

**Queen Mary's College
Local Governing Body**

**Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 3rd February at 6.00pm
Meeting held using Microsoft TEAMS**

- Present:** Dr Janice de Sousa (Chair)
Mr David Ayre (Parent Governor)
Ms Keshni Bhoodhoo (Student Representative)
Ms Melissa Farnham
Mr Mark Henderson (Principal)
Mr Matthew Jackson
Mr Ali Kanji (Staff Governor)
Mrs Sarah Pritchard (Parent Governor)
Mrs Sally-Ann Hall-Jones
Mr Jordon Renault (Staff Governor)
Mr Neil Mclean
Mr Pete Stagg
Mr Chris Thomas
- 12/13 quorate
(excluding students)
- In attendance:** Mr Tom Featherstone (Director of Learning) – until 7pm
Ms Kate Need (Deputy Principal)
Dr Toni Baldwin (Academy Secretary)

30. **WELCOME**
Janice deSousa welcomed Melissa Farnham to her first meeting of the LGB. The LGB noted that the Board of Trustees had appointed Melissa Farnham as a community governor on the LGB for a four-year term of office from 29th January 2022.
31. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies were received from Kay Smith and John Wright.
32. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no declarations of interest.
33. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
The minutes of the QMC-LGB meeting held on 17th November 2021 (paper LGB 19/21) were approved for signature.
34. **MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**
All matters arising were on the agenda with the exception of:
Minute 8.2: EDI team scheduled to present to the May meeting of the LGB.
Minute 20.3: Introductions have been made between QMC sports teachers and some local sports clubs.
- 35.1 **OXBRIDGE AND SELECTIVE UNIVERSITIES SUPPORT**
Tom Featherstone (Director of Learning) presented on the work he was doing for his new cross-college role supporting students applying to Oxford, Cambridge and highly selective universities. Tom Featherstone reported that he had taken a

structured approach to supporting these students starting by reviewing the characteristics of successful applicants and then initially focusing on those issues that QMC could most easily influence. Second year students had been supported in their applications and with interview preparation and for 2021/22 a revised, more structured, programme had been put in place for any first-year students considering applying to selective universities. In summary:

- Term 1 research options and get started
- Term 2 participate in (and log) enrichments and activities
- Term 3 personal statement and practice for admissions test and interview
- Term 4 practice, practice, practice.

35.2 Successful applicants generally had outstanding GCSE results, which QMC was not able to influence directly, however, students also needed to want to and have the confidence to apply to selective universities. QMC therefore had systematically identified all current first year students with GCSE results of 8+ as well as those with slightly lower GCSE results for whom social economic factors would possibly be taken into consideration. These students were invited by their teachers to access support in applying for highly selective course and those interested were enrolled in a Google Classroom to start the process.

- Section 1 – for all students applying to highly selective universities (including Oxbridge) providing access to stretch opportunities such as podcasts and lectures and information on what they should be working on.
- Section 2 – an additional Google classroom for students interested in applying to Oxford or Cambridge

35.3 The LGB heard that students were encouraged to participate in and log extra-curricula activities such as Sport and DoE, however, the College was focusing on increasing students' super-curricula understanding through a wide range of opportunities and directed individual study to improve their subject based knowledge outside the standard curriculum. Tom Featherstone also reported that students were being encouraged to attend any additional activities that they were eligible for. For example, some Oxbridge colleges were running events for underrepresented groups and the four QMC students with 8+ GCSE results who also received bursaries were being supported through the SUN (Southern Universities Network) scheme.

35.4 Students were provided with lots of admissions test practice. Students were provided with a QMC mentor as well as a QMC alumnus who had previously graduated from Oxford or Cambridge and were also encouraged to spend time talking to a wide range of people and have interview practice. Tom Featherstone reported that he had been involved with an annual Oxbridge conference (The McWhirter Conference) for many years and used to take 2 or 3 QMC students to this conference each year. Three years ago, QMC had set up a similar conference which enabled a far larger number of QMC students to get involved and benefit. This year's conference would be taking place next week on the theme of 'the role of risk in progress and excellence'. The conference would consist of a mixture of lectures and panel sessions giving participants opportunities to ask questions and participate in discussions.

35.5 The Local Governors questioned Tom Featherstone on the revised approach being taken and one Governor described their experience as a parent of an Oxbridge applicant. The LGB noted the following:

- Interviews had moved on-line during the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore did not include a meal as part of the interview – a final decision had not been

taken, however, there was currently the possibility that interviews would remain on-line.

- Student visits to universities had been curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic, however, Universities were now opening up and there were plans to organise visits along with secondary schools in Basingstoke.
- 2021 had been a very competitive year for applications as many students had been asked to defer from 2020 due to grade inflation resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in an excess of students receiving university places in 2020.
- QMC was encouraging students to apply across a wide range of courses. In addition, due to the heavy emphasis on STEM subjects, applications were slightly lower for non-STEM courses.
- Students from underrepresented groups were being identified and encouraged to apply. Now that QMC had identified a number of schemes/ opportunities such as summer schools they were better able to direct these students appropriately.

- 35.6 One of the Local Governors asked how the College would respond to a student who was very keen to go to a highly selective university or whose parents were very keen for them to go but who the college didn't think would flourish in this environment. Tom Featherstone reported that QMC understood that Oxbridge was not the best choice for some students as it was a very pressurised environment, although universities were getting better at supporting student wellbeing. As part of the process of getting more students into highly selective Universities, QMC was hoping to provide some post offer support including linking new university students with QMC alumni already at the University. Janice de Sousa thanked Tom Featherstone for a very interesting presentation and the LGB asked for an update on the success of the programme in due course.

Tom Featherstone left the meeting

- 36.1 **UPDATE FROM THE PRINCIPAL (Mark Henderson)**
Mark Henderson reported on a series of visits to local schools and colleges, continuing the work started in the Autumn Term by Ali Foss to re-establish links with partner schools that had been disrupted by the pandemic. The LGB were pleased to hear that the College was supporting partner schools in a range of ways including stretch and challenge events for the more able secondary school students.
- 36.2 The LGB noted that exam boards would be releasing the final modifications to the summer 2022 examinations. The College was expecting lists of topics for each subject as well as information sheets that would be provided for some examinations. Mark Henderson reminded the LGB that the students being examined this summer had not taken examinations in 2020 and reported that the College was giving students lots of examination technique and assessment practice as well as walking-talking mocks.
- 36.3 Mark Henderson reported on the large increase in student applications for September 2022. The marketing and admissions teams were progressing applications and keeping applicants connected with mailings etc. Events were being held for potential students including one for high achievers and one for medics/vets. The LGB discussed the application figures which were included in the monitoring information (paper LGB 28/21). Mark Henderson and Kate Need explained how the College estimated potential student numbers from application

numbers using data from previous years for both the applicant's feeder school and subjects.

36.4 The LGB noted that work had started to recruit additional teaching staff for September 2022. The LGB discussed areas of staff recruitment. In response to a question, Kate Need reported that, during the demographic dip, there had been some spare teaching capacity within the college but this had now been taken up with the 2021 increase in students.

36.5 The LGB noted a number of other current activities at QMC:

- Preparations were progressing for the 50th Anniversary events in the summer – the marketing team had connected with a large number of alumni through social media who were sharing their memories of QMC.
- Staff and student selections had taken place for the College trip to Cambodia.
- BTEC and CamTEC examinations had recently taken place
- There had been a very busy apprenticeship evening for current students and their parents.

37.1 **STUDENT FEEDBACK FROM START OF YEAR**

The LGB noted the results of first year student feedback questionnaires (paper LGB 12/21). The LGB noted that data was collected through google to encouraged more responses and that questions were general in nature and not subject or teacher specific. Kate Need reported that feedback was generally good and that any issues had been explored further in focus groups, tutorial sessions and with the Student Union; some actions had already been taken. Kate Need highlighted that:

- The blocked timetable, which had been put in place during the covid-19 pandemic was being reviewed partially in response to students (and staff) finding the 2 ½ hour afternoon lessons too long.
- Tutorials were being reviewed with a view to reverting to weekly sessions.

38.1 **COLLECTING AND RESPONDING TO STUDENT FEEDBACK**

The LGB discussed the questions '*How is the student voice heard*' and '*How do you know that QMC responds*'. The LGB noted the range of ways in which the college collected student feedback:

- Groups of 1st year students are interviewed and feedback to the marketing team
- Annual questionnaires such as that discussed earlier
- Tutor group/ focus group discussions
- Student Union collects suggestions/concerns from students
- Student Voice meetings to raise concerns (1 student invited from each tutor group – meet 3 or 4 times a term)

In addition, Governors were able to talk to students (and staff) in lessons and without teachers or CMT present during their visits.

38.2 One of the Local Governors asked how CMT validated that they heard everyone and not just the loudest voices. Kate Need reported that by asking whole classes or Tutor groups questions everyone should have a route for communicating concerns. Another Governor asked about the tutorials – had feedback been lost with the reduction in tutorial sessions? Kate Need reported that students were having 1-2-1 sessions with their tutors but that Tutor group sessions were happening less frequently which had reduced the opportunity for PSHE type discussions. Mark Henderson reported that the College was considering reframing 1-2-1s as coaching/mentoring sessions alongside a skills programme. The LGB

asked to hear a further report on any changes to the Tutorial programme in due course.

Action: report on changes to timetable and tutorial sessions.

KND

38.2 Local Governors suggested questions that could be included in future student questionnaires including access to tablets/laptops for BOYD and access to private tuition outside the College.

39.1 **REPORT FROM THE STUDENT GOVERNORS**

Keshni Bhoodhoo reported on Student Union activities and any issues of concern raised by the Student Body:

- First year students had settled in well and were making friends and socialising – the mixed 1st year/2nd year tutor groups had helped as had enrichment activities.
- The new gym equipment was very nice and had encouraged more students to use the gym.
- Lots of second year students hadn't had a school leavers event or prom so the SU was planning an event at a local hotel aimed mainly at 2nd year students.
- There were no issues of concern.

39.2 One of the Governors asked for examples of the College responding to student concerns. Keshni Bhoodhoo reported that students had been complaining that the afternoon lesson was too long to concentrate in. This issue had been raised with the College Management Team and the College was looking into changing the timetable for next year. The LGB also noted that changes had been made to the food available in the Café after the lack of vegan options was raised at a Student Voice meeting. The LGB also heard that students were aware that the College had responded to some of their concerns.

39.3 One of the Governors asked how students were feeling whilst preparing for their examinations. Keshni Bhoodhoo reported that second year students were concerned but were being prepared well with mock exams and exam revision. In response to a further question the LGB heard that teachers were helping students revise for exams in lots of different ways – mind maps, presentations, revision sessions.

40.1 **GOVERNOR ENGAGEMENT**

Janice de Sousa reported that she had spoken to the majority of Local Governors. The general view was that the LGB had managed to carry out its responsibilities whilst working remotely but that Governors now wanted to get back into the College and be actively engaged in their roles. The first Governor Visit morning had been very useful and more were planned. Governors were also being allocated to different roles.

40.2 Janice de Sousa reported that she had met with Kate Need and Toni Baldwin to review the Governance Self Assessment for 2021/22 (paper LGB 21/21). The LGB agreed to move the timing of the SAR to align more with the College SAR. The LGB noted that the actions for 2021/22 continued on from the actions agreed for 2020/21 with a strong focus on visiting and monitoring as the College came out of the pandemic. The LGB asked for actions for 2021/22 to be added to the bottom of the next agenda so that they could be reviewed and monitored.

41.1 **POLICIES**

Complaints Policy: Toni Baldwin reported that CMT had agreed that the Complaints Policy needed further work and that once approved it would be brought to a future LGB meeting.

41.2 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy: The LGB noted the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for 2021/22 (paper LGB 23/21) which had been approved by the Board of Trustees and included changes from the 2021 KCSiE.

42.1 **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN QMC-LGB AND NHEA BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The LGB noted a summary of Trust meetings and activities since the last LGB meeting (paper LGB 24/21). The LGB noted that Ali Foss, previous CEO and Principal, had been appointed to the Trust as a Member and would be keeping in touch with the College through this role.

42.2 The LGB noted the most recent Risk Register and Covid-19 supplementary Risk Register (papers LGB 25/21 and 26/21). Changes to the risk registers included an increased risk of disruption to teaching and learning and examinations in 2022 with the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to a question from one of the Governors, Kate Need reported that, although levels of Covid-19 at the College were higher than at any point in the pandemic, staff who were now affected were generally able to teach their lessons remotely.

42.3 The LGB noted, for information, the Annual Report and Financial Statements (paper LGB 27/21). Mark Henderson reported that the Financial Statements had received a clean audit, been approved by the Board of Trustees and submitted to the ESFA.

43.1 **GOVERNORS MONITORING INFORMATION**

The LGB noted a detailed monitoring report along with a dashboard summary and commentary (papers LGB 28/21, 29/21 and 30/21). Kate Need picked out highlights from the reports including trends in student numbers, early leavers and progression. Governors discussed the Maths and English GCSE results noting that these were all students who had not achieved a GCSE pass in summer 2021 and whom had retaken in November 2021. The LGB noted pass rates of 44.3% for English and 23.2% for Maths. Kate Need reminded the Governors that all students were required to continue with Maths and English at College until they had obtained a Grade 4 or above. The LGB noted a drop in the number of students retaking Maths and English between 2019 and 2020/2021 due to more students passing first time (by teacher assessment at secondary school). Mark Henderson reported that this situation had resulted in some Level 3 students, who had passed GCSE Maths and English, requiring support and intervention.

43.2 One of the Governors highlighted the lower attendance rates for Level 2 courses and Kate Need reported that this was partially due to 'selective attendance' prior to the end of term with students not wanting to catch Covid-19 before the Christmas holiday as well as students who had re-taken GCSEs and who hoped that they had passed and would not need to attend further Maths and English lessons. Overall, both attendance and retention remained high and there were no other areas of concern.

44. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Janice de Sousa reminded those present of the upcoming Trust Strategy day to which they had been invited.

approved

45. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Local Governing Body Meetings

Wednesday 16th March 2022 at 6pm

Thursday 12 May 2022 at 6pm

Wednesday 22 June 2022 at 6pm

Governor Visit Mornings

Friday 4th March 2021

Friday 10th June 2021

Strategy Day

Friday 4th March 2021

The Chair thanked those present and the meeting ended at 8.05pm

To be signed following approval at the meeting on 3 February 2022.....approved.....

Janice de Sousa (Chair)

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS	Timescale	Responsibility
Minute 8.2: EDI team to present to LGB	2021/22	TBN
Minute 38.2: report on changes to timetable and tutorial sessions.	June 2022	KND

Toni Baldwin
Academy Secretary, Queen Mary's College