Minutes of the Corporation Meeting Held on
Tuesday 10 February 2026

Present: Subhaan Ali, Damien Bourke, Simon Boyle, Amanda Bromley, Phill Brown, Malcolm Bruce, Jonathan Frankham, Michael Ginger, Nicky Littler, John Lyne (Chair), Jackie Moores, Jemma Newton, Mariam Rana, Remell Thompson-Bell, Atta Ul-Rasool

Nils Elgar, Clerk to the Corporation

In Attendance: Dave Dobson (Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure), Leon Dowd (Deputy Principal Quality and People), Nicola Welland (Deputy Principal Curriculum)

			ACTION
25/26.43	**Apologies for Absence**		
	There were no apologies.		
25/26.44	**Declarations of Interest**		
	It was noted that Jonathan Frankham had a standing declaration that he was an employee of the Department for Education (DfE), the College's principal funder and regulator.		**Noted**
25/26.45	**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9 December 2025**		
	Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the minutes (including the confidential minutes) of the meeting held on 9 December 2025.		**Approved**
25/26.46	**Matters Arising**		
	There were no Matters Arising.		
25/26.47	**Notes of the Self-Assessment Report Validation Meeting, 27 January 2026**		
	Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Notes of the Self-Assessment Report Validation Meeting held on 27 January 2026.		**Noted**
25/26.48	**Key Discussion Topic: Self-Assessment Report 2024/25**		
	Michael Ginger temporarily left the meeting during this item.		
	The Deputy Principal Quality and People raised the following points:		
	(i)	following the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2024/25 Validation meeting held on 27 January, the final proposed grades were presented;	
	(ii)	hybrid grades (i.e. those that spanned two grades) were used due to a lack of data from published reports under the new inspection framework. As more inspection reports became available, the College would be better able to refine its	

position, especially in relation to Ofsted's new 'secure fit' approach;

(iii) changes to judgements following the SAR Validation meeting included both Curriculum, Teaching and Training and Achievement for High Needs provision being judged to be 'expected / strong standard', up from 'expected standard', as presented at the SAR Validation meeting;

(iv) securing a 'strong standard' judgement would be much harder than the previous 'good' judgement;

(v) the College's inspection was expected to be mid-cycle and so there should be plenty of evidence to draw on to ensure the College had an accurate view of its provision under the new framework.

Issues discussed by Governors included:

(i) their prior input at the SAR Validation meeting;

(ii) that the report and judgement profile read well. A view offered was that it was currently uncertain how the Ofsted judgements would pan out, with the 'exceptional' judgement appearing to be unachievable at the present time, putting its viability into question;

(iii) that the Governor Development Session scheduled for Tuesday 28 April, would include a session on the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, drawing on published inspection reports at the time;

(iv) that Ofsted's judgements might prove difficult for the further education sector, with Ofsted's views critical in respect of achievement rates on GCSE Maths and English resits. The Deputy Principal Quality and People opined that the reports available seem to focus on progress rather than just achievement rates. If this was the case it would be advantageous for the College;

(v) that the College would share the final report with Ofsted, but it would not be published.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note approve the Self-Assessment Report 2024/25. **Approved**

25/26.49 <u>**Principal's Report**</u>

The Principal reported the following points:

(i) the College had recruited 3,866 16-18 learners, some 274 above the 3,592 places in the funding allocation. This would generate £696k of in-year funding, according to DfE funding rules, but this was subject to affordability. With additional recruitment being achieved across the country, the DfE might not be in a position to pay the full amount, leaving colleges to self-fund additional students;

(ii) the College was currently up 423 16-18 applications for September 2026, compared with 2025, with the Wilko development key to accommodating these additional learners;

(iii) results for 2024/25 showed that many areas had significantly improved after intervention since the last SAR and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP);

(iv) there had been some 600-700 resits in each of GCSE Maths and English in November 2025. Some 18% (113) of Maths learners and 13% (91) of English learners had been successful in securing a grade 4 or 5. This would allow remaining Maths and English classes to be collapsed as some 200 learners were removed from lessons;

(v) feedback from Ofsted following their inspection of College Initial Teacher Education (ITE) provision:
- previously, the College's ITE provision had been inspected at university level and so this was a new experience for the College;
- the inspection involved two inspectors across four days;
- a slide was shared with provisional judgements, key strengths and key areas for development; the final report would undergo two evidence-based reviews before being published as a batch with other inspection reports;
- the College had self-assessed as 'expected standard' in all areas, with compliance with safeguarding being 'met'. The Ofsted judgements agreed broadly with these judgements, but concluded a 'strong standard' for both inclusion and professional behaviours, personal development and well-being;
- key strengths and key areas for development were highlighted;
- a view that the inspection was conducted fairly and represented good preparation for the College's full Ofsted inspection, especially in relation to Ofsted's new 'secure fit' approach to its judgements;

(vi) conclusion: the College continued to grow, taking on additional learners, many of whom were at lower levels that provided challenges, but behaviour continued to be well managed.

The Principal gave her thanks to Malcolm Bruce, Michael Ginger and John Lyne for meeting with Ofsted inspectors.

Governors considered the following issues:

(i) the nature of grade boundaries for the November cohort of students undertaking GCSE Maths and English resits. It was noted that these continued to be norm referenced, with a proportion required to fail;

(ii) the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of the College's ITE provision which, overall, was felt to be very positive. The identified key areas for development were considered to be relatively minor and the College would await to see which of these were included in the final report;

(iii) the thanks of John Lyne, on behalf of the Board of Governors, for the team effort in achieving this strong outcome. The Principal undertook to share this with relevant staff.

25/26.50 **December Finance Report**

Jemma Newton left the meeting during this item.

The Vice Principal Finance and Infrastructure reported the following:

(i) as at 31 December 2025 the management accounts showed a £914k operational surplus, which represented a positive variance of £409k to the approved year-to-date budget. This variance was due to additional grant awards and timing variances on pay and non-pay expenditure that were expected to self-correct during the year. As an example, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) had paid the full grant for the Wilko project, but this had not yet been spent. Recruitment also remained difficult and so a time lag remained in filling roles;
(ii) College capital expenditure was in line with agreed approvals;
(iii) the College's financial health was planned to be 'Outstanding' for 2025/26;
(iv) cash was expected to remain strong to the end of the year (£5.5m), which would ensure that the College could continue to operate effectively on a day-to-day basis;
(v) that Governors had accepted a risk on £300k in-year growth funding;
(vi) an update on capital projects:
- Wilko Development: A contractor had been identified, with an appointment expected imminently with the tender exercise resulting in a reduction in the provisional cost to under the £4.17m budgeted. The License to Occupy and Carry Out works had been signed, with the signing of the lease expected to follow shortly;
- Summer 2026 Works: To support the expected intake of students in 2026/27, a number of other facilitating projects were planned within the agreed £1.5m capital allocations. These had been reported previously and remained unchanged;
- solar panels were currently being installed across the Beaufort Road site and on target for completion by the end of the month with the impact expected (in terms of reduced electricity costs) by April 2026.

Governors noted that the Wilko project was proceeding as planned and were content with the report as presented.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the December Finance Report. **Noted**

25/26.51 **Subcontracting Annual Report and Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy**

The Principal reported the following key points:

(i) the College viewed subcontracting as a high risk activity and so purposely kept this to a minimum, using just two subcontractors in 2024/25: King's Trust and Holy Trinity

Community Centre. Both had been used for a number of years and achieved good achievement rates of 92% and 96% respectively;

(ii) the DfE's 25% funding cap on subcontracting was based on the actual funding streams. The College's subcontracting in 2024/25, as a percentage of GMCA funding, was 1.8% (planned) and 1.2% (actual). The College's subcontracting in 2024/25 as a percentage of DfE funding was 0.2% (planned) and 0.3% (actual). Total planned subcontracting in 2024/25 was valued at £130k (0.36% of total College turnover). Actual delivery was £122k or 0.34% of turnover;

(iii) the same two contractors were proposed for 2025/26. The College's planned subcontracting as a percentage of GMCA funding was 1.6%. For DfE funding, planned subcontracting was 0.3%. The total planned value of subcontracting was £147k (or 0.37% of total College turnover);

(iv) there were no substantive changes to the College's Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy.

Governors considered the following issues:

(i) noted apparent tension between the GMCA, which was keen for the College to engage in more subcontracting, and the DfE, which was keen for this to be kept minimal;

(ii) that although the College's Policy was not a standardised policy, it was based on the extensive guidance provided by the DfE and updated annually as this changed.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the subcontracted delivery for 2024/25. **Noted**

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the proposed supply chain subcontractors for 2025/26. **Approved**

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the Subcontracting Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy 2025/26. **Approved**

25/26.52 **<u>Procurement Activities and Approvals</u>**

Jonathan Frankham left the meeting and Michael Ginger rejoined the meeting during this item.

Issues considered by Governors included:

(i) the detail behind the direct awards for both the College's staffed security services and specialist SEND legal advice. It was noted that the College's procurement process was followed in both circumstances;

(ii) that the contract for specialist SEND legal advice would likely pay off in the long term as there were significant complexities in this area.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Procurement Activities and Approvals report. **Noted**

25/26.53 **Update on Governor Engagement and Development Activities**

The following Governor development and/or engagement activities that had taken place since the last Board meeting were reported:

(i) 04.12.25 – HE Graduation Ceremony – Malcom Bruce, Nicky Littler, John Lyne, Remell Thompson-Bell, Atta Ul-Rasool;
(ii) 27.01.26 – SAR Validation – almost all Governors

As indicated in the Principal's Report (see minute 25/26.49), it was also noted that Malcolm Bruce, Michael Ginger and John Lyne had met with Ofsted as part of their inspection of the College's ITE provision.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the verbal update on Governor Engagement and Development Activities. **Noted**

25/26.54 **Governor Appointment**

The Clerk to the Corporation provided salient details (skills, experience, background) of a candidate Governor who had applied for the role of Governor and subsequently met with the Vice Chair, Principal, and Clerk. The proposed appointment date was set as 1 April 2026, to allow the individual to meet existing obligations.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to approve the appointment of Benjamin Hobbs as an Independent Governor for an initial one-year term of office starting 1 April 2026, subject to a satisfactory DBS check. **Approved**

25/26.55 **Items to Note**

(i) Chair's Action

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note that no Chair's Actions had been taken since the date of the last meeting. **Noted**

(ii) Use of the Seal of the Corporation

The Clerk to the Corporation reported that the Seal of the Corporation had been used on two instances:

- 08.12.25 – Grant Agreement – Relating to GM Post-16 Sufficiency Fund (Local Growth Fund Grants) (£1.5m capital and £194,214.16 for kit and equipment) (GMCA). This had been reported verbally at the last meeting;
- 15.12.25 – Retrospective Licence for Alterations Relating to New Construction Skills Centre, Beaufort Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 6NX (GMCA).

It was also noted that John Lyne and Jackie Moores had also recently signed, as a Deed with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, a Licence to Occupy and Carry Out Works in the former Wilko space, which would allow construction work to get underway.

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the use of the Seal of the Corporation. **Noted**

(iii) Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2025/26

Resolved: The Board of Governors resolved to note the Interim Report on Governor Attendance 2025/26 (74%). **Noted**

25/26.56 Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risks

No new risks were identified within the item.

25/26.57 Time and Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 24 March 2026

The Clerk reported that there would be a Governor Learning Visit to Tameside Adult and Community Education (TACE) before the Board meeting.

Minutes formally approved by the Corporation:

Chair **Date**