

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

**Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 20th June 2024 at 6.00pm
Conference Room, Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke**

Present: Mr Chris Thomas (Vice-Chair – chaired the meeting)
Mr Richard Ash – online via TEAMS
Mrs Jackie Day
Mr Mark Henderson (Principal)
Ms Kirsten Johnston
Ms Agnes Wisniewska
Ms Olivia Fisher-Collins
Mr Marcus Rutland

In attendance: Mr Gordon Holdcroft - Trustee
Ms Julie McLatch - Chair of Trustees
Dr Kelly Richens - Director, Basingstoke Alliance SCITT
Ms Kate Need - Deputy Principal
Mrs Victoria Renault – Director of Admissions, Progression and Engagement
– to 6.45pm
Dr Toni Baldwin - Academy Secretary

7/10 quorate
(excluding students)

60. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Chris Thomas chaired the meeting and started by reminding those present that Jancie de Sousa had stepped down as a Trustee and that the previous meeting scheduled for 1st May 2024 had been cancelled.

The LGB welcomed to the meeting:

- Agnes Wisniewska – new staff governor elected by the staff
- Olivia Fisher-Collins– new student representative elected by the students. (Dasha Kyei-Poakwah the second student representative was due to join the meeting via TEAMS but for technical reasons was unfortunately unable to do so)
- Dr Kelly Richens from Basingstoke Alliance SCITT who was joining the meeting as an observer
- Gordon Holdcroft, and Julie McLatch Trustees

Apologies for absence were received from David O'Donnell, Alexia Makrygianni Wilson, Dasha Kyei-Poakwah and Sarah Pritchard.

The LGB welcomed Victoria Renault Director of admissions, progression and engagement.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

62.1 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the QMC-LGB meeting held on 1st May 2024 (paper LGB 40/23) were approved for signature by the Chair.

63.1 **MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Minute 54.2: Governors supporting progression team regarding online applications – in progress

Minute 58.1: Conference Room heating – reported following meeting

63.2 Minute 52.3: Policies relevant to Freedom of speech.

The LGB noted the Policy for Organising Events with External Speakers (paper LGB 41/23). Kate Need explained the process which had been written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Kate Need demonstrated the online system in place to record all external speakers and confirm SLT approval.

64.1 **CAREERS, DESTINATION AND PROGRESSION**

The LGB noted the 2024 Careers Policy (paper LGB 42/23) which had been approved by the Board of Trustees on 23rd May 2024. Victoria Renault gave a presentation to the LGB on careers, destination and progression starting with a reminder of the 2022 Ofsted feedback that - leaders should ensure that students who don't wish to progress to university are as well prepared and supported as those who do. The LGB noted data that the progression team now collected which showed an increase in both careers' interactions and work experience (virtual, hybrid and face-to-face) in the two years since 2021/22. Victoria Renault reported that a code for tracking careers/wex interactions had recently been added to Vista and that this provided another set of data to monitor and show impact. The LGB heard that with these various changes a total of 493 careers interactions had taken place from Sept 23 to April 24.

What are SUN events? Victoria Renault explained that the Southern Universities Network (SUN) provided the College with a careers' advisor. The SUN advisor had traditionally held individual meetings with students, however, using the new progression hub, they were now also able to provide drop-in sessions and group careers sessions (such as on NHS careers and architecture) and reach a larger proportion of QMC students.

64.2 Turning to destinations, Victoria Renault reported that UCAS applications had dipped slightly for 2024 despite a slightly higher cohort of students. The number of students progressing to Higher education had rebounded from the dip in 2020 (Covid-19 pandemic) and the LGB were pleased to hear that, due to more focused careers advice students were making more informed decisions regarding university. In addition, MIS had put in place a system to text students (and their parents) prior to any UCAS deadlines which had reduced the number of late applications. The number of students taking on apprenticeships peaked in 2020 and remained stable in 21/22 and 22/23 with around 1/3 of the number of students progressing to an apprenticeship than went onto university.

64.3 The LGB noted progression team activity including:

- Placements and work experience – mainly vocational 1st year students taking virtual and hybrid work experience and 2nd year students going out on face-to-face placements. The exception to this was students on childcare courses where physical placements were a requirement of the course.
- Employability support – mock interviews, mentoring, public speaking practice, industry talks and trips.
- Careers coaches – community volunteers from industry to mentor non-HE bound students.

- Industry lead hybrid work experience – employers come on site, set a group of students a project, check in with them during the week and then have a presentation at the end of the week.
- Inspiration days – a group of students visit a firm for the day to find out about careers in that area. For example, a solicitor and a legal secretary at Lamb Brooks hosted a group of students, and students had also attended inspiration days with the NHS.
- Careers week – futures fair, progress day, HE and apprenticeship evenings for parents, HE fair.

64.4 Victoria Renault reported on the 2024 Futures Fair which had 40 employers/providers attending. Fewer students had participated than in 2023, however a higher proportion of students provided feedback. The majority of students found the event varied and helpful and the Progression team was able, after the event, to contact any students who fed back that they didn't feel more confident about their plans following the fair so that they could be supported in different ways.

64.5 The LGB noted progress with the eight Gatsby benchmarks (the national framework for careers programmes) as measured by the Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) Compass Reviews. Benchmarks had improved from 2023 to 2024 and were all above 60% with five of the benchmarks at 100%. Victoria Renault reminded the LGB that it was unlikely that the benchmarks would all ever be at 100% as there were always changes and room to improve in different areas.

64.6 Victoria Renault ended her presentation with some slides of the recently refurbished Progression Hub which had, in part, been funded by a Basingstoke & Deane 'Pride in Place' grant.

The LGB noted a summary of actions in the 18 months since the Ofsted report.

- 1) *Improve the quality of careers advice* – group careers sessions, subject sessions and drop in guidance
- 2) *Students should be fully informed of all options* – student portal, emails, posters, Progression hub, Parent mailers, events
- 3) *Non-HE students prepared as well as HE students* – bespoke support and opportunities, mocks, workshops, employability skills, coaches, wex, talks from providers.
- 4) *Prove impact* – vista tracking, counting, recording, evaluating and analysing

64.7 Those present asked a number of questions arising from the presentation:
How was the Careers activity benchmarked? Gatsby benchmarks for all institutions were assessed by the independent Careers and Enterprise company. Victoria Renault reported that feedback from the CEC as well as compass reports for other institutions had provided both benchmarking and ideas for further activities.

Which area was the team currently looking to improve? Interactions with employers – the team had set themselves a target of working with 50 employers over the next year. The College needed to report back on the effectiveness of the 'Pride in Place' funding used to refurbish the Progression Hub and employer interactions was one of the targets being monitored.

How was the College finding work experience for students? Victoria Renault reported that finding good quality relevant work experience was difficult but that activities such as the virtual and hybrid work experience enabled QMC to provide work experience for more students. Mark Henderson reported that QMC was not the only institution looking for work experience and gave an example where QMC was currently supporting a local school that had not been able to find work

experience placements for all its pupils. A group of pupils would be coming to QMC for a week, the Progression Team would be acting as 'the employer' and would run 'hybrid' work experience activities for the school pupils.

What about parents? The general approach across the College had changed and parents were now more informed about careers and progression including, for example, deadlines and options. A students' careers activities were recorded in 'Unifrog' and parents received communications from Unifrog, for example to approve work experience. A parent facing version had also been made of the progression website with information about both HE and non-HE routes of progression.

The Chair thanked Victoria Renault for a very useful update on the progress that had been made over the last 12 months.

Victoria Renault left the meeting

65.1 **PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**

Mark Henderson gave an end of year presentation looking back over 2023/24. The LGB heard that nationally schools and colleges had started the year with poor attendance and retention rates, achievement below 2019, record mental health issues and students being home educated. RAAC closing some schools and colleges, problems with teacher recruitment and funding rates lagging inflation rates. The LGB were pleased to hear that QMC was ending the year with attendance across all courses of above 90% (back to pre-pandemic), retention at 97% (2% above 2023) and predicted grades looking good.

65.2 The Trust had also been successful with a number of grants during the year:

- £560k for the Spectrum roof.
- £46k from Wolfson for computing/robotics lab
- £45k x 5 years from AWE for primary science centre
- £24k Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council for Progress Hub
- £17k from QM Foundation for benches, media screens and Foundation Learning space.

65.2 The LGB noted new teaching and support staff for employed over the year and for September 2024. Mark Henderson reported that, despite the national problems with teacher recruitment, QMC was able to attract good staff.

65.3 Mark Henderson ended his presentation with photos of end of year activities including, the leavers day for second year students, some of the murals painted on the walls around College by the art students, the Foundation learning sports day, a public art exhibition in Festival Place, and the Principal's Commendations. The LGB noted that next week all first year students would be participating in a Social Action week and the college would be hosting prospective students for 'Welcomefest'. In response to a question about the Social Action week, Mark Henderson explained that this would be run by Unloc an education not-for-profit who worked to empower young people. Students would work in teams to support their chosen charity and it was hoped that this structured event would support team building, communication, confidence and resilience amongst students.

66.1 **UPDATE FROM DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

The LGB noted a Quality Improvement update from April 2024 (paper LGB 43/23). Kate Need highlighted:

- The variation in vocational exam results across subjects

- An update on the Aspire programme
- Predicted grades for Summer 2024.

66.2 Kate Need gave a presentation on aspects of curriculum and quality:

- Significant progress had been made in improving retention and attendance. The DfE funded achievement and measured achievement as (retention x pass rate). The anticipated improvements in achievement (depending on pass rate) would improve funding for 2024/25.
- Data analysis had shown that students on free school meals had below target attendance - this would be a priority for SLT in 2024/25.
- The handover to the new exams team had gone smoothly with some support from the previous team. The College had passed its JCQ spot visit and exam attendance had been really good. MIS had put in place a system to text students and parents the day before each exam. 4 students did not retake their GCSE Maths or English and 1 A-Level student did not take any of their exams. **What happens if a student is sick?** Under exam regulations, students were able to miss one paper from a subject and still get an A-Level grade.

66.3 The LGB noted areas of curriculum change:

- Summer 2024 would be the first results using the new creative and performing arts exam board UAL - University of the Arts London
- New qualifications for September 2024 included an Extended Diploma in Sport and A Level Environmental Science
- Qualifications that would not be continued in 2024 included the Extended Diploma in E-Sports. The College was monitoring other qualifications with low recruitment including the Music extended diploma and some modern foreign languages.
- QMC would be offering Core Maths (1/2 A Level points) – this qualification attracted additional government funding.

The LGB discussed the changing curriculum, Kelly Richens reported that secondary schools had mainly moved from teaching German to teaching Spanish and Latin was also being offered in more schools. The LGB noted that final decisions on low recruiting courses would be made before the end of term.

66.4 Kate Need reminded the LGB of the new timetable for September 2024. The LGB discussed the new timetable noting that the change would mainly affect current 1st years as prospective students had been given the new timetable. Kate Need highlighted the mid-morning tutorial/enrichment session that would be used for the personal development programme, as well as the additional 15 minutes for retrieval practice (2nd years only). The LGB noted staffing changes for September 2024 noting that as members of staff resigned SLT took the opportunity to make changes to staffing in line with changes in student recruitment - some teachers were replaced like-for-like and with other subjects teaching staff were either not replaced or the funding was used for other subjects. The LGB noted that there were higher than expected numbers of teachers going on maternity leave in 2024/25.

66.5 The LGB discussed tutorials and personal development, Kate Need reported that work was underway to reduce inconsistencies in delivery, for example, one of the Politics teachers had produced a narrated presentation on democracy that could be used by all Tutors. In response to a question Kate Need reported that students were usually taught by their Tutor, this system enabled Tutors to know their students. Expert speakers were used for some tutorials to support Tutors in dealing with niche or difficult subjects.

66.6 The LGB noted that departments were starting to self-assess as the first stage of the annual SAR cycle and that SLT had a list of courses that needed improvement. Kate Need reported that the College was looking to put in place a coaching approach across the College.

In response to a question regarding the new Vista the LGB asked for an update or presentation from MIS.

Action: Vista Update KND

66.7 Kate Need reminded the LGB that they were all welcome to come into College for results day on 15th August.

67.1 **REPORT FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Olivia Fisher-Collins reported on current SU activities and any issues of concern raised by the student body.

The LGB noted:

- Campaigning had taken place and the new SU elected. They had now met a few times as a group and had their photos taken for Instagram and to go up on the notice board.
- The new SU had helped out at the recent open evening and would have a stand with games, sweets and teddies at Welcomefest.
- It had not been possible to organise a Prom for summer 2024 but this year's SU were keen to try again for 2025.
- Culture day had been a great success and would be repeated next year.
- The SU were working on more interaction with the student body as well as thinking about how to encourage more students to interact with the student voice process either with face-to-face meetings or online.

67.2 Chris Thomas asked about the handover process from last year's SU and Olivia reported that the previous SU had provided some handover including what had worked and what hadn't. The LGB discussed the SU's role in welcoming new students especially those who were coming from out of area who may not have a ready-made friendship group at the College.

Action: SU to discuss how to support 'out of area' students with Support Hub staff (Kate Need to facilitate) SU/ KND

67.3 The LGB put on record their thanks to last years' Student representatives Justin Lamberte and Vladimer Perelighin and wished them well for the future.

68.1 **GOVERNOR ENGAGEMENT – *standing item***

The LGB noted a summary of the 2023/24 Governor engagement along with a number of reports of governor visits (papers LGB 44/23 and 45/23). Governors reported on The LGB discussed the engagement during the year including:

- Observing SAR and MYR meetings
- Curriculum area walk throughs – hosted by Directors of Learning
- Sitting in lessons.
- Visits and meetings with other areas – eg MIS, Support Hub
- SEND and Safeguarding visits.

The LGB noted that visit reports provided evidence for Ofsted of Governor engagement as well as providing discussion points for LGB meetings.

68.2 Chris Thomas summarised the themes that had been identified during the quality improvement process and reviewed at LGB meetings.

- Attendance
- Retention
- Difficulties with staff recruitment and retention and how staff had stepped up to cover any gaps
- Peer review and support

69.1 GOVERNORS MONITORING INFORMATION – *standing item*

The LGB noted the monitoring report for the second half of the spring term and the first half of the summer term (papers LGB 46/23 and 47/23). Kate Need drew the Governors attention to the executive summaries and the LGB discussed aspects of the reports including recruitment. Mark Henderson reported that recruitment was up with the majority of increases seen from schools outside Basingstoke. The LGB noted that with some schools this was likely to be Basingstoke students who had attended secondary schools out of Basingstoke but were returning to Basingstoke for their sixth-form education.

69.2 The Chair thanked Kate Need for the revised half termly monitoring reports with executive summary which had significantly improved the accessibility of Governor monitoring information. There were a couple of suggestions for improvements to the reports for 2024/25 and the Chair asked Local Governors to send any other suggestions to the Academy Secretary.

Action: suggestions for changes to half-termly reports TBN

69.3 The LGB noted the current risk register for input prior to it being approved by the Board of Trustees (paper 48/23). Toni Baldwin reported on changes including the risk relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. Incoming students were now less likely to have gaps in subject knowledge but were however lacking emotional and social skills. The LGB noted that the personal development programme and activities such as the Social Action week were in place to support students in developing these skills.

70.1 REVIEW OF 2023/24 AND DRAFT AGENDA PLAN FOR 2024/25

The LGB noted a review of 2023/24 activities against the LGB terms of reference along with a draft agenda plan for 2024/25 (paper LGB 49/23). Chris Thomas highlighted the wide range of topics that the LGB had covered despite having one less meeting during 2023/24. The LGB approved the draft agenda plan noting that it might change during the year as issues arose. The LGB agreed to review of the SAR at their November meeting with no other main items so that it could be covered in depth.

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 including a paper on cybersecurity (paper LGB 50/23). Julie McLatch highlighted a couple of items:

- The Finance Committee had discussed in detail how the College predicted student numbers for the following year and calculated ESFA income for the budget.
- The Trust had received a presentation on cybersecurity from the Director of IT and had discussed 8 questions to help governing boards improve their understanding of cyber security risks (paper attached). Mark Henderson reported that the SLT would be practicing cyberattack scenarios with one of the Trustees who was an expert in this area.
- The Trust had new External Auditors in place for 2024.

71.2 The LGB noted a compliance check against the DfE list of Statutory Policies for Trusts (paper LGB 51/23). Policies rated amber were under review. There were no issues of concern.

72.1 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The LGB put on record their thanks to Dr Janice de Sousa who had stepped down from the Trust and LGB a few weeks ago on starting a new job in London. Julie McLatch reminded those present that Jancie had been one of the first new recruits to the NHEA Board of Trustees in 2018 after academy conversion and had joined the LGB as Chair in 2021. Janice had brought to the LGB a deep and broad understanding of teaching and learning stemming from her experience first as a teacher and then various roles leading up to Dean of Education at the University of Winchester. Janice had had the best interests of QMC students at heart and participated fully in the life of the College but was also able to ask deceptively simple questions which got to the heart of issues. The LGB asked that their thanks and best wishes be passed to Janice.

72.2 The LGB put on record their thanks to Chris Thomas who was stepping down from the LGB at the end of the term. Julie McLatch reminded those present that Chris had joined what was then QMC’s Sixth Form College Corporation in 2016 having moved from a teaching role at Farnborough SFC to AWE and wanting to maintain a link with Sixth Form education. At academy conversion Chris had chosen to be part of the LGB with it’s focus on students and quality and had been elected as the first Vice-Chair working first with Julie McLatch and then Janice de Sousa. Chris had first a teaching and learning responsibility for the LGB and more recently a Careers representative role. Chris had brought to LGB meetings, his experience of teaching and quality assurance, his understanding of 16–19-year-olds and his passion for supporting students’ development both academically and more holistically. The LGB expressed their best wishes to Chris for the future and presented him with a token of their thanks.

Chris Thomas thanked the LGB for their kind words and responded that it had been a pleasure to be part of such a fantastic college and support them on their journey through academy conversion, the Covid-19 pandemic, a change in Principal and an Ofsted inspection.

73. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS 2024/25

<u>Local Governing Body meetings</u>	<u>Governors’ Visit mornings</u>
Tuesday 24 th September 2024 at 5.30pm	Tuesday 19 th November 2024 – am
Tuesday 26 th November 2024 at 5.30pm	Thursday 6 th March 2025 – am
Tuesday 21 st January 2025 at 5.30pm	<i>Wednesday 4th June 2025 – am (tbc – may move to before half term)</i>
Tuesday 18 th March 2025 at 5.30pm	
Tuesday 13 th May 2025 at 5.30pm	
Tuesday 17 th June 2025 at 5.30pm	

The Chair thanked those present, the meeting ended at 8.00pm and was followed by a social

To be signed following approval at the meeting on 24th September 2024

..... Chair to be confirmed

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS	Timescale	Responsibility
<u>Minute 66.6:</u> update on Vista	Autumn Term	KND
<u>Minute 67.2:</u> Support for 'out of area' students	Start of Term	SU/KND
<u>Minute 69.2:</u> Suggestions for changes to half-termly monitoring reports	Sept 2024	KND

Toni Baldwin
Academy Secretary, Queen Mary's College