

Board of Trustees

Monday 3rd July 2023

Minutes

Present:

Sugra Alibhai
Richard Craster
Peter Green (Chair)
Lucy Harrison
Linda Horbye
James Marshall
Adrian Marrocco
Lola McDowell
Lucy Needleman
Helen Pettifor
Zubair Shaikh
Ellie Smith
Andrew Tebbutt

1.	Governance
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting
3.	Matters Arising
4.	Strategic/Training Item: 5-Year Priorities
5.	Budget and 3-Year Plan
6.	Maths School Update
7.	CEO Report
8.	Reports from Committees
9.	Any Other Business

In Attendance:

Alex Christodoulou
Del Cooke
Ian Hooper
David Lee
Marco Macchitella
Claire Mugridge
Beth Yap

Minute	Decision /Action	D/A
3.8	Board to receive a presentation from Andrew Tebbutt on Outreach at a future meeting.	A
4.	Andrew Tebbutt to share details of Black Graduates' Careers Events with Sugra Alibhai.	A
5.	ICLMS lettings to be discussed by the Finance & Operations Committee.	A
5.	The Board approved the 2023-24 budget and three-year plan.	D
8.1	Scheme of Delegation to be discussed at the next meeting of the Search & Governance Committee.	A
8.3	Audit & Compliance Committee to discuss climate change at its next meeting and add industrial action to the risk register.	A

The Board welcomed Claire Straus, Chair of Governors-Elect of the Archer Academy, as a guest observer at the meeting.

1. Governance

1.1. Apologies

Lubna Hussain.

1.2 Declaration of Interest

Peter Green and Helen Pettifor declared an interest in item 1.3.

Del Cooke declared an interest in item 1.5.

1.3 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Peter Green and Helen Pettifor withdrew for this item.

The Board agreed to re-appoint Peter Green and Helen Pettifor as Chair and Vice Chair of Trustees, respectively, for the 2023-24 academic year.

1.4 Treasury Policy

It was noted that the Trust's Treasury Policy was approved by electronic written resolution on 4th May 2023.

1.5 Del Cooke

Del Cooke withdrew for this item.

The Board agreed to reappoint Del Cooke as a Governor of the ICLMS Local Governing Body for a full term of four years.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting of 27th March 2023 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record of the events that took place, with one minor amendment. It was agreed that item 6 was confidential and would be removed from the minutes before being uploaded to the Trust's website.

3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

3.5 **In response to a question from Trustees**, Sugra explained that the Premises Working Party will be constituted and will convene once a condition survey of the site has taken place. **In response to a follow-up question**, Claire Mugridge explained that this survey will confirm whether there is any of the 'crumbling concrete' that has been discussed in the media of late.

8. Board to receive a presentation from Andrew Tebbutt on Outreach at a future meeting.

Action

4. Strategic & Training Item: Strategic Priorities

The Board received a presentation from Sugra Alibhai, who outlined the mission and vision of the Trust.

Sugra then updated Trustees on the progress of each of the 5-year priorities:

Students

- Attract diverse cohorts of high achieving, aspirational students who seek a transformative educational experience.

Applications to Woodhouse College have increased by 10% year-on-year, with a record 4,000 applications this year. The College has made 1,356 offers, with 2,631

applicants on the waiting list, all for 750 places. ICLMS has made 71 offers, with a further 12 applicants on the waiting list, and is confident that it can achieve its target of 40 students. However, there is further work to do to diversify the student body, both in terms of free school meals and female students.

- Provide excellent teaching and relevant guidance in a supportive and safe environment, so that students have a fulfilling and enjoyable experience.

The Woodhouse Way has started to embed across the College and the pedagogical approach for ICLMS is currently being drafted.

- Enable students to achieve the best possible grades and progress to the next step in their academic or professional journey.

Results remain strong at Woodhouse with 83.5% of students achieving high grades. In addition to this, 61% of students progress to a Russell Group university and ICLMS will have a similar mandate. It was noted that there is more work to do around apprenticeships and international universities.

In response to a question from Trustees, Alex Christodoulou explained that the aim is not to increase the number of students progressing to international universities but to improve the support that is available to them. Alex went on to explain that around 40 students expressed interest in studying abroad and are now receiving regular support via newsletters and workshops, including one which shares the experience of alumni who studied abroad. **In response to a follow up question**, Alex confirmed that destinations include the United States, Canada, Japan, and New Zealand, and most of the students already have family or contacts in these countries.

Noting the target around diversity for ICLMS, **Trustees questioned** whether Woodhouse has something similar in place. Sugra explained that the target at Woodhouse is broader, namely that it should reflect and serve the community. However, the target of recruiting 40% female students was part of the original business case for ICLMS, set as a clear target for widening participation.

In response to a question from Trustees, Sugra explained that, whilst staff understand it and are putting this into practice, the Woodhouse Way will remain on the College Improvement Plan until it has been fully embedded across the College.

The Board questioned whether any other metrics were being tracked, other than progression to Russell Group universities, and Sugra confirmed that, at the request of Trustees, the College started tracking the number of students who progressed to high tariff universities last year and will have comparative data in the summer. Interest was also expressed in the number of students progressing to Imperial College London, as a benchmark, to see if this is impacted by the opening of ICLMS.

Staff:

- Attract, recruit and retain a high performing, diverse staff body who will collaborate to deliver the vision.

Despite recruitment being a challenge in the sector, this has not been the case at the College. However, the College would like to diversify its workforce and improve the percentage of BME teachers. It was noted that there was a high number of resignations in May but almost all of these were either leaving the profession or moving to new roles outside of London.

- Develop and support all staff to thrive in their careers.
Leadership has been reflecting on what CPD looks like across the Trust, with sessions on *having difficult conversations* and HR matters taking place this term.
- Build and sustain an organisational culture based around trust, respect and openness.
This is a long-term aim for the Trust, ensuring that both institutions can work together. This work has already started and is moving in a positive direction.

The Board discussed in detail the need to diversify the staff body, agreeing that it should be more reflective of London's demographic. **In response to a question from Trustees,** Sugra outlined the work that is currently taking place during recruitment processes, such as 'blind' sifting applications. However, Sugra went on to explain that more work needs to take place around messaging and perceptions. Andrew Tebbutt agreed to share details of the Black Graduates' Careers Events. It was also noted that the lack of BME teachers is currently a national issue.

Action

Finally, Sugra reminded Trustees of the priorities around the wider work of Frontier Learning Trust, which were:

- Lead national innovation through sharing our educational expertise and influencing stakeholders.
- Provide opportunities by working collaboratively with our diverse local communities.
- Achieve organisational excellence and financial sustainability through resource planning and efficient estate management.

Sugra explained that the Trust is still at the beginning of this journey but has already made good progress in building relationships in the community. Staff at Woodhouse College are encouraged to visit other institutions to discuss best practice, whilst ICLMS is involved in U-Maths and outreach work with Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4 students.

Trustees were reminded that the vision of ICLMS is *an excellent learning environment for students, staff and the wider community*

The Board was also informed of the 4-year priorities of ICLMS, namely:

Students

- Achieving a diverse, high-achieving student body that is representative of the demographics of London in terms of ethnicity, gender, and in which students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately represented.
- Developing a curriculum that fosters enthusiasm for the subjects and collaboration and prepares students for future study, including a super-curricular offer that extends beyond the A level curriculum.
- Achieving excellent outcomes at A level (as many as possible achieve A or A*).
- Producing students who are ready to be healthy, successful adults.

Staff

- Developing a shared vision for teaching and learning at ICLMS in line with the values and ethos of the school, and that contributes to a culture of collaboration, support, improvement and innovation.
- Ensuring that maths, chemistry and physics are valued by the ICLMS leadership and accounted for in decision making.

Operational

- Achieving an over-subscribed, financially sustainable school.
- Successfully transitioning to the new building and maximising the use of space and the opportunities provided by a new building and its site.
- Establishing sustainable systems and work practices that adapt to the needs of the growing school.
- Managing roles and responsibilities in response to the increase in staff as the school grows.

Wider Impact

- Developing a sustainable, impactful Outreach programme that contributes positively to local provision and is aligned with the Outreach aims of Imperial College London.
- Establishing a functioning strategy for working with alumni to contribute to the activities of the school.
- Maintaining mutually strong working relationships with Woodhouse College, Imperial College London, and the University Maths School Network.
- Establishing partners to provide additional fundraising to support the school.

The Board requested that the Trust consider how it would measure the success of some of these priorities, such as *producing students who are ready to be healthy, successful adults*.

The Board thanked Sugra for her presentation and agreed that these were a strong set of priorities.

5. Budget and 3-Year Plan

Claire Mugridge presented the 2023-24 budget and three-year plan, explaining that this was the first full budget as an operational Multi-Academy Trust.

It was noted that this budget had been discussed in detail and recommended by the Finance & Operations Committee, subject to two amendments: that the interest income is amended to £100k (as a result of higher interest rates); and an additional one-off £100k be included for capital spend (as a result of the high surplus this year). However, it was noted that this figure would be reviewed in the autumn, once the survey of the site had been completed.

It was noted that the Trust remains in a financially strong position, with a projected operating surplus for the next three years.

Claire reminded Trustees that staffing accounts for 80% of the Trust's expenditure and the staff pay award is not yet known. However, the Trust has budgeted for an increase of 7.5%. Teachers' pensions employer contributions are likely to increase next year, but the Trust hopes that additional funding for this would be provided.

Trustees agreed that there are a number of unknowns with regard to the opening of ICLMS and the budget is being continually reviewed. However, Claire explained that a contingency of £50k had already been included.

In response to a question from Trustees, Claire confirmed that there is some cross-charging between the two institutions within the Trust, such as the £53k paid to Woodhouse from ICLMS for students taking at fourth subject at the College and central staffing costs, including HR, finance and premises.

In response to another question from Trustees, Claire explained that, currently, income is received via the trading company for the Woodhouse site, but it was agreed that ICLMS lettings would need to be discussed by the Finance & Operations Committee in the future.

Action

In response to a question from Trustees, Claire explained that, should there be a high, unfunded pay award, the Trust would make in-year adjustments, likely reducing the capital budget. **In response to a follow-up question**, Sugra explained that there is no strategy to grow student numbers at Woodhouse College due to the current space constraints of the site.

The Board asked whether the Trust was anticipating any funding from Imperial College London and was reminded that, according to the Collaboration Agreement, ICLMS must be self-sufficient. It was noted that the Trust has received support from Imperial with marketing and outreach and could also support with fundraising.

The Board approved the 2023-24 budget and three-year plan.

Decision

6. Confidential Item
Confidential item.

7. CEO Report

Sugra Alibhai took her report as read and updated the Board on the recent changes to the Ofsted framework.

The question was raised as to how the Trust has managed the recent industrial action. Sugra explained that there have been 7 days of strikes this year, with a further 2 taking place next week. Sugra explained that the College has remained open but informed Trustees that there is likely to be more industrial action in the autumn term with Headteacher unions currently balloting.

8. Reports from Committees and Local Governing Bodies

8.1 ICLMS Local Governing Body

The Board received the minutes of the ICLMS Local Governing Body Meeting of 24th April 2023, noting that there have been many further developments since this meeting. The Chair of the Governing Body explained that **questions have been raised** around the Scheme of Delegation and it was agreed that this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Search & Governance Committee.

Action

8.2 Search & Governance Committee

The Board received the minutes of the Search & Governance Committee of 8th May 2023, noting that Chairs will be discussing meeting start times with their committees. It was also noted that, as the number of Board meetings has reduced from 4 to 3 each year, the first meeting is likely to last 2.5 hours, rather than the usual 2 hours. It was noted that the Search & Governance Committee have recommended to members that Lucy Harrington be re-appointed as Trustee. Finally, the Board noted that James Marshall was stepped down at the end of this academic year and thanked him for his service, wishing him all the best for the future. José Morago had been recommended by the Search & Governance Committee to replace James and this would be discussed at the next Members' Meeting.

8.3 Audit & Compliance Committee

The Board received the minutes of the Audit & Compliance Committee of 22nd May 2023, noting that the first internal scrutiny with Price Bailey had taken place around cyber security and the Trust's websites. Staff had agreed that this was a valuable exercise and were pleased with the service being received from the new auditors. **Trustees requested** that the Committee discuss climate change at its next meeting and add industrial action to the risk register.

Action

8.4 Woodhouse Local Governing Body

The Board received the minutes of the Woodhouse Local Governing Body Meeting of 19th June 2023, noting that the College Improvement Plan was reviewed, with positive progress being made in all areas, and governors received an update on the W Level, which is an exciting and innovative project.

8.5 Finance & Operations Committee

The Board received the minutes of the Finance & Operations Committee of 26th June 2023, noting that the majority of this meeting considered the 2023-24 budget and three-year plan. The Management Accounts show that the Trust is projecting a healthy surplus this year and it was noted that the accounts will now be included in the Board papers. Finally, it was noted that all meetings of the Finance & Operations Committee will take place at 5pm.

9. Any Other Business

Trustees were reminded of the governor dinner at Caravan in Kings Cross on Monday 10th July 2023, at 6:30pm.

Confidential minute. (See part 2 minutes.)

The meeting concluded at 8:13pm