



**WOKING COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ANNUAL CONFERENCE & SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING
Learning Resource Centre
Wednesday 13th September 2023**

Present:	Gary Botha	
	Erica Ehoru	
	Tim Stokes	Chair
	Anne Middleton	
	Rosh Sellahewa	Vice Chair
	Andy Williams	
	Brett Freeman	Principal
In Attendance:	Ray Marks	Member
	Nuweed Razaq	Deputy Principal
	Laura Cook	Assistant Principal
	Helena Clarke	Assistant Principal
	Fiona Munday	Finance Director
	Barbara Maude	Clerk to the Board of Trustees

Item	Item	Action
	Annual Conference with Heads of Department/Years	
1.	<p>Welcome by Chair & Principal The Chair and the Principal welcomed everyone to the meeting, with particular thanks to all of the Heads of Department and Heads of Year and also to Ray Marks who was attending in his capacity as a Member.</p>	
2.	<p>Trustees to meet College Heads of Department Trustees and Ray Marks, were invited to join a table of their choice with Heads of Department and Heads of Year to discuss in small groups their thoughts and reflections on the last academic year and to highlight any of the challenges and priorities for the new academic year.</p> <p>The discussion groups were rotated after approximately 15 minutes allowing Trustees to meet three separate groups of HoD and HoY.</p> <p>After the session concluded, the Principal thanked all staff members for their time and HoD and HoY then left the meeting.</p>	

	<p>Break & Refreshments There was a short break for refreshments.</p>	
	<p>Board of Trustees Meeting</p>	
3.	<p>Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interest Apologies had been received from Alastair MacAulay (on holiday) and Ben Smith and Cullum Mitchell both of whom had work commitments. The apologies were agreed.</p> <p>No Trustee, Woking Academy Member or member of SLT declared any pecuniary or other direct or indirect personal interest in any item on the agenda.</p> <p>Before the formal Board meeting commenced, the Trustees gave some feedback on their discussions with the HoD and HoY.</p> <p>There had been a number of themes discussed which included the fact that class sizes were larger this year (which had been anticipated with the increase in enrolments). If next year saw another large intake then staff had raised this as a potential concern.</p> <p>SLT advised that College class sizes were still well below sector averages and there was currently no single class that had more than 21 students.</p> <p>Trustees were pleased to note that staff had commented on the positivity of the new student cohort. However, given the comprehensive nature of the College, students did bring with them a number of issues, most notably in terms of mental health. It was noted that whilst the support provided by CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) was extremely limited, the College did support and signpost students to alternative charities and resources.</p> <p>An increase in student numbers did mean that there were likely to be more mental health concerns and more students who had an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP).</p> <p>There had also been discussion concerning the need for even more social space within the College. Again, SLT advised that from the October half term the OWCC would provide a 25% increase in available social space.</p> <p>There had been some discussion concerning T levels and whether the introduction of a tier of Assistant HoD might be useful as the College infrastructure continued to grow.</p> <p>Trustees had also discussed the input from students and how Trustees could more accurately capture their feedback. The Trustees had held Student Focus Groups and these would be continued together with inviting the SU representatives to Board meetings. Insofar as those students who had left, the Board were advised that a survey would be going out to those parents whose child had just left the College to ascertain their feedback. The results could come back to the Board at a future meeting.</p>	
4.	<p>Introduction to the Board Meeting The Chair outlined the intent of the meeting which was to provide Trustees with an overview of success data from the 2022/23 examinations, an update on enrolment figures, the latest set of Management Accounts and a progress update on capital works including the OWCC, CIF bid</p>	

	projects and the re-suiting of departments. The Chair also extended, on behalf of the Board, a welcome back to SLT for the new term and wished them all the best for the year ahead.	
5.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The Board received the minutes of the previous meetings held on 28th June 2023 & 5th July 2023 respectively. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and approved for signature by the Chair, via the marked as signed facility on Governor Hub.</p>	
6.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>There were no substantive matters arising from the previous meetings. It was noted that the revised budget approved at the meeting in July 2023 had been submitted in accordance with the appropriate timelines.</p>	
7.	<p>Trustee & Executive: Annual Conversation</p> <p>Flowing from the External Review of Governance, the Board had agreed to implement three recommendations from the report. The first such recommendation was to hold an open conversation to discuss the expectations of both the Board and SLT for the year ahead to ensure skills, knowledge and experiences around the table were leveraged for the benefit of the College.</p> <p>Following discussion, the Board’s expectations of SLT were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papers should be available and circulated in time for meetings; • Key areas/focus for Trustees should be highlighted in executive summaries; • Trustees skills and experience should be leveraged by the College to access greater links within the community <p>SLT’s expectations of the Board were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any substantive questions should be posed before meetings to enable SLT to prepare accordingly. This was not to preclude Trustees from asking questions in the meeting but if there was any question that required a more thorough response then SLT would appreciate those being outlined prior to the meeting; • Link Trustee scheme should be more fully utilised to promote greater awareness and understanding of College life (this could include just dropping in and seeing how the College felt on a typical day); • SLT would welcome greater attendance by Trustees at events such as SAR Meetings, Open Days, Open Evenings, College productions etc. <p>It was acknowledged that Board and Committee papers did need to be available a week before the meeting and from the Trustees perspective this needed at the latest to be by the weekend before a meeting to allow Trustees sufficient time to review and ask questions beforehand.</p> <p>It was also acknowledged by Trustees that in asking questions prior to a meeting they did not want to be too onerous or pedantic but sometimes questions posed in a meeting could potentially appear combative and if so, it was important that the potential for this was lessened.</p> <p>The Board discussed the Link Trustee Scheme and it was agreed that the protocol should be re-circulated, together with the list of current links and the names of all the HoD. Trustees were encouraged to review the list and notify the Clerk and or the Deputy Principal if they wished to be linked to a particular department and if so, introductions would be made on email.</p>	<p>SLT SLT ALL</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>

	<p>The Board were also advised that the SAR meetings would be taking place on the 28th and 29th September and again, Trustees were encouraged to attend if possible. The schedule of SAR meetings would be circulated by the Clerk outside of the meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk and SLT would review outside of the meeting the executive summary template in line with the focus outlined in the ERG.</p>	<p>BMA</p> <p>BMA/ SLT</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>College Briefing Update The Board received an oral cross-College update from the Principal.</p> <p>The Principal was able to reassure the Board that following a survey, no Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) was present within College premises. If the survey results had been different, the Principal advised that he had sourced alternative premises so that the College could continue to function if any remedial works had been necessary.</p> <p>The College had now moved into the OWCC. There was a long snagging list but the College were officially in residence and were predominantly happy with the facilities.</p> <p>It was suggested that before the Board meeting in November, the College would offer a tour of the OWCC premises for Trustees.</p> <p>Insofar as the main site was concerned, a substantial amount of work had been undertaken over the summer. All the heating systems had been replaced, together with all the old ceilings, the re-suiting of departments completed, many areas re-decorated and refreshed, and new and approved signage installed.</p> <p>The first Open Evening on 12th October 2023 would be the perfect opportunity to showcase the College site, which Trustees were of course invited to attend.</p> <p>Next year the College would be completing the second successful CIF bid which was the replacement of the College’s fire suppression systems and fire doors.</p> <p>In terms of funding, the College had received an additional 3% funding to contribute towards the cost of the teachers’ 6.5% pay rise. The budget for 2023/23 included an allowance for a 4% pay rise.</p> <p>Insofar as enrolment figures, the College had currently enrolled 1,528 students in total. SLT anticipated that by the October census date that figure may possibly have dropped to around 1,500 students as ordinarily the College lost some students in the first few weeks of term.</p> <p>The consequence of increased student enrolments was that the College would be in a reduced deficit position this year and possibly not in a deficit position for 2024/25.</p> <p>In terms of staffing, the College had lost two members of staff from Registry and were losing their Head of Computing at the end of the calendar year and the Board were advised that unfortunately this was a particularly difficult position to recruit to.</p>	<p>BMA</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Examination Results 2023 The Board received a summary of examination results for the academic year 2022/23 from Laura Cook, Assistant Principal.</p>	

Data was still changing and remarks were coming in (a remark could make a 4% difference) but overall the pass rate was at 97% (95% in 2018/19).

The Assistant Principal advised that the most accurate comparison was against data for 2019 as the intervening years had seen CAGs and TAGs.

High grades for 2022/23 were 50.4% compared to 54% in 2019.

In terms of Level 3, the pass rate was 98% (compared to 97.8% in 2018/19) with High Grades down to 50% (2022/23) compared to 59% (2018/19).

A level had seen a pass rate of 99% (98.5% in 2018) and high grades of 52% (compared to 48.6% in 2018). However, the ALPs grade had decreased from ALPs 3 in 2018 to ALPs 4 in 2022.

The Assistant Principal advised that the 2022/23 cohort had come into College on Teacher Assessed Grades which arguably were slightly higher due to grade inflation. The ALPs grade was worked out on what a student was expected to achieve based on their entry grades. As those original GCSE grades were arguably grade inflated it meant that their outcomes this year were not quite as good as would be expected. This accounted for why the ALPs grade had decreased in 2022.

An ALPS grade of 3 would put a College in the top 25% nationally. An ALPS grade 4 meant that students were achieving well but were not in the top 25%.

The Six Dimensions Analysis was another Value-Added mechanism. This reflected that 20% of College students achieved 1 grade higher than typical for similarly qualified students in sixth form colleges nationally. In terms of the College this was in respect of 24% of boys and 16% of girls and 20% of white students and 17% of BME students.

The Board discussed these figures and were advised that whilst girls were generally more consistent across the year, boys tended to leave exam preparation until the last minute. With TAGs and CAGs, they had been unable to do that but as exams returned to normal they had now out performed girls.

The Assistant Principal advised that although the average ALPs grade had decreased there were courses that warranted special attention for their individual results of ALP3 or higher. Particular mention was made of Core Maths, Maths, Graphics, Fine Art, Textiles and Latin which all achieved an ALPS 2.

Subjects achieving ALPs 3 included Chemistry, English Language and Literature, English Language, French, Law and Drama.

Conversely, those A level subjects that required improvement were noted as Classical Civilisation, Philosophy, Film Studies and Three-Dimensional Design.

Classical civilisation appeared to be similar to the national picture; Philosophy had seen a turn over in staff but whilst a new member of staff was an NQT the College were hopeful that with strong contacts at other S7 Colleges the department would see an upturn.

Film Studies presented a conundrum as the teaching staff and levels of teaching were both very good but the department was not achieving the level of high grades expected. As such the

College would be commissioning an EQR on film studies to assist in the identification of how the department could improve.

The Three-Dimensional Design course had seen a particularly tricky cohort in 2022/23 but with a new member of staff now heading up 3DP it was hoped that this was on an upward trajectory as there had also been good growth in the subject area as well.

In terms of L3 Applied General Qualifications, it was confirmed that 50% of all College students studied at least one AGQ. The pass rate for AGQ was consistent with 2018 although High Grades had dropped from 72.3% in 2018 to 48.4% in 2022. The Assistant Principal advised that comparison with 2018 was not feasible as the 2022 cohort were sitting different exams but SLT acknowledged that they were overall disappointed with the results, notably the drop in HGs as it was considered that they should have been more in line with the 2021 results as there had been no TAGs in 2022.

However, again, within the AGQ overall results there were results to be celebrated, for example, ALPS Grade 2 for Music Tech, Engineering and Applied Science and ALPS 3 for Media.

Areas for development included Diploma Business, IT and Health and Social Care. These subject areas would be closely monitored. Currently it had not been possible to identify a suitable reviewer to undertake an EQR on either Business or Health and Social Care and so SLT would be analysing forensically each subject by topic and module.

The Principal advised that the Assistant Principal had been tasked with reporting half termly on areas requiring development so that they could be tracked and monitored.

Level 2 results had been pleasing with HGs up to 52% compared to 41.7% in 2021. There was an 86% Merit Plus compared to 67.4% in 2021. It was to be remembered that L2 students ordinarily hadn't passed all of their GCSEs and were not always suited to exams so the L2 qualification provided a stepping stone for them to go on to do what they wanted to do – often to a L3 course within the College.

Looking at GCSE results HGs for English stood at 55% (compared to the national average for SFCs of 31% and FE Colleges of 26.1%) and HGs for Maths of 43% (compared to 22.7% for SFCs and FE Colleges of 18.5%).

In terms of SEND, disadvantaged and Safeguarding Student results there was a general discussion concerning the percentage of students on or above target grades. Trustees queried whether it was possible to have some further narrative around the data as comparison or context was difficult to appreciate. SLT advised that with these particular groups it was not possible to compare to national averages as each institution would make its own judgement (such as those eligible for free meals, in receipt of a bursary or safeguarded). The Principal advised that the best that could be achieved was to track year on year.

SLT advised that more detailed analysis would come to the Board at the next meeting as part of the SAR review process. If Trustees were able to come to departmental SAR meetings then again, the data would be further examined and greater context would be provided in those sessions.

Finally, the range of other successes was duly noted together with headline feedback of both the staff and student surveys.

<p>10.</p>	<p>Financial & Capital Projects Update</p> <p>The Board received an oral summary on funding, the July 2023 Management Accounts together with an update on current capital projects from Fiona Munday, Finance & Estates Director.</p> <p>In addition, to the summary provided by the Principal, the Finance and Estates Director advised that the CIF heating and ventilation works had been completed and the new heating systems had been tested but the heating would not be turned on until after the October half term.</p> <p>The fire suppression CIF bid works would commence over the February 2024 half term.</p> <p>The new round of CIF bids would be open later in the autumn term and the College would be looking to put in a further bid for the roof of the main block as the two previous bids for the roof had been unsuccessful.</p> <p>The Board extended their thanks to the Finance and Estates Director and the entire Site Team for all their hard work over the summer.</p> <p>The July Management Accounts had been uploaded late onto Governor Hub, just prior to the meeting. Whilst Trustees had not had the opportunity to see the July Management Accounts, the Finance Director explained they indicated an operating surplus of £371k which was £46k ahead of budget. The forecast for the end of the financial year indicated an operating surplus of £341k.</p> <p>It was noted that the Financial Statements Audit was scheduled for October.</p> <p>As enrolment figures were positive the Finance and Estates Director indicated that she would look to undertake a reforecast in either the December 2023 or the January 2024 Management Accounts to incorporate the additional funding received for the teachers’ pay increase of approximately £140k. If student numbers remained at 1,500 then the additional funding equated to approximately £200k. With those changes, the overall budget deficit for 2023/24 was likely to reduce to below £100k.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the ESFA had granted permission for the College to set a deficit budget but it was now pleasing that the original deficit would be reduced.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023</p> <p>The Board received an update on the key changes introduced under KCSIE 2023 and the implications for Trustees from Helena Clarke, Assistant Principal.</p> <p>The changes introduced under KCSIE 2023 related predominantly to the new filtering and monitoring standards applicable to all College networked machines. The College utilised Smoothwall, for all filtering and monitoring of College devices and networks. Smoothwall had been in place for 3 years and the Assistant Principal gave examples of how any inappropriate search was immediately highlighted and could be traced to the individual device, thus enabling staff to identify the student and to clarify the purpose of the search.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded of their responsibility to read KCSIE 2023 (paying particular attention to Section 2 which related to the management of safeguarding) and to then complete the declaration on Governor Hub to confirm that they have done so.</p>	

<p>12.</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>Trustees were reminded to complete via Governor Hub their declaration of interests for 2023/24, especially as the Financial Statements auditors would be reviewing these as part of the planned audit in October 2023.</p> <p>The Board also received a summary of the key changes introduced under the Academy Trust Handbook 2023. The Clerk suggested that a possible audit of compliance against the ATH may be a consideration to discuss with the internal auditors.</p> <p>The Clerk had prepared a Board Performance Review for 2023/24. The Chair was currently preparing the final concluding paragraph and once completed this would be circulated to all Trustees for their information and in turn uploaded to the College website.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting of the Board of Trustees would take place on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 6.00pm</p>	