

Queen Mary's College Local Governing Body

Minutes of a Meeting held on Tuesday 17th June 2025 at 5.30pm
Conference Room, Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke

Present:	Mr David O'Donnell (Chair)	
	Mrs Sarah Pritchard (Vice-Chair)	
	Ms Maya Barton	
	Mrs Maria Bedit	
	Mr Roger Chung	
	Mrs Jackie Day	
	Mr Mark Henderson (Principal)	
	Ms Kirsten Johnston	
	Mr Mark Kingswood	
	Ms Irate Odewale	9/12 quorate
In attendance:	Mr Marcus Rutland	(excluding students)
	Mrs Helen Gumuskaya, Head of MIS Registry and Exams - to 6.00pm	
	Ms Kate Need, Deputy Principal QMC	
	Dr Toni Baldwin, Academy Secretary	

69.1 **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The meeting started with everyone welcoming new members and attendees. The Chair reported that Maria Bedit was the new Parent Governor and Mark Kingswood had recently been appointed as a Trustee and Local Governor. Both new Local Governors introduced themselves: Maria is a qualified accountant who lives and works locally. She has a son in his first year at QMC and a second son to come to college in a few years. Mark is the County Education Manager for vulnerable children and has previously been a teacher and head teacher in Basingstoke schools. The LGB also welcomed Irene Odewale and Maya Barton who had been elected by QMC students as the 2025/26 President and Vic-President of the Students' Union.

Apologies for absence were received from Liz Cooper, Neil Maxfield and Agnes Wisniewska.

70. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

71. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the QMC-LGB meeting held on 13th May 2025 (paper LGB 45/24) were approved by the LGB.

72.1 **MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Minute 58.1: The LGB noted that the recently approved ED&I policy had been reviewed following the Supreme Court ruling (April 2025) on the Equality Act 2010 – the NHEA policy is compliant.

Minute 59.3: outreach for Primary Schools – QMC had limited capacity and therefore, apart from the primary science centre, concentrated its outreach on partner Secondary Schools (and local primary schools (Science Centre activities and use of the swimming pool)).

72.2 Minute 63.2: The LGB noted an update on the 3G pitch circulated by Mike Gilham (Director QM Leisure Ltd.) following the last meeting (paper LGB 46/24). The LGB noted

that the current 3G pitch was well maintained but was coming to the end of its useful life. Discussions were ongoing with various parties to source funding to replace/refurbish ageing pitches.

Minute 63.3: Review of 2024/25 governor engagement – on the agenda

72.3 Minute 63.4: SEND presentation – scheduled for 2025/26

Following the outcomes of the recent Governor visit, what steps were the College taking to improve student awareness of prevent and safeguarding? Kate Need reported that the Personal Development programme would be reviewed for 2025/26 and that the site security team had produced a video of all the different people and places that students could go to for wellbeing support. The video would be used in September 2025 as part of the new student induction process.

Minute 63.7: Presentation on Ofsted – scheduled for 2025/26

73.1 **USING TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND STAFF**

The LGB welcomed Helen Gumuskaya, Head of MIS, Registry and Exams to the meeting to report on the work being carried out in-house to develop and embed technology into the work of the College. The LGB noted that the MIS team included software developers as the majority of QMC systems and processes (as at other colleges) were bespoke and designed in house. There were currently no suitable off the shelf solutions that would do everything needed by the College. Helen Gumuskaya explained that the MIS team worked with members of SLT and other staff to plan and design systems and processes before creating and maintaining them. The LGB heard that over the last few years the team had focused on:

- Putting in place an online application process and moving student information online
- Continuing to support Vista – the college's management information system
- Developing 'new' Vista
- Improving the reporting from Vista
- Developing an app, optimised for mobile phones, for students and parents

73.2 Helen Gumuskaya explained that all the college's data was held in one central data base which was accessed by the various systems. Although vista was old it remained the main route for staff to access student information, however, the App was both easier and far more secure for external users.

What is the timeframe for 'new' Vista? MIS expected the final swop over to the new system in a couple of years as the team continue to put in place and develop other online systems alongside 'new' vista. Recently the team had added PEEPs (personal Evacuation Plans) to student information as well as putting in place a teacher/parent communication system and an interactive map to help new students at the start of the new academic year.

The LGB noted that as well as the main internal information systems the MIS team also managed the other online systems used at QMC, including CPOMS (student safeguarding information), PayMyStudent and SCOPay (paying money in and out of the college), EPOS (catering payment system), Locker (link between MIS and Microsoft), etc.

73.3 The Chair asked the parents and students present for their opinions of the QMC App. Those present agreed that it had made it much easier to find information (timetables, attendance, exams info, current grades etc.) Parents also got notifications if a tutor added information to the app – e.g notes from 1-2-1s. One of the parents reported that absence reporting was also much easier via the app. Kate Need reported that as a result of parents having more easily accessible information, engagement with parents had improved. Helen Gumuskaya reported that the app worked slightly better on Apple phones than Android however, it was significantly faster and easier than the previous web-based interface. The LGB thanked Helen Gumuskaya for an interesting presentation and asked to pass on their thanks to her team for all their work.

Helen Gumuskaya left the meeting

74.1 UPDATE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Mark Henderson updated the LGB on events and activities since their last meeting. The LGB heard that Mark Henderson had held a teaching staff meeting earlier in the day and would be meeting with support staff tomorrow. The aim of these meetings was to talk through the final weeks of the term and importantly make sure that all staff had the same information prior to up to 1000 potential students attending welcomefest – the final in-person point of contact before enrolment. The LGB noted that applications were up on 2024 and that the College felt positive that enrolment would be up on 2024.

74.2 Turning to other issues Mark Henderson reported on:

- A DoL's away morning that had focused on developing routines and habits and improving consistency across QMC. The LGB noted that it was a balance between empowering teachers and being more systematic across the college.
- The upcoming 'Social Action Week' (3 days), where students were put in teams in their tutor groups and tasked to choose a charity and do something for the Charity. Last year this had resulted in QMC students raising a total of £22k for local, national and international charities in a wide range of ways.
- Work Experience for all first-year students

74.3 Mark Henderson reminded the LGB that the last three days of term would see all first-year students doing some form of 'meaningful' work experience or alternative. The LGB noted that this was the first year that students had been asked to do this and around half of the students had already found something to do, mainly through parents and family contacts. The LGB discussed the problems in finding work experience when a lot of companies now used hybrid working. Those present were concerned that there was bias in the system as it was the students with parents in good jobs or with connections who were most able to find work experience and not the students who possibly needed it more. Mark Henderson explained that this was the first year that QMC had made all students go on work experience and that although this year it mainly depended on 'parent power' the progress team were trying to find more placements and would have more contacts to place students in subsequent years. Kate Need reported that the progress hub was providing e-mail/letter templates for students as well as other support. Those students who were not able to get face-to-face work experience would be carrying out virtual work experience in the College or other employability skills activities.
How would the work experience be monitored? All Wex placements were being registered in UniFrog and students, employers and parents were having to submit information. Students would also be asked to review their learning as part of the process.

74.4 Kate Need reported that the most recent careers guidance asked for all year 10 students to go out on work experience form 2025/26 and this might impact the number of work experience placements available in the future. The LGB noted that the college would review and learn from the experience of this first year and, for example, advertise the dates for work experience at the start of the year.

74.5 Mark Henderson ended his report with pictures from the Basingstoke Place to be Proud of awards at which QMC had sponsored the young role model award. One of the Local Governors had attended the award dinner with Mark Henderson and a QMC student who had been nominated for the award along with their tutor and family.

75.1 UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

The LGB noted a summary of Curriculum Changes since 2020 (paper LGB 47/24). Kate Need reminded the LGB of the previous government's changes in setting up T Levels

and reforming the curriculum to defund Applied Vocational qualifications (BTECs) where they overlapped with T Levels. QMC and other Colleges had responded to this by reducing the number of extended diplomas offered as or before they were defunded (H&SC, Business, E-Sports) and by replacing some BTECs with A Levels (Law and Criminology, Dance). Over the last year, the new Government had paused the defunding of BTECs and removed the 'combination rule' which would have prevented students taking a double or two single BTECs with an A Level thereby decreasing the uncertainty Colleges were facing. Kate Need reported that the demand from students for certain courses had decreased and QMC had therefore stopped both the extended diploma in Music and A Level German.

75.2 The LGB discussed the various curriculum changes over the last few years and raised a concern that QMC was gradually closing its more practical courses and thereby losing a group of students who would have welcomed these courses. Mark Henderson and Kate Need explained the pragmatic approach that the SLT were taking to the defunding of BTECs as well as staffing issues with some subjects and highlighted that QMC had added single BTECs in Media, Sport Physical Activity and Art to the courses being offered as well as A Level Environmental Science.

75.3 Kate Need briefly reported on staffing changes. As previously, when any member of staff resigned or retired the area they had worked in was reviewed for trends and new staff appointed to cover current and future subjects. There were no current teaching vacancies for September 2025 and the College was in the process of recruiting technicians for a number of areas. The LGB noted that from September 2025 Humanities would come under the same Director of Learning as English and MFL.

76.1 **REPORT FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Irate Odewale and Maya Barton reported on Students' Union activity. The SU had met as a group a couple of times and discussed how to get feedback from students as most students were not keen on in person meetings so the SU were hoping to have time in some tutorials to ask students what they wanted from their SU.

- The SU had had a stand at Farewell Friday (the last day for second year students).
- The SU were planning events for the start of the next year.
- The SU were looking to get some funding and had written to the QM Foundation. The LGB discussed other sources of funding (Borough Council, Tesco's, etc.) and asked the SU to come up with a project which they wanted to use the money for.

77.1 **GOVERNOR ENGAGEMENT 2024/25 – *standing item***

The LGB noted a report from their termly visit on 4th June 2025 (paper LGB 48/24). As the second-year students had left and the first-year students were mainly revising for exams, governors had met with two focus groups, staff and students. The first group of new teaching and support staff had been at the College for up to three years. The staff interviewed had been very positive about working at the College and reported being valued, trusted, supported and listened too. Governors were then supposed to have a student focus group, however, several students had dropped out on the day and Irate Odewale (Student Governor) was the only student to meet the Governors. Irate gave some really useful feedback to the Governors on why she chose QMC, what could make the students' experience better and how the Personal Development programme was going for her and other students.

77.2 The Local Governors then met with Jason Yeomans who gave a presentation on EPQs and the new Triple A+ programme. Around 80 students a year submitted an EPQ, which was an individual project equivalent to ½ an A Level or an AS level. EPQ's were rarely included in university offer grades but universities often offered slightly lower grades to students with EPQs in recognition of the skills they had learnt.

- 77.3 The LGB passed on several suggestions to Mark Henderson and Kate Need that had come up during their visit morning including:
- Students were having difficulties using the old college laptops
 - Could more interaction be planned into lessons and tutorials, particularly at the start of the year, to help less outgoing students make new friends (buddy system, group work, changing seating plans etc.)
 - Was there a way in which students who did not take an EPQ could gain similar skills – independent research, dissertation writing, presentations etc.
 - Could Students' Union elections take place in tutorial sessions to encourage more students to vote.
- 77.4 The LGB noted a review of their interactions with QMC over the past year including three governor visit mornings, attendance at various SAR and MYR meetings and at least eight focused visits (safeguarding, SEND, Careers and EDI). Local Governors had sat in on 1st year and 2nd year tutorial sessions and had spoken with students in lessons, tutorials and social spaces. The LGB discussed these visits with the members of SLT present, and all agreed that both senior leaders and the LGB had responded to the 2022 Ofsted recommendation and Governors now had a better understanding of the College. One of the Governors reported that, since visiting the college more often and sitting in SAR and MYR meetings they had seen a far wider range of college activities as well as its provision for a wide range of students.
- 77.5 After further discussion the LGB agreed to a similar Governor Engagement programme for 2025/26; i.e. curriculum visits, focused visits and witnessing the annual quality improvement process (SAR, MYR). The LGB asked for more information prior to SAR and MYR meetings especially if it was a new area for them. The LGB suggested visiting the Performing Arts and Humanities curriculum areas during 2025/26.

Action: 2025/26 Governor Engagement programme TBN

- 78.1 **GOVERNORS MONITORING INFORMATION – *standing item***
The LGB noted the monitoring report for the first half of the Summer term along with an executive summary (paper LGB 50/24 executive summary attached below). Kate Need highlighted aspects of the monitoring information reporting that not much had changed since the Spring 2 monitoring and that the College was ending the year with improved attendance and retention. Governors discussed the data.
- 78.2 **How did QMC use 'rescue' courses?** Kate Need explained that the college tried to make sure that students who were not doing well in a subject and wanted to drop it continued on a full timetable in second year. The LGB noted that, unlike when A Levels were taken as modules (AS then A Level), the system was now less flexible. There were also fewer BTECs which could be 'cashed in' for a qualification after one year so students could start again or go elsewhere (e.g. BTEC Business and BTEC Health and Social Care). Kate Need reported that QMC made up timetables using for example,
- AS Level, or core maths or EPQ, or
 - Students taking year 1 and year 2 of an A Level or applied vocational at the same time.
- 78.3 Kate Need reported that it was important for as many students as possible to have a full timetable, both for their own achievement and progression and for the College to receive full funding. Unlike some other local Colleges, QMC tried to keep all students for two years.
- What about students who wanted to change subjects?**
- Ideally, students chose the right programme when they started at college and teachers helped with this at enrolment.

- Students who wanted to change subjects had to do so before October half-term to have time to catch up.
- When students had a significant change of direction and restarted as first years the College could often justify getting full funding, however, this was not possible if students repeated the same subjects.

79.1 REVIEW OF 2024/25 AND DRAFT AGENDA PLAN FOR 2025/26

The LGB noted a review of all they had done during 2024/25 against their terms of reference (paper LGB 51/24). Toni Baldwin reported that the LGB had covered all aspects of their terms of reference during the year and although there had not been an Ofsted inspection, the LGB had regularly reviewed the recommendations from the 2022 inspection.

79.2 The LGB noted the standing items on each of their agendas and the proposed main discussion items for each of the six 2025/26 meetings.

September – KCSiE and Safeguarding

November – SAR and Quality Improvement Plan

January – SEND

March – Ofsted – new framework

May - Careers, Destination and Progression

June – possibly review of Triple A+ programme, digital learning, impact of AI or coaching for staff.

Kate Need briefly highlighted some of the proposed discussion items **and the LBG approved their agenda plan for 2025/26**

80.1 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN QMC-LGB AND NHEA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The LGB noted a summary of Trust meetings and activities since their last meeting (paper LGB 52/24). David O'Donnell reported on the last NHEA Board meeting which had included, a marketing and recruitment update; an HR update by the Director of HR and DSL (Sally-Anne Spooner) including approval of updated policies; and review of the management accounts to end Feb 25. The LGB noted that the other NHEA meeting that had taken place recently was the Search and Governance Committee who were progressing succession planning and memberships changes for September 2025.

80.2 The LGB noted the updated risk register (paper LGB 53/24). Toni Baldwin reported that this had been reviewed by SLT and there was one proposed change to increase the risk score relating to the loss of data. The LGB noted that there were now three 'red' risks, one relating to the recruitment of students and two relating to cybersecurity and IT. There were no proposed additions to the risk register from the LGB.

81.1 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- No other business had been notified.
- The LGB put on record their thanks to Roger Chung, one of the NHEA Trustees, who had been a member of the LGB for the last 18 months and was now moving to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. Roger replied that he had thoroughly enjoyed being part of the Local Governing Body, had found its discussions really interesting and wished all present well for the future.
- Kate Need reminded Local Governors that they were very welcome to come in for results day on Thursday 14th August (details to be circulated).

Action: circulate information about results day TBN

approved

82. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS 2024/25 and 2025/26**
- | <u>2025/26 Local Governing Body meetings</u> | <u>Governors' Visit Mornings</u> |
|--|--|
| Tuesday 30th Sept 2025 at 5.30pm | Thursday 16 th Oct 2025 am |
| (Note: moved from Thursday 25th Sept 2025) | Wednesday 11 th Feb 2026 am |
| Tuesday 25 th Nov 2025 at 5.30pm | Tuesday 12 th May 2026 am |
| Tuesday 20 th Jan 2026 at 5.30pm | |
| Tuesday 17 th March 2026 at 5.30pm | |
| Tuesday 28 th April 2026 at 5.30pm | |
| Tuesday 9 th June 2026 5.30pm | |

The Chair thanked those present and the meeting ended at 7.10pm

For approval at the meeting on 25th September 2025

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS	Timescale	Responsibility
Minute 77.5 2025/26 Governor Engagement programme	2025/26	TBN
Minute 81.1 circulate information about results day	Before 14 th August	TBN

Toni Baldwin
Academy Secretary, Queen Mary's College