Paper 000

WQE & Regent College Group

Corporation Meeting
25th March 2026

17:00– 19:00

Room G01, G Building, University Road Campus

Members of the Corporation in attendance:
Sarah Thomson (Chair), Joyce Black, Mariam Delair, Theo Hillier-Drewett, Onkar Korotana, Iain McKenzie, Hasan Peerbhai, Alison Stone, Paul Wilson, & Jimmy Zachariah

Other attendees:
Dan Ismail, Andrew Jackson, Rachel Middleton, Sarah Oldfield, Tim Rogers

Apologies:
Phill Ashton, Adeola Obadan and Donna Trusler

MINUTES

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**
   Sarah Thomson

   Sarah Thomson welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Apologies were received from Phill Ashton, Adeola Obadan and Donna Trusler. Sarah confirmed that Hasan Peerbhai would be joining the meeting a little later.

   Sarah thanked all Governors for participating in Governor insight visits and requested that reflection forms be sent over to the Director of Governance, who, along with the Chair of Governance & Search Committee and the Principal, will review these to identify any themes. The themes will then be reported to the Governance & Search Committee at its April 2026 meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**
   Sarah Thomson
   Alison Stone had a declaration of interest in the following agenda item. There were no other conflicts of interest.

3. **Governor succession planning**
   Sarah Thomson

   Sarah reported that Alison Stone would be leaving the employment of the College at Easter, when she will step down as Support Staff Governor, leaving a vacancy.

   Alison has given long service as a member of staff and has made a significant contribution to the College and its students and staff. Likewise since becoming a Staff Governor in 2023, Alison has contributed fully to the Corporation and participated in two committees. She has also been instrumental in supporting the induction of Student Governors and has supported them ongoing prior to any governance meetings as a mentor.

Alison expressed the wish to remain allied to the College as a volunteer. The Corporation proposed and approved that Alison be nominated as an External Governor. Alison's term of office as an External Governor will commence from 11th April 2026.

Sarah confirmed that the Director of Governance will promote the Support Staff Governor vacancy via the Staff Bulletin.
She will also promote the Teaching Staff Governor vacancy for a further week following the start of the Summer term and close nominations on Monday 20th April 2026.

To date there have been two enquiries from teaching staff about the Teaching Staff Governor vacancy and the Director of Governance has met with both to have a discussion.

Sarah reported that the External Governor who was proposed and approved for appointment at the last Corporation has since withdrawn their application due to ongoing illness.

Sarah informed the Corporation that a revised Governor Recruitment Pack is in train and will shortly be finalised and circulated by the Director of Governance. Sarah appealed to all Governors to promote the External Governor vacancies as fully as possible through personal and professional networks. **Action RM and all Governors**

4. **Corporation minutes and matters arising**
Sarah Thomson

4.1 To approve the minutes of the open Corporation meeting held on 17th December 2025 as a correct record – Paper 001
The Corporation approved the minutes of the open Corporation meeting.
There was one action on the action list which the Director of Governance confirmed had been completed during the intervening period between meetings:

- TR/RM to issue full SAR to Governors for comment

4.2 To approve the minutes of the closed Corporation meeting held on 17th December 2025 as a correct record (issued by email circulation to eligible Governors)
The Corporation approved the minutes from the closed meeting.

STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT

5. **Principal's Update** – presentation
Paul Wilson
The Principal's presentation was circulated in advance of the meeting.
Highlights from the presentation included:

- Governor Conference feedback
- Annual Strategic Conversation feedback
- Local government re-organisation

- Mid-term 2025-2028 Strategic Plan progress including RAG ratings
- Recently published data: qualification achievement rates and progress data; Outstanding Financial Health- confirmed grading; student recruitment numbers
- Update on emerging pattern of Ofsted outcomes nationally

The Principal discussed the strategic partnership working with institutions locally which he had been undertaking and the Corporation encouraged this approach further.

6. SAR and QIP verbal update – progress on significant actions

Tim Rogers

Tim reminded Governors of the purpose of the SAR and QIP respectively.

Highlights included:

- Moving to a future SAR format which aligns with the new Ofsted Framework
- Focus within the SAR on the development of oracy and strengthening the use of data to improve student performance.
- Baseline assessment followed by a second report on students' oracy reveals that students' listening skills are at a higher level already and speaking skills are improving
- The Course Evaluation Questionnaire completed prior to half-term showed that 82.4% of students were acknowledging that discussions were taking place- one of the developmental practices aimed at boosting oracy skills
- Achievement rates are improving- the driver for this is strong retention rates which are at 90+%.
- C. 500 students will be attending Easter intervention sessions, designed to boost student outcomes.
- Forecast achievement rates and progress scores were shared at the SECO meeting.
- Embedding the use of ALPs is beginning to impact curriculum teams positively.

Governors asked questions about how the College determines that students' listening skills have improved. Tim confirmed that lesson observations bear this out and there is evidence of consistent evaluation of skills levels across the College.

Governors asked if further updates to Governors can always reinforce the difference between achievement and progress.

A Governor reflected on the benefit of having participated in a validation visit as part of the QA cycle in the autumn term and then having followed this with a Governor Insight Visit, and how this had enabled her to witness plans being put into action on a practical level. She was also able to see the impact of the Estates Masterplan. The Governor recommended to all Governors that they try to attend validation visits in the autumn term.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE, CURRICULUM & OUTCOMES

7. Minutes, executive actions and recommendations from the Student Experience, Curriculum & Outcomes Committee

Phill Ashton

In Phill's absence, the Chair read a statement from Phill about the focus of the committee meeting and its outcomes:

The committee would like to thank members of ELT for the quality and detail of papers provided for the meeting and thank Student Governors for their report on the work being done with the Student Executive. As you can see from the minutes the following areas were discussed: Bursary Support for Offsite Students, Attendance monitoring report, destinations and progression report, development of Young Professionals and Skills Accountability update, Revised Gatsby Benchmarks, annual complaints Report and the EWS. The committee was more than satisfied with how effectively the college is using achievement and in year tracking data to identify areas where performance can be increased. The committee was also satisfied that once areas of focus had been identified that there were logical and robust plans either in place or being formulated to combat areas where performance was falling short of expectations. There was an excellent grasp of the wider and national context and where WQE sits in comparison. The committee were pleased to hear about the work being done by the Student Executive on the updated Student Charter. It was suggested that given the rise in prominence of apprenticeships as a viable route after WQE that the College looks at further strengthening the support available for those interested in this pathway. It was also suggested that after looking at some of the performance data that the SECO Committee's next session could focus more in depth on the following identified groups: CLA, Bursary, students with English and maths deficits and SEND.

7.1 Draft minutes from SECO Committee meeting 11.02.26 – Paper 002 – *For reference*
These were noted by the Corporation

7.2 Papers from the Committee meeting for Governor reference & learning – Paper 003 - *For Governor reference & learning*
These were noted by the Corporation.

The Principal thanked the Student Governors for their positive contributions to the SECO Committee meeting, particularly around apprenticeships.

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS

8. Minutes, executive actions and recommendations from the Finance & Resources Committee
Onkar Korotana
Onkar provided a verbal round-up from the Committee and thanked members of ELT for their papers. Onkar confirmed that the Business Plan for the Committee had been reviewed and that two policies had been pre-reviewed by the Committee and were being referred to the Corporation for approval – the Hybrid Working Policy and the Treasury Management Policy.

8.1 Draft minutes from the F&R Committee meeting 04.02.26 – Paper 004 – *For reference*
The Corporation noted the minutes.

8.2 Hybrid Working Policy – Paper 005 - *For Corporation approval*
The Corporation approved the policy.

8.3 Treasury Management Policy – Paper 006 – *For Corporation approval*
The Corporation approved the policy for the short-term, noting that this will return to the Corporation in June 2026 at the same time as budget confirmation.

8.4 Papers from the Committee meeting - *For Governor reference & learning* – Paper 007

The Corporation noted the papers.

9. Sexual Harassment at Work Policy (new) – Paper 008 – *For approval*

Sarah Oldfield

Sarah confirmed that it was a legal requirement to implement a policy and that the AoC's model policy template had informed the College's new policy.
All middle leaders and members of ELT have completed training on this topic.

Governors noted the duty to 'actively prevent' sexual harassment.

The policy was approved by the Corporation.

10. Financials

Dan Ismail

10.1 Management accounts – Paper 009a – *For information & questions*

Dan confirmed that following consultation with the Finance & Resources Committee, he had changed the format of the management accounts to better reflect DFE best practice. He provided an overview to the Corporation, explaining that the cashflow and balance sheet had been streamlined.

Dan confirmed that all KPIs were on or above target.
Dan reported that the College was in a positive financial position against the budget which was forecast in June 2025.

No risks were identified to bring to the Corporation's attention. Governors noted that there was some pressure on the budget due to over-recruitment of students. They also noted that the capital project relating to C building completion (budgeted at £4.1m) had come in under budget and impacted positively on the College's finances.

Dan reported there were no current risks of breaching the Reserves threshold.

Dan reported that the College had 'Outstanding' financial health. He explained the relationship between EBITDA and financial health ratings. The forecast rating had been 'Good'. Dan will be monitoring EBITDA ongoing as this would only need to drop by £25k to move the College to 'Good' financial health instead.

Governors noted that the College does not intend to move comfortably into Outstanding health ongoing as it is committed to developing the College estate ongoing, and to improving the student experience and catering for demographic growth.

Governors asked about the LGPS pension calculation and Dan explained the relationship with an actuarial calculation.

Governors asked about an underspend, referenced in table 7. Dan reported that occasionally there is a time lag between staff leaving the organization and new employees replacing them and this can account for underspends.
Governors asked questions to clarify whether there were ongoing impacts on staff workload volume when staff were covering until new appointees joined the organisation.

Governors asked Dan to present variances in the form of a percentage in future reports, for easier reference and Governor tracking. **Action DI**

10.2 DfE Funding Update – Paper 009b – *For information & questions*

Dan reported on an uplift in the national funding rate of 0.55%.
The College has also had confirmation of the National Insurance contributions grant for the next 12 months.
To date the College has not had any update on in-year student growth funding.
The DfE has combined the £375m post-16 capacity fund and £195m construction capital fund into a single £570m budget. Around 50% will be distributed through mayoral/strategic authorities. FE colleges, sixth-form colleges and 16–19 academies in non-devolved areas can bid for up to £5m per project. Bids must be submitted by 17 April 2026 for projects delivering new teaching spaces by September 2028 or earlier.

11. Capital projects update – Paper 010 - *For information & questions*

Dan Ismail

Dan provided an update on:

- North wing refurbishment works
- WC refurbishment
- J Building condition improvement
- Flat rook refurbishment

Dan talked Governors through funding opportunities relating to the North Wing refurbishment through the Post-16 Capacity Fund. Governors approved the funding bid proposal and asked whether the outcome could be positively impacted if the College was to provide match funding.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

12. Minutes, executive actions and recommendations from the Governance & Search Committee

Iain McKenzie

Iain informed the Corporation that Tim Rogers had provided the Committee with an overview of the new Ofsted Framework. The Committee considered how Governors could be briefed or pursue independent learning to boost their awareness of the new framework. Tim will liaise via the Director of Governance to steer Governors towards future training. **Action TR and RM**

Iain reported that all Governors will need to play a role in promoting the External Governor vacancies. A new recruitment pack is available to support with this.
The Committee considered the Business Plans and revisions to Standing Orders.

Iain confirmed that the Committee will discuss the use of co-option to boost recruitment opportunities and report back to the Corporation.

Now the governance model is a year old, Governors will be asked to comment on whether the meeting volume and frequency is appropriate and whether they feel able to engage effectively.

Iain reported that Student Governor induction has taken place and mentoring arrangements are in place to support them ongoing.

Iain thanked Joyce Black and the Director of Governance for their work on revising the Standing Orders.

12.1 Draft minutes from G&S Committee meeting 21.01.26 – Paper 011 – *For reference*

The Corporation noted the committee minutes.

12.2 Revised Standing Orders – Paper 012 - *For Corporation approval*

The Corporation approved the revised Standing Orders and noted that these are a companion to the Instrument & Articles which were refreshed earlier in the year.

13. Business Plans for Committees 2026 -– Paper 013 - *For approval*

Rachel Middleton

Business Plans for all five Committees were refreshed and have been consulted on with members of the ELT and appropriate Committee Chairs.

Rachel reminded Governors that agenda items are mapped to College strategies and to strands of the AoC's FE Code of Good Governance.

The Corporation approved all terms of reference.

The Corporation also noted that there will be revised terms of reference for the Vaughan Endowment Fund Committee, which will be known in future as the Grants & Awards Committee. This will enable grants and awards to current students as well as alumni to be considered and distributed, of which the Vaughan Endowment Fund will continue to be one element.

14. Terms of reference for the Estates & Capital Planning Task & Finish Group - Paper 014 – *For approval*

Rachel Middleton

The Corporation noted the aspirations for the new task & finish group and approved the terms of reference. The date for this group to convene was confirmed as Weds 29th April 2026, 17:00 -19:00 in Room G03, G Building, UR Campus.

The Director of Governance will issue the invitation to members of the Finance & Resources Committee, identified within the ToR as the 'core membership', however all Governors are welcome to attend. **Action RM**

ROUND-UP

15. AoB

There were two matters of AoB

- A charity which has provided a service enhancing the WQE curriculum and the student experience – Magistrates in the Community- has asked that the College makes a donation. They cannot invoice for services, hence the request for a donation. The CFO checked with the external auditors how to approve a donation in terms of compliance. They proposed that the approval of the suggested £200 donation be approved by the Corporation. The Corporation approved the donation. The CFO will pursue this further.
- A Governor reported that they were very pleased to note the successful

partnership working which had resulted in the launch of scholarships from the University of Leicester/Leicester City Football Club aimed at students from high disadvantage postcodes. Many of WQE's students would be within scope to apply for a scholarship. Each scholarship is for £5k.

16. Confidentiality

The Corporation considered the following paper to be confidential – DfE Funding

17. Next meeting date

Corporation meeting 24.06.26, 5pm – 7pm

Action List

Actions from the Corporation meeting on 25th March 2026	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
Issue invitations to Governors for the new task & finish group	RM	ASAP
Issue revised Governor Recruitment Pack to all Governors. All Governors to promote to their own networks	RM and all Governors	Around Easter 2026
Amend Management Accounts to show variances as percentages	DI	ASAP
Keep Governors apprised on learning opportunities in relation to the new Ofsted Framework	TR and RM	
Standing item	**Who is responsible?**	**Date for completion**
To refer any matter which could be externally assured to the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee	All Governors	

Signature:……………………………………………..
Chair of Corporation

Date: …………………………………………………..