

WOKING COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Woking College held on Wednesday 25th
January 2023 at 6.00pm in the Study Area, New Teaching Block

Present:	Tim Stokes	Chair
	Jonathan Miles	Vice Chair
	Alastair MacAulay	
	Anne Middleton	from 6.50pm
	Mike Mulheron	
	Rosh Sellahewa	
	Andy Williams	
	Brett Freeman	Principal
In Attendance:	Gary Botha	Observer
	Erica Ehoru	Observer
	Avril Webster	Observer
	Zamir Tehal	Member
	Nuweed Razaq	Deputy Principal
	Laura Cook	Assistant Principal
	Helena Clarke	Assistant Principal
	Barbara Maude	Clerk to the Board

Item	Agenda Description	Action
	STANDING ITEMS	
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interest Apologies had been received from Ben Smith (child care commitments), Cullum Mitchell (clash of meetings) and Anne Middleton, who would be joining the meeting but would be slightly late. The apologies were agreed.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Gary Botha, Erica Ehoru and Avril Webster to the meeting. They had all put themselves forward for the current Parent Trustee vacancy. The vote was still open and due to close on Friday, so in the interim they had been invited to attend the Board meeting and the Chair was delighted that they had all agreed to attend.</p> <p>In terms of declarations of interest, no Trustee, member of SLT or any observer present declared any pecuniary or other direct or indirect personal interest in any item on the agenda.</p>	

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2.	<p>Introduction to the Board Meeting</p> <p>The Chair outlined the strategic intent of the meeting which was for the Board to experience the learner’s journey with a particular focus on the enrolment process, the range of support available and the new teaching methodology of WALKTHRU’s and how their use may impact upon students’ learning.</p>											
3.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The Board received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th December 2022. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and approved for signature by the Chair</p>											
4.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>To review any matters arising</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="245 748 1347 813"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Matters arising 07.12.23</th> <th>By whom</th> <th>By when</th> <th>Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Review Link Trustee protocol</td> <td>BMA/NRA</td> <td>25.01.23</td> <td>Update to be provided</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It was confirmed that following the last meeting, the Link Trustee protocol had been reviewed to reflect a less prescriptive tone as it was recognised that the scheme had now been in operation for some time and worked well. It also included, under arrangements for visits, that Trustees may, if they wished to do so, have a contextual discussion with a member of SLT prior to a planned visit.</p> <p>The Board resolved: To approve the revised Link Trustee Protocol.</p>		Matters arising 07.12.23	By whom	By when	Status	1.	Review Link Trustee protocol	BMA/NRA	25.01.23	Update to be provided	
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	<p>PRINCIPAL’S UPDATE</p>											
5.	<p>The Board received an oral update from the Principal on the start of term. The Principal reported that the mood in College seemed generally quite contented with students having settled well into the routine of College life. There were a couple of incidents of vaping which had resulted in suspensions, an issue the College appeared to have inherited from students previous schools.</p> <p>In terms of staffing, the Principal talked through a few staff changes and also advised that in terms of strike action taking place next week the College’s planned arrangements for the day were being sent out to parents. The College would effectively follow the routine for a snow day.</p> <p>Ongoing capital projects were discussed, including progress on the OWCC project and CIF bids for the main site relating to the roof on the main block and new fire suppression systems.</p> <p>Applications were up 20% compared to the same time last year and acceptances were up 40%.</p> <p>Retention was at 98% compared to 97% for the same time last year.</p> <p>The results of the staff wellbeing survey conducted in December 2022 were positive with</p>											

	<p>staff feeling supported despite the often challenging circumstances.</p> <p>The Careers Team had today completed 20% of all UCAS applications on the last day before the closing date. 370 applications had been submitted with 10 Oxbridge offers received so far, and it was noted that for the first time, a student had received an offer to read medicine at Oxford. The Clerk had circulated the latest Careers Bulletin prior to the meeting and the Board commended the work of the Careers team for the wide range of opportunities that it regularly promoted to students.</p> <p>In terms of the College’s financial position, the Principal advised that for 2023/24 the College would be setting a deficit budget. This would mean that the College would be utilising some reserves. The Board were advised that a School Resources Management Advisor had been assigned to review the College’s financial position. SRMAs were sector experts that provided peer to peer advice to schools and Academy Trusts on how to get the best out of their revenue and capital resources. The appointment of a SRMA was not specific to the College but a national initiative as schools and Trusts sought to set budgets and plan ahead in challenging financial circumstances.</p> <p>The Board asked whether the College may be setting further deficit budgets post 2023/24. The Principal advised that management anticipated that it would be setting a deficit budget for one year but the impact of a number of financial challenges such as the energy crisis and cost of living increases was difficult to predict. It was also noted that the deficit budget for 2023/24 was based primarily on the under recruitment of students this year and not as a result of the increase in utilities and other costs.</p> <p>The College was in a fortunate position, compared to many other schools and trusts, as it had a healthy reserves position and could therefore afford to set a deficit budget. In addition, the College was not committed to proceeding with any of the CIF bids if it was felt appropriate to retain cash reserves.</p> <p>Finally, the Principal advised that an external review of governance was due to start shortly. Fiona Chalk, who had been appointed to undertake the review would be contacting all Trustees in due course. She would attend the March Board meeting as an observer and present her final report and recommendations at the May Board meeting.</p>	
	<p>BOARD TRAINING SESSION – THE LEARNER EXPERIENCE</p>	
<p>6.1</p>	<p>Enrolment</p> <p>Nuweed Razaq, Deputy Principal facilitated a talk through how a typical student would experience enrolment at the College, to ensure that students are enrolled on the best course for them and explored how some of the more challenging situations have been resolved.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal advised that the enrolment process started with an Open Evening in June for Year 10 which combined with the launch of the College’s new application year. This was followed by a taster day with the school in July for Year 10. This tended to be local schools within an approximate 12-mile radius. The students would come in groups or clusters and experience College life. This would be followed up by an Open Evening in the Autumn of Year 11. This was the College’s busiest marketing event of the year.</p> <p>Students would then have an individual interview to discuss their course choices and the College provided guidance and support in making those choices. An offer letter would be sent out and students would have to accept that offer. Once they had accepted they would</p>	

	<p>be invited to a Welcome Day in June/July after GCSEs exams had finished.</p> <p>On GCSE results day, all of the senior team would be in College to provide advice and guidance to students.</p> <p>Students would then be invited into College for a personalised 5 stage enrolment process. This would be done on a face to face basis and they would be guided through the process which involved having their GCSE results logged onto the system together with other essential information. A senior manager would then discuss their course choices with them and if necessary, at this stage students would be referred to ESOL testing if they had overseas qualifications or careers advice if needed.</p> <p>Students would then meet subject teachers to discuss their motivations for choosing the course and if appropriate to discuss alternative options. Once agreed, the subject teacher would then sign off to authorise the course choices and set introductory work to be completed prior to their first lesson.</p> <p>The process continued with students choosing extra-curricular activities and finally signing off a learner agreement form and being provided with details of when to attend for their induction session.</p> <p>The size of the College meant that it was able to offer a personalised face to face service. Management were also constantly reviewing how they could improve the service and this year introduced the use of a QR code that students could scan to complete a Wellbeing Survey and then those details could be uploaded to their records.</p> <p>In terms of growth, whilst the College could grow to 1,600 students the limiting factor was the recruitment of teachers. There was also a very real sense of community and if the College got too big there was a danger of losing that collegiate feel.</p> <p>Trustees asked whether the College ever dissuaded students from enrolling. Management advised that on occasion they may ask a student's former school for a reference, they may take note of a student's behaviour or body language during the process; or may recommend them not enrolling with the College if they did not have the appropriate qualifications. In that case, they would always support a student to find an alternative place. Asked how many times those particular circumstances might arise, management said possibly a few times per year.</p> <p>Trustees also asked about whether there were enough stages in the career's guidance on offer as students often struggled to identify what they should do next. SLT advised that at base, the advice was to do what a student enjoyed and what they were good at. Often there were not specific subject requirements for degrees. Students only needed to know what the next step was likely to be.</p>	
<p>6.2</p>	<p>Support for Students</p> <p>Helen Clarke, Assistant Principal facilitated a talk through Apple [©] to show how the College supports individual students.</p> <p>APPLE stood for Attendance, Progress, Pastoral, Learning Support, Extension Support. The system helped staff to identify the appropriate support route for students.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal highlighted just some of the support options available under each category.</p>	

	<p>In respect of attendance concerns, a progress mentor was assigned to a student if mental health or personal circumstances were impacting or were likely to impact attendance. So far in 2022/23 38 students had been assigned a progress mentor. They were being supported by way of daily parental contact and if a student was not in College the parents would be messaged. Last year 46 students had dropped out at this point in time and this year it was 24 so the measures were having an appreciable impact.</p> <p>In terms of progress concerns, for those students who lacked the skills to study independently they could be assigned Independent Learning Mentors – experienced members of staff (including the Principal) who offered 1-2-1 6 weekly sessions, with a further 4 if required, to agree short- and long-term objectives, weekly targets and the opportunity to reflect on progress made. After 6 or 10 weeks the aim was to have a more assured student. 33 students were utilising this service this year.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal also highlighted peer mentors which were students who had undertaken peer mentoring training. The College currently had 47 trained student mentors.</p> <p>Under pastoral concerns, the use of a Green Card was also discussed which enabled a student to leave a lesson if they felt anxious. Often just by having the card available, this helped to ease anxiety for some students.</p> <p>Also, as from February 2023 the College could offer a 24/7 Counselling phonenumber. This was a paid service undertaken by Health Assured which was BACP accredited. The College was charged per student but it meant that help was available to students' whatever day or time it was needed.</p> <p>Extension support examples included the Lunchtime Lectures and Big Talks, access to the careers team, Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and the Excellence Programme which was 3 strands (Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Maths & Physical Life) to all students by application.</p>	
<p>6.3</p>	<p>WALKTHRUs</p> <p>Laura Cook, Assistant Principal facilitated a discussion on WALKTHRU's which were a teaching methodology used by College staff and provided a teaching tool kit.</p> <p>WALKTHRU's were 5 step guides to instructional coaching. They were set out in 2 booklets with clean, simple graphics with brief descriptions of how teachers could try out new techniques within the teaching and learning context.</p> <p>There were 6 strands which covered behaviour and relationships; curriculum planning; explaining and modelling; questioning and feedback; practice and retrieval and Mode B teaching (which related to independent learning outside of the classroom).</p> <p>There were two cycles. Cycle 1 ran from September to January when a teacher would pick 3 academic focussed WALKTHRU's. In cycle 2 from January to April the focus shifted towards pastoral skills they wanted to develop and 3 more strands that were focussed on student and staff wellbeing.</p> <p>This was the second year that the College had used WALKTHRU's. Feedback after the first year was that staff wanted to work more collaboratively and the focus for Year 2 was for a department to choose 6 principles they wanted to focus on as a team. Each staff member would then choose 2 strategies to try in the classroom from that area.</p>	

	<p>Staff would complete a planning sheet and return to Terry Wilks, who would review them and departments would then be paired to share best practice.</p> <p>The WALKTHRU strands that were considered the most useful from the teaching staff feedback were questioning and feedback and explaining and modelling.</p>	
7.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chair advised that the Board were considering putting forward nominations for Outstanding Governance in the National Governance Association Awards.</p>	
8.	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting of the Board would take place on Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 6pm.</p>	