

WIGAN AND LEIGH COLLEGE EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

In accordance with Department for Education's statutory guidance, the College commissioned an external governance review through the Association of Colleges. The Review was carried out by Shirley Collier MBE between November 2023 and March 2024.

The overall conclusion of the Reviewer on Board effectiveness is that there is strong evidence that the Board is highly proficient and consistently impacts positively on college strategy, effectiveness, and outcomes.

The Review found that Board outcomes are underpinned by the structures and processes of governance, which are comprehensive and aligned. They provide Governors with the information and the opportunities they need to exercise oversight of quality and finances. Particular strengths are the systematic approach to compliance and board self-assessment, the processes put in place to understand the staff and student experience through Link Visits, the role of Lead Governors and the arrangements for engagement with external stakeholders, through the extensive calendar of events, the Skills Review Task and Finish Group, and the annual stakeholder workshops.

Drawing on their skills and experience outside the College, Governors challenge and support the Executive and hold them to account. All Governors, including staff and student governors, contribute. They offer strategic leadership in areas of specialism, participate in external stakeholder events as well as internal strategic discussions, and their concern for and interest in the student experience is evident in their questions and their challenge.

Evaluation and self-assessment are embedded. This reflectiveness is part of the Board's continuous improvement mindset, which enables it to be responsive to the multiple needs of stakeholders. The Board is particularly aware of meeting local and regional skills needs and has a proactive approach to doing so which draws on best practice.

The Review found that Governors are fully able to strategically influence how the College responds to local skills needs. Governors have relevant professional skills and experience and are in sufficiently senior roles in their own right, to influence outcomes and the structures and processes of governance provide them with relevant information and opportunities to shape strategy. The open and inclusive culture of meetings ensures that Governors are able to challenge and are listened to.

The Reviewer identified three areas of best practice that other colleges could learn from, a number of strengths and some areas for further development.



There are four recommendations, all of which the College takes on board and which will be incorporated into its Governance Quality Improvement Plan for the forthcoming year.

The College's next Review will take place in 2026-27.