



Annual Report of the Search and Governance Committee 2024/25

1. Introduction

This report covers the academic year 2024/25 and details the work and role of Hopwood Hall College's Search & Governance Committee.

2. Committee Function

The establishment of the Search and Governance Committee is outlined within the Articles of Government (Clause 5). The Committee Terms of Reference and minutes of meetings are available on the Governance page of the College website.

3. Membership

Members who served on the Search and Governance Committee during the 2024-25 academic year were:

- Mr G Buxton (Committee Chair / Independent Member)
- Mr B Ward (Independent Member)
- Mrs S Ayers (Independent Member / From January 2025)
- Mr I Ruff (Independent Member / From January 2025)
- Mrs J Worsdale (Independent Member / Until October 2024)
- Mrs J Heap (Principal & Chief Executive)

4. Attendance

The Committee met three times over the course of the academic year. The average attendance for the Committee was 100%.

Table 1 Attendance at Search and Governance Committee Meetings 2024/25

SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE	19.09.24	12.03.25	11.06.25						
Mr G Buxton	✓	✓	✓				3	3	100%
Mrs S Ayers	-	✓	✓				2	2	100%
Mrs J Heap	✓	✓	✓				3	3	100%
Mr I Ruff	-	✓	✓				2	2	100%
Mr B Ward	✓	✓	✓				3	3	100%
Ms J Worsdale	✓	-	-				1	1	100%
TOTAL	4	5	5				14	14	100%

5. Corporation Recruitment, Re-appointment and Succession Planning 2024-25

Resignations

- The Committee received the following resignations during the year:
- Jenny Worsdale (Independent Member)
- Kimberley Conway (Student Governor)

End of Term of Office

The following Governors left the Board in July 2025 following the end of their term of office:

- Sarfaraz Akram – Independent Governor / Chair of the Employment & Finance Committee

Appointments / Recruitment

- The following Independent members were appointed to the Board during the year:
- David Brereton
- Sinead Hesp
- Andrea Murphy
- Peter Njoroge (Was previously a Co-opted Member of the Employment & Finance Committee)
- Ian Ruff

The following Co-opted Member was also appointed to the Audit & Risk Committee:

- Azhar Sacraine

Re-Appointments

During 2024/2025, the Committee considered the re-appointment of 1 independent Governor, taking into account attendance at committee and Corporation meetings, performance at meetings, the committee structure and the skills audit. Independent governors do not usually serve more than two four-year terms of office.

Succession Planning

The Search and Governance Committee discuss succession planning at every Committee meeting in order to ensure that any vacancies are filled in a timely manner.

The College was successful in securing DfE funding to undertake a targeted recruitment campaign utilising the services of a specialist recruitment agency. Sinead Hesp was appointed as a member of the Board and Employment & Finance Committee.

Vacancies

- As of 31st July 2025, the Corporation had the following vacancies:
- 1 Independent Board member
- 1 Student Governor

The Committee has made recommendations to the Board on filling the vacancies, considering any skills gaps and the diversity of the Board. It is anticipated that all the vacancies will be filled during the 2025 Autumn term.

6. Self-Assessment / Governor Performance Review

Governor self-assessment and evaluation at both Chair and individual level are undertaken on an annual basis with the results informing training needs and succession planning discussions.

7. Code of Governance

The Board has adopted the AOC Code of Good Governance. In the opinion of the Governors, the College complies with the provisions of the Code and has complied throughout the year ended 31 July 2025. This opinion is based on an internal review of compliance with the Code.

8. Register of Members Interests

Governors updated the Members' Register of Interest through the 'annual returns exercise' undertaken in January 2025. The Register was reviewed at the Search and Governance Committee meeting on 12th March 2025, with no issues of concern raised.

9. Corporation Policies

The Corporation Board has the following policies:

- Election of a Staff Member – last reviewed September 2025
- Student Governor Appointment Process – last approved July 2025
- Governor Expenses - last approved October 2023
- Governor Recruitment - last approved October 2023
- Governor Training & Induction - last approved October 2023
- Removal / Suspension of a Governor - last approved October 2023
- Governor Code of Conduct – last approved December 2023
- Conflicts of Interest Policy - approved July 2025

10. Student & Staff Governors

The Clerk to the Corporation oversees the Staff Governor elections and the Student Governor appointment process. 21 students applied for the Student Governor vacancy in 2024/25, a positive endorsement of the Board's commitment to learner engagement. A new Staff Governor (Business Support) was elected in December 2024

11. Equality and Diversity and Inclusion

The Corporation Board values and promotes equality and diversity, and as such, all appointments are made on merit, taking account of the need to fill any identified skills gaps and areas of underrepresentation within the Corporation. All vacancies are advertised pro-actively on the College's website, and directly to local employers and partners where appropriate. Recruitment consultants are also utilised where the Board considers it relevant to do so.

Corporation Board Profile 2024 – 2025

Gender	12 Male / 8 Female Members
Age	16-18 – 2 19-24 – 0 23-34 – 1 35-44 – 5 45-54 – 4 55-64 – 7 65-74 – 1
Ethnicity	17 White British / Irish 2 Pakistani 1 Black

Disability	2 Members declared a disability
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12. External Review of Governance

FE Corporations, Sixth-form College Corporations and designated institutions are required to have an external governance review every three years.

At Hopwood Hall College, this review was completed during the Spring term of 2024, and a summary of the outcomes published in the annual report and accounts for 2023/ 2024.

The next external review is due to be undertaken in 2027.