



MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board MEETING
held on Tuesday 10 October 2023 at 09.45
held at Ada College, 1 Sutherland Street, Pimlico, London

<p>Members present:</p> <p>Tiffany Hall Amali de Alwis Anna Douglas Tom Fogden Phil Kemp Suzanna Lawson Imran Razzaq Kathryn Skelton Mark Smith Steven Stanley Kevin Walsh Nick Wilcock</p> <p>In attendance:</p> <p>Ben Brodie Sophie Clifton Katy Miles Chris Payne Dr Geoff Stevenson Tina Götschi Jacky Gearey</p>	<p>Chair and External Member External Member External Member External Member/Dean External Member External Member External Member External Member CEO External Member External Member External Member</p> <p>Director, Impetus Foundation Director of Operations (DoO) for items 1.6 and 1.8 Director of External Relations for Item 1.10(ii) Interim Director of Finance and Data (FD) for item 1.10(i) Director of Degree Apprenticeships for item 1.3 Principal for item 1.3 and 1.4 Clerk</p>
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Quorum 7 Members

Item		Action
	<p>The Chair opened the meeting at 09.51 and welcomed everyone to the new building and for attending the open event on Ada Lovelace Day. In addition the Chair informed the Board that Chris Payne had stepped down from the Board to take up the role of the interim Director of finance & Data. Albeit it was thought to be until January 2024, the Chair asked if there were any expressions of interest to act as the interim Vice-Chair as this will be discussed at the Board Membership committee meeting the following week. Finally there was an additional item under 1.10(ii). The Chair advised that as some members of the ELT were required for preparations for the day's event, some agenda items would be taken out of order.</p>	
	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies had been received from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Margot Hooley – teaching 2. Zarine Kharas - Covid 	
	<p>Declarations of Interest in agenda items</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
1.1	Minutes of Previous meeting	
	<p>Minutes:</p> <p>(i) Meeting 5 July 2023</p> <p>Confidential minutes:</p> <p>(ii) Meeting 5 July 2023</p>	

	<p>(iii) Meeting 13 July 2023 The Board approved the minutes of the meetings held on 5 and 13 July 2023 as accurate records of the meetings held.</p> <p>Resolved that the minutes were an accurate record of the meetings held on 5 and 13 July 2023</p>	
1.2	<p>Matters Arising not covered by the agenda</p> <p>Item 4.2(i) advise the Board on sustainability decisions made in the design and fit out of the Victoria building – this is now delayed to the Board December meeting due to workload of DoO but will also include a summary of the Manchester building as well. The Chair reiterated that this was important to complete.</p> <p>Item 4.3(i) check if clients' internal procurement restrictions apply to any retendering applications - CEO confirmed that there are no procurement restrictions. Closed</p> <p>Item 4.3(ii) provide more details on Salesforce grant use and the short courses – Dean to provide dashboard.</p> <p>Item 4.7(i) provide information on short courses for next meeting - Short courses are all funded by Salesforce at present so see above comment/action – Dean to provide.</p> <p>Item 4.9(i) provide explanatory notes regarding apprenticeship third party donors – Dean to provide.</p> <p>There were no other matters arising.</p>	
1.3	<p>Chief Executive's Overview</p> <p>First the CEO said that this was a huge landmark for the College with the first event 'Ada Lovelace Day' being held today and thanked the board members for attending and showing their support. The learners, both sixth formers and apprentices, are extolling the additional facilities of the new building including its location and the opportunities the building affords for different ways of learning as well as the extra-curricular spaces like the games room and sports hall.</p> <p>The paper was taken as read with the CEO first asking the Dean then the Director of Degree Apprenticeships to talk about apprenticeships and the Principal to speak on the sixth form. Additionally the CEO provided an update on changes to the ELT and how the College operates within the sector.</p> <p>The target enrolments for apprenticeships were down (approx. 19%) across both programmes which is also being factored into the budgets. For clarification some employers had dropped the number of apprenticeships being recruited impacted by the national trends on grades and economic volatility. CEO confirmed that there was rigorous managing and monitoring of the current pipeline to help address this and the target for Spring 2024 is 40 which is a 25% increase with just under 50% of this number confirmed. The Dean said there would be an increase in enhanced marketing to aid recruitment.</p> <p>Director of Degree Apprenticeships said that for Manchester the pay off in business development and employer partnership is now coming to fruition with good growth in the skills team which is now fully embedded.</p> <p>The Board asked if the deficit in enrolment targets could be made up through Ada students however as previously explained this was ultimately a question of timings which were too tight. The employers' recruitment timetable tends to be too late for the Ada sixth formers. The apprenticeship growth trajectory was skewed towards Manchester with CEO reassuring the Board that there were strategies in place to address this, but the biggest issues centred around employers who were going out later to recruit students.</p>	

	<p>CEO wanted to highlight that overachieving on the attendance target was a huge achievement bearing in mind the issues across the sector. The Chair congratulated the Principal and team.</p> <p>Sixth Form move to Victoria had been difficult i.e. difficult to enrol students when they could not see the new building. Board asked where the competition was if not choosing Ada, the Principal said that the College was developing its local connections via the Student Outreach and Recruitment Officer to the local feeder schools as this was different to North London. The target was now 450 applications and Principal confirmed it was a numbers game and not enough tracking had been done last year which was now a focused priority.</p> <p>The new open evenings etc were much more positive as there is now a new building. The Board discussed and noted the reduction in recruitment numbers in the sector, the drop in GCSE grades, the lack of recruitment in T-levels and the need to keep a close eye on recruitment. Of note the Principal said that the sixth form was fully staffed but the issues now were the plans to introduce the two-year Digital T-Levels (Digital, Production, Design and Development) at Ada from Autumn 2024/25 bearing in mind the recent comments regarding the uncertainty of this new qualification.</p> <p>The end of year results were low with the exception of computing science and the Principal confirmed that strategies have been put in place to improve student outcomes to include increased provision time, more training of teachers and moderation of assessed work. Whilst a number of students secured their first choice at universities, a large number wanted to take a year out to work or explore other options largely it is thought due to the impact of the pandemic. The Board agreed that much of this was not surprising especially the move to Victoria, but also felt that the College needed to see where T-Levels were going, which would be discussed in more depth at Education Committee meetings. There were no further questions.</p> <p>Resolved that the Chief Executive's Overview Report was received and noted by the Board</p> <p>DoO joined meeting at 10.34 for item 1.9 under confidential.</p>	
1.4	<p>Safeguarding and Prevent Update</p>	
	<p>The CEO briefed the Board on the latest safeguarding updates explaining that this had been covered in detail at the recent Education committee meeting and that there were no major issues to bring to the meeting.</p> <p>Sixth Form</p> <p>There had been an increase in safeguarding incidents being recorded reflecting the increased awareness of staff to the challenges faced by learners. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023 requires an increased focus on online safety, as well as a renewed focus on the additions of KCSIE 2022. Adaptations have been made to the online filtering and monitoring service to reflect these changes and is proving effective.</p> <p>Apprentices</p> <p>The Dean briefly covered the number of safeguarding incidents which was very low, with any significant incidents identified through CPOMS. Special education needs were being identified earlier. The Chair mentioned adult learning and the short courses which would increase safeguarding risks. CEO confirmed this and most FE colleges have this, and the new building facilitates separating the groups.</p> <p>Finally the move to Victoria and changes to statutory regulations and the local authority requires updates to policies to be approved by the Board (Safeguarding Policy, Prevent Risk Assessment, Online Safety Policy). Behaviour Policy (to include required statements on restraint and search) and Criminal Convictions Policy and these will be addressed first by the Education committee.</p>	

	<p>There were no Prevent concerns raised across the College.</p> <p>Resolved that the Safeguarding and Prevent update was received by the Board</p> <p>Tina Götschi left the meeting at 11.24</p>	
1.5	<p>Review KPIs 22/23 and approve KPIs for 23/24</p> <p>The CEO apologised for the omission of the KPIs 22/23 information from the pack and said that it would be sent out directly after the meeting. If there were any comments for these to be sent to him. However in the interim, the KPIs for 22-23 covering the sixth form (namely the issues relating to the sixth form performance/overall achievement rate, retention, progression to Ada apprenticeships, positive value add, and enrolments) had already been covered under item 1.3. The Board did reference that with a possible change of government there could be an impact on T-levels and/or introduction of possible Advanced British Standards and that this should be considered.</p> <p>Targets for 23-24 were in the main the same as for 22/23 with the addition of new KPIs added around operational issues including budget performance and staff feedback on IT and facilities and whilst others concerning feedback on apprenticeships been revised to cover both employers and apprentices. The Board asked for more visibility in future of any complaints arising from employers about the Ada apprenticeship service, though not necessarily as a KPI.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>(i) verbal update on the KPIs 22/23 were received and noted by the Board and that the KPIs for 23/24 were received and noted by the Board</p> <p>(ii) CEO to provide more visibility in future of any complaints arising from employers about the Ada apprenticeship service</p>	
1.6	<p>Strategic Risk Summary to include planned improvements in 23/24</p> <p>There were 24 risks in Ada's strategic risk register which have been reviewed and updated. No risks have been closed in the period since the last Board meeting and one new risk has been added i.e. risk that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment either flatlines or declines due to lack of sustained focus, high staff turnover and budget constraints. For note seven risks had moved in a positive direction since the last Board meeting and one risk has increased in likelihood and so has moved in a negative direction, this is because there had been an attempted fraud on one of the College's charge cards. This had been reported to the Audit committee in September. The Chair asked if there was anything planned to reduce these risks further with the CEO explaining that some of the organisational KPIs could be reduced but this would be down to increasing learner volumes. The Board suggested bringing in university graduates as interns for 6-9 months to help with the outreach programme which the CEO said would be considered alongside similar ideas for other operational roles.</p> <p>For reassurance the DoO said that the register would be further discussed at the next Audit committee meeting. There were no questions.</p> <p>Resolved that Strategic Risk Summary to include planned improvements in 23/24 was received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.8	<p>Evolving to Ada 2.0 - Strategy update</p> <p>The College is into its second year of its strategic plan and the ELT has reviewed the priorities and the metrics to achieve its objectives. A slightly updated set of priorities that recognise progress made in the past 12 months was proposed to include removing a building specific fundraising target as this approach has not been particularly successful. Given the current trajectory and the College's partnership with the Impetus Foundation it thought this might be achievable.</p>	

	<p>The main metrics now focused on are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification Achievement Rates (as a proxy for Quality of Education) • Learner volumes – for apprenticeships - greater focus on 'upselling' to existing partners through improved relationship management, more realistic pipeline management, addition of new anchor partners with a focus on financial services, professional services and tech sector employers. • Learner diversity metrics (especially low-income indicators and gender but also ethnic diversity) – discussion around access requirements, e.g. women coming back to work needing to upskill with CEO confirming that the original focus on the mission set the College apart from other FE colleges • Financial sustainability - more regular and better budget reforecasts to ensure careful financial management <p>For consideration the CEO discussed the possibility of a foundation year for sixth form and taking on a small adult learning contract. For reassurance the targets set were not enormous but focussed on operational excellence. Further discussion then centred on fundraising and alumni (currently 640 alumni and just over 500 enrolled at College with latest cohort).</p> <p>There were no further issues raised. The Board thanked the CEO for the strategy update presentation.</p> <p>Resolved that Evolving to Ada 2.0 - Strategy update and revisions were received and approved by the Board</p>	
1.10(i)	<p>Policy documents for approval</p>	
	<p>The Financial Regulations were last reviewed in 2019 and should have been reviewed again in 2022. The College had been waiting the arrival of the new Director of Finance and Data to finalise this but given the delay in their starting, the review has been conducted to expedite matters. A secondary consideration was that the Financial Regulations should also have been amended following the reclassification of colleges in November 2022, which resulted in colleges coming under the HM Treasury 'Managing Public Money' (MPM) regulations. The FD went through the changes which included for example increases to thresholds for referring contracts and bids and/or tenders to be approved by corporation from £20k to £100k. All references to reclassification changes and MPM requirements had now been actioned and the financial regulations would be reviewed continuously throughout the year and updated annually. For completeness, the financial regulations have been through both the Audit and Finance & Resources committees for comments before going to this Board for final approval.</p> <p>There were no questions, the Board approved the revised Financial Regulations.</p> <p>Resolved that the revised Financial Regulations were reviewed and approved by the Board</p>	
1.10(ii)	<p>Corporate Advisory Group to support External Relations</p>	
	<p>The Director of External Relations presented a new initiative covering the setup of a new Corporate Advisory Group to support External Relations whose aim was to dramatically increase the fundraising requirement from £870k to £1.5m in 25/26 through a platform for strategic engagement. This was a huge opportunity especially as corporate bodies are very hierarchical. Ideally there would be 3 meetings a year with specific people invited to join the group and terms of reference would be generated mindful that this was not a Corporation Board committee.</p> <p>The Board felt that this would be a very solid add and that one or two super connectors would be useful in this group. There followed a discussion on how success would be measured, and how would brand awareness be elevated as the prospective individuals would need most probably to make a business case within their companies. Finally it</p>	

	<p>was essential that this not be London centric and that there must be North West representation to ensure coverage.</p> <p>Resolved that the presentation on Corporate Advisory Group to support External Relations was received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.11	<p>Governors' Register of Interest 2022-23</p> <p>The Register of Interests for 22-23 was presented for the Board to note. There were no conflicts identified.</p> <p>Resolved that Governors' Register of Interest 2022-23 was received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.12	<p>Board Members attendance for 2022-23</p> <p>The attendance figures for FE and Sixth Form Colleges combined for 2022/2023 were as follows: 2022/2023 Mean average attendance rate of 101 colleges – 82.68%</p> <p>For all Ada College Board meetings the average was 94% an improvement on the previous year of 85% with 10 members having 100% attendance which was acknowledged and thanked by the Chair. The committee attendance rate was 80% albeit the move to fully remote meetings had a significant impact on governor attendance at committee meetings with 8 out of 19 members (including co-opted member on audit) having 100% attendance. The overall combined attendance at Board and committee meetings was 88%.</p> <p>Resolved that the Board Members attendance for 2022-23 was received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.13	<p>Board and Committee membership update</p> <p>There were currently three vacancies for the Board: two independent and one student. One potential external candidate with FE experience had dropped out of the process, however another with HR experience was currently going through the interview process with the Board Membership committee. A student governor is soon to be elected via the student membership and the plan for 2023/24 is for this to be a sixth form member whose duration in post will be one year. In the subsequent year there is the option to revert to an apprentice.</p> <p>Steven Stanley was confirmed as the Safeguarding Lead governor and the new Chair of the Education committee.</p> <p>Resolved that the Board and Committee membership update was received and approved by the Board</p>	
1.14	<p>Committee Chairs' Feedback</p> <p>The Chairs of the following committees provided brief feedback on their respective meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Audit – 3 July 2023 – covered under 1.6 b) Finance & Resources – 19 September 2023 – covered under items 1.7, 1.9 and 1.10(i) c) Audit – 28 Sep 2023 – covered under item 1.10(i) <p>The Board Chair asked if there were any questions on the above that had not been addressed in the previous agenda items and there were none.</p> <p>Resolved that the Audit and Finance & Resources Committee Chairs' Feedback were received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.15	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
1.16	<p>Forward agenda items</p> <p>1. Environmental sustainability</p>	

	2. Board Performance 3. External Board Review	
	Date of Next meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 December 2023 at 15.45• 24 April 2024 at 15.45• 3 July 2024 at 15.45	
	Close of meeting	
	Meeting closed at 12.30	