

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

**Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 12th May at 6.00pm
Meeting held in the Conference Room at Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke**

Present: Dr Janice de Sousa (Chair)
Mr David Ayre (Parent Governor)
Ms Melissa Farnham
Mrs Sally-Ann Hall-Jones,
Mr Mark Henderson (Principal)
Mrs Sarah Pritchard (Parent Governor)
Dr Jordon Renault (Staff Governor)
Mr Neil Mclean
Mr Pete Stagg
Mr Chris Thomas

10/12 quorate
(excluding students)

In attendance: Mrs Sally-Anne Spooner (Director of HR and Commercial Opps) – till 6.40pm
Mrs Katherine Bejide (Teacher of Psychology and EDI Champion) – till 6.40pm
Mr Gordon Holdcroft – Trustee
Ms Sophie Peskett – Student Representative
Ms Kate Need (Deputy Principal)
Dr Toni Baldwin (Academy Secretary)

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The LGB welcomed Sophie Peskett a member of the Student's Union and Gordon Holdcroft a new Trustee who were attending the meeting.

The LGB noted that Ali Kanji, one of the staff Governors had stepped down from the LGB.

Apologies were received from Matthew Jackson, Satya Sookhun and Kay Smith (student representative).

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

62. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the QMC-LGB meeting held on 16th March 2022 (paper LGB 40/21) were approved with two minor changes.

63. MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

All matters arising were covered on the agenda with the exception of:
Minute 48.3: Early Leavers Report – to be covered at a subsequent meeting.

64.1 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The LGB noted the most recent Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which had recently been approved by the Board of Trustees (paper LGB 41/21). Katherine

Bejide, who had been appointed as EDI lead and champion in September 2021 and Sally-Anne Spooner, Director of HR, presented on how the policy was being put into practice within the College. The College was approximately following the national EDI calendar with regular displays and activities taking place, as well as information in Tutor Groups and an expanding EDI section on the web portal. Katherine Bejide reported that she was building on previous work at the College (pre-pandemic) and had taken the approach of enlisting a large number of EDI representatives all of whom supported EDI in different ways across the College from researching the diversification of the curriculum to raising awareness of their particular passion to putting on events. The LGB noted that the pandemic had increased inequality across society and had also resulted in different groups being seen more and looking for recognition in society. This was therefore a very good time to improve inclusivity and equity.

65.2 Katherine Bejide reported that the EDI group changed their displays/campaigns regularly to keep up momentum and that areas covered so far included:

- Black history month – race awareness including black lives matter
- Mental Health Month – focus on male mental health
- Refugee awareness Month – this had in place before the recent war in Ukraine but brought into sharp focus with the recent movement of refugees across Europe.

The LGB heard about some of the activities that had taken places as part of refugee awareness month including a group of refugees hosted locally visiting the College on an INSET day to use the sports facilities, hear a music performance and meet staff and students. The LGB noted that this event had taken place with the support of Winchester University and that at least one of the refugees would be coming to study at QMC in September.

- Neurodiversity awareness month – May 2022

65.6 The LGB heard about other activities that had come out of the increased focus on EDI:

- Sign language workshops for staff and students
- Gender neutral toilets – pronoun badges – gender/ transgender awareness
- Increasing diversity in pictures used for marketing, including for example, a sunflower lanyard to identify hidden disability and neurodiversity.
- Discussion material for Tutorials including a tutorial on consent
- Stop and Search Advocacy – this project had come out of race awareness sessions and a Basingstoke wide project was underway with Basingstoke police and Basingstoke against racism to help everyone in schools/colleges understand the situation and build better relationships with the police.

Action: invite Local governors to Stop and Search Advocacy launch event

65.7 Local Governors discussed the issues raised in the presentation. One of the Governors raised the issue of supporting students with mental health problems or families with mental health problems. Sally-Anne Spooner explained that the College had a register of young carers and that there was a raft of different approaches for students including the wellbeing hub, therapy dogs on site, mental health first aid trained staff and student mentors for students who didn't want to talk to an adult, however, the college did understand that some students found it very hard to ask for help.

The LGB thanked Katherine Bejide and Sally-Anne Spooner for an inspiring presentation and asked to hear how the work had progressed at a later meeting.

Sally-Anne Spooner and Katherine Bejide left the meeting

66.1 **UPDATE FROM THE PRINCIPAL**

Mark Henderson provided an update on College activities:

- The recent Open Evening had gone well with around 1700 people attending. This had mainly been aimed at year 10 students but year 11 students had also attended.
- An 'Oxbridge and Highly Selective Universities' event had also taken place.
- The College was pro-actively celebrating success and a number of students had recently received Principal's commendations and been invited to an achievers' event in Central Studio.
- Recent enrichment activities had included a visit from a high court judge which had led to law students visiting the Courts in Winchester to witness a trial and meet the judges involved, one of whom turned out to be an ex-QMC student.
- Lots of activities had taken place over the Easter holidays including a regional robotics challenge and Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions. Sophie Peskett who had been one of the students on a DoE exhibition, briefly reported on her experience.
- Students and staff were fundraising for the Cambodia trip in summer 2022.
- Marketing continued to 'keep warm' applicants for September 2022 – the College had received nice feedback on the mailings from prospective students/parents.
- Teacher recruitment was continuing for September 2022 in-line with the expected growth in student numbers.

66.2 Governors asked a number of questions which were answered by Mark Henderson and Kate Need and discussed generally:

What was the year 11 helpline that was being advertised on social media?

This was 1-2-1 advice from the admissions team mainly to support those that had not had a face-to-face interview but open to all applicants.

How were applications going? There had been a flurry of late applications following the recent Open Evening and applications for 2022 were looking very healthy.

67.1 **CURRICULUM AND QUALITY UPDATE**

Kate Need reported the predicted grades for summer 2022 based on assessments through the year. A Level results/high grades were expected to be slightly lower than in 2021 in line with government expectations and the move back to examinations from Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). Students who had underperformed in their mocks had been identified and provided with interventions (eg additional workshops). A good proportion of the Maths and English GCSE students had passed on their first re-take in November 2021, however, those who had yet to pass would retake again. The College had a small cohort of students taking Japanese GCSE all of whom were expected to pass with high grades. Kate Need identified two areas of concern from applied vocational qualifications and reported on what was being done to improve these predictions. One of the Governors asked if this was a once off or a trend. Kate Need reported that with one of the courses, partially as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the students taking it had particularly low prior attainment and there had been motivation and behaviour issues within the class.

67.2 The LGB noted the detailed monitoring report and data dashboard (LGB 42/21 and 43/21). Kate Need highlighted aspects of the report:

- Average attendance was at target at 90%, this was slightly below 2019/20 and 2020/21 but around pre-pandemic levels.
- Attendance was below target for several vocational programmes and GCSEs.
- Retention was slightly below target with and lower than in 2020/21.

Kate Need reminded those present that the targets for attendance and retention were set each year and confirmed by the LGB as part of the SAR process.

The LGB discussed the change in retention which had dropped off more sharply than in previous years Kate Need explained that retention appeared to be down across the sector this year due to - increasing mental health issues; students unhappy with courses they were enrolled on; lots of retail and hospitality apprenticeships coming on-line and students not having the academic ability or maturity to complete their course (entry grades based on CAGs /TAGs).

67.3 Kate Need answered questions from the Governors

Is the dip in retention a surprise? The College understands mental health issues but didn't expect the increase in students going to apprenticeships before the end of their applied vocational courses.

What happens to the 'unknowns' students who leave/stop communicating with the College?

The College tries to keep in touch with students and a number return to the College to restart or repeat a year. Students who leave without a destination are reported to HCC to be classed as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Action: early leavers report

67.4 The LGB noted travel to learn data which showed that the majority (70%) of Basingstoke and Deane learners studied at either QMC or BCoT with a significant minority (around 20%, 300 learners) traveling out of the area to study at Peter Symonds College in Winchester.

67.5 Kate Need reported on two different sources of external feedback:

- A recent EQR (External Quality Review) of student voice and enrichment had been very positive: Student voice meetings were considered an effective way of students communicating with senior staff. Both staff and students reported that the increase in enrichment had been very positive.
- BASCITT (Basingstoke School Centred Initial Teaching Training) students had recently had post-16 placements at the College and had been very positive about how they had been supported and what they had learned.

68 **REPORT FROM THE STUDENT GOVERNORS**

Sophie Peskett reported on recent Students' Union activity:

- The current SU were getting 1st years interested in taking over for next year. Hustings and voting would take place so that the next group were in place before the next LGB meeting.
- The SU had held a charity fundraising event for comic relief and hope for justice (an international charity combating modern slavery)
- The students were organising a summer ball at a local hotel – this event was aimed at second year students whose school proms had been cancelled in summer 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic but all students were welcome.

Governors asked about the handover to the new SU. Sophie Peskett reported that there was some handover between years and that Simon Barnard (member of staff with responsibility for the SU) and Victoria Barnes (Head of Student Transition) would also be supporting the new SU.

One of the Governors asked for Sophie's view on the EDI activities that had been presented earlier. The LGB heard that there was information scattered around the College so that students were aware of the campaigns and different issues were also brought up in Tutor Group discussions.

69.1 GOVERNOR ENGAGEMENT

Update from Safeguarding Governor Sarah Pritchard reported that she had recently attended very useful HCC Safeguarding training and was now more confident in her role and the areas which the LGB should be monitoring. The LGB noted their role in setting the culture of safeguarding across the College. Sarah Pritchard raised a number of issues regarding safeguarding which were discussed by the LGB and answered by Mark Henderson and Kate Need. Staff Code of Conduct: This was in place and the College took any breaches very seriously, however, this was a very rare occurrence. Kate Need reported on a recent situation where a member of the public in the Sports Centre had made a comment about a member of staff to another member of staff - Sally-Anne Spooner had dealt with this incident as Director of HR.

69.2 Kate Need reported that Jean Thorpe had carried out a safeguarding monitoring visit in the Autumn Term in her role as Safeguarding Trustee [Secretary's note: due to the importance of Safeguarding and Prevent the NHEA has both a Safeguarding Trustee and a Safeguarding Local Governor]. Kate Need reported that the Action Plan from the Autumn 2021 visit was being put in place and would be reviewed by both Jean Thorpe and Sarah Pritchard during a joint monitoring visit later this term. Local Governors asked some other questions:

How do we know that students are aware of safeguarding protocols in the College? Kate Need reported that students were given information in their Tutor Groups and that Lucy Poynter (SENCO) runs focus groups with staff. The LGB noted that Ofsted would test student and staff knowledge of, for example Prevent, directly.

Do students and staff use WhatsApp and snapchat? Kate Need reported that students and staff should not have personal connections through WhatsApp or snapchat. Should contact be needed, for example, on trips such as the recent DoE exhibitions, staff used College mobile phones. However, staff and students did communicate online via the discord servers used as part of e-sports events as well as 'spaces' in Goggle chat attached to for example, class groups – these were monitored. Separately, if students circulated inappropriate images or messages on WhatsApp or other social media this was treated as a disciplinary matter. Kate Need also reported that the College had a very good 'firewall' and that searches were flagged and monitored and in some cases blocked – any matters of concern would be dealt with. Jordon Renault reminded those present that in some cases searches were part of a student's academic study, for example, law and criminology students looked up a wide range of information.

69.3 Update from SEND governor

Melissa Farnham reported on her first focused visit to the College. The aim of her visit was to understand the context of SEN across the College and, following a discussion with the new SENCO, Lucy Poynter, she had carried out a learning walk, specifically:

- A Media lesson with a mixed cohort including a Student Support Assistant supporting learning (SSA). The students talked to Melissa about their study and the SSA explained that she taught herself the media content so that she was better able to support the students.
- A Foundation Learning session where the students were learning comprehension and deciphering information and critical thinking whilst

learning about the Titanic disaster. The students had been keen to engage with Melissa about their work and also talked about their recent work placements and what they wanted to do next.

69.4 The LGB discussed the allocation of special needs staff noting that one of the main barriers to supporting students was where a student would benefit from specific support but did not have an EHCP, i.e. funding, in place. The College was able to provide more general support to these students. In response to a question about SSAs, Kate Need explained that some SSAs were specific to the student and supported them with all their work and others were specific to a subject and where possible, stayed with the subject from year to year.

69.5 The LGB agreed their focus for the next Governor Visit (10th June) would be staff with a 'Meet the Directors of Learning' session.

70.1 **GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

Toni Baldwin gave a short presentation on various aspects of governance, based partially on the Wessex Group training for new governors which some of those present had attended earlier in the week:

- Recap of academy governance structures, key documents and the responsibilities of each layer - including where the LGB fitted into Trust governance.
- Refresh on the objectives of the Trust as set out in the Articles of Association
 - *To advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom.... 16-19 Academies offering a curriculum appropriate to the needs of its students.*
 - *To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the areas in which the academies are situated and their surrounding areas, the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation..... With the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.*
- Reminder of the requirements for Charity Trustees – which Local Governors were required to meet.
- Reminder that governors should be strategic, understand accountability, challenge and support.

70.2 Review of LGB Terms of Reference: (paper LGB 44/21) Toni Baldwin reported that the Trust was carrying out a review of all terms of reference - last approved in 2019. The LGB noted their current terms of reference with annotated proposed amendments:

- Reduction in maximum size of the LGB from 15 to 13 members (Principal, 2 parent governors, 2 staff governors, 7 Community Governors).
- Amending the remit to focus more on student matters - reducing monitoring of finance and estates matters and increasing monitoring of, for example, teaching and learning, careers and destinations,

The LGB briefly discussed and agreed with the suggested changes. The LGB asked to see the revised version once approved by the Board.

71.1 **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 45/21). The LGB noted that one of the Local Governors had had a useful discussion about the potential for cryptocurrency with the Director of Finance. There were no matters of concern raised.

72. **GOVERNORS MONITORING INFORMATION**

The LGB noted that the usual monitoring reports had been discussed earlier in the meeting (papers LGB 42/21 and 43/21). The most recent consolidated Management Accounts and Business development updates were available in GovernorHub.

73. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

One of the Governors asked for a report at the next meeting on how the College was supporting students whose families were struggling financially through the developing 'cost of living crisis'. Kate Need reported that finances were also a growing concern for some College support staff.

Action: report on student support (financial)

74. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The LGB agreed to continue meeting at 6pm on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday mid-way through each half term. The LGB agreed the proposed dates for 2022/23

Local Governing Body Meetings

Wednesday 22 June 2022 at 6pm

Wednesday 28th Sept 2022 at 6pm

Thursday 24th November 2022 at 6pm

Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 6pm

Thursday 9th March 2023 at 6pm

Thursday 4th May 2023 at 6pm

~~Tuesday 29th June 2023 at 6pm~~ 20th June

Governor Visit Mornings

Friday 10th June 2022

Friday 4th November 2022

Friday 24th February 2023

Friday 9th June 2023

The Chair thanked those present and the meeting ended at 8.10pm

To be signed following approval at the meeting on 22 June 2022.....

Janice de Sousa (Chair)

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS	Timescale	Responsibility
Minute 65.6: : Local governors to Stop and Search Advocacy launch event	9 June 2022	TBN
Minute 67.3: Early leavers report	22 June 2022	KND
Minute 73: report on student support (financial)	22 June 2022	KND

Toni Baldwin
Academy Secretary, Queen Mary's College