

Local Governing Body

Monday 21st February 2022

Minutes

Present:

Aisha Adesanya
Rakeb Alemu
Sugra Alibhai (Principal)
Sam Bailey
Louise Burke
Lynn Blades
Pamela Chowdhury
Del Cooke
Angela Hille
Matthew Konneh
Jo Large
Marco Macchitella (Chair)
Emma McCoy
Aiyong Seo

1.	Governance
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3.	Matters Arising
4.	Use of Data
5.	College Improvement Plan
6.	Student Experience – Curriculum & Extra-Curricular
7.	Principal's Report
8.	Risk Management Plan
9.	AOB

In Attendance:

Peter Green
Ian Hooper
Lubna Hussain
Peter Thompson
Beth Yap

Minute	Decision /Action	D/A
3.4	Ian Hooper to circulate the final College Self Assessment Report to the Governing Body.	A
6.	Ian Hooper to circulate his presentation on the curriculum to the Governing Body.	A
7.	Lubna Hussain to circulate the report that was presented to Trustees outlining the work taking place in response to Everyone's Invited.	A

The Governing Body welcomed Aiyong Seo and Rakeb Alemu, the newly elected Student Governors.

1. Governance

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Pemi Arowojolu and Funmi Esuola.
Farina Begum was absent without apologies.

1.2 Declaration of Interest

None.

2. Minutes

The Governing Body approved the minutes of 15th November 2021 as a true and accurate record of the events that took place. It was agreed that these minutes should be uploaded to the College website in their entirety.

3. Matters Arising

1.3 All governors to consider how the Governing Body can become more engaged with the College and pass on any suggestions to the Chair or Clerk.

4. The Chair requested that the final College Self Assessment Report is circulated to the Governing Body.

Action

4. Use of Data

Ian Hooper explained how the College has historically used attainment and progress data, reminding governors that this has changed in recent years due to the pandemic and the introduction of TAGs and CAGs. Ian went on to explain that the College continues to use data both retrospectively, to identify trends, and looking forward, to plan opportunities.

In addition to this, the College also uses data internally to measure progress, which is now more important than ever, as much is still unknown around the grading of exams this summer.

Ian reminded the Governing Body that the content of exams has been reduced and shared by exam boards, meaning that it is difficult to extrapolate data from mock exams and make meaningful comparisons.

Governors questioned how the College can assist students in their UCAS applications, given the difficulty predicting accurate grades. Ian explained that the College has specialist teachers who will draw on their experience from previous years and time has been set aside for staff to talk about moderation and marking. In addition to this, Sugra Alibhai confirmed the College is focused on ensuring that each student secures a university place and conversations around aspirational and insurance options are taking place.

A long discussion ensued around whether students would feel more motivated using percentages, rather than grades. Sugra reminded governors that the majority of students join Woodhouse with the aspiration of progressing to a high-tariff university and explained that the College must be honest with them in terms of attainment. Sugra went on to explain that a large amount of work is being conducted around growth mindset and the use of language in relation to grades.

In response to a question from the Governing Body, the Student Governors confirmed that, whilst receiving feedback in percentages encourages students to work harder, grades are more comforting to receive, particularly as there is a disparity in grade boundaries between subjects.

Governors questioned what work the College is doing to ensure that projected grades remain accurate. Sugra confirmed that the College is monitoring predicted grades against results and will work with departments when there appears to be a growing gap by discussing unconscious bias and ensuring that students have a sound knowledge foundation.

In response to another question from governors, Sugra confirmed that the College also monitors the data of disadvantaged students. It was noted that, whilst there is not a substantial gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students at the College overall, more work could be done to narrow this further and the data is a starting point for these conversations.

Noting that the data used in the report was an example from one department, **governors questioned** whether the gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students and males and females were typical across the College. Ian explained that, whilst the gaps are typical, these differ in both degrees and timing from department to department.

In response to a final question from governors, Sugra confirmed that she is working with Marco Macchitella to discuss the progress and attainment metrics that would be presented to the Governing Body at future meetings.

5. College Improvement Plan – Autumn 2 Update

The Governing Body considered the College Improvement Plan which included updates from the second half of the autumn term. The Chair asked the Principal to draw attention to any areas of the plan that she deemed to be high risk.

Sugra explained that, whilst there were no areas of the plan that were high risk, the Governing Body should be aware that some strategic items that were due to commence in February or March will be put on hold as capacity is currently limited and the College is eager that these get the attention that they require.

Noting the leadership and management section of the College Improvement Plan, **governors questioned** how staff have found the recent period of transition. Ian explained that staff appear to have coped well but the College is looking to strengthen staff voice and is currently preparing to circulate a survey to understand how staff are feeling and see if there are any ‘quick wins’ that could be put into place to provide additional support.

The Governing Body agreed that this is an ambitious plan and assured the Senior Leadership Team that there is no pressure if every item is not completed by the end of the year.

In response to a question from governors, Sugra confirmed that the College is ensuring that students are learning skills that will assist them at university through VESPA. It was also noted that personal development features heavily in tutorials and assists students in learning how to debate in a healthy way and communicate clearly.

In response to a question from the Governing Body, the Student Governors explained that tutorials could be improved, such as using this time to discuss

the student bulletin or careers information. However, the Student Governors confirmed that the College offers a number of useful opportunities such as programmes and workshops via the Careers Team.

6. Student Experience – Curriculum and Extra-Curricular

Ian Hooper outlined the College's curriculum offer, which currently includes 27 A Levels that can be taken in any combination and is more than can be offered by an average school sixth form.

Ian explained that the subjects are divided into 5 faculties: maths & computing, science, humanities, social science and English, creative and languages. Subjects vary in size ranging from German (with 12 students) to maths, the largest subject at the College, which has 570 students.

The Governing Body was presented with the weekly timetable noting that there are 20 lessons per week along with space for meetings, briefings, tutorials and one-to-ones.

Ian explained that the curriculum is largely influenced by the demand from students, for example, as English literature has become less popular at GCSE in recent years, this has affected the demand for it at A Level. The College must also factor in parental and HE demands and, whilst the College can be somewhat flexible, the curriculum remains limited by staff capacity and the size of the campus.

Ian then drew attention to the College's enrichment and wider curriculum offer, which includes sport, trips, volunteering, Duke of Edinburgh award and an impressive speakers' programme.

In addition to this, Woodhouse plus offers a number of academies, such as law, medicine and Oxbridge, which assist students in finding out more about their chosen career. However, there are also subject-related options, such as Microsoft Office and drawing, along with leisure-related options including gardening, choir and rock climbing.

In response to a question from governors, Ian confirmed that 21% of the 578 Woodhouse Plus enrolments are from a disadvantaged background. However, there are variations within each choice of Woodhouse Plus.

In response to a question from governors, the Student Governors confirmed that Woodhouse Plus is a good initiative, but it can be disappointing if students did not receive their first choice, as some academies, such as medicine, are very popular. The Student Governors suggested the need for increased flexibility in the timetable, as students are required to stay for supervised study even if they have free periods later in the day.

Governors thanked Ian for his presentation and requested that it is circulated to the Governing Body.

Action

7. Principal's Report

The Principal drew attention to her report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and highlighted the successful work around Oxbridge applications. It was also noted that two departments are receiving additional teaching and learning support.

Noting the information on marketing, the Governing Body was pleased to see a 13% increase in the number of applications received this year and congratulated the College on this success.

Under safeguarding, the **Governing Body questioned** the increase in the number of safeguarding cases. Lubna Hussain explained that this is due to an increased amount of anxiety following the pandemic, along with the fact that the College is encouraging students to be more vocal around their concerns. The Governing Body agreed that, whilst it is worrying to see an increase in cases, this shows that students are comfortable in coming forward and the College has the correct processes in place for dealing with this. It was noted that this is a trend that is likely to continue for a number of years.

In response to a question from governors, Lubna confirmed that a large amount of work has been conducted in response to ‘Everyone’s Invited’ and she would circulate the paper that was shared with the Trust on this.

Action

Governors offered suggestions around how the College may further develop this work. Lubna explained that a session on consent has already taken place and further work has now started around toxic masculinity to ensure that young men feel confident. Lubna explained that the college is eager to ensure that it is opening up these kinds of conversations in a safe space.

Peter Thompson presented a report on teaching and learning, reminding the Governing Body that one of the College’s priorities this year is to ensure that it delivers high-quality teaching and learning that engages all students. Therefore, a number of learning walk weeks have been planned, the most recent focusing on how sophisticated and academic students’ spoken contributions are in lessons.

In response to a question from governors, Peter explained that he includes student voice in the learning walks to gauge their satisfaction. Overall, the College has been impressed with the application and approach of the lower sixth students. Peter reminded the Governing Body that the students demand a high quality of teaching and learning, and the College receives few complaints regarding this.

8. Risk Management Plan

The Governing Body considered Woodhouse’s risk management plan, noting that the College is now developing a wider recruitment strategy and is currently in the midst of recruiting.

9. Any Other Business

Peter Green, Chair of Trustees, updated the Governing Body on the work around the Imperial College London Maths School (ICLMS), highlighting that

David Lee has now been recruited to the post of Headteacher and will start in June. In addition to this a contract for the building has been awarded to Portakabin. The Governing Body noted that a public consultation will begin in May and include students and parents at Woodhouse.

It was noted that the ICLMS Local Governing Body will convene from September and plans are underway to ensure a smooth handover from the Steering Group over the next few years.

In response to a question from governors, Sugra confirmed that Woodhouse staff are being updated regularly on the progress of the ICLMS.

The meeting concluded at 8:07pm