

## Board of Trustees

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

### Minutes

**Present:** Sugra Alibhai  
Peter Green (Chair)  
Lucy Harrison  
Ruth Henrywood  
Linda Horbye  
Adrian Marrocco  
James Marshall  
Helen Pettifor  
Zubair Shaikh  
Ellie Smith  
Andrew Tebbutt

**In Attendance:** Ian Hooper  
Lubna Hussain  
Marco Machitella  
Claire Mugridge  
Beth Yap

1.	Governance
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting
3.	Matters Arising
4.	Strategic/Training Item: Outcomes & Destinations
5.	Safeguarding Report & Policy
6.	Report from the CEO
7.	Maths School Update
8.	Reports from Committees
9.	Risk Management Plan
10.	Any Other Business

Minute	Decision /Action	D/A
3.3.4	Ian Hooper to ensure that Imperial College London become involved in Woodhouse's chemistry and maths academies.	A
5.	To approve the Trust's safeguarding policy for the 2021-22 academic year.	D
8.2	Clerk to send out reminder for Trustee and Governor preferences regarding the date and time of the Annual Strategy & Training Event.	A

The Chair welcomed Ruth Henrywood, who has joined the Board and is the new Safeguarding Trustee.

#### 1. Governance

##### 1.1. Apologies

Richard Craster and Jeremy Ruff.

##### 1.2 Declaration of Interest

None.

It was noted that all Trustees had completed a Register of Interest for the academic year.

##### 1.3 Trustee and Governor Attendance

The Board considered attendance data for the academic year. The Clerk explained that the Trust's attendance for the year was 88% and in line with the sector average (87%). The Clerk reminded the Board that this information is included in the financial statements and published on the Trust's website.

## 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record of the events that took place. It was agreed that part of item 6 would be removed prior to these being uploaded to the Trust's website.

## 3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

3.4 Ian Hooper to ensure that Imperial College London become involved in Woodhouse's chemistry and maths academies.

4. A working party, has been formed to develop a 5-year strategic plan for the Trust.

8.1 Plans are underway regarding the Board Meeting of 6th December 2021, which will take place at Imperial College London. Imperial Trustees will present a strategic item regarding their roles at Imperial and how they interact with Frontier Learning Trust.

8.1 Further information regarding data centre costings was circulated, as requested, and this project had been approved by the Board electronically.

Action

## 4. Strategic/Training Item: Outcomes and Destinations

Ian Hooper presented the Board with the latest outcome data, reminding Trustees that Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) formed the third assessment process that the College had undertaken in the last three years, making it difficult to compare previous data in a meaningful way. The Board noted that the DfE has devised a method for parents to compare schools, but this is based purely on the number of students that have taken qualifications.

Therefore, rather than compare with previous data, the Board considered how Woodhouse compares to the national average in terms of high grades and noted that this gap had narrowed this year.

The Board then considered attainment by subject, as well as by key groups within the College, noting that, this year, female students had made more progress than male students, which had not been the case in previous years. The Board agreed that this could be due to the change in assessment method.

Whilst discussing key groups, the Board also noted the bottom income quartile is the largest at Woodhouse and these students made less progress than those in the lower, middle and top quartiles. **In response to a question from Trustees**, Ian explained that the bottom income quartile is calculated using the IDACI measure of deprivation, which is largely based on postcode.

The Board went on to consider the value-added measure, as calculated by ALPs, and was reminded that these scores were compared to the December

2020 data, to show progress that was made in-year. The Board was pleased to note the progress of disadvantaged students which was much higher than the national figures.

**In response to a question from trustees**, Ian explained that, often, students with lower GCSE profiles make better progress at A Level, and the College needs to do more to help higher-achieving students achieving A\*s, as it is difficult to show these students' progress in a meaningful way statistically. The Board noted that this will be especially difficult this year as no student in the College has taken external exams.

The Board was informed that there will be a two-week assessment window in February, which is a shift from previous years, as the College is looking to better prepare students for exams as much as possible.

After discussing the latest assessment data in some detail, **Trustees asked** SLT what the expectations should be for this year's results. Ian explained that there are a number of external variables, such as students not having taken external exams, but this is the case nationally, and the College is working hard to ensure that students catch up on any lost learning. The Board was reminded that the ALPs figures considered at this meeting were not an indicator for next year, but the College is aiming to narrow gaps between departments and key groups.

Sugra Alibhai then drew attention to the destinations report, reminding the Board that this is an evolving picture, as the College is still liaising with some students to clarify their destinations data, including those who are taking gap years.

The Board discuss the gaps in key groups, noting that these are much smaller than the national picture, with 2% of disadvantaged students progressing to Oxbridge compared to 4% of non-disadvantaged students. The Board was reminded that UCAS states that these students are three times less likely to progress to higher tariff universities. However, it was noted that this is not the case at Woodhouse with 56% of disadvantaged students progressing to Russell Group universities compared to 62% of disadvantaged students nationally.

**In response to a question from Trustees**, Sugra confirmed that the College has no concerns regarding ethnicity inequalities in terms of destinations. The biggest area of focus is reducing the number of students who are entering clearing (64 this year) and more work is needed in supporting students to finalise their firm choice and their insurance choice universities.

The Board noted that the College has contacted every student in clearing, including students who are taking a gap year and retaking their exams; those who are taking a gap year and not retaking; and some who are awaiting the result of an appeal. The College is supporting students in clearing to ensure that they do not rush and make a poor choice.

The Board discussed whether it should continue to use progression to Russell Group universities as an internal measure but noted that many parents are interested in this, and it should continue to be used as a marketing tool. The Board was pleased to note that Woodhouse was rated 8<sup>th</sup> in the country in terms

of getting students into Russell Group universities (according to research by The Daily Telegraph).

**In response to a question from Trustees,** Sugra confirmed that most students progress to universities, and that only one or two undertake higher level apprenticeships each year. Many students are interested in these but there are very few available.

The Board thanked Sugra and Ian for the hard work around the TAGs process.

## 5. Safeguarding Report and Policy

Lubna Hussain presented the proposed Safeguarding Policy for the academic year, informing the Board that there have been very few changes made, but this latest version takes into account the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

**In response to a question from Trustees,** Lubna confirmed that the College does not consult students in the drafting of the Safeguarding Policy but does take into account their feedback regarding the College's safeguarding provision in general.

The Board approved the Trust's Safeguarding Policy for the 2021-22 academic year.

Decision

The Board then considered the annual Safeguarding Report from 2020-21, noting the increase in mental health issues as a result of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. **In response to a question from Trustees,** Lubna confirmed that the College ensures that students are aware of the external support and agencies that are available even when the College is closed.

The Board reviewed the summary of cases that have been dealt with this year, along with comparison data for the previous 3 years, and was reminded that this will provide a picture of the areas that need particular focus after the pandemic.

**In response to a question from Trustees,** Lubna confirmed that MyConcern continues to work well, as all concerns or issues are recorded on this system, allowing the team to run a number of reports to identify trends and patterns.

**Trustees questioned** how the College monitors students who have been referred to an external service. Lubna confirmed that the College will continue to work with these students, their parents and providers such as CAMHS or their GP, in order to provide a wrap-around service to ensure full support.

## 6. CEO Report

Sugra Alibhai presented the CEO report, explaining that this contains significantly more data than previous reports and this will be updated every half term to provide Trustees with a narrative throughout the year.

The Board noted that the College is currently preparing its Self-Assessment Report which will be considered by the Woodhouse Local Governing Body in

November, and it is likely that the judgment will be unchanged from previous years.

The Board noted that the current number of students on roll is 1479 and that the College over-recruited in music and music tech, meaning that BEAT has needed to source additional staffing.

A new attendance policy, approved by the Local Governing Body, has now been implemented. Persistent absenteeism is currently 15% but the Board was reminded that this is in the context of Covid.

The Board received a brief overview of the Trust's financial situation and was reminded that the Finance & Operations Committee will consider the year-end accounts at its next meeting.

Under staffing, the Board noted that the College has struggled to recruit some support roles, such as an interim accountant, and **Trustees questioned** why this was the case. Sugra explained that post-pandemic issues have made it more difficult when offering temporary posts.

Noting that the male/female ratio of students has now skewed even further (male 539 / female 940), **Trustees questioned** whether the College has any plans to address this trend. Sugra confirmed that gender is not taken into account during the admission process, but the high female intake is likely to be because girls achieve higher than boys at GCSE.

## **7. Maths School Update**

The Board considered the Chair's report on the progress of the ICLMS. The Board noted that a written resolution to expand the Collaboration Project Review Board to include two more Imperial representatives was approved in September by the Trust.

## **8. Reports from Committees and Local Governing Body**

### **8.1 Woodhouse Local Governing Body**

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and Marco Macchitella, as Chair of the Woodhouse Local Governing Body, explained that much of the meeting was used to discuss the latest outcomes and destinations data.

The Board noted that the Local Governing Body also received the College Improvement Plan (CIP) and agreed with the holistic approach to improve the College as a whole. The CIP will be reviewed at every meeting of the Local Governing Body and Governors are aware that this is an ambitious plan for the year.

Finally, it was noted that the Local Governing Body would be receiving the College SAR at its next meeting and approving this for submission to Ofsted.

## 8.2 Search & Governance

The Board noted the Search & Governance minutes of the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

The Chair explained that, to allow for more interaction between the Board and College staff and students, it has been proposed that the Annual Strategy & Training Event includes a tour of the College ‘in action’, meaning that it will need to commence earlier than the usual 5:00pm start time. The Clerk will send out another reminder for Trustee and Governor preferences regarding the date and time.

Action

The Board also considered the outcome of the Trust and Governor self-assessments, noting that only 18 out of 26 questionnaires were completed. The Chair reminded the Board that self-assessing governance processes is a DfE requirement.

The Chair informed the Board that the Academy Trust Handbook sets out the requirement that governance should be reviewed externally every three years and that the Trust is considering when the best time to do this would be.

The Board went on to discuss whether members of Local Governing Bodies should continue to sit on Trust Committees as Associate Members. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that it is likely that this would not continue long-term and Associate Members should not have voting rights at committees.

## 9. Risk Management Plan

Sugra Alibhai informed the Board that separate risk management plans have been drafted for Frontier Learning Trust and Woodhouse College and thanked Zubair Shaikh for his assistance.

The Board then considered the Frontier Learning Trust risk management plan and **questioned** whether this was being used by SLT to identify and manage risks on a day-to-day basis. Sugra explained that the risk management plan is considered regularly by the Senior Leadership Team and some of the issues identified in the plan have now been included in the College Improvement Plan, with the aim of reducing these risks permanently.

**In response to a final question from Trustees**, Sugra explained that a reduction in Ofsted grade is a risk, as the number of colleges receiving ‘outstanding’ is lower than under the previous framework. Sugra reminded Trustees that it has been 13 years since the College was last inspected. The Board noted that Ofsted training will be included in the Annual Strategy & Training Event in January.

## 10. AOB None.

The meeting concluded at 8:25pm