

Board of Trustees

Monday 30th September 2024

Minutes

Present:

Sugra Alibhai
Richard Craster
Peter Green (Chair)
Lucy Harrison
Lucy Kasler
Jose Morago
Lola McDowell
Ellie Peters
Helen Pettifor
Zubair Shaikh
Andrew Tebbutt

1.	Governance
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting
3.	Matters Arising
4.	Strategic/Training Item: Outcomes & Destinations
5.	Safeguarding Report & Policy
6.	Any Other Business

In Attendance:

Alex Christodoulou
Del Cooke
Beth Holmes
Ian Hooper
David Lee
Marco Macchitella
Claire Mugridge
Debbie Ramm-Harpley

Minute	Decision /Action	D/A
1.4.	The Board approved the 2023-24 Scheme of Delegation.	D
1.5	Trustees to confirm that they had read and understood the Academy Trust Handbook [2024].	A
3.4	SA to circulate an update on the Trust's strategic priorities, along with the papers, when presented to the Board in July 2025.	A
4.	SA to provide analysis of SEND outcome data at a future meeting.	A
4.	<i>Confidential action.</i>	A
5.	To approve the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.	D

1. Governance

1.1. Apologies

Adrian Marrocco and Linda Horbye.

1.2 Declaration of Interest

PG and HP declared an interest in item 1.3.

1.3 Chair and Vice Chair

PG and HP withdrew from the meeting for this item.

The Board unanimously elected Peter Green and Helen Pettifor as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for the academic year.

1.4 Scheme of Delegation

The Clerk presented the 2024-25 Scheme of Delegation, highlighting the main changes, which were largely due to the Trust now having two open schools, along with referring to updated legislation from the DfE.

The Board approved the 2023-24 Scheme of Delegation.

Decision

1.5 Academy Trust Handbook

Trustees were informed of the latest Academy Trust Handbook and asked to confirm that they had read this.

Action

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2024 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record of the discussions 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

4. SA to circulate an update on the Trust's strategic priorities, along with the papers, when presented to the Board in July 2025.
6. SA had shared the Board's feedback on the U Maths Charter with DL and for him to discuss with U Maths.

Action

3.3.6 **In response to a question from Trustees**, SA confirmed that the Complaints Policy was currently being redrafted in consultation with the Trust's lawyers, with a view to bringing this to Audit & Compliance for approval in November.

4. Strategic & Training Item: Outcomes & Destinations

IH presented Woodhouse's 2024 outcome data, explaining that this had been a success for the College, with students achieving highly both in terms of attainment and progress, and improvements in the overall results being made year-on-year.

The Board was informed that the modal grade in 2024 was an A, for the very first time. Although the number of A grades was slightly less than last year, this was due to the number of A* grades increasing by 2.7%. IH explained that in previous years, the Trust had deemed high grades to be A*-B but, given the high aspirations of students joining the College, this was now viewed as A*-A, which had increased from 47% to 48.4% this year. This was significantly higher than the national average of 27.6%.

Noting that pupil premium students were less likely to achieve A*-A grades, **Trustees asked if** the pupil premium gap had widened from last year. IH confirmed that it had and that individual departments were expected to have strategies for how they planned to address the gap in their area. **In response to a follow-up question**, it was confirmed

that around 11% of students at Woodhouse College were pupil premium, and it was agreed that this low percentage meant that the College could target and work with these students on an individual level. Trustees agreed that narrowing the gap between pupil premium and non-pupil premium students must be a priority for the College.

Trustees questioned what the College was doing to remove barriers that may prevent pupil premium students from achieving the best grade. DRH explained that the Trust had increased the bursary fund threshold to £28k to assist more families and was also looking at how it could support students regarding travel arrangements, some of whom may need to catch multiple buses or trains to reach the College.

In response to another question from Trustees regarding the pupil premium gap, AC confirmed that the Career Ready Programme and mentoring, such as Realising Opportunities, specifically supported disadvantaged students but focused on progression after leaving the College, rather than attainment. AC reminded Trustees that the departments that used COVID catch-up funding had significantly reduced their gaps, as a result of one-to-one tutoring, with some even outperforming their non-pupil premium peers.

Regarding other key groups, it was noted that boys were outperforming girls, and there continued to be grade variation in the College's largest ethnic groups. **Trustees requested** an analysis data relating to students with SEND to be presented at a future meeting.

Action

In terms of value-added, it was noted that the College had an overall ALPS score of 3, which was in line with last year. Additionally, the Six Dimensions data gave the College a score of 0.2 (compared to 0.16 last year), meaning that students at Woodhouse achieved 0.2 of a grade higher than average.

Confidential minute.

Finally, IH presented an update on attendance, explaining that, while this was in line with the national average, there was a desire to improve it further, given that students at the College were above average.

AC presented the destinations data, highlighting that, as it was still relatively early in the academic year, the data was still changing, and the final UCAS report would be available in November.

The Board noted that 72% of students were placed at their first-choice university, 33 of whom were Oxbridge (an increase from 20 in 2023), 60% went to Russell Group universities, and 63% to High Tariff Universities. The Board also noted the subjects by popularity, which included Law, English, Medicine, and Psychology.

AC explained that 130 students were eligible for clearing on the morning of the results, 59 of whom had since secured places, including 29 at Russell Group Universities.

It was noted that, according to the Six Dimensions Data, 9% more of Woodhouse students went to university than would be expected of students with a similar GCSE profile.

Finally, the Board was pleased to note that students secured six higher-level and two degree apprenticeships, including at accountancy firm BKL, Amazon, and HSBC.

5. Safeguarding Report and Policy

DRH presented the 2024-25 Safeguarding Policy, explaining that it had been updated in line with updated legislation.

The Board approved the Trust's Safeguarding Policy

DRH presented the 2023-24 Safeguarding Report, explaining that Mind currently provided counselling services for students at the Trust. However, after several years of working with Mind, the Trust planned to review this provision to ensure it continued to meet the evolving needs of the students.

The Board also noted the large amount of training that had taken place across the Trust, particularly that which had been undertaken by the Safeguarding Team.

DRH informed Trustees that all policies were up to date, except for the EDI Policy, which had been paused due to long-term senior staff absence. This policy would be resumed by the new Assistant Principal of Student Services, and Trustees were reminded that interviews for this position were scheduled for that week.

It was noted that, while there was a high number of reports via MyConcern, these often related to the same students and the report had been adapted to reflect this. Additionally, the report now detailed information about Children in Need, showing how the Trust continued to support the most vulnerable.

The Board expressed its thanks to DRH for covering the role of Interim Assistant Principal of Student Services this year. The Safeguarding Trustee confirmed that the report contained the need-to-know information for Trustees, as well as outlining the lessons learned throughout the year, demonstrating that the Trust was constantly on a journey of growth and improvement.

In response to a question from Trustees, DRH confirmed that the Fitness to Study Policy was being reviewed to ensure it was fit for purpose, specifically addressing the needs of students with long-standing medical conditions. The review aimed to demonstrate how the Trust made appropriate adjustments for students who missed lessons due to ill health, and to reassure parents that students would not be excluded simply for not meeting academic standards due to health-related challenges.

6. Any Other Business

The Board was informed that ISG, the contractor responsible for the permanent build of the ICLMS, had gone into administration. However, the Trust had been informed by the DfE that there was a contingency plan in place, and the school was receiving support around exams and access arrangements initially, with future meetings planned to discuss the build. The Board agreed that this was a huge disappointment for the students and staff at ICLMS, but the school would still recruit 80 students as planned for the next academic year. Trustees noted that, apart from the building, the school was going from strength to strength and had started the term positively.

Decision

SA explained that safeguarding training for Trustees and Governors would take place via Zoom, with those unable to attend completing an online module.

Finally, the Chair explained that the next meeting would include a discussion around the Trust's governance structure, and key stakeholders would be consulted during the autumn term.

The meeting concluded at 7.38pm