



Ealing, Hammersmith and West London  
College

External Governance Review (Summary)

January 2024 – May 2024

Bath  
Birmingham  
Bristol  
Cambridge  
Leeds  
London  
Manchester



## Introduction

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This external governance review of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College was commissioned by the Governing Board in December 2023.

The review was undertaken in the context of the most recent inspection by Ofsted (January 2023) which graded the overall opinion of the quality of education of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College as ‘requires improvement’. The report commented positively on the Governing Board that ‘The board of Governors includes members who have the appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and experience they need to challenge leaders effectively. Governors receive accurate and detailed information from leaders to inform their oversight. As a result, governors provide leaders with robust challenge and support to ensure improvement.’

A monitoring visit in February 2024 assessed that the College had made significant progress in three of the recommendations for improvement and reasonable progress on the other two recommendations.

This external governance review was undertaken by Stone King LLP, specifically Alison Shillito (Consultant).

## Code of Governance

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The Governing Board of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College has adopted the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges to guide its approach to governing. This review takes this code as the basis for the review. However, this review does not constitute an audit of compliance with the code of governance.

## Methodology

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The methodology adopted for this review, undertaken between January 2024 and May 2024 was as follows:

- Observation of the Governing Board in person (21 May 2024), Audit Committee on-line (8 February 2024) and, Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee on-line (14 March 2024)
- Interviews with the Chair of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College Governing Board, Vice Chair of the Governing Board, Chair of the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), senior staff, and the Director of Governance (Clerk to the Corporation)
- Core governance documentation supplied by the Director of Governance to support a desk review.

## Executive Summary

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In summary, taking account of meeting observations, discussions and documentation available, this review recognises that the governing of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College is well-organised, committed, positive, challenging and ambitious. There is a supportive and enquiring governing culture which, in the College’s context, has produced effective governing of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College.

The College is emerging from a period of financial intervention and there has been a rigorous and effective strategic focus by the Governing Board on sustainability. As the College moves out of financial intervention, the

College's governance needs are necessarily evolving and there is now potential for governance to expand its field of vision and support the College in seeking new opportunities. To make governing more productive and increase its positive impact on the College, its learners and other stakeholders, the Governing Board should continue to apply rigour to approving a new College strategy which includes ambitious goals for the quality of the College's curriculum and the performance of its students and people.

Recommendations for enhancing the performance of the Governing Board are presented both in the text and in a collated table at the end of the report.

In summary, to achieve greater governing influence, effectiveness and impact, this review suggests that the Governing Board considers:

- a) Building on the scrutiny provided by the Governing Board's committees to ensure that every Governing Board agenda gives priority to the College's progress on improving the quality of teaching and learning and student achievement. This should complement the continued focus on the strategic priorities of financial health, strategic risks, people development and estates improvement.
- b) Using the College's standard format rigorously for Reports supporting the Governing Board agenda to ensure that Governors have easy access to the key strategic analysis being presented. The reports should also include specific actions senior managers are taking to increase the impact or pace of change so the Board can hold managers to account.
- c) Ensuring Governors use every report for deliberation and decision making so that the focus of Governing Board and Committee meetings is on governing.
- d) Continuing to prioritise succession planning for key board roles and committee memberships so that preparation of new role holders and transfer of leadership are highly effective.
- e) Further developing Governing Board frameworks (including systems, controls and impact statements) for student, staff and stakeholder voice to ensure it is clear when and how Governors monitor implementation and the impact of action taken in response to the feedback.
- f) Convening regular in-person meetings of the Chair (and/or a Vice Chair), CEO and Director of Governance for forward planning of new strategic developments and the governance agenda.
- g) Continuing to create a shared culture and ethos that encourages newer members to develop their understanding of the core business of the College, by creating opportunities to meet informally to discuss strategic topics with each other and senior managers.

How the Governing Board approaches and addresses these recommendations will necessarily be a further indicator of the Governing Board's effectiveness.





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