.	

	(ii) Finance The Finance Committee Chair reported a positive in-year financial position, with performance tracking favourably against budget. The Board noted the stabilisation and strengthening of the finance function and the improved quality and confidence of financial reporting. The Committee had reviewed updated Financial Regulations, representing the first phase of a wider programme of refinement. AGREED to note the content of the update provided and approve the updated Financial Regulations as presented. (iii) Audit & Risk The Board received an update on internal audit activity, including reasonable assurance opinions and progress in closing previously raised recommendations. An advisory review of risk management highlighted a strong governance framework, with further work needed to embed risk awareness more deeply across operational levels. Significant discussion focused on the recent cyber simulation exercise. Governors expressed concern about clarity of Board-level roles, escalation pathways and communications in the event of a cyber incident. Action: Provide a Board briefing clarifying Board responsibilities, escalation and communications arrangements for cyber incidents, to be issued ahead of the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting. (COO) AGREED to note the content of the update provided and approve the Risk Management and Assurance Policy as presented.	*
10	AOB There were no items for this meeting.	
11	Date and Time of Next Meeting These were noted as: • Friday 20 March 2026 – Board Development Day • Thursday 14 May 2026 – Board Meeting • Thursday 16 July 2026 – Board Meeting (Staff and students left the meeting at 8pm) Meeting closed at 8.20pm	

12	Confidential Items It was agreed that confidential discussions would be recorded separately.	
-----------	--	--