

Queen Mary's College Local Governing Body

Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 28th November 2022 at 6.00pm
Conference Room, Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke

Present: Dr Janice de Sousa (Chair and Trustee)
Mr Chris Thomas (Vice-Chair)
Mrs Sally-Ann Hall-Jones,
Mr Gordon Holdcroft
Mrs Alexia Makrygianni Wilson
Mr Jordon Renault
Mr Marcus Rutland
Mrs Sarah Pritchard
Ms Patricia Szoke
Ms Nihinsa Yongya Limbu

8/10 quorate
(excluding students)

In attendance: Dr Beth Linklater (Assistant Principal)
Ms Kate Need (Deputy Principal)
Dr Toni Baldwin (Academy Secretary)

18.1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The LGB welcomed Alexia Makrygianni Wilson (new Parent Governor) and Marcus Rutland (new Staff Governor) to the Local Governing Body as well as Beth Linklater (Assistant Principal) who was attending to report on safeguarding matters and the annual Self-Assessment Report.

Apologies were received from Mark Henderson and Melissa Farnham.

18.2 Janice de Sousa reported that Neil McLean had stepped down from the LGB with effect from 22nd November 2022.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20.1 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the QMC-LGB meeting held on 28th September 2022 (paper LGB 10/22) were approved for signature.

21. MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Minute 9.3: teething issues with the new gates were being resolved. All the pedestrian gates were set so that students could get off site at any time with a student ID card, e.g after clubs/activities.

Minute 13.2: Janice de Sousa reported that she had reviewed all the paperwork for the appeal mentioned at the last meeting and had then written to the parent upholding the decisions made by the Principal. The LGB noted that there had been no further correspondence with the Governors on the matter, however, Kate Need reported that a QMC member of staff had since provided evidence to the parent's tribunal with Hampshire County Council.

22.1 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

The LGB noted the QMC Safeguarding report for 2021/22 (paper LGB 11/22) Beth Linklater (Designated Safeguarding Lead) briefly recapped on KCSiE and the 2022 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which had been discussed and approved at the last LGB meeting alongside the HCC annual Safeguarding Audit. The LGB noted that Beth Linklater revised and updated the NHEA/QMC Safeguarding Policy each September following the publication of the latest KCSiE and Hampshire County Council's model policy for the year. The LGB noted that the NHEA/QMC policy included prevent as well as child protection and safeguarding as QMC considered prevent to be a safeguarding matter.

22.2 Beth Linklater talked through each part of the safeguarding report and answered questions from those present. The report included:

- Personnel involved in safeguarding at the College – The welfare officer in post during 2021/22 had resigned and a replacement welfare officer recruited.
- Training that had taken place during 2021/22 included Safeguarding training for designated staff, all staff, Governors and Trustees. Staff training included internal training, smartlog training and Hampshire training for designated staff and those involved in recruitment.
- Numbers of incidents and referrals were reported split up by types of issues and groups of vulnerable learners.
- Actions identified during Trustee/Governor safeguarding monitoring visits (Nov 2021 and March 2022)

22.3 Beth Linklater reported that last years' report (2020/21) covered the main period of the Covid-19 pandemic and discussed online and phone support for students. The 2021/22 report was back to a pre-pandemic level of activity. Students' behaviour had not been as good in 2021/22 as before Covid-19 and there had been a number of fights and other incidents (mainly from a small group of students) some of which had led to suspensions.

Were there any trends in the fights/suspensions? All but one of the students involved were male but there were no trends in ethnicity.

Beth Linklater reported that, so far this year (2022/23) there had not been the same level of incidents as in 2021/22. LGB noted data on students on Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plans, Team around the Family and Early Help Hub as well as the number of students categorised as purple, red or amber at the College. Beth Linklater reported that increased numbers of referrals had been made to Children's Services and Adult Services in 2021/22 but fewer to CAMHS. The College had had also had fewer contacts from Children's Services possibly as this service was so stretched that they were using higher thresholds and referring more students back to the College for support. Increasing numbers of students had been referred to GPs and the College responded to requests from GPs for reduced programmes.

22.4 Beth Linklater reported that the College recorded all safeguarding incidents on CMTstar the college's own system but the central team were now also using CPOMS the system used in many schools. CPOMS was being trialled before roll-out to all staff. The LGB noted that:

- 'everyone invited' had led to an increase in reports of peer-on-peer abuse
- there were some situations where the College was not able to help, for example, providing supervised eating for those with eating disorders – these students often returned to college once they were in a better situation.

- There had been a large increase in student identifying as a different gender to their birth gender (or non-binary).
 - There were 2 prevent referrals one of whom left the college and 2 other students had been spoken to about right-wing material/opinions voiced online.
- Governors who had not seen this annual report before expressed surprise at both the volume and range of incidents and referrals dealt with by the College on a regular basis. However, Beth Linklater reminded those present that it was far better to record incidents and identify students with challenges as the students could then be supported.

22.4 **What happens to students who drop out?** Early leavers are registered with BCOT, The Princes Trust or the NEET team and become their responsibility, however, QMC continues to attend or send reports to meetings about students who had left the College and a number of students restart at QMC each year after a break. Students leaving the College are also referred to I-Talk (NHS talking therapy) or Basingstoke Counselling Service if they are not able to get support through CAMHS.

Can we expand the counselling capacity at QMC? The College employs one paid counsellor and the remaining counsellors are volunteers who are gaining experience as part of their training and who are supervised by the employed counsellor. The College only has the number of volunteer counsellors that national bodies recommend that one experienced counsellor can supervise. The College doesn't have funds to employ another experienced counsellor and support students in other ways.

What are we doing to prevent problems escalating? Tutors are the first point of call for students. The College then provides a range of support for students through the welfare team. DfE Senior Mental Health lead funding was used to train a member of QMC staff and this knowledge has been cascaded through the college to e.g. SSAs and Help Desk staff. Some students have been trained in peer support and sit in the wellbeing corridor as peer mentors (these students are provided with support in this role).

How is the College responding to the increase in trans and non-binary students? All accessible toilets are gender neutral. All changing rooms have cubicles. The College is treating each student on a case by case basis. Students play for the sports team that they identify with (some negotiation has taken place). A student on an overseas trip is being given a single room.

Are the staff involved in supporting and safeguarding students supported? Staff are entitled to supervision (support). DSLs have confidential group meetings and are very supportive of each other. The Wessex Group safeguarding network also provides a very good supportive community outside the College.

22.5 The LGB noted the College's procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (paper LGB 12/22) which been circulated following a question from a Local Governor on the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. In response to a question, Kate Need reported that staff disciplinary policies were in place if required.

23.1 **POLICIES**

The LGB noted the Harassment and Bullying Policy and supporting documentation (LGB 13/22, LGB 14/22, LGB 15/22) as well as the Student Exclusion Procedure (LGB 16/22). Beth Linklater reported that the college had a culture of respect along with a zero tolerance to harassment and bullying. The policy identified all the options that students had for support in relation to harassment and bullying and had been updated to make it clear that bullying could lead to suspension or exclusion.

The LGB noted that students were made aware of college rules when they started at the College and the expectations of students were widely advertised to students with posters and infographics up around the college. The LGB noted that the Harassment and Bullying Policy was required to be publicly available on the website.

- 23.2 The LGB discussed the documents and Kate Need and Beth Linklater responded to questions:

Are all students equally able to make informed consent to the learner agreement? Students sign their learner agreement at enrolment often with their parents present. Foundation Learning students have the agreement read out to them and explained prior to signing it.

Are there many exclusions at QMC? Very few - the college tries not to let students get to the stage where they are excluded, students can leave and then restart the following year.

One of the Student Governors reported that her tutor had gone through the college expectations with tutees on the first day of the term.

The LGB approved the updated Harassment and Bullying Policy with the addition of a standard definition of bullying (eg. ACAS or DfE).

BLR

24.1 GOVERNOR ENGAGEMENT

Governors' Visit – 4th November 2022

The LGB discussed the recent Governors' Visit (feedback on GovernorHub). Four Local Governors and two Trustees had participated in the visit which had focused on vocational qualifications, one of the LGB's monitoring themes for 2022/23.

Kate Need had reported in detail on the College's approach to vocational qualifications, Governors/Trustees had visited different vocational lessons as well as the Science Centre (for primary children). There had also been focus group discussions with students and staff.

Those present noted some of the discussions from the student focus group:

- 2nd year students who had experienced the two long lessons (blocked timetable) in 2021/22 preferred the new timetable (three shorter lessons)
- Students tended to stay in college for study periods – they liked the new library study area as well as the group study areas in Costa Coffee and Café QM. Students asked if the Coffee shop could stay open later after College – as a study space not a food/coffee outlet.
- Students liked having one of their teachers as a tutor and 2nd year students preferred the new weekly tutorial system and tutor debates as well as 121s. The students in the focus group all had very positive experiences of being supported by their tutors including with UCAS applications.
- One of the students in the focus group talked about using the Shrubbery and how useful this quiet space was them.

Action: College to publicise all the spaces available for group study after College.

KND

- 24.2 The LGB noted that staff in the focus group found the new timetable quite relentless especially on days they were involved with enrichment activities, taking tutorials or had evening meetings (e.g. making the grade). The Chair asked the staff governors how they found the new timetable and the LGB heard that both preferred the three long lessons to either the two very long lessons (blocked timetable put in place for the Covid-19 pandemic) or the timetable with 1-hour

slots that had been used before the pandemic. Staff Governors welcomed the 1st year or 2nd year only tutorials and the increased 121s but noted that these all needed to be fitted into break and lunch times. Kate Need reported that SLT had had similar feedback from the Staff Consultative Committee and the timetable would be reviewed later in the year. However, as discussed, no timetable was perfect.

24.2 Safeguarding Visit – 7th November 2022

The LGG noted a report of the Safeguarding visit carried out by Sarah Pritchard and Jean Thorpe (Safeguarding Trustee) (paper LGB 18/22 attached below). Sarah Pritchard reported that this visit had concentrated on talking to students around different areas of the college and in lessons. The LGB noted that the visit had included talking to different groups of vulnerable students (shrubbery, smoking area, Foundation Learning).

How would the identified actions be monitored? Beth Linklater reported that the actions from each safeguarding visit were reviewed at the next visit. The LGB noted that the next safeguarding visit was expected to include more discussion with members of staff. Kate Need reported that the upcoming INSET days included training sessions for all staff on neurodiversity.

24.3 The LGB noted that Melissa Farnham was booked in for a SEND monitoring visit on 30th November but that this may need to be re-scheduled due to a planned strike by the NEU.

25.1 **REPORT FROM THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Nihinsa Yongya Limbu and Patricia Szoke reported on Students' Union activities and any concerns raised by the student body:

- Students were generally happy at College.
- There had been a very good turnout for the most recent student voice meeting and the SU were encouraging those representing their tutor groups to discuss any issues with their peers and bring concerns to the student voice meeting.
- Students were asking for more benches in the smoking/vaping area.
- Catering had responded to a request from students for more vegetarian and vegan dishes and the Catering Manager was coming to a SU meeting to discuss catering.
- The SU were organising a fundraising event alongside the Christmas concert

ACTION: circulate minutes of Student Voice meetings

TBN

25.2 The Local Governors asked the students about their upcoming mocks. The Students reported that the SU had postponed a meeting to give themselves more time to concentrate on revision. The LGB heard that teachers were using 'Walking Talking Mocks' as well as things like Kahoot quizzes to help students revise. Beth Linklater explained that Walking Talking Mocks involved talking students through a paper question by question and making them think about what was being asked at each stage - analysing, evaluating etc..

The students reported that teachers were using the extra time at the end of the afternoon lessons for revision including going through practice questions and explaining how to structure answers. In response to a question the students said that all the extra revision was helpful.

One of the Local Governors asked about a technique with little whiteboards that they had seen on a recent visit to the College. Kate Need explained that this was

a quick assessment tool to see what proportion of the class knew the answer to a question or understood a concept and was used instead of asking one of the class a question.

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

The LGB noted a summary of Trust meetings and activities since the last LGB meeting including the feedback that Local Governors had provided to the Search and Governance Committee as part of the Trust's self-assessment of Governance (paper LGB 19/22).

Janice de Sousa highlighted a number of points from the feedback including:

- A request for on-going governor training after induction training.
- A question if the LGB were sufficiently challenging of senior management.
- How the LGB could demonstrate their impact

Kate Need addressed these questions. In her view the information provided for meetings was challenged by the Local Governors and Local Governors questioned her, the Principal and other staff who attended their meetings. In addition, Local Governors visited the College regularly to see evidence of what was reported and 'tested' the information provided in meetings – for example the new tutorial setup.

ACTION: any training opportunities to be circulated earlier and more widely
ACTION: New LGB Skills Audit

TBN
TBN

26.2 One of the Governors raised the point that since the LGB was now more focused on teaching and learning they received less information about the Trust's strategy and what was happening at Trust level. Janice de Sousa, Chair of the LGB and also a Trustee reported that the Trust was looking to expand and was reviewing any local opportunities as and when they arose but there were very few potential opportunities to expand the MAT. The LGB noted that they would be kept updated with any changes to the Trust should any opportunities for expansion move beyond initial discussions.

26.3 The LGB noted the most recent iteration of the NHEA/QMC Risk Register (paper LGB 20/22). Toni Baldwin highlighted from the register:

- A new medium level risk that College support services were unable to adequately support students who don't get timely access to external services – this was in line with the discussions around safeguarding earlier in the meeting.
- The two highest risks on the register; restructuring results in single points of failure and a reduction in staff morale/wellbeing; and the Financial Health of Trust and Academies decreases during economic crisis.

One of the Local Governors (who is also a Trustee) reported that the Trust was monitoring financial health and levels of reserves in detail as the economic crisis progressed. The LGB noted all the recent updates to the risk register. No additional risks were identified by the LGB.

27.1 **GOVERNORS MONITORING INFORMATION**

The LGB noted their usual monitoring information along with an executive summary prepared by Kate Need (papers LGB 21/22 and LGB 22/22). Kate Need highlighted that retention at this point in the year was better than in previous years. Local Governors welcomed the addition of percentages to the retention data. One of those present questioned the suggestion that being home educated made students more likely to withdraw from college. Beth Linklater explained to

the LGB that there were generally two cohorts of previously home educated students at QMC:

- those who had been home educated by choice with plenty of support at home and often lots of organised small group activities/learning.
- those who were not in school for some reason and who had then been classified as home educated.

The LGB noted that, in general, the first group of home educated students flourished at college and it was the second group of home educated students who were more likely to struggle in a formal education setting and withdraw from college.

27.2 Turning to attendance, Kate Need reported that the College was focusing on improving the attendance of GCSE/L1/L2 students. The LGB heard that students who had retaken their Maths and English GCSEs in November were being encouraged to continue to attend lessons with extension work such as understanding personal finances with the aim of getting them ready for Level 3 work.

27.3 Local Governors asked a number of questions about the data.
How were Oxbridge applications going? The LGB recalled that they had had a presentation from Tom Featherstone in February 2022 on a new approach to supporting Oxbridge applications. Beth Linklater reported that the number of students applying to Oxford or Cambridge had increased (25 in 2022, compared to 17 in 2021) and that these students were currently having practice interviews. Interviews continued to be held on-line.

27.4 **Why did fewer parents attend the recent 'Making the Grade' Parents Evening?** Kate Need reported that this year the November parents evening had only been opened to parents of second year students who were not doing as well as might be expected and so attendance data was not a like for like comparison. The staff Governors reported that having these meetings online helped attendance and there had had good discussions with some parents. However, by the second year of sixth form, parents whose children were not working hard enough tended to know what they were going to be told at a parent's evening and were less likely to attend.

The Chair thanked Kate Need for preparing the helpful executive summary putting the data in context.

28.1 **QMC 2021/22 SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR)**

The LGB noted the draft QMC Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2021/22 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2022/23 (paper LGB 23/22). Kate Need explained the annual process that the College went through to self-assess and produce its QIP. The LGB noted that this was a bottom up process. During the summer term staff had additional planning time and used this time to reflect on the year that was finishing using for example, attendance data and lesson observation data. Staff identified areas for improvement within their departments and these areas for improvement were then finalised after the results were out in August. During October each area met with members of the SLT to discuss their individual SAR/QIPs and the whole college document produced from parts of each of the individual SAR/QIPs. Kate Need explained that the College's approach was to identify its strengths but always look for ways to make things better. The full SAR/QIPs written for each area were live documents and were used during the year by Assistant Principals and DoLs as the basis for departmental discussions.

- 28.2 Kate Need highlighted from the document:
- the College considered itself to be outstanding in all four Ofsted categories and would aim to justify this to Ofsted at the next inspection (quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management).
 - College achievement targets were compared against 2018/19 Sixth Form College benchmarks (the last set of exams - pre pandemic) and were above benchmark except for some B/CTECs/Level 2 courses.
 - The target was for Alps grades of 1-3 for all Level 3 courses (measure of value added) the 2022 overall Alps grade was 4 which the College considered to be very good bearing in mind that the students who had just left the college had slightly inflated GCSE grades.
- 28.3 The LGB noted that the SAR/QIP was only one part of the College's quality improvement strategy which also included:
- Learning walks by both DoLs and members of the SLT
 - EQRs and PQRs – external and peer quality reviews
 - Feedback from student questionnaires and focus groups.
- 28.4 The LGB discussed various aspects of the SAR/QIP which in the view of the LGB was a good working document that showed that the College understood its business. One of the Local Governors asked how the actions from the QIP were monitored. Kate Need reported that there would be a mid-year review of the QIP in February and would report the outcomes of this back to the LGB. Beth Linklater reminded the LGB that they had already had a number of reports on QIP actions that had been put in place for the start of the academic year, were already complete or were in progress. For example, a new timetable had been put in place along with a revised Tutorial programme for 2022/23, work experience placements were being put in place for all Applied General qualifications and catering had been brought in house. The LGB noted that one of the QIP actions was: 'to continue with increase volume and regularity of focused, on-site visits by members of the LGB/Trustees to increase visibility and engagement and support them in their role of monitoring and challenging college leaders.'
- 28.5 The LGB briefly discussed the format of an Ofsted inspection, the preparation currently taking place at the College and the involvement of Governors in an inspection. Beth Linklater reminded those present that the current Ofsted framework concentrated less on data and more on the students' experience.

29. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Local Governors noted that the annual Christmas Concert would be taking place on Wednesday 14th December. A Governors and Trustees get together would be taking place before the concert and all were invited. Toni Baldwin to circulate details.

The LGB agreed to hold a separate strategy meeting to review the College's strategy.

30. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

Local Governing Body Meetings

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 20th June 2023 at 6pm

Governor Visit Mornings

Friday 24th February 2023
Tuesday 20th June 2023
rescheduled from Friday 9th June 2023

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

To be signed following approval at the meeting on 25 January 2023.....

Janice de Sousa (Chair)

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS	Timescale	Responsibility
<u>Minute 24.1</u> : College to publicise all the spaces available for group study after College	Following meeting	KND
<u>Minute 25.1</u> : circulate minutes of Student Voice meetings	Following meeting	TBN
<u>Minute 28.2</u> : training opportunities to be circulated earlier and more widely	As available	TBN
<u>Minute 28.2</u> : Update LGB skills Audit	Prior to Governor Recruitment	TBN

Toni Baldwin
 Academy Secretary, Queen Mary's College