

Board of Trustees

Monday 25th March 2024

Minutes

Present:

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

1.	Governance
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting
3.	Matters Arising
4.	CEO Report
5.	Strategic/Training Item: Curriculum
6.	ICLMS Update
7.	Reports from Committees
8.	Risk Register
9.	Any Other Business

In Attendance:

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

Minute	Decision /Action	D/A
3.6	Debbie Ramm-Harpley to send overall student attendance data to the Clerk for circulation to the Board.	A
3.6	Complaints and Fitness to Study Policies to be updated for September and the autumn term respectively.	
4.	Sugra Alibhai/ Debbie Ramm-Harpley to forward information to Lola McDowell regarding the nature of safeguarding incidents that had been referred to the police.	A
6.	<i>Confidential Action</i>	A

Trustees welcomed Debbie Ramm-Harpley who had temporarily joined the Senior Leadership Team, as the Acting Assistant Principal of Student Services, and introductions were made.

1. Governance

1.1. Apologies

Ian Hooper and Lubna Hussain.

1.2 Declaration of Interest

None.

1.3 Caroline Davis

It was noted that Caroline Davis had been electronically appointed as a governor to the Woodhouse Local Governing Body for a term of four years.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting of 11 December 2023 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record of the discussions that took place, with minor amendments. 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

- 3.4 Andrew Tebbutt had shared the details of Black Graduates' Careers Events with Sugra Alibhai.
4. Ian Hooper had confirmed the number of schools that use Alps and this information had been shared with all Trustees.
6. The full cyber-attack report had been shared with the Audit & Compliance Committee.
6. Debbie Ramm-Harpley to send overall student attendance data to the Clerk for circulation to the Board.

Action

In response to a question from Trustees, David Lee explained that it has been confirmed that the ICLMS building cannot be let for non-maths school purposes. However, for school-based events, the building can be let out until 10:00pm.

In response to a request for an update, Sugra Alibhai confirmed that a condition survey of the site has now taken place and a working party is considering the next steps with a view to creating a long-term premises strategy.

It was noted that the Fitness to Study Policy is live on the website, after being reviewed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team. However, it was noted that a further review of the policy would take place for September. **In response to a follow-up question**, it was noted that the Complaints Policy was also under review with the aim of this being in place for September 2024.

Action

4. CEO Report

The Board received the CEO report, noting that the format had changed as a result of the opening of ICLMS. It was noted that the ICLMS admissions process for September 2024 entry had been successful so far and it is expected that there will be an increase in the number of applications from female students.

The Board also received an update on staffing at Woodhouse, noting that, as one member of the Senior Leadership Team has requested to reduce their working week, the College will now be advertising for a full-time Assistant Principal to increase resource in this area. The Board agreed that the need to secure leadership resource is paramount, and it would rather the College over-recruit for a time if necessary.

Sugra outlined the impact that cyber and IT issues have had on the College this academic year and highlighted the need for additional resource in this area at a senior level, which would be included in next year's budget. **In response to a question from Trustees**, Sugra explained that this new role would include leading the digital strategy for the Trust, as well as considering the implications of AI. **In response to a follow up question**, Sugra explained that, whilst the MIS Manager is responsible for day-to-day issues, this additional role would take a strategic view of IT and bring this together with the work taking place at ICLMS, especially in the classroom. Therefore, it was expected that the successful candidate would be a qualified teacher.

Trustees questioned the nature of the safeguarding incidents that had been referred to the police and Sugra confirmed that this information would be shared directly with the Safeguarding Trustee.

Action

5. Strategic & Training Item: Curriculum

Sugra presented an update on curriculum across the Trust, informing Trustees that there are a number of changes to the national post-16 curriculum at present.

It was noted that, in 2001, the most popular A Level was English literature, closely followed by maths. However, in 2022, it was maths followed by psychology and biology, with English dropping down to fifth. Sugra explained that, in recent years, there has been an increase in the take up of sciences, psychology, sociology and economics, whilst languages, design & technology, drama & the expressive arts have declined. **In response to a question from Trustees**, Sugra confirmed that Woodhouse currently teaches French, German and Spanish and explained that the take up of languages at the College tends to reflect the national picture. It was noted that, whilst the take up in German is low (usually in single figures), the College agrees that it is important that Woodhouse continues to run this language subject, as it is one of the only institutions in the area that offers German A Level.

Sugra then outlined the national A Level entries by gender, ethnicity, and students in receipt of free school meals. It was noted that female students are more likely to take three arts subjects. She noted too that students in receipt of free school meals only account for 10% of the A Level demographic. Sugra also highlighted the most popular subjects by ethnicity, explaining that Woodhouse College generally reflects national trends.

The Board then discussed T Levels, noting that this is a technical qualification at a high academic standard, with a focus on vocational and practical learning, alongside academic study. It was noted that T Levels were launched in September 2020 and a recent Ofsted review has shown that *there remains considerable work to do to improve the quality and effectiveness of the T Level course and TLTP, to make sure that they fulfil their potential and can be offered at scale.*

In addition to T Levels, the Advanced British Standard (ABS) has also been announced recently, as *a new Baccalaureate-style qualification for 16- to 19-year-olds that takes the best of A-levels and T levels and brings them together into a single qualification.* Sugra explained that, whilst the ABS consultation closed earlier this month, the Government has confirmed that this will take around 10 years to fully deliver.

Sugra reminded Trustees of the upcoming general election and explained that she has recently met with Peter Hyman (an advisor to Keir Starmer) to understand Labour's priorities, which include technology, human skills and oracy.

Trustees thanked Sugra for her presentation and **questioned** what these trends mean for the Trust. Sugra explained that the Trust should bear current trends in mind, particularly when considering recruitment, which is a national challenge at present. Sugra explained that this has been the case at Woodhouse, with significant challenges recruiting a law teacher. It was noted the College may need to make some difficult decisions around law, especially considering that over 300 applications were received for this subject last year. In addition to this, given the increase in the number of applications for Computer Science, Sugra explained that there may be a need to expand the ICLMS curriculum to include Computer Science as a subject choice.

In response to a final question from Trustees, Alex explained that Woodhouse is unable to influence students' subject choices prior to joining the College. However, once a student has joined, staff are able to have conversations with them early on if there are any concerns.

6. **Confidential Item**

Confidential minute.

7. **Reports from Committees and Local Governing Bodies**

7.1 **Finance & Operations Committee**

The Board noted the minutes of the Finance & Operations Committee of 5th February 2024. Trustees were informed that Jose Morago had been appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee. The Trust is projecting a surplus again this year.

7.2 **Audit & Compliance Committee**

The Board considered the minutes of the Audit & Compliance Committee of 26th February 2024, noting that the majority of the meeting was used to discuss the IT outages and the need for the long-term IT strategy.

7.3 **ICLMS Local Governing Body**

The Board considered the minutes of the ICLMS Local Governing Body of 11th March 2024, noting that governors received an update on admissions, outreach and widening participation.

8. **Risk Register**

The Board received the Trust, Woodhouse and ICLMS risk registers, noting that these are owned and reviewed regularly by the Audit & Compliance Committee. Trustees considered the main changes, which included increased risks around recruitment, the failure of IT services and the completion of the ICLMS build.

It was **requested** that only the Trust risk register is considered at Board level. Sugra informed Trustees that, as a result of the recent internal audit, the risk register would now be moving to a 5-point matrix.

9. Any Other Business

It was noted that Imperial College London has launched a new strategy, which names Frontier Learning Trust as a partner, and this was shared with the Board.

Finally, the Safeguarding Trustee confirmed that, in the absence of the Assistant Principal of Student Services, the interim arrangements are fit for purpose and safeguarding at the Trust continues to be robust.

The meeting concluded at 7:49pm