



**WOKING COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Woking College held on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 at 6.00pm in W09 Conference Room**

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| <b>Present:</b>       | <p><b>Gary Botha</b><br/> <b>Erica Ehoru</b><br/> <b>Brett Freeman</b>                      <b>Principal</b><br/> <b>Tracy Hampton</b><br/> <b>Anne Middleton</b><br/> <b>Alastair MacAulay</b><br/> <b>Ben Ramdhony</b><br/> <b>Rosh Sellahewa</b><br/> <b>Ben Smith</b>                              <b>from 6.12pm</b><br/> <b>Tim Stokes</b>                              <b>Chair of Board of Trustees</b></p> |
| <b>In Attendance:</b> | <p><b>Nuweed Razaq</b>                      <b>Deputy Principal</b><br/> <b>Laura Cook</b>                              <b>Assistant Principal</b><br/> <b>Emma Hobbs</b><br/> <b>Sophie Mngoma</b><br/> <b>Terry Wilks</b><br/> <b>Barbara Maude</b>                      <b>Clerk to the Board of Trustees</b></p>  |

| Item      | Agenda Description  | Action |
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| <b>1.</b> | <p><b>Apologies for Absence &amp; Declarations of Interest</b><br/> Apologies had been received from Cullum Mitchell who had a prior work commitment. The apology was agreed. All other Trustees were present and it was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>No Trustee or member of the extended senior management team present at the meeting declared any pecuniary or other direct or indirect personal interest in any item on the agenda.</p>  |        |
| <b>2.</b> | <p><b>Appointment of New Trustees: Tracy Hampton &amp; Ben Ramdhony</b><br/> The Board duly noted the election of Tracy Hampton, as the new Parent Trustee, who had been appointed by the parent body with effect from 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and her term of office would run for four years, expiring on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2027.</p> <p>The Board considered the appointment of Ben Ramdhony, as a co-opted Trustee. Ben had joined the December meeting as an observer where details of his background and expertise had already been discussed.</p> <p>The appointment of Ben Ramdhony was proposed by Tim Stokes, seconded by Rosh</p> |        |

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|  | <p>Sellaheewa and unanimously approved.</p> <p>The Board <b>resolved:</b><br/> <b>To note the election of Tracy Hampton as a Parent Trustee with effect from 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and to approve the appointment with immediate effect of Ben Ramdhony as a co-opted Trustee. Both appointments to be for a term of four years.</b></p>   |     |
| <b>3.</b>  | <p><b>Introduction to the Board Meeting</b></p> <p>The Chair outlined the intent of the meeting, which was in essence a training and enrichment opportunity for the Board to further strengthen their understanding of the College and in particular to understand more about the training support for new teachers, and the enrichment opportunities and pastoral support available for students.</p>  |     |
| <b>4.</b>  | <p><b>Minutes of the Previous Meetings</b></p> <p>The Board received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and approved for signature by the Chair. The signing of minutes was now undertaken by the 'marked as signed' facility on GovernorHub.</p>  | TST |
| <b>5.</b>  | <p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>The Board noted that there were two action points arising from the previous meeting. The first was for any completed Link Trustee visit reports to be submitted to Nuweed Razaq, Deputy Principal for onward circulation to the rest of the Board.</p> <p>The second was in respect of the follow up action flowing from the meeting between the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board with the Student Union. The Principal confirmed that he had spoken to the canteen manager concerning the students' feedback that there was inconsistency over pricing and the second, in respect of the SU being allocated a budget for activities for the year (without the need for it to be returned in full at year end) had been agreed with the Finance &amp; Estates Director.</p>   | ALL |
| <b>Board Training Sessions – Presentations followed by Q &amp; A</b> |   |     |
| <b>6.</b>  | <p><b>ECT &amp; Trainee Teacher Support</b></p> <p>The Board received a presentation from Terry Wilks, Director of Learning and Teaching on the training and support provided to teachers new to the profession and the pathways in place to retain high quality staff. There were two routes for new teachers either – those that were Early Careers Teachers (ECT) or trainee teachers (PGCEs).</p> <p>ECTs replaced Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in 2021 and were staff members who had achieved a teaching qualification that awarded teacher status (QTS). The system had moved to ECTs under the Early Careers Framework as the Government felt too many teachers were leaving the profession as a results of not receiving enough support. Under the Early Careers Framework staff on this pathway received a 90% full time teaching timetable in Year 1 and a 95% fulltime teaching timetable in Year 2. The College had one member of staff in Year 1 and two members of staff in Year 2. All ECTs received training through an accredited, funded training provider and required a</p> |     |

termly report to be written by the Induction Tutor (which is and has been TWI) each term over the two years.

PGCE's were trainee teachers who had no previous teaching experience. Teachers had approximately 12 hours of teaching in Year 1 and 18 hours in Year 2. This included a tutor group to develop pastoral skills and they were also required to visit evening lectures once a week at Reigate College. The College had five staff in Year 1 and three staff in Year 2.

Both PGCE and ECT members of staff were assigned a mentor that they met with weekly to discuss areas of their teaching and how they wished to develop. If possible, a mentor would be assigned who taught in the same subject area as the trainee teachers but this was not always possible. On occasion, it would be necessary to go outside the subject area to find a suitable mentor. The mentors were there not only to assist with the practical skills but also the softer more holistic skills that the role required. Time between mentors and mentees was protected for one period per week.

In terms of the extra support available for PGCE and ECT's this extended to half term online learning community sessions; S7 training via the specific ECT S7 group; and attendance at the College's 5 sharing best practice events and three CPD INSET days.

Terry Wilks advised that it was important that all trainee teachers were encouraged to be reflective as it was appreciated that not all lessons go to plan. In addition, all teachers needed to be comfortable with being observed. For the PGCE course this included external observations from the lead ITT member of staff from Reigate College. 8 formal observations had to take place over the 2 year period for a member of staff to pass the PGCE course.

For ECT's formal observations took place at least once each half term in Year 1 and at least every full term in Year 2. In addition, Year 2 staff had to conduct a research enquiry project in an area of teaching and learning to investigate.

PGCE staff had to meet the Professional Standards and all ECT staff had to meet and provide evidence for meeting the Teaching Standards.

The Director of Learning highlighted some of the members of staff who had successfully completed their training via either the PGCE or ECT route.

Board members challenged on how the College identified the teaching superstars and how did they ensure those members of staff were retained. Management advised that teaching stars naturally emerged and those that were ambitious were able to progress such as a member of staff who having started as a learning support assistant had now progressed to not only a qualified teacher but one of the youngest College Heads of Year. Likewise, it was important to recognise that not all teachers would be superstars but with the right amount of support would become very good teachers and it was important to support those that may struggle initially.

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| <p><b>7.</b></p> | <p><b>Enrichment &amp; Cultural Capital</b></p> <p>The Board then received a presentation from Emma Hobbs, Associate Director for Enhancement &amp; Cultural Capital on the enrichment programme run across the College.</p> <p>The College’s current enrichment programme was the result of the passion of both students and staff. There were currently 84 weekly registered sessions led by staff that ranged from volunteering; short courses; additional qualifications, BIG talks and student and staff led lectures; external speakers and workshops; trips and visits and competition opportunities.</p> <p>The biggest club operated via the enrichment programme was in fact Badminton. All students signed up to an enrichment option in September and the enrichment programme consisted of one hour of registered activity per week with the option to switch, if required in January.</p> <p>The impact of the enrichment programme was felt in many different ways – the personal development of students; the development of their wider skills; increased social interaction; improvement in wellbeing and health; greater engagement and progression opportunities which were not just limited to UCAS and employability.</p> <p>The Associate Director for Enrichment also explained to the Board that there were several additional qualifications that could be taken as part of the enrichment programme. These included the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) (which had a 100% pass rate and 73% A* to B); Lamda (45 were enrolled and 100% received a Merit or Distinction at Grade 6-8), Duke of Edinburgh Award (15 students completed the Gold award in 2023) and the NEA Shakespeare Certificate (grade 8 100% distinction).</p> <p>In addition, as previously mentioned, there were lectures undertaken by staff, students and external speakers. There were also BIG TALKS which were selected by tutor groups which were filmed and then placed on the student intranet. 18 BIG TALKS had been organised by staff and 7 by students. Of the 7 put on by students these ranged from Nietzsche vs Christianity to the Worlds Greatest TV Show.</p> <p>The enrichment programme also included short courses and Pop Ups. The short courses were delivered by staff and took place for an hour either during lunch or after College. They consisted of small groups and were based on a range of topics which might include development of skills and wellbeing.</p> <p>Pop Ups were weekly activities held in the canteen by the enrichment co-ordinator and again covered a wide range of activities such as gingerbread house making; stress ball making; building bird feeders; footgolf; and making bath bombs.</p> <p>The Board were also updated on Cultural Diversity Week which had been held in September and members were shown a variety of the events that had been on offer.</p> <p>Overall, when surveyed the College’s enrichment programme received a 4.3 out of 5 star rating with 92% of students saying that enrichment enhanced their knowledge or</p> |  |
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|                  | <p>skills and 78% said that the enrichment programme had helped them settle into College and to make new friends.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>8.</b></p> | <p><b>Pastoral Provision</b></p> <p>The Board received a final presentation on the College’s pastoral provision available for students from Sophie Mngoma, Associate Director Pastoral Care. Details of all the pastoral team were shared with the Board and it was also noted that there was a new Head of Student Wellbeing. Given the growing demand for pastoral services, the College were also in the process of appointing two new additional Heads of Year.</p> <p>Pastoral support was available throughout the College structure – initial contact was usually via a student’s personal tutor. On enrolment, a student would be allocated a personal tutor who they would meet with every week and also have a regular 1:1 session with at least once a term. In addition, students could also contact their Head of Year who were there to provide guidance and support on a wide range of issues. Alternatively, students could also meet the Head of Student Wellbeing. Any concerns could also be made via the ‘I need help’ button on the student intranet page.</p> <p>In addition, support was also available through the APPLE (Attendance, Progress, Pastoral, Learning and Extension) Support system which helped staff to identify the appropriate support route for students. So for example, if there were progress concerns, there were opportunities for students to have an ILM (Independent Learning Mentor) who were available for students who needed extra help in adjusting to the more independent method of study which was part of College life or to participate in an LSE (Learning Skills Enrichment) programme which was specifically aimed at students who needed additional support to improve their independent learning skills and this might include looking at how to use resources effectively, or improving organisational and time management skills.</p> <p>In terms of concerns over attendance, the Pastoral Team also could allocate Progress Mentors, particularly if a student’s attendance level dropped below 80%. Students were supported by way of daily parental contact and if a student was not in College, a parent would be messaged.</p> <p>Two additional staff members were also available to provide support for HoY and there were two Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ESLAs) within the College who were specifically there to help those students who may experience difficulty in interacting within the College community.</p> <p>The Steps to Work programme offered advice and suggestions for students who were thinking about their next steps.</p> <p>The Pastoral team continuously evaluated what worked and what didn’t throughout the pastoral programme.</p> <p>The Woking Way also enabled learners to develop outside of their academic or vocational studies and the programme of events included a wide range of activities, workshops, trips and opportunities.</p> |  |

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|                           | <p>Pastoral provision worked closely with the careers department and was present at every stage of the student’s journey – through academic support; sustainable access to learning and learning support provision.</p> <p>Anne Middleton, who as designated Safeguarding Trustee, met the Pastoral team on her visits into College commended the work of the team, acknowledging the challenges they had faced over the ever-changing landscape of mental health issues and the team’s commitment to helping address those issues.</p>  |  |
| <b>Principal’s Update</b> |  |  |
| <p><b>9.</b></p>          | <p>The Board received an oral update from the Principal on the start of the new term.</p> <p>The Principal started his report with details of the results for the College’s GCSE English and Maths re-sits that had just been published. The national pass rate was 20% so the College were delighted to advise that students who had re-taken the subjects early had achieved 50% pass rate for English and 43% for Maths. For so many students, passing their English and Maths GCSE was a major achievement so the pass rates were especially pleasing.</p> <p>In terms of attendance and retention data to date, this was all in line with the previous year’s data.</p> <p>The College currently had 1,451 students enrolled with 97% retention.</p> <p>To date, 1,818 applications had been received for 2024/25 and 1,051 interviews had been completed. On current figures and allowing for a percentage drop off, the Principal advised that it might be possible that the College could have in total 1,872 students next year. Management considered that it might be nearer to 1,750 but they were very aware of the potential for reputational damage (following over-recruitment) if the process was not well managed.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the SFCA had published its six priorities for sixth form education ahead of the 2024 general election. The main manifesto points included raising the rate of funding for sixth form students; protecting student choice by retaining BTECS alongside A levels and T levels; co-ordinating policy making and cutting bureaucracy; tackling the teacher recruitment and retention crisis; creating capital funds for expansion and maintenance; and conducting an evidence based review of the sixth form curriculum.</p> <p>In terms of marketing, events were taking place at local feeder schools and bespoke sessions for schools with Sixth Forms were also scheduled to take place from March 2024. The Principal would be also completing numerous assemblies for Years 11s. There was also a big push on promoting the College alumni.</p> <p>In terms of the College site, there were no reportable incidents in terms of Health &amp; Safety. The main snagging on the new teaching block and the OWCC was being</p> |  |

completed. Work was ongoing with the fire-retardant systems which formed a project under one of the successful CIF bids. A new CIF bid was being submitted in terms of the main roof. The dance area was currently being considered for possible re-development to form a potential Visually Impaired hub if financial support was provided by Surrey County Council.

In terms of the financials, whilst a deficit budget had been set, with the ESFA's permission, the Finance & Estates Director was looking to reforecast the budget in March. The College had received notification that there would be no in-year growth funding available and this was disappointing although the deficit budget originally forecast would hopefully reduce slightly following the reforecasting exercise.

The Principal did report that very sadly, a student suicide had taken place before Christmas.

The Principal also gave a brief staffing update, advising that two members of staff were leaving at Easter, but the College had managed to recruit already to fill those roles.

Trustees asked how the College supported religious worship and it was confirmed that the College had a multi-faith room which was available for any faith or denomination for students to access for prayer or quiet contemplation. The College had a chaplaincy service provided by members of local churches and the mosque. The Principal reiterated that the College operated as a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-ethnic community.

Trustees also challenged on student attendance. The Board were advised that proportionally there tended to be more issues with attendance at L2 but that overall attendance at L2 was very good.

The Board asked for feedback from the recent SLT Away Day. The Principal advised that the focus for the day had been on the growth in predicted student numbers and assessing the ability of the College to cope with potentially 1,800 students. It was difficult to know whether the acceptance rate was higher than usual because students had applied early and accepted early or if the rate was simply higher than in previous years.

Historically, the College had limited class sizes to 20 but in 2024/25 this would be increasing to 22.

Once the College had received 1,000 acceptances, then the message to students would change to one that reflected that the College could not guarantee students a place. Management did not want to stop students applying but they did have to manage expectations.

The Board thanked the Principal for his update.

| Policy Approvals |   |  |
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| <b>10.</b>       | <p><b>Policies</b></p> <p>In terms of the policies identified on the agenda, it was confirmed that following some comments on the Admissions Policy received from Alastair MacAulay prior to the meeting, the Principal had revised the draft to reflect those suggested changes which included the fact that the Deputy Principal would now make a decision on whether a student could or could not be offered a place at the College and the Principal would make the final judgement in relation to appeals about admissions.</p> <p>It was agreed, that the revised draft would be shared again with Alastair MacAulay outside of the meeting and provided he was happy with the changes, the Board would endorse their approval as no other Trustee present had any additional comments to make on the Admissions Policy.</p> <p>It was noted that there were very minor changes made to the Careers Guidance – the most notable being the inclusion of Unifrog which was an independent online advisory programme.</p> <p>The Board endorsed their approval of the remaining policies but did suggest that the policies should, going forward, all be consistent in terms of layout, style, font choice and font size etc.</p> <p><b>The Board resolved to approve the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Admissions Policy (subject to the agreement of Alastair MacAulay to the suggested revisions which would be reviewed after the meeting);</b></li> <li>● <b>Careers Guidance – Progression, Careers &amp; Work Related Policy;</b></li> <li>● <b>Equality Information (Public Sector Equality Duty) &amp; Objectives;</b></li> <li>● <b>SEN Policy and SEN Information Report; and</b></li> <li>● <b>Staff Grievance Procedure</b></li> </ul> |  |
| <b>11.</b>       | <p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>It was confirmed that the link to the certified online Safeguarding &amp; Prevent training had been circulated to all Trustees and everyone was reminded that there was a duty for Trustees to undertake regular safeguarding training.</p> <p>Once completed, the training details would be maintained by the College but could also be uploaded direct to a Trustee’s individual training record under their profile on GovernorHub.</p>  |  |
| <b>12.</b>       | <p><b>Date &amp; Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting of the Board of Trustees would take place on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 6pm.</p>  |  |