



Email: enquiries@sandwell.ac.uk
Switchboard: 0121 667 5000

Central Campus, 1 Spon Lane, West Bromwich, B70 6AW

SANDWELL COLLEGE

Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023-24



Members' Report & Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 July 2024

Contents	Page
Reference and administrative details	2
Strategic Report	3 – 13
Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control	14-21
Governing Body's Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance	22-24
Statement of Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation	25-26
Independent Auditor's Report to the Corporation of Sandwell College on the Financial Statements	27-29
Independent Reporting Accountant's Assurance Report on Regularity	30-31
Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	32
Statement of Changes in Reserves	33
Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2024	34
Statement of Cash Flows	35-36
Notes to the Financial Statements	37-61

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Board of Governors

Nisha Anhu
Mark Ashford
Richard Bearman
Alison Cope
Natalie Edwards-Yesufu
Taranpreet Kaur
Shokat Lal
Bilal Lok-Shun Hussain
Neil Makin
Graham Pennington
Sheridan Powell
Tony Sharma
Harpinder Singh
Sonia Smalling
Alan Taylor
John Tew
Jalal Uddin

Clerk/Company Secretary

Elise Scotford

Senior management team

Mr. G Pennington	Principal and Accounting Officer – to 28 October 2024
Mr. R Pickup	Director of Finance and Resources - to 28 October 2024
	Principal and Accounting Officer – 29 October - 3 November 2024
	Director of Finance and Resources - from 6 November 2024
Ms. L Capper MBE	Principal and Accounting Officer – from 4 November 2024
Mr. D Holden	Vice Principal – to 27 October 2024
Mrs. J Stevens	Vice Principal – to 31 October 2024
Mr. A Gordon	Deputy Principal - from 4 November 2024
Ms. R Beaty	Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development

Principal and Registered Office

1 Spon Lane, West Bromwich, B70 6AW

Professional advisors

External auditors	MHA, Rutland House, 148 Edmund Street, Birmingham, B3 2FD
Internal auditors	RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP, St Philips Point, Temple Row, Birmingham, B2 5AF
Solicitors	Eversheds Sutherland, Water Court, 116-118 Canal Street, Nottingham, NG1 7HF
Bankers	Santander Corporate & Commercial, Santander UK PLC, Bridle Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 4GB
	Lloyds Bank, West Bromwich Branch, 293 High Street, West Bromwich, B70 8NA

NATURE, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The members present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2024.

Legal status

The Corporation was established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 for the purpose of conducting Sandwell College. The College is an exempt charity for the purposes of the Charities Act 2011.

On 1st November 2018 Sandwell College merged with Cadbury Sixth Form College. The merged entity is called Sandwell College.

College Mission and Vision

The Mission of the College is to provide and continuously develop and deliver an education of the highest quality, training and learning programmes that help improve the life chances and the economic prosperity of our learners, communities and businesses.

The Vision of the College is:

- To provide an exceptional, innovative, technologically advanced and inspirational teaching and learning experience leading to individuals' success; and
- To be an anchor institution at the heart of our communities by working together with schools, employers and partner organisations to enrich lives, raise aspirations, encourage enterprise and improve social and economic wellbeing.

Public Benefit

Sandwell College is an exempt charity under the Part 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and following the Machinery of Government changes in July 2016 is regulated by the Secretary of State for Education as Principal Regulator for all FE Corporations in England.

The members of the Governing Body, who are trustees of the charity, are disclosed in the Statement of Corporate Governance and Control later in this document.

In setting and reviewing the College's strategic objectives, the Governing Body has had due regard for the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and particularly upon its supplementary guidance on the advancement of education. The guidance sets out the requirement that all organisations wishing to be recognised as charities must demonstrate, explicitly, that their aims are for the public benefit. In delivering its mission, the College provides the following identifiable public benefits through the advancement of education:

- High-quality teaching
- Widening participation and tackling social exclusion
- Excellent achievement, employment and progression record for students
- Strong student support systems
- Links with SMEs, larger employers as well as strategically critical employers.
- Links with local and regional stakeholders, including local authorities, employer representative bodies and business representative groups

Strategy

Our core objectives are as follows

Improvement, Students, Staff, Growth, Resources, Solvency

- Ensure continued focus on quality within the Education Inspection Framework (“EIF”) and ensure we are well prepared for inspection to ensure a successful outcome.
- Support our students and ensure we focus on welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure no group of students are ‘left behind’ and ensure our policies on Equality and Diversity are effective.
- Ensure we successfully institute necessary curriculum changes for T levels and adult education and we innovate to take advantage of opportunity areas for growth.
- Ensure highly effective employer engagement to ensure placements, apprenticeships and job outcomes requirements are met.
- Invest in our asset base to support curriculum changes.
- Continue to develop staff and ensure effective welfare, and recognition of the contribution.
- Ensure we have sound finances to implement our plans.

Quality

- Deliver the Quality Improvements identified in the Self-Assessment Report.
- Prepare for successful Ofsted Inspection.
- Further develop broader measures of success, in particular, outcome destinations and jobs.
- Continue improving teaching and learning with further investment in training, development and support.
- Continue to ensure achievement rates remain very high.

Students, Curriculum & Innovation

- Enhance safeguarding by investing in the Safeguarding team across all College centres. Target specific themes e.g., county lines, gangs and gun and knife crime as well as substance abuse.
- Increase the use of student voice to act as a catalyst to improve services for students and encourage participation by groups who are historically underrepresented e.g., adult learners and apprentices.
- Enhance student support and ensure they are equally supported irrespective of characteristics gender, LGBT, Care Leavers, BAME, social disadvantage, disability or age.
- Curriculum redesign and implementation of the redesign. The continued growth of 16-18 provision but recognising curriculum change with the move to T levels being a key focus. Ensure the successful transition to T levels.
- Increase the College apprenticeship delivery by increasing the number of employers and sectors.
- Develop new adult programmes to support the new skills guarantee at level 3 and work to increase funding through the combined authority in order to benefit more students.
- Increase focus on job outcomes and employability.
- Address skills gaps identified both regionally and locally by re-designing the curriculum.
- Create workforce development programmes to support the WMCA skills plan and local skills improvement plan.
- Increase the number of employers we work with and those who offer work placements.
- Engage stakeholders to support the economy and learners, both those seeking employment and those already in the workforce. Seek funding for programmes to support this work.

Organisation & People

- Ensure an effective staff development programme to equip staff with skills to deliver new qualifications such as T levels.
- Continue to develop recruitment methods for hard to recruit to areas.
- Continue to develop effective employee relations and increase the use of focus groups and surveys.
- Ensure effective relations with representative bodies such as unions.
- Ensure the College actively promotes equality and diversity amongst the workforce.
- Ensure the single central register is maintained and up to date.
- Further develop the appraisal system to link to personal development plans.
- Continue to develop 'positive culture programmes' such as 'Our Great College'.
- Continue to focus on developing staff welfare.
- Ensure teaching and professional support staff are recognised for their contribution.

Estate, Facilities & Resources

- Creation of single estates plan to cover the current estate and the planned developments.
- Maximising grant income to support any developments.
- Production of a planned maintenance programme encompassing all assets.
- Ensuring that there is effective project control and oversight of any capital projects

Finance

- Ensure finances align to business objectives and cash is available for capital investment
- Improve financial health to sustained 'Outstanding', as measured by the ESFA
- Focus on improving the College's solvency and cash position
- Ensure effective financial control and audits
- Optimise use of the College estate
- Ensure value for money in procurement and cost control.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The College is committed to observing the importance of sector measures and indicators and uses a number of external benchmarks, as available, to compare performance such as success rates. The College is required to complete various financial returns for the Education and Skills Funding Agency ("ESFA"). The College was assessed by the ESFA as having a "Outstanding" financial health grading for 2023/24.

The financial indicators (Financial Health and Financial Management and Control) will continue to be graded and will be reported to providers directly by the relevant funding body.

The College is committed to observing the importance of the measures and indicators within the Framework and is monitoring these through the completion of the annual Finance Record for the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In 2023/24 the College has approximately 9,760 ESFA/WMCA funded students and approximately 640 employers responsive funded learners.

The table below illustrates achievement rates for classroom provisions, including English and Maths.

	16-18			19+		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
2023/24	91.0%	83.8%	83.1%	91.6%	84.6%	83.5%
2022/23	92.3%	84.0%	80.8%	89.2%	80.6%	83.7%
National average (2021/22)	82.4%	80.6%	82.4%	89.6%	84.0%	78.1%

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

In line with other colleges and universities, Sandwell College has many stakeholders. These include:

- Students;
- Education sector funding bodies;
- Staff;
- Local employers;
- Local Authorities;
- West Midlands Combined Authority;
- Government Offices
- West Bromwich Albion Football Club
- Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club
- Warwickshire County Cricket Club
- The local community;
- Other FE institutions;
- Universities;
- Trade unions;
- Professional bodies;
- Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust.

The College recognises the importance of these relationships and engages in regular communication with them through the College Internet site and by meetings.

After students, their families and staff, the College's main stakeholders include Sandwell Metropolitan Council, Birmingham City Council, Wolverhampton University, UCU, Unison, Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust and the Labour Party.

DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Financial Results

The College generated a surplus before other gains and losses of £3,024k (2023 surplus of £1,196k).

The economic crisis which followed Covid, resulted in higher levels of inflation, which have led to increased costs including energy and consumables throughout the year. Additional income has been generated by an increase in student numbers, including an overperformance in adult learners. Additional income has also been generated from high needs provision. During 2023/24 the college introduced new working practices including the transfer of funds to a high interest deposit account.

The actuarial gain in respect of the LGPS pension scheme has had an impact on the total comprehensive surplus for the year of £2,438k (2023: surplus of £9,265k includes a write off of the 21/22 pension liability of £7,331k).

The College has not taken out any additional bank loans in the year. At the balance sheet date, the College held net current assets of £8,175k and net assets of £42,228k, which includes a defined benefit pension asset of £0k (2023: £0k liability).

Cash flows and liquidity

At £11.6m net cash flow from operating activities was very strong even when compared to the £12.8m net cash flow from operating activities in 2023. In 2024 around £6.2m (2023: £7.2m) of cash received was due to deferred capital grants received which will be paid out in 2024-26 as the projects are completed.

The size of the College's total borrowing provides a reasonable cushion between the total cost of servicing debt and operating cashflow. Bank interest of £203k (2023: £220k) (Note 8) is covered comfortably by net operating cash flows of £11.6m.

Developments

Several significant capital projects were completed in the year including the development of Cadbury STEM building and a new Engineering Centre for West Bromwich. Both of these new, exciting developments opened in the first term of 2024/25. These bring top class facilities and additional capacity to both these campuses to support the continued growth and outstanding provision of teaching in these areas. Additionally, the College invested in improvements to existing buildings and digital infrastructure across the campuses.

Reserves

Excluding the surplus on the LGPS defined benefit pension scheme, the College has accumulated reserves of £42m (2023: £40m) and cash of £16.8m (2023: £11.5m).

The College has significant reliance on the education sector funding bodies for its principal funding source, largely from recurrent grants. The College has no active subsidiary companies; however, there is one dormant subsidiary Forward Through Learning.

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Corporation considers that the College has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

The College is ensuring that it remains a going concern by ensuring that cash and expenditure are controlled and forecast on a regular basis.

The College currently has £3.9m of loans and overdrafts outstanding with bankers on terms negotiated in 2019. The College's forecasts and financial projections indicate that it will be able to operate within its existing facilities and covenants for the foreseeable future.

The College has growing learner numbers aged 16-18 and will benefit in future years from the lagged funding methodology.

Key risks identified in the College risk register include failure to secure the correct level of funding identified in the plan. This could involve funding reductions or reduction in student numbers. Business planning procedures are in place through the budgeting process with supporting sensitivity analysis to mitigate this risk. Cost increases are also identified in the risk register.

Accordingly, the College has a reasonable expectation that it has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and for this reason will continue to adopt the going concern basis in the preparation of its Financial Statements.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Future developments

The College has plans to continue to invest in College buildings in the next few years, aided by increased government capital funding and potential grant funding from other sources. Alongside this the College continues to invest in the digital infrastructure.

Sandwell College Skills Centre Cradley Heath – the project seeks to build a satellite education hub as part of the Rowley Regis Towns Fund initiative. The project, valued at £9m, has received planning permission. Tendering for the construction contract has commenced with a view to start the build phase from the Autumn of 2024. The building phase is likely to be 12-15 months, with the aims of the building being completed towards the first quarter of 2026. Outside of the construction phase, the College continues to work internally and with stakeholders to develop the curriculum offer for young people and adults.

The Midland Metropolitan Learning Campus – this project is led by the Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust with the College as a partner in the development of the campus with the proposition of taking up space for teaching and learning within the learning campus in order for the development to achieve outputs related to its funding. The project secured £18m from the Smethwick Towns Funds and the WMCA, and have received planning permission with a 15-18 month build programme scheduled, opening for Teaching & Learning by the College in Early 2026. Outside of the of the construction phase, the College continues to work internally with the current building designs to develop an appropriate curriculum offer for young people and adults and has established a strategic partnership agreement between the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust and the College seeking to secure learning and job opportunities for residents and continuous professional development for trust staff.

Financial plan

The College governors approved a financial plan in July 2024 which sets objectives for the period to 2026. The College aims to achieve a financial health rating of “outstanding” and achieve a surplus in the year to 31 July 2025 & 2026.

Funding for 16-19 provision will increase for the year to 31 July 2025 following learner number growth in 2024. Adult education funding increased following successful growth agreements with West Midlands Combined Authority.

Treasury policies and objectives

The College has treasury management arrangements in place to manage cash flows, banking arrangements and the risks associated with those activities. All borrowing requires the authorisation of the corporation and ESFA approval.

The College is confident that all current borrowing will be repaid as per scheduled repayment plans.

Reserves

The College recognises the importance of reserves in the financial stability of any organisation and ensures that there are adequate reserves to support the College’s core activities.

The College’s reserves include £88k (2023: £87k) held as restricted reserves. Excluding the deficit on the LGPS defined benefit pension scheme, the College has accumulated reserves of £42m (2023: £40m). The actuarial movement on the pension scheme is not within the College’s control. It is the corporation’s intention to increase reserves over the life of the strategic plan through the generation of annual operating surpluses.

PRINCIPAL RISK AND UNCERTAINTIES

The College continues to improve internal systems and controls, including financial, operational and risk management, which are designed to protect the College’s assets and reputation.

The Senior Leadership Team undertakes a comprehensive review of the risks to which the College is exposed. They identify systems and procedures, including specific preventable actions, which should mitigate any potential impact on the College. Internal controls are then implemented and the subsequent year’s appraisal will review their effectiveness and progress against risk mitigation actions. In addition to the annual review, the Senior Leadership Team will also consider any risks which may arise as a result of a new area of work being undertaken by the College.

A risk register is maintained at the College level, which is reviewed at each meeting of the relevant sub-committee, the Audit Committee and the Board of Governors. The risk register identifies the key risks, the likelihood of those risks occurring, their potential impact on the College and the actions being taken to reduce and mitigate the risks. Risks are prioritised using a consistent scoring system.

Outlined below is a description of the principle risk factors that may affect the College. Not all the factors are within the College’s control. Other factors besides those listed below may also adversely affect the College.

Government funding

The College has considerable reliance on continued government funding through the further education sector funding bodies. There can be no assurance that government policy or practice will remain the same or that public funding will continue at the same levels or on the same terms.

Risks are mitigated in a number of ways:

- By ensuring the College is rigorous in delivering high quality education and training.
- Considerable focus and investment are placed on maintaining and managing key relationships with various funding bodies.
- Ensuring the College is focused on those priority sectors, which will continue to benefit from public funding.
- Regular dialogue with the regional further education sector funding bodies.

Failure to maintain the financial viability of the College.

The College's current financial health grade is classified as "Outstanding" as described above. This is largely the consequence of increased student numbers. Notwithstanding that, the continuing challenge to the College's financial position remains the constraint on further education funding arising from the ongoing cuts in public sector spending whilst maintaining the student experience. This risk is mitigated in a number of ways:

- By rigorous budget setting procedures and sensitivity analysis
- Regular in year budget monitoring.
- Robust financial controls.
- Exploring ongoing efficiencies.

Operational Risks

Specific areas of operations like apprenticeships and curriculum reforms/developments are constantly monitored. This reflects the notion that external factors like the engagement of employers, the impact of quality (Ofsted) and funding policy changes means the College has to adapt, invest and adopt other mitigations to minimise or negate any risks that would then flow into the overall finances. General areas of teaching and learning, for example Safeguarding of Students remains critical to the College.

The wellbeing of both staff and students not only reflects the statutory duties on a College, but also reflects reputational risks of failing to address such areas which could, for example, lead to adverse perceptions from students and parents impacting on student recruitment or adverse perceptions by potential member of staff impacting on our ability to recruit the necessary staff to maintain classes and overall student volumes – both of which have clear links to student revenue streams.

Trade union facility time

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 require the College to publish information on facility time arrangements for trade union officials at the College.

Numbers of employees who were involved in union duties during the relevant period	FTE employee number
6	5.66

Percentage of time on union duties	Number of employees
0%	0
1-50%	6
51-99%	0
100%	0

Total cost of facility time	£26,100
Total pay bill	£34,116,317
Percentage of total bill spent on facility time	0.08%
Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time	0.08%

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

The College is committed to creating an environment where learners, its customers, staff, governors and other stakeholders celebrate and promote equality diversity and inclusion in all activities providing equal opportunity to all who learn and work here. We respect and value differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, class and age. We strive vigorously to remove conditions which place people at a disadvantage.

The College is committed to creating a place where everyone, whatever their circumstances and/or background:

- is fully respected
- is listened to and encouraged to give their views
- feels welcome
- is treated in a friendly way
- is treated in a fair way
- has equality of opportunity
- has full access to all activities wherever possible.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the College will, in carrying out its functions, have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The College fully accepts its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act Part 4 (and the subsequent Equality Act 2010) and is committed to making any reasonable adjustments within the Corporation's business activities that will promote equal access and equal opportunity for students, employees and members of the public with disabilities and/or learning difficulties using College facilities.

The College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is available through the College website.

Admission Arrangements

The admissions policy describes the process for learners with disabilities. A dedicated careers adviser is employed to support learners with additional needs.

Learning Support

There is a support service for students who are experiencing literacy, language and/or numeracy difficulties including dyslexia, and who need help with their course work in order to succeed at College. 1:1 specialist support and in class support are available.

Environmental Access

The campuses are accessible and comply with the Equality Act 2010.

The buildings have wheelchair access. All floors have one or more adapted toilet facilities, and all of the signage is in Braille.

The College has a strobe lighting system, for use in an emergency evacuation, for learners with learning impairments. As well as visitors and staff.

Specialist Equipment

The College has invested in specialist equipment to support learners and staff with disabilities

To support this Statement the College has:

- A College Charter
- A 'Supporting your Learning' Leaflet
- Equality and Diversity-operational targets
- Additional Learning Support Policy
- Equality and Diversity Annual Report
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Strategic Plan
- Cross-College Self- Assessment Report
- Learner Entitlement Policy

Disclosure of Information to Auditors

The members who held office at the date of approval of this report confirm that, so far as they are each aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the College's auditors are unaware; and each member has taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the College's auditors are aware of that information.

Following a rebranding exercise on 15 May 2023 the trading name of the company's independent auditor changed from MHA MacIntyre Hudson to MHA. MHA were appointed auditors during 2024 by the corporation.

Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 2 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:


.....
Mr. A Taylor - Chairperson

Professional Advisors

Financial Statement Auditors:

MHA
Rutland House
148 Edmund Street
Birmingham
B3 2FD

Internal Auditors:

RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP.
St Philips Point
Temple Row
Birmingham
B2 5AF

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank
West Bromwich Branch
293 High Street
West Bromwich
B70 8NA

Solicitors:

Eversheds Sutherland
Water Court
116-118 Canal Street
Nottingham
NG1 7HF

Santander Corporate & Commercial
Santander UK PLC
Bridle Road
Bootle
Merseyside
L30 4GB

Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control

The following statement is provided to enable readers of the annual report and accounts of the College to obtain a better understanding of its governance and legal structure. The College endeavours to conduct its business:

- i. In accordance with the seven principles identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership);
- ii. In full accordance with the guidance to Colleges from the Association of Colleges in the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges; and
- iii. Having due regard to the UK Corporate Governance Code (“the Code”) insofar as it is applicable to the further education sector.

The College is committed to exhibiting best practice in all aspects of corporate governance and in particular the College has adopted the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges. We have not adopted and therefore do not apply the UK Corporate Governance Code. However, we have reported on our Corporate Governance arrangements by drawing on best practice available, including those aspects of the UK Corporate Governance Code we consider to be relevant to the further education sector and best practice.

The Governing Body recognises that, as a body entrusted with both public and private funds, it has a particular duty to observe the highest standards of corporate governance at all times. In carrying out its responsibilities, it takes full account of Code of Good Governance for English Colleges which it formally adopted on 4 December 2023.

In the opinion of the Governors, the College complies with the provisions of the Code, and it has complied throughout the year ended 31 July 2024. This opinion is based on an internal audit review of compliance with the Code dated 13 November 2023, resulting in Reasonable Assurance, reported to the Board on 4 December 2023, as well as an External Governance Review undertaken from March to July 2024 by Martin McNeill, Reviewer, of the Association of Colleges.

MEMBERS

The members who served the Corporation during the period and subsequent to the period end were as follows: -

Name	Date of Appointment	Term of Office	Date of Leaving	Status of Appointment	Committees Served	Attendance at Board of Govs meetings
Alex Aitken	19.04.23	3 yrs	Removed w.e.f. 4.12.23	Independent	Finance & Strategy	0% (0 of 3)
Nisha Anhu	13.05.22	3 yrs		Staff (Sandwell)	N/A	100% (4 of 4)
Mark Ashford	13.03.23	3 yrs		Independent	Audit	78% (7 of 9)
Richard Bearman	19.04.23	3 yrs		Independent	Finance & Strategy	80% (4 of 5)
Allison Cope	11.03.24	3 yrs	Resign w.e.f. 18.9.24	Independent	Finance & Strategy	0% (0 of 1)
Natalie Edwards- Yesufu	11.03.24	3 yrs		Independent	Finance & Strategy	0% (0 of 1)
Ken Ellis (Chair until 31.12.23)	01.08.18	3 yrs	Resign w.e.f. 31.12.23	Independent	Finance & Strategy LQCC Perf & Remun Search & Gov	100% (7 of 7)
Taranpreet Kaur	04.12.23	8 m	Term ended 31.7.24	Student (Sandwell)	LQCC	25% (1 of 4)
Shokat Lal	19.04.23	3 yrs		Independent	Audit	25% (1 of 4)
Bilal Lok-Shun Hussain	11.03.24	5 m	Term ended 31.7.24	Student (Cadbury)	LQCC	0% (0 of 2)
Nell Makin	10.12.18	3 yrs		Independent	LQCC Perf & Remun	82% (9 of 11)
Graham Pennington	Not Applicable – ex officio	Not applicable – ex officio		Principal	Finance & Strategy LQCC Search & Gov	92% (12 of 13)
Sheridan Powell	05.12.22	3 yrs		Staff (Cadbury)	N/A	50% (2 of 4)
Tony Sharma	14.03.22	3 yrs		Independent	Audit	100% (9 of 9)
Harpinder Singh	11.03.24	3 yrs		Independent	LQCC	0% (0 of 2)
Sonia Smalling	11.03.24	3 yrs		Independent	Search & Gov	100% (2 of 2)
Paul Stanaway	07.12.20	3 yrs	Term ended 6.12.23	Independent	Finance & Strategy	67% (2 of 3)
Alan Taylor (Chair from 1.1.24)	09.03.20	3 yrs		Independent	Finance & Strategy Search & Gov Perf & Remuneration	70% (7 of 10)
John Tew	11.03.19	3 yrs		Independent	Audit Search & Gov Perf & Remun LQCC	100% (18 of 18)
Jalal Uddin	01.08.19	3 yrs		Independent	N/A	67% (4 of 6)

The Governance Framework

Mrs Elise Scotford was Clerk to the Corporation during this period.

It is the Corporation's responsibility to bring independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance, resources and standards of conduct.

The Corporation is provided with regular and timely information on the overall financial performance of the College together with other information such as performance against funding targets, proposed capital expenditure, quality matters and personnel related matters such as health and safety and environmental issues. The Corporation meets at least once every term.

The Corporation conducts its business through a number of committees. Each committee has terms of reference, which have been approved by the Corporation. These committees are Performance & Remuneration, Search & Governance, Audit, and Learners, Quality and Curriculum, Finance & Strategy. Full minutes of all meetings, except those deemed to be confidential by the Corporation, are available on the College's website at <http://www.sandwell.ac.uk> or from the Clerk to the Corporation at:

Sandwell College, Central Campus, 1 Spon Lane, West Bromwich, B70 6AW.

The Clerk to the Corporation maintains a register of financial and personal interests of the governors. The register is available for inspection at the above address.

All governors are able to take independent professional advice in furtherance of their duties at the College's expense and have access to the Clerk to the Corporation, who is responsible to the Board for ensuring that all applicable procedures and regulations are complied with. The appointment, evaluation and removal of the Clerk are matters for the Corporation as a whole.

Formal agendas, papers and reports are supplied to governors in a timely manner, prior to Board meetings. Briefings are also provided on an ad-hoc basis.

The Corporation has a strong and independent non-executive element and no individual or group dominates its decision-making process. The Corporation considers that each of its non-executive members is independent of management and free from any business or other relationship, which could materially interfere with the exercise of their independent judgement.

There is a clear division of responsibility in that the roles of the Chair of the Corporation and Principal of the College are separate.

Appointments to the Corporation

Any new appointments to the Corporation are a matter for the consideration of the Corporation as a whole. The Corporation has a Search & Governance Committee comprising four members, which is responsible for the selection and nomination of any new member for the Corporation's consideration. The Corporation is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided as required.

Members of the Corporation are appointed for a term of office not exceeding 4 years.

Corporation performance

The College underwent an OFSTED inspection in October 2022 and the outcome was good with areas of outstanding.

The College has undertaken activities during the year to develop governors and clerks/heads of governance. The Corporation also underwent an External Governance Review with the final report dated 26 July 2024, undertaken by Martin McNeill of the Association of Colleges. The resulting areas for development will be formulated into an Action Plan which the Search & Governance Committee will consider before recommending to the Corporation.

Governors undertake various training and development opportunities throughout the year to develop their skills and knowledge via presentations to Board and committee meetings, meetings with staff and students via Programme Area Reviews at LQCC, the Annual Governors Strategy and Development Day, Link Governor visits to departments. Governors' development is also aided by the regular circulation of briefings and updates from the AoC, Eversheds, DfE, ESFA, FE Week, Ofsted. The Board has subscribed to the Education and Training Foundation's Governor Development Programme which gives Governors an opportunity to complete a range of modules at new, intermediate and advanced level to further develop their knowledge base.

The Clerk has completed the ETF's Technical Aspects of being a GP - Expert level - and also benefits from various webinars and sector updates via the Clerks Network, AoC, Eversheds, DfE, ESFA, FE Week, Ofsted, as well as in-house online training modules.

Performance & Remuneration Committee

Throughout the year ending 31 July 2024, the College's Performance & Remuneration Committee comprised three members. The Committee's responsibilities are to make recommendations to the Board on the remuneration and benefits of the Principal, other senior post holders and Clerk to the Corporation.

Details of the remunerations of the senior post holders for the year ended 31 July 2024 are set out in note 6 to the financial statements. The College has adopted the AoC's Senior Post Holder's Remuneration Code and the Board has complied by ensuring that Senior Post Holder salaries and contractual arrangements are fair, reasonable, justifiable and constitute best value. A sub-committee of the Board, the Performance and Remuneration Committee is in place. The remuneration of the Principal/CEO is published and is related to the remuneration of all employees including the multiple of their remuneration and the median earnings of the whole workforce. There have been no severance payments or settlement agreements relating to any Senior Post Holder this financial year.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee comprised four members of the Corporation (who exclude the Principal and Chair). The Committee operates in accordance with written terms of reference approved by the Corporation. Its purpose is to advise the Corporation on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's system of internal control and its arrangements for risk management, control and governance processes. The Audit Committee meets at least on a termly basis and provides a forum for reporting by the College's internal and financial statement auditors, who have access to the Committee for independent discussion, without the presence of College management. The Committee also receives and considers reports from the main FE funding bodies as they affect the College's business.

The College's internal auditors review the systems of internal control, risk management controls and governance processes in accordance with an agreed plan of input and report their findings to management and the Audit Committee. The internal auditors present an annual report to the Committee, which includes an opinion and statement of assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's governance, risk management and control processes.

Management is responsible for the implementation of agreed recommendations and internal audit undertake periodic follow up reviews to ensure such recommendations have been implemented.

The Audit Committee considers the Risk Register on an annual basis and recommends its approval to the Corporation. It also considers a risk management monitoring report at each of its meetings.

The Audit Committee advises the Corporation on the appointment of internal and financial statements auditors and their remuneration for both audit and non-audit work as well as reporting annually to the Corporation. As well as progress reports on previous audits and annual benchmarking report, the Audit Committee undertook specific work on:

- Governance and Risk Management Arrangements
- Key Financial Controls – Creditors
- Business Continuity Processes
- Learner Number Systems

The Audit Committee met 5 times in the year to 31 July 2024. The members of the committee and their attendance records are shown below:

Audit Committee members 2023/24	Meetings attended
Tony Sharma (Chair)	5/5
Mark Ashford	4/5
John Tew	5/5

Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee

This Committee comprised six members, including the two Student Members of the Corporation. The Committee operates with written terms of reference approved by the Corporation. It meets at least three times per annum and considers a wide range of reports, issues and policies relating to learner, quality and curriculum matters.

Finance & Strategy Committee

This Committee comprised five members. The Committee operates with written terms of reference approved by the Corporation. It meets at least three times per annum and considers a wide range of reports, issues and policies relating to finance, resources and strategic matters.

Internal Control

Scope of responsibility

The Corporation is ultimately responsible for the College's system of internal control and for reviewing its effectiveness. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives, and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Corporation has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Principal, as Accounting Officer, for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the College's policies, aims and objectives whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which the Principal is personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned in the Financial Memorandum between the College and the funding bodies. The Principal is also responsible for reporting to the Corporation any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of College policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Sandwell College for the year ended 31 July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to handle risk

The Corporation has reviewed the key risks to which the College is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Corporation is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the College's significant risks that has been in place for the period ending 31 July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the member's report. This process is regularly reviewed by the Corporation. During the year to 31 July 2024 and up to the date of signing this report, there were no significant control weaknesses that should be disclosed.

The risk and control framework

The system of internal control is based on a framework of regular management information, administration procedures including the segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, it includes:

- Comprehensive budgeting systems with an annual budget, which is reviewed and agreed by the Corporation;
- Regular reviews by the Corporation of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts;
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- Clearly defined capital investment control guidelines; and
- The adoption of formal project management disciplines, where appropriate.

The College sub contracts an internal audit service from RSM Risk Assurance Services Ltd, who operate in accordance with requirements of the ESFA's Post 16 Audit Code of Practice. The work of the internal audit service is informed by an analysis of the risks to which the College is exposed, and audit plans

are based on this analysis. The analysis of risks and the internal audit plans are endorsed by the Corporation on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

As a minimum, the Internal Audit service provides the Corporation with a report on internal audit activity in the College. The report includes the independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's system of risk management, controls and governance processes.

Risk faced by the corporation

The corporation identifies its risks through the management structure and escalation of issues along with a regular assessment of its ability to meet its operational, financial and compliance obligations and strategies. Evaluations of the severity and likelihood of these risk are carried out by the senior team along with mitigating actions taken to manage the risk and these are reported through to relevant governor committees and Boards.

These risks are managed through operational and management meetings, through a risk register approach, and highlighted in the principle risks noted in the strategic report.

Control weakness identified

No significant control weaknesses have been identified by the College in the period. The College undertakes a comprehensive internal audit review process, with regular audits conducted by an independent accounting firm. No major findings were identified in the period, but minor improvements to processes are reported, and changes implemented as a result.

Responsibilities under funding agreements

The Department for ESFA introduced new controls for the College on 29 November 2022 on the day that the Office for National Statistics reclassified Colleges as public sector organisations in the national accounts.

The ESFA Chief Executive communicated these changes to all college accounting officers and explained plans to introduce a college financial handbook in 2024. The college has reviewed its policies, procedures and approval processes in line with these new requirements to ensure there are systems in place to identify and handle any transactions for which DfE approval is required.

Statement from the audit committee

The Audit Committee has advised the Board of Governors that the Corporation has an effective framework for governance and risk management in place. The Audit Committee believes the Corporation has effective internal controls in place.

The specific areas of work undertaken by the Audit Committee in 2023/24 and up to the date of the approval of the financial statements are reviews of Governance and Risk Management Arrangements; Key Financial Controls – Creditors; Business Continuity Processes; Learner Number Systems.

Review of effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, the Principal has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The Principal's review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- The work of the internal auditors;
- The work of the Senior Leadership Team within the College who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework;
- Comments made by the College's financial statements auditors and the ESFA-appointed funding auditors in their management letters and other reports.

The Principal has been advised on the implications of the result of his review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Audit Committee which oversees the work of the internal auditor and other sources of assurance, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.


The Senior Leadership Team receives reports setting out key performance and risk indicators and considers possible control issues brought to their attention by early warning mechanisms, which are embedded within the departments and reinforced by risk awareness training. The Senior Leadership Team and Audit Committee also receive regular reports from internal audit and other sources of assurance, which include recommendations for improvement.

The Audit Committee's role in this area is confined to a high-level review of the arrangements for internal control. The Corporation's agenda includes a regular item for consideration of risk and control and receives reports thereon from the Senior Leadership Team and the Audit Committee.

The emphasis is on obtaining the relevant degree of assurance and not merely reporting by exception. At its 2 December 2024 meeting, the Corporation carried out the annual assessment for the year ended 31 July 2024 by considering documentation from the Senior Leadership Team and internal audit, and taking account of events since 31 July 2024.

Based on the advice of the Audit Committee and the Principal, the Corporation is of the opinion that the College has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control, and has fulfilled its statutory responsibility for "the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the body and the safeguarding of their assets".

Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 2 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:


.....
Mr. A Taylor - Chairperson


.....
Ms. L Copper MBE - Principal and Accounting Officer

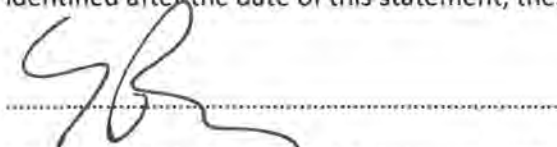
Governing Body's Statement on the College's Regularity, Propriety and Compliance with Funding Body Terms and Conditions of Funding

Statement of regularity, propriety and compliance

As accounting officer, I confirm that the corporation has had due regard to the framework of authorities governing regularity, propriety and compliance, and the requirements of grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, and has considered its responsibility to notify ESFA of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with those authorities and terms and conditions of funding.

I confirm on behalf of the corporation that after due enquiry, and to the best of my knowledge, I am able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the corporation, or material non-compliance with the framework of authorities and the terms and conditions of funding under the corporation's grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, or any other public funder. This includes the elements outlined in the "Dear accounting officer" letter of 29 November 2022 and ESFA's bite size guides.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety, funding noncompliance, or non-compliance with the framework of authorities have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to ESFA.



Mr. G Pennington – Principal & Accounting Officer
28 October 2024

Statement of the Chair of Governors

On behalf of the corporation, I confirm that the Accounting Officer has discussed their statement of regularity, propriety and compliance with the board and that I am content that it is materially accurate.



Mr. A Taylor
Chair of Governors
2 December 2024

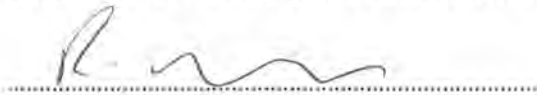
Governing Body's Statement on the College's Regularity, Propriety and Compliance with Funding Body Terms and Conditions of Funding

Statement of regularity, propriety and compliance

As accounting officer, I confirm that the corporation has had due regard to the framework of authorities governing regularity, priority and compliance, and the requirements of grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, and has considered its responsibility to notify ESFA of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with those authorities and terms and conditions of funding.

I confirm on behalf of the corporation that after due enquiry, and to the best of my knowledge, I am able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the corporation, or material non-compliance with the framework of authorities and the terms and conditions of funding under the corporation's grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, or any other public funder. This includes the elements outlined in the "Dear accounting officer" letter of 29 November 2022 and ESFA's bite size guides.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety, funding noncompliance, or non-compliance with the framework of authorities have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to ESFA.



Mr. R Pickup – Principal & Accounting Officer
3 November 2024

Statement of the Chair of Governors

On behalf of the corporation, I confirm that the Accounting Officer has discussed their statement of regularity, propriety and compliance with the board and that I am content that it is materially accurate.



Mr. A Taylor
Chair of Governors
2 December 2024

Governing Body's Statement on the College's Regularity, Propriety and Compliance with Funding Body Terms and Conditions of Funding

Statement of regularity, propriety and compliance

As accounting officer, I confirm that the corporation has had due regard to the framework of authorities governing regularity, propriety and compliance, and the requirements of grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, and has considered its responsibility to notify ESFA of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with those authorities and terms and conditions of funding.

I confirm on behalf of the corporation that after due enquiry, and to the best of my knowledge, I am able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the corporation, or material non-compliance with the framework of authorities and the terms and conditions of funding under the corporation's grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, or any other public funder. This includes the elements outlined in the "Dear accounting officer" letter of 29 November 2022 and ESFA's bite size guides.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety, funding noncompliance, or non-compliance with the framework of authorities have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to ESFA.



.....
Ms. L Capper MBE – Principal & Accounting Officer
2 December 2024

Statement of the Chair of Governors

On behalf of the corporation, I confirm that the Accounting Officer has discussed their statement of regularity, propriety and compliance with the board and that I am content that it is materially accurate.



.....
Mr. A Taylor
Chair of Governors
2 December 2024

Statement of the Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation

The members of the Corporation, as charity trustees, are required to present audited financial statements for each financial year.

Within the terms and conditions of the Corporation's grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, the Corporation – through its Accounting Officer – is required to prepare financial statements and an operating and financial review for each financial year in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting for Further and Higher Education, ESFA's College accounts direction and the UK's Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, and which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Corporation and its surplus / deficit of income over expenditure for that period.

In preparing the financial statements, the Corporation is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- assess whether the Corporation is a going concern, noting the key supporting assumptions qualifications or mitigating actions as appropriate
- prepare financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to assume that the College will continue in operation.

The Corporation is also required to prepare a Members' Report which describes what it is trying to do and how it is going about it, including information about the legal and administrative status of the Corporation.

The Corporation is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the College and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with relevant legislation including the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and Charities Act 2011, and relevant accounting standards. It is responsible for taking steps that are reasonably open to it to safeguard its assets and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Corporation is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of its website; the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and, accordingly, the auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the Corporation are responsible for ensuring that expenditure and income are applied for the purposes intended and that the financial transactions conform to the authorities that govern them. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that funds from ESFA, and any other public funds, are used only in accordance with ESFA's grant funding agreements and contracts and any other conditions, that may be prescribed from time to time by ESFA, or any other public funder, including that any transactions entered into by the corporation are within the delegated authorities set out in the "Dear Accounting Officer" letter of 29 November 2022 and ESFA's Bite Size guides. Members of the Corporation must ensure that there are appropriate financial and management controls in place to safeguard public and other funds and ensure they are used properly.

Statement of the Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation

In addition, members of the Corporation are responsible for securing economic, efficient and effective management of the Corporation's resources and expenditure so that the benefits that should be derived from the application of public funds from ESFA and other public bodies are not put at risk.

Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 2 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Taylor', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Mr. A Taylor - Chairperson

Independent auditor’s report to the Corporation of Sandwell College

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Corporation of Sandwell College (the ‘College’) the year ended 31 July 2024 which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Changes in Reserves, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows, and the notes to the financial statements. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 ‘The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland’ (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). In our opinion, the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the College’s affairs as at 31 July 2024 and College’s income over expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education, UK GAAP and the current College Accounts Direction.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the College in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC’s Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Governing Body’s use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the College’s ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the governors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditor’s report thereon. The governors are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Independent auditor’s report to the Corporation of Sandwell College

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

As explained more fully in the Statement of Corporation Responsibilities on page 22, the Members of the Governing Body are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Governing Body determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Governing Body is responsible for assessing the College’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Governing Body either intends to liquidate the College or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor’s report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- Obtained an understanding of the nature of the sector, including the legal and regulatory frameworks that the College operates in and how the College is complying with the legal and regulatory frameworks;
- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims;
- Enquiry of College staff in compliance functions to identify any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for bias.
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Reviewing internal audit reports;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Independent auditor’s report to the Corporation of Sandwell College

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council’s website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor’s report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Governing Body, as a body, in accordance with the Funding Agreement published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and our engagement letter. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Governing Body those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor’s report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Governing Body as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



MHA

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
London, United Kingdom

Date: 16/12/2024

MHA is the trading name of MacIntyre Hudson LLP, a limited liability partnership in England and Wales (registered number OC312313)

Independent Reporting Accountant’s Report on Regularity

To: The corporation of Sandwell College and Secretary of State for Education, acting through Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 15 August 2023 and further to the requirements and conditions of funding in ESFA’s grant funding agreements and contracts, or those of any other public funder, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether anything has come to our attention that would suggest, in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received by Sandwell College during the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 have not been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

The framework that has been applied is set out in the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice (the Code) issued by ESFA and in any relevant conditions of funding concerning adult education notified by a relevant funder.

This report is made solely to the Corporation of Sandwell College and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Corporation of Sandwell College and ESFA those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept, or assume, responsibility to anyone other than the Corporation of Sandwell College and ESFA for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Sandwell College and the reporting accountant

The Corporation of Sandwell College is responsible, under the requirements of the Further & Higher Education Act 1992, subsequent legislation and related regulations and guidance, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed, and income received, are applied for the purposes intended by Parliament, and the financial transactions conform to the authorities that govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession’s ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the Code. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received, during the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Code issued by ESFA. We performed a limited assurance engagement as defined in that framework.

The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity.

A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion.

Independent Reporting Accountant's Report on Regularity

Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity and propriety of the Corporation's income and expenditure.

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- An assessment of the risk of material irregularity and impropriety across all of the College's activities;
- Further testing and review of self-assessment questionnaire including enquiry, identification of control processes and examination of supporting evidence across all areas identified as well as additional verification work were considered necessary; and
- Consideration of evidence obtained through the work detailed above and the work completed as part of our financial statements audit in order to support the regularity conclusion.

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament, that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities that govern them.



MHA

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
London, United Kingdom

Date: 16/12/2024

MHA is the trading name of MacIntyre Hudson LLP, a limited liability partnership in England and Wales (registered number OC312313)

Statement of Comprehensive Income For the Year ended 31 July 2024

	Note	2024		2023	
		Pre FRS 102 (28) £'000	FRS 102 (28) £'000	Pre FRS 102 (28) £'000	FRS 102 (28) £'000
Income					
Funding Body Grants	2	53,457		48,233	
Tuition fees and education contracts	3	399		559	
Other Grants and Contracts	4	15		1,058	
Other Income	5	5,426		3,718	
Investment income					0
Other Interest	8	-	291		
Total income		<u>59,297</u>	<u>291</u>	<u>53,568</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure					
Staff costs	6 & 20	37,204	(295)	33,515	480
Fundamental restructuring costs	6	36		222	
Other operating expenses	7	15,356		14,125	
Depreciation	10	4,060		3,557	
Interest and other finance costs	8	203		220	269
Total expenditure		<u>56,859</u>	<u>(295)</u>	<u>51,639</u>	<u>749</u>
Surplus before other gains and losses		<u>2,438</u>	<u>586</u>	<u>1,929</u>	<u>(749)</u>
(Deficit) / Surplus on disposal of fixed assets				16	16
Gain on investments					
Surplus before tax		<u>2,438</u>	<u>586</u>	<u>1,945</u>	<u>(749)</u>
Taxation	9				
Surplus for the year		<u>2,438</u>	<u>586</u>	<u>1,945</u>	<u>(749)</u>
Actuarial gain on pension scheme less provision for unrecognised asset			(586)		8,080
Increase in permanent endowments					(11)
Total Comprehensive Income for the year		<u>2,438</u>	<u>2,438</u>	<u>1,945</u>	<u>7,320</u>

All items of income and expenditure relate to continuing activities

Statement of Changes in Reserves

	Income and Expenditure Account	Restricted Endowment Reserves	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1st August 2022	30,426	99	30,525
Surplus/(deficit) from the income and expenditure account	1,196		1,196
Other comprehensive income	8,080	(11)	8,069
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>9,276</u>	<u>(11)</u>	<u>9,265</u>
Balance at 31st July 2023	39,702	88	39,789
Surplus/(deficit) from the income and expenditure account	2,438		2,438
Other comprehensive income	-		-
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>2,438</u>		<u>2,438</u>
Balance at 31st July 2024	42,140	88	42,228

Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2024

		2024	2023
	Note	£'000	£'000
Non-current			
Tangible assets	10	92,254	88,793
Intangible assets	10	35	41
		92,289	88,834
Current Assets			
Inventories		21	33
Trade and other receivables	11	3,176	4,591
Investments		-	-
Cash and cash equivalents	16	16,772	11,465
		19,969	16,089
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	(11,794)	(10,438)
Net current assets/(liabilities)		8,175	5,651
Total assets less current liabilities		100,464	94,485
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	13,14	(58,236)	(54,696)
Provisions			
Defined benefit obligations	20	-	-
Other provisions	15	-	-
Total net (liabilities)/assets		<u>42,228</u>	<u>39,789</u>
Restricted reserves			
Permanent Endowments		88	87
Total restricted reserves		88	87
Unrestricted reserves			
Income and expenditure account		42,140	39,702
Total unrestricted reserves		42,140	39,702
Total reserves		<u>42,228</u>	<u>39,789</u>

The financial statements on pages 30 to 59 were approved by the Corporation on 2 December 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:


Mr. A Taylor - Chairperson


Ms. L Capper – MBE CEO & Principal

Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year ended 31 July 2024

Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year ended 31 July 2024

		2024	2023
	Note	£'000	£'000
Cash flow from operating activities			
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		3,024	1,196
Adjustment for non-cash items			
Depreciation and amortisation		4,060	3,557
(Increase)/decrease in inventories		12	(4)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors		1,416	(2,496)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors due within one year		(473)	2,360
Increase/(decrease) in creditors due after one year		3,923	7,227
Increase/(decrease) in provisions		-	-
Pension costs less contributions payable		(586)	749
Adjustment for investing or financing activities			
Interest payable		203	220
(Profit)/Loss on sale of fixed assets		-	(16)
Net cash flow from operating activities		<u>11,579</u>	<u>12,793</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets		0	3
Investment income		-	-
Payments made to acquire fixed assets		(5,699)	(11,162)
		<u>(5,699)</u>	<u>(11,159)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Interest paid		(203)	(220)
Repayment of amounts borrowed		(370)	(358)
		<u>(573)</u>	<u>(578)</u>
Increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year	16	<u>5,307</u>	<u>1,056</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	16	11,465	10,409
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	16	16,772	11,465

Analysis of movement in net debt

	Brought forward	Cash flows	Other non-cash changes	Carried forward
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cash at bank and in hand	11,465	5,307		16,772
Debt due within one year	(370)	370	(383)	(383)
Debt due after more than one year	(3,895)		383	(3,512)
Total Net debt	<u>7,200</u>	<u>5,677</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,877</u>

Notes to the Accounts

1 Statement of accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the financial statements.

Basis of preparation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2019* (the 2019 FE HE SORP), the *College Accounts Direction for 2023/24* and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102– “*The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland*” (FRS 102). The College is a public benefit entity and has therefore applied the relevant public benefit requirements of FRS 102.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 required the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in applying the College’s accounting policies.

Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention as modified by the use of previous valuations as deemed cost at transition for certain non-current assets.

The activities of the student union have not been included as the College does not control these activities although it does contribute an annual grant to the operation of the union.

Going concern

The activities of the College, together with the factors likely to affect its future development and performance are set out in the Operating and Financial Review. The financial position of the College, its cashflow, liquidity and borrowings are described in the Financial Statements and accompanying Notes.

The College currently has £3.9m of loans and overdrafts outstanding with bankers on terms negotiated in 2010 and 2019. The College’s forecasts and financial projections indicate that it will be able to operate within its existing facilities and covenants for the foreseeable future.

The College has generated positive cashflows and is forecast to make an operating surplus in 2024/25. The College also expects to meet all bank covenant requirements.

Accordingly, the College has a reasonable expectation that it has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and for this reason will continue to adopt the going concern basis in the preparation of its Financial Statements.

Recognition of income

Revenue grant funding

The recurrent grant from the funding bodies is that receivable as informed by the results of the funding audit undertaken.

Funding body recurrent grants are recognised in line with best estimates for the period and what is receivable and depend on the particular income stream involved. Any under achievement for the Adult Education Budget is adjusted for and reflected in the level of recurrent grant recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income. The final grant income is normally determined with the conclusion of the year end reconciliation process with the funding body at the end of November following the year end, and the results of any funding audits. 16-18 learner-responsive funding is not normally subject to reconciliation and is therefore not subject to contract adjustments.

Other discrete funding body funds received during the year are taken to the Statement of Comprehensive Income in line with the specific terms and conditions attached to each fund.

Where the College receives and disburses funds in which it has no direct beneficial interest, such funds are excluded from the Statement of Comprehensive Income on the grounds that the College does not have direct control over the future economic benefits derived from these funds. The College has applied this policy to certain funds received during the year (see note 22).

Capital grant funding

Government capital grants are capitalised, held as deferred income and recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income over the expected useful life of the asset, under the accrual model as permitted by FRS 102.

Other, non-governmental, capital grants are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when the College is entitled to the funds subject to any performance related conditions being met. Income received in advance of performance related conditions being met is recognised as deferred income within creditors on the Balance Sheet and released to income as conditions are met.

Donations and grants received for non-depreciable fixed assets, such as land, are recognised in the year they are received.

Where charitable donations are restricted to a particular objective specified by the donor, these are accounted for as an endowment. The restricted permanent endowments are where a capital fund is maintained but the income can be applied to the general purposes of the institution.

Fee income

Income from tuition fees is recognised in the period for which it is receivable and includes all fees chargeable to students or their sponsors.

Catering income

Income from catering is derived mostly from free school meals funding which is paid to students by means of the identity card being charged with an amount which enables the student to claim meals at catering facilities within the College. VAT is accounted for on staff sales and card transfers are recognised in the period in which they are made.

Other income

Other income includes high needs funding for the services the college provides to local authorities, for post 16 learners with additional needs. This income is recognised in the year in which the services are provided.

Investment income

All income from short-term deposits is credited to the Statement of Comprehensive Income in the period in which it is earned. Income from restricted purpose endowment funds not expended in accordance with the restrictions of the endowment in the period is transferred from Statement of Comprehensive Income to accumulated income within endowment funds.

Agency arrangements

The College acts as an agent in the collection and payment of discretionary support funds. Related payments received from the funding bodies and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the Income and Expenditure of the College where the College is exposed to minimal risk or enjoys minimal economic benefit related to the transaction. Agency disbursements are shown at Note 22.

Post-retirement benefits

Post-employment benefits to employees of the College are principally provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). These are defined benefit plans, which are externally funded and contracted out of the State Second Pension.

Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS)

The TPS is an unfunded scheme. Contributions to the TPS are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the College in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of valuations using a prospective benefit method. The TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution plan and the contributions recognised as an expense in the income statement in the periods during which services are rendered by employees.

West Midlands Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The LGPS is a funded scheme. The assets of the LGPS are measured using closing fair values. LGPS liabilities are measured using the projected unit credit method and discounted at the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in interest and other finance costs.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in actuarial gains and losses within Other Comprehensive Income.

At the year end, the initial actuarial report from the Scheme Actuary reported a net pension asset of £8,620k (2023: £5,624K). When the Scheme gives rise to a potential asset position, the Governors are required to assess the basis for recognising an asset on the balance sheet against the FRS102 criteria, this being “An entity shall recognise the plan surplus as a defined benefit plan asset only to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or refunds from the plan.” In using the word “shall”, the emphasis is placed upon the College to consider the value of such an asset, rather than whether an asset should be recognised in the first instance. Accordingly, the College has considered the value at which they can benefit from either (1) refunds from the plan or (2) reduced contributions. As the College intends to continue to participate in the LGPS, the likelihood of a refund being due from the Scheme has been deemed as remote and not practically achievable. Secondly, the College has undertaken an exercise to assess the Minimum Fund Requirement (MFR) due to the Scheme in order to calculate the net present value of the asset which will be the value of a perpetuity of the future service cost minus the present value of the employer contributions. The outcome of this calculation has shown that the College is unlikely to gain economic benefit from a reduction in future contributions.

Accordingly, the College has made an impairment charge on the asset reducing the net position at the year ended 31 July 2024 to £Nil. Therefore, no defined benefit pension asset has been included in the financial statements.

Short term Employment benefits

Short term employment benefits such as salaries and compensated absences (holiday pay) are recognised as an expense in the year in which the employees render service to the College. Any unused benefits are accrued and measured as the additional amount the College expects to pay as a result of the unused entitlement.

Enhanced Pensions

The cost of any enhanced ongoing pension to a former member of staff is paid by the College annually and expended through the income and expenditure account.

Tangible fixed assets

Land and buildings

Central Campus Land and buildings are included in the balance sheet at cost. Freehold land is not depreciated as it is considered to have an infinite useful life. Freehold buildings are depreciated over the expected useful economic life to the College of the component parts of the building. This means that aspects of the Central Campus building are depreciated over 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 years respectively.

In 2016/17 the College acquired an additional building at Phoenix Street, West Bromwich. It has been decided upon acquisition that this building and any equipment would be depreciated over a period of 4.25 years aligned to the useful economic life of the buildings and equipment therein.

In November 2018 Sandwell College merged with Cadbury College. The value of land and buildings at the Cadbury campus acquired through the merger was assessed as having a fair value of £16,900,000 at acquisition. As consistent with Sandwell College accounting policy, freehold land acquired will not be depreciated as it is considered to have an infinite useful life. Freehold buildings acquired were depreciated based on the expected useful economic life which had been assessed as 30 years at the point of acquisition. Following building work at Cadbury which has improved the site considerably, and in line with future developments on the site, the lifetime of the buildings at Cadbury have been re-assessed and increased to 50 years.

Where land and buildings are acquired with the aid of specific grants, they are capitalised and depreciated as above. The related grants are credited to a deferred income account within creditors, and are released to the income and expenditure account over the expected useful economic life of the related asset on a systematic basis consistent with the depreciation policy. The deferred income is allocated between creditors due within one year and those due after more than one year. Capital grants acquired as a part of the Cadbury merger are accounted for using the same policy.

Where the expected lifetime of an asset is reduced to due impairment of the asset, depreciation will be accelerated over the remaining lifetime of the asset. The release of related grants will also be accelerated over the lifetime of the grant related assets.

Subsequent expenditure on existing fixed assets

Where significant expenditure is incurred on tangible fixed assets it is charged to the income and expenditure account in the period it is incurred, unless it meets one of the following criteria, in which case it is capitalised and depreciated on a relevant basis:

- Market value of the fixed asset has subsequently improved
- Asset capacity increases
- Substantial improvement in the quality of output or reduction in operating costs
- Significant extension of the asset life beyond that conferred by repairs and maintenance

Equipment

Equipment costing over £2,500 per individual item is capitalised and depreciated in accordance with the policy below. If equipment is less than £2,500 per individual item but forms part of a capital project, then it is capitalised at cost.

Motor vehicles and general equipment	-	20% per annum
Computer equipment	-	20% per annum
Furniture and fittings	-	10% per annum

Capital equipment is depreciated on a straight-line basis over its remaining useful economic life in accordance with this policy.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. Shortfalls between the carrying value of fixed assets and their recoverable amounts are recognised as impairments. Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

Where equipment is acquired with the aid of specific grants, it is capitalised and depreciated in accordance with the above policy, with the related grant being credited to a deferred capital grant account and released to the income and expenditure account over the expected useful economic life of the related equipment.

Intangible fixed assets

Accounting software

As accounting software is a significant investment for the long term that the accounting system is capitalised over a period of 10 years from the implementation date of May 2017.

Borrowing costs

Borrowing costs are recognised as expenditure in the period in which they are incurred. Except for borrowing costs, which are directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of a qualifying asset which are then capitalised.

Leased assets

Costs in respect of operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term to the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. Any lease premiums or incentives relating to leases signed after 1st August 2014 are spread over the minimum lease term.

Leasing agreements which transfer to the College substantially all the benefits and risks of ownership of an asset are treated as if the asset had been purchased outright. Costs in respect of operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term and recognised in the income and expenditure account.

Inventories

Inventories are stated at the lower of their cost and net realisable value.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash includes cash in hand, deposits repayable on demand and overdrafts. Deposits are repayable on demand if they are in practice available within 24 hours without penalty.

Cash equivalents are short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. An investment qualifies as a cash equivalent when it has maturity of 3 months or less from the date of acquisition.

Financial liabilities and equity

Financial liabilities and equity are classified according to the substance of the financial instrument's contractual obligations, rather than the financial instrument's legal form.

All loans, investments and short-term deposits held by the College are classified as basic financial instruments in accordance with FRS 102. These instruments are initially recorded at the transaction price less any transaction costs (historical cost). FRS 102 requires that basic financial instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost; however, the College has calculated that the difference between the historical cost and amortised cost basis is not material and so these financial instruments are stated on the balance sheet at historical cost. Loans and investments that are payable or receivable within one year are not discounted.

Maintenance of premises

The cost of routine corrective maintenance is charged to the income and expenditure account in the period it is incurred.

Taxation

The College is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the College is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Sections 478-488 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

The College is partially exempt in respect of Value Added Tax, so that it can only recover a minor element of VAT charged on its inputs. Irrecoverable VAT on inputs is included in the costs of such inputs and added to the cost of tangible fixed assets as appropriate, where the inputs themselves are tangible fixed assets by nature.

Investments

Investments include sums on short-term deposits with recognised banks and building societies and government securities.

Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the College has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In preparing these financial statements, management have made the following judgements and estimates:

- Consideration of indicators of impairment of the College's tangible assets. Tangible fixed assets are depreciated over their useful lives taking into account residual values, where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. In re-assessing asset lives, factors such as technological innovation and maintenance programmes are taken into account. Residual value assessments consider issues such as future market conditions, the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values. Upon the merger with Cadbury College, such judgements were made over acquired assets in line with this policy.
- The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit has been transferred to reserves awaiting future actuarial valuations. The value of this asset/liability in future years will be dependent upon a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in Note 20, will impact the carrying amount of the pension asset (transferred to reserves). Furthermore, a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2024 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 July 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability

2 Funding Body grants

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Education and Skills Funding Agency – 16-18	43,304	39,103
Education and Skills Funding Agency – adult	4,968	4,638
Education and Skills Funding Agency - apprenticeships	1,805	1,745
Other Education and Skills Funding Agency	120	119
Teachers' pension Support Grant	1,320	974
Releases of deferred capital grants	1,940	1,654
Total	53,457	48,233

3 Tuition Fees and Educational Contracts

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Adult education fees	58	67
Fees for FE loan supported courses	142	333
Total Tuition fees	200	400
Education contracts	199	159
Total	399	559

4 Other Grants and Contracts

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Other grants and contracts	15	1,058
Total	15	1,058

5 Other Income

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Catering and residence	1,045	762
Other income generating	17	20
High Needs	3,338	2,629
Local Authority	0	100
Miscellaneous income	1,026	207
Total	5,426	3,718

6 Staff numbers and costs

The average number of persons employed by the College (including senior post holders) during the year, expressed as full-time equivalents, was as follows:

	2024	2023	2024	2023
	Head count	Head count	FTE	FTE
Teaching staff	601	636	517	504
Non-teaching staff	227	218	185	177
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	828	854	702	681
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Staff costs for the above persons were as follows:

	£'000	£'000
Wages and salaries	26,215	24,226
Social security costs	2,575	2,386
Other pension costs (including FRS 102 adjustments of (£295,000); (2023: £480,000)	5,031	5,514
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Payroll sub total	33,821	32,126
Contracted out staffing services	3,088	1,869
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Payroll sub total	36,909	33,995
Fundamental restructuring costs - Contractual	36	222
- Non-Contractual		
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Staff Costs	36,945	34,217
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Key management personnel are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the College and are represented by the Senior Leadership Team which comprises the Principal, Deputy and Vice Principals and significant budget holders. Staff costs include compensation paid to key management personnel for loss of office.

Emoluments of key management personnel, Accounting Officer and other higher paid staff.

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
The number of key management personnel including the Accounting Officer was:	7	7

The Accounting Officer is the Principal.

The number of key management personnel and other staff who received emoluments, excluding pension contributions and employer's national insurance but including benefits in kind, in the following ranges was:

	Key Management Personnel		Other Staff	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
£55,001 to £60,000			1	
£60,001 to £65,000			1	2
£65,001 to £70,000			3	2
£70,001 to £75,000		1	2	1
£75,001 to £80,000	1	2		1
£80,001 to £85,000	1	2		
£85,001 to £90,000	1			
£90,001 to £95,000	1			
£95,001 to £100,000	1			
£110,001 to £115,000		1		
£130,001 - £135,000	1			
£195,001 to £200,000		1		
£210,001 - £215,000	1			
	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>

Emoluments include compensation for loss of office paid to key management personnel.

Key management personnel emoluments are made up as follows:

	2024	2023
	£000s	£000s
Salaries-gross of salary sacrifice and waived emoluments	781	700
Employer's National Insurance	99	90
Pension contributions	180	152
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	1,060	942
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The pension contributions in respect of the Principal and key management personnel are paid to the Teachers' Pension Scheme and the Local Government Pension Scheme at the same rate as for other employees.

The above includes amounts payable to the Accounting Officer (who was also the highest paid senior post-holder) of:

	2024	2023
	£000s	£000s
Salaries	210	196
Pension contributions	45	40
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	255	236
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The total remuneration of the Principal/Accounting Officer is determined annually by the Remuneration Committee who make a recommendation to the board of Governors who make a final determination. The Principal neither sits on or is present at the remuneration committee. Pay reflects satisfactory achievement of agreed targets. Secondly, pay is benchmarked against AoC staff remuneration survey data for the relevant year against the median pay for Colleges of similar size in the region to ensure it is within sector pay norms.

The Principal/Accounting Officer has the following pay multiples when compared to the median of other employees:

	2024	2023
	Median	Median
Salary Multiple	6.41	6.23
Emoluments multiple	6.47	6.20

Severance payments

	2024	2023
	£000s	£000s
Contractual payments	29	222
Non Contractual payments	7	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	36	222
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The College has paid 7 severance payments in the year, disclosed in the following bands:

£0 to £25,000	7
£25,001 to £50,000	-
£50,001 to £100,000	-
£100,001 to £150,000	-
£150,001 +	-

The severance payments were approved by the Principal in line with the severance policy.

The members of the Corporation other than the Accounting Officer and the staff member did not receive any payment from the College other than the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses incurred in the course of their duties.

7 Other operating expenses

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Teaching costs	4,228	4,195
Non-teaching costs	6,775	5,630
Premises costs	4,353	4,300
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	15,356	14,125
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Other operating expenses include:

Auditor's remuneration:

Other services provided by financial statement auditor	4	3
Financial statements audit	45	41
Internal audit	36	30
(Gain)/Loss on disposal of fixed assets	0	(15)
Depreciation and amortisation	4,172	3,557
Hire of assets under building leases	614	609
Hire of assets under other operating leases	113	80

8 Interest Payable/Receivable**8a Interest payable**

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Bank loan interest payable wholly or partly within five years by	203	220
Net interest on defined pension liability (note 20)		269
	<u>203</u>	<u>489</u>
Total	<u>203</u>	<u>489</u>

8b Interest Receivable

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Net interest on defined pension asset (note 20)	(291)	
	<u>(291)</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	<u>(291)</u>	<u>0</u>

9 Tax

The members do not believe the College was liable for any corporation tax arising out of its activities during either period.

10 Fixed assets

	Land and Buildings Freehold £'000	Equipment £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Tangibles Total £'000	Intangibles £'000
Cost					
At 1 August 2023	98,978	15,320	10,871	125,169	154
Additions	97	3,014	4,404	7,515	
Transfers	11,360	186	(11,546)		
Disposals					
At 31 July 2024	110,435	18,520	3,728	132,684	154
Depreciation					
At 1 August 2023	26,966	9,410		36,376	113
Charge for the year	2,483	1,571		4,054	6
Elimination of Disposals					
At 31 July 2024	29,449	10,981	0	40,430	119
Net book value					
At 31 July 2024	80,986	7,540	3,728	92,254	35
At 31 July 2023	72,012	5,910	10,871	88,793	41
Financed by capital grant	48,085	772		48,857	
Other	32,901	6,767	3,728	43,396	37
Total	80,986	7,539	3,728	92,254	37

Freehold Land and Buildings includes assets with a net book value of £48,085k (2023: £50,107k), which are funded by a grant from the LSC and its successor organisations; and other government organisations.

Also included within Freehold Land and Buildings are assets with a net book value of £151k for alterations made to the Central St Michael's building which is leased from Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

Also included within Freehold Land and Buildings is Land with a value of £9,071k is not depreciated.

11 Trade and other receivables

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	1,292	3,178
Prepayments and accrued income	1,658	1,291
Amounts owed by the ESFA	226	122
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	3,176	4,591
	<hr/>	<hr/>

12 Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Bank loans and overdrafts	383	370
Trade payables	2,264	2,475
Taxation & social security	1,319	1,081
Accruals and deferred income	4,386	3,003
Holiday pay accrual	695	639
Deferred Income – government capital	2,637	2,335
Deferred Income – government revenue	15	15
Amounts owed to the ESFA	95	520
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	11,794	10,438
	<hr/>	<hr/>

13 Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Bank Loans	3,512	3,895
Deferred Income – government capital	54,724	50,801
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	58,236	54,696
	<hr/>	<hr/>

14 Maturity of debt**Bank loans and overdrafts**

Bank loans and overdrafts are repayable as follows:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
In one year or less	383	370
Between one and two years	816	383
Between two and five years	854	1,370
In five years or more	1,842	2,142
Total	<u>3,895</u>	<u>4,265</u>

A bank loan with a balance of £3,195k with a fixed rate of 5.3025 per cent is repayable by instalments falling due between 1 August 2023 and 31 October 2034, and is secured by a fixed charge on the property dated 31 October 2018. The further bank loan with a fixed interest rate of 3.33 per cent was secured by a fixed charge on the property dated 25 July 2019 and has a capital balance outstanding of £700k repayable by instalments between 31 August 2024 and 27 July 2026.

15 Provisions

	Defined Benefit Obligations	Enhanced Pension Provision	Total Provisions
	£'000	£'000	£'000
At 1 August 2023	0		0
Income in the period	586		586
Transferred to / (from) other comprehensive income	(586)		(586)
As At 31st July 2024	<u>-</u>		<u>-</u>

Defined benefit obligations relate to the assets/liabilities under the College's membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The calculated pension asset is not recognised as this is classed as being an unrealisable asset. Further details are given in Note 20. The enhanced pension provision was held at 31 July 2021 in relation to pensions paid to former members of staff via the College payroll, and has been reclassified as an ongoing payroll cost from 1 August 2022 onwards.

16 Cash and cash equivalents

	At 1 August 2023	Cash flows	At 31 July 2024
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cash and cash equivalents	11,465	5,307	16,772
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	11,465	5,307	16,772
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

17 Capital commitments

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Commitments contracted for at 31 July	791	1,881

Capital commitments at 31 July 2024 include building work under a contract for Cradley Heath Project and Extension to the MEC centre West Bromwich High Street. which is due for completion during 2025 and 2026.

18 Lease Obligations

At 31 July the College had minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Future minimum lease payments		
Land and Buildings		
Not later than one year	583	666
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,540	1,768
Later than five years	3,408	3,555
Total	<hr/> 5,531	<hr/> 5,989
Other		
Not later than one year	122	75
Later than one year and not later than five years	139	56
Later than five years	0	-
Total	<hr/> 261	<hr/> 131

19 Contingencies

The College has no contingent liabilities as at 31 July 2024.

20 Defined Benefit Obligations

The College's employees belong to two principal pension schemes, the Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff and the and the West Midlands Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff. Both are multi-employer defined-benefit plans.

The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest formal actuarial valuation of the TPS was at 31 March 2020 and the LGPS at 31 March 2022.

Total pension cost for the year

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Teacher's Pension Scheme; contributions paid	3,416	2,915
Local Government Pension Scheme		
Contributions paid	1,910	2,119
FRS 102 (28) charge	(295)	480
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Income	5,031	5,514
	<hr/>	<hr/>

There were outstanding contributions to the LGPS scheme at the 31 July 2024 of £0, (2023 £0).

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. These regulations apply to teachers in schools, Colleges and other educational establishments. Membership is automatic for teachers and lecturers at eligible institutions. Teachers and lecturers are able to opt out of the TPS.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and members contribute on a 'pay as you go' basis – these contributions, along with those made by employers, are credited to the Exchequer under arrangements governed by the above Act. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102 (28.11), the TPS is a multi-employer pension plan. The College is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan.

Accordingly, the College has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined-contribution plan. The College has set out above the information available on the plan and the implications for the College in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The valuation of the TPS is carried out in line with regulations made under the Public Service Pension Act 2013. Valuations credit the teachers’ pension account with a real rate of return assuming funds are invested in notional investments that produce that real rate of return.

Valuation of the Teachers’ Pension Scheme

The latest actuarial review of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education (the Department) in October 2023. The valuation reported total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service at the effective date of £262 billion, and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222 billion giving a notional past service deficit of £40 billion (compared to £22 billion in the 2016 valuation)

As a result of the valuation, new employer contribution rates will rise to 28.68% from April 2024 (compared to 23.68% during 2018/9).

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation can be found on the Teachers’ Pension Scheme website.

The pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £3,415,991 (2023: £2,915,345).

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate funds administered by West Midlands Pension Fund. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 July 2024 was £2,529,167 of which employer’s contributions totalled £1,951,304 and employees’ contributions totalled £577,863. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 21.5% for employers and range from 5.5% to 12.5% for employees, depending on salary. The following information is based upon a full actuarial valuation of the fund as 31 March 2024 updated to 31 July 2024 by Hymans Robertson LLP a qualified independent actuary.

Principal Actuarial Assumptions

Weighted average assumptions used to determine benefit obligation at:

	2024	2023
Discount Rate	5.00%	5.05%
Future pensions increase	2.75%	3.00%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.75%	4.00%
CPI Inflation assumption	2.80%	3.00%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	0.00%	0.00%

The current mortality assumptions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on retirement age 65 are:

	At 31 July 2024	At 31 July 2023
	Years	Years
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	20.2	20.2
Females	23.6	23.6
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	21.4	21.5
Females	24.8	24.9

Sensitivity

Change in assumptions at 31 July 2024	Approximate % increase to Defined Benefit Obligation	Approximate monetary amount
		£000
0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate	2%	1,100
1 year increase in member life	4%	2,428
0.1% increase in the Salary Increase	0%	48
0.1% increase in Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	2%	1074

The College's share of the assets in the plan at the balance sheet date were:

	2024	Value at	2023	Value at
	Percentage of total assets	31-Jul-24	Percentage of total assets	31-Jul-23
		£'000		£'000
Equities	51.00%	35,354	68.00%	43,342
Bonds	35.00%	24,263	21.00%	13,385
Property	7.00%	4,853	7.00%	4,462
Cash	7.00%	4,853	4.00%	2,550
Total market value of assets		<u>69,323</u>		<u>63,739</u>

The amount included in the balance sheet in respect of the defined benefit pension plan is as follows:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Fair value of plan assets	69,323	63,739
Present value of plan liabilities	(60,703)	(58,115)
Unrecognised Pension Asset	(8,620)	(5,624)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Net pension liability	0	0
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in respect of the plan are as follows:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Amounts included in staff costs		
Current service cost	1,615	2,176
Employer contributions	(1,910)	(1,696)
Administration costs		-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	(295)	480
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Amounts included in (investment income)/interest payable

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Net interest	(291)	269
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	(291)	269
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Amounts recognised in Other Comprehensive Income

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Return on pension plan assets	1,980	(2,449)
Other actuarial gains/(losses) on assets	-	(126)
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of plan liabilities	2,191	13,485
Change in demographic assumptions	122	1,925
Experience loss on defined benefit obligations	(1,883)	869
Unrecognised pension asset	(8,620)	(5,624)
	<u>(6,210)</u>	<u>8,080</u>

Movement in net defined benefit liability during the year

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Deficit in scheme at 1 August	5,624	(7,331)
Movement in year:		
Current service cost	(1,615)	(2,176)
Employer Contributions	1,910	1,696
Net interest on the defined (liability)/asset	291	(269)
Actuarial gain or (loss)	2,410	13,704
Unrecognised pension asset	(8,620)	(5,624)
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Net defined liability at 31 July	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Asset and Liability Reconciliation

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Reconciliation of Liabilities		
Defined benefit obligation at start of period	58,115	70,938
Current Service cost	1,615	2,176
Interest cost	2,937	2,533
Contributions by scheme participants	568	564
Change in demographic assumptions	(122)	(1,925)
Experience (gains) and losses on defined benefit	1,883	(869)
Changes in financial assumptions	(2,191)	(13,485)
Estimated Benefits paid	(2,102)	(1,817)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Liabilities at end of period	60,703	58,115
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Reconciliation of Assets

Fair value of plan assets at start of period	63,739	63,607
Interest on plan assets	3,228	2,264
Return on plan assets	1,980	(2,449)
Employer contributions	1,910	1,696
Contributions by scheme participants	568	564
Benefits paid	(2,102)	(1,817)
Experience (gains) and losses on defined benefit	-	(126)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Assets at end of period	69,323	63,739
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Deficit Contributions

The College entered into an agreement with the LGPS to make additional contributions of £395,787 to March 2023 in addition to the normal payroll levels. Subsequent to this the rate of employer's contribution was increased from 19.5% to 21.5% with additional contributions no longer required.

The estimated value of employer contributions for the year ended 31 July 2025 is £2,081,590. (2023/24: £1,890,229).

These accounts show a past service cost in respect of the McCloud / Sergeant judgement which ruled that the transitional protection for some members of public service schemes implemented when they were reformed constituted age discrimination. This provision is 0.5% of the total scheme liability as at 31 March 2020.

The calculation of adjustment to past service costs arising from the outcome of the Court of Appeal judgement is based on a number of key assumptions including:

- the form of remedy adopted
- how the remedy will be implemented
- which members will be affected by the remedy
- the earning assumptions
- the withdrawal assumption

The other financial and demographic assumptions adopted to calculate the past service cost are the same as those used to calculate the overall scheme liability. Adopting different assumptions, or making other adjustments to reflect behavioural changes stemming from the judgment, would be expected to change the disclosed past service cost. Similarly, allowing for variations in individual members' future service or salary progression is expected to produce higher costs. The past service cost is particularly sensitive to the difference between assumed long term general pay growth and the CPI. If the long-term salary growth assumptions were 0.5% pa lower, then the past service cost disclosed here would be expected to reduce by 50% and conversely a 0.5% pa increase would increase the estimated cost by 65%.

21 Related Party Transactions

Due to the nature of the College's operations and the composition of the Board of Governors (being drawn from local public and private sector organisations) it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a member of the Board of Governors may have an interest. All transactions involving organisations in which a member of the Board of Governors may have an interest are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the College's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures.

During 2023/24 the College transacted generically with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) which has a representative on the Board of Governors. There are a number of transactions between Sandwell College and Sandwell Council which form the normal course of business, including business rates, payments in respect of learners with additional needs and property related costs. These costs are included in the financial statements as required.

During 2023/24 the College transacted generically with the Labour Party's national organisation. The College rented a part of Terry Duffy House from the national Labour Party with a cost of £42,000 during the year (£3,500 per calendar month).

The total expenses paid to or on behalf of the Governors during the year was £257.20 (in total) 2 governors. This represents travel and subsistence expenses and other out of pocket expenses incurred and claimed in attending Governors' meetings and charity events in their official capacity. No Governor has received any remuneration or waived payments from the College during the year (2022/23: None).

22 Amounts disbursed as agent

Bursary Funds	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Balance as at 1 August	252	225
16 18 bursary grants	2,268	1,906
	<u>2,520</u>	<u>2,131</u>
Disbursed to students	(2,225)	(1,795)
Administration costs	(96)	(84)
Balance unspent as at 31 July (included in creditors)	<u>199</u>	<u>252</u>

Funding body grants are available solely for students. In the majority of instances, the College only acts as a paying agent. In these circumstances, the grants and related disbursements have therefore been excluded from the Statement of Comprehensive Income, other than when the College has directly incurred expenditure itself.

23 Post balance sheet events

There are no events after the reporting period.