CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held at the School at 5.00pm on Wednesday 1st November 2023

Present:	Andrew Bonwick	Chair
	Stephen Lawlor	Head
	Melanie Gulliver	
	Priya Rangaswamy	
In Attendance:	Jo Cross	Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)
	Adam Selby	Asst Headteacher (Teaching & Learning & Staff Development)
	Wendy Newton	Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Mary Argent, Maish Unhale	

1. The Chair opened by welcoming Melanie Gulliver to her first meeting of Curriculum Committee.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE **ACTION**

2. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mary Argent and Maish Unhale.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3. There were no declarations of business interest, further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2023-24, or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality reported.

ITEM 3 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

4. Nominations were sought for the role of Vice Chair of the Curriculum Committee for academic year 2023-24. Melanie Gulliver volunteered and was unanimously **elected**.

ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

5. The minutes of the meeting held on 10th May 2023 were approved as presented.

ITEM 5 – MATTERS ARISING

6. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

ITEM 6 – CHAIR'S ACTION

7. There had been no Chair's Action since the last meeting.

ITEM 7 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

8. **Decision**. The Terms of Reference for the Curriculum Committee were presented for annual review and were **approved** as presented.

ITEM 8 – PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS REVIEW

9. The Public Examinations Review 2023 and June 2023 GCSE and A level grade summaries were received for review. The documents had been seen at the Full GB meeting in October, and the Committee commended the School on the excellent results. Governors asked for additional

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explanation of the SEND and PP results data. It was confirmed that the SEND students were high performing, mostly with ASD (autistic spectrum). Each girl was individually assisted to achieve their full potential. The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) advised that SEND and PP students were also always reviewed first in student progress meetings. The two EHCP students who had taken public examinations last summer had achieved excellent results. The School has few SEND and PP students compared to the national picture, which permits close tracking and personalised intervention plans. Governors noted that the examination results closely reflected the TA2 predictions, and it was confirmed that the assessment by staff was generally very accurate. The Headteacher stated that overall, TA2 for A level was 83.7% A*-B and actual was 85.23%, and for GCSE it was 89.7% 9-7 and actual was 88.26% - demonstrating how accurate teachers' judgements are.

ACTION

10. The Headteacher advised that Government data had just been released which gave the School a 2023 GCSE Progress 8 figure of +0.89, with no modifications ('hard landing') to course content or grade boundaries consequent on Covid. It had been +0.91 in 2022, with some modifications ('soft landing') to course content and grade boundaries. Both figures showed that Year 11 students achieved nearly one whole grade higher than predicted. The success of the eight Year 11 PPG students, who had a Progress 8 score of +1.6, was highlighted and commended. The meeting was advised that no Government data for a progress measure (Level 3 Valued Added) had been produced for A level students this year as they had not sat formal GCSE examinations. The School's last A level progress score was +0. The only data published for 2023 A level students was the Average Point Score (APS) shown as a grade, which had been Grade A in 2022 (with exam modifications) and for 2023 was Grade A- (with no modifications). The five Year 13 bursary students had achieved an APS grade equivalent of B.

11. The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) tabled information relating to reviews of marking (ROMs) for the Summer 2023 examinations. There had been a large number of ROMs; these were not re-marking of papers, but a check of correct marking. Of the 170 submitted, 24% of the A level reviews had resulted in grades going up by a grade. The largest number of grade increases had been in English Literature, History and Chemistry. In Chemistry, 56% of the ROMs went up a grade. As marking is not considered subjective in this subject, this was not considered normal. At GCSE, 103 ROMs had been submitted and 34% had resulted in a grade increase. Computer Science had 62.5% of its reviews had gone up a grade. The changes were discussed, and it was suggested that such marking errors raised questions on the efficacy of the whole exam board marking system. It was reported that, as had been done for the marking of German in 2022, the School was making formal appeals to the exam boards for A level English Literature (1 paper), History (2 papers) and Music (1 paper) and details of the issues were summarised. The Committee discussed the general examination marking situation, and it was stated that it was a national problem with concerns widely shared between schools. The benefit of having an accurate TA system was noted in relation to assessing correct grades. It was confirmed that none of the re-mark grade changes had affected the entry of a Year 13 student into the university of their choice. The Committee was reminded that SLT carefully review examination outcomes and pursue processes with the exam boards when we are not satisfied with grades, either for individuals or groups.

ITEM 9 – OPTION NUMBERS AT KS4 & KS5

12. Details of KS4 and KS5 subject numbers for September 2023 were received. The Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) highlighted the breadth of subjects chosen by the students in both of the Key Stages. The meeting discussed the subjects with smaller numbers. A level PE had been introduced this year and 7 students had chosen to take the subject, this number was likely to rise as GCSE PE was now a curriculum subject. The meeting was reminded that GCSE Spanish began in Year 10, with the GCSE syllabus being covered in 2 years, and the work of the Spanish Co-ordinator was commended. Governors noted the high percentage of students who continued from GCSE to A level Spanish. Governors queried whether there were any issues relating to the sustainability of subjects with low student numbers and were advised that there were currently none. The meeting

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was reminded that certain subjects, such as A Level Music and Latin, were considered a vital part of the offering of a school such as CCHS, irrespective of low numbers. It was confirmed that GCSE Italian, taken as an extra subject in the Sixth Form, had now stopped following the retirement of a teacher and was only being taught in Year 13 to allow three students to finish the course.

ACTION

ITEM 10 – KS5 CURRICULUM 2024

13. The background reasons for a change to the Sixth Form curriculum offer were received for information. Details of the new A level Twin Pathway for the Sixth Form had been received and discussed at the Full GB meeting in October. Currently, all Year 12 students start by studying 4 A level subjects but 67 % then choose to drop to 3 A levels at the start of Year 13. The Twin Pathways, starting in September ~~2023~~ 2024, would give students the choice to study from 3, 4 or 5 A level subjects from the start of Year 12, allowing more time over the course of the 2 years to be dedicated to each subject. It was reported that feedback from Year 11 CCHS students and students from other schools attending the recent Sixth Form Open Evening had been very positive. Details were received on the support given to Year 11 students in relation to choosing their A level subjects alongside details of the options process. It was confirmed that further information on subject options for Year 12 in September 2023 would be received in a future Curriculum Committee meeting. The Headteacher outlined the benefits of the new A level Twin Pathways which included: more focussed learning and maximised study periods for the subjects actually taken.

ITEM 11 – POLICIES

14. Item 11.1 – Examination Policy 2023-24 – **Decision**. The updated JCQ-model Examination Policy 2023-24 was presented for review. After one date correction error, the Examination Policy 2023-24 was **approved** with an annual review.

15. Item 11.2 – Examination Contingency Policy 2023-24 – **Decision**. The updated JCQ-model Examination Contingency Policy 2023-24 was presented for review. After two spelling corrections, the Examination Contingency Policy 2023-24 was **approved** with an annual review.

16. Item 11.3 – Relationship & Sex Education Policy – **Decision**. The Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy was presented for review with minor changes. The meeting discussed the issue of providing parents with the materials relating to the subject, and were advised that schools would be happy to share their materials but that there were problems relating to the corporate bodies who own the materials e.g. books and copyright issues. It was stated that additional Government guidance was still awaited on specific issues in the RSE curriculum, such as gender identity. The RSE Policy was **approved** as presented with a 3-year review.

5.50pm – Priya Rangaswamy left the meeting.

17. Item 11.4 – Teaching & Learning Policy – **Decision**. The Teaching & Learning Policy was presented for review. The policy had been re-structured to reflect the ethos and current good practices of the School. The Assistant Headteacher summarised the major changes within the document including additional information on CPD and how it is undertaken; the commitments of staff; the processes and implementation of teaching and learning within the School, and also what is expected from students. The succinct structure of the revised policy was commended by the Chair. The Teaching & Learning Policy was **approved** as presented with a 2-year review. It was also **agreed** that the School would report back against the Policy on an annual basis.

Asst Head

ITEM 12 – CHANGE@CCHS

18. The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) advised that the change@cchs project continues to be an important part of the School's work. The student-led celebrations were highlighted including PrideFest, Culture Fest , Black History Month assembly and Black Excellence Fest, details of which were received, and the activities of the students praised. The School continued to work with subject leaders in relation to the curriculum. An Offensive Language Policy was already in place for English

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and History because of the nature of their texts and to protect both staff and students. It was stressed that the passion and energy for the change project continued and was firmly part of the school infrastructure. Governors queried whether the disquiet which had initiated the change@cchs project had diffused and were advised that it had. The Headteacher reminded the Committee that only one formal student complaint had been raised during the period of protest, which was investigated at the time and deemed to be totally unfounded. The meeting was advised of a general change that now exists in young people driven by the power of social media and the influence of ill-accurate information obtained online. It was stated that the School was now attuned to changes in student sensitivities and any new issues that arise. When required, the School attempts to educate students using a neutral point of view. It was noted that the change@cchs project allows the School to be positive and can be broadened to cover new issues and educate students. The benefit of younger students listening to older students via the change@cchs activities was stressed as they tend to take more notice of their peers.

ACTION

ITEM 13 – RISK REGISTER

19. **Decision.** The curriculum section of the CCHS Risk Register was received for termly review and **approved** as presented.

ITEM 14 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-24

20. The School Development Plan (SDP) for 2023-24 was received for information. The Headteacher advised the Committee that the SDP items form the basis for SLT Performance Management targets.

ITEM 15 – INFORMATION ITEMS

21. **Item 15.1 – Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR).** The IDSR was to be published by the DfE on 15th November and would be fully analysed by the School, to be reviewed at the next Curriculum Committee meeting. However, Progress 8 data and limited KS5 data had already been released, details of which were received earlier in the meeting. It was confirmed that the IDSR would contain CCHS data plus a national comparison. The GCSE Progress 8 figure was very healthy and SEN & PPG Progress 8 figure excellent. Any Ofsted inspection would take the new figures into account.

Dep Head

22. **Item 15.2 – Autumn Term Enrichment Calendar**. A summary of Autumn Term enrichment activities was received for information. Following a re-structuring of SLT roles, Dr Michael Palmer was now responsible for community, enrichment and opportunity and details of his role were explained. Governors noted the wide range of activities and it was confirmed that sport was now back to pre-Covid levels. Investigations were currently underway to decide if it may be possible to re-instate the 'large' overseas trip previously undertaken by the School before the pandemic; this would be for Summer 2025.

23. **Item 15.3 - Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes**. The Committee received curriculum-related extracts from the minutes of the Student Voice and Sixth Form Council meeting both held on 21st September 2023. The meeting was advised that both meetings were steered towards teaching and learning discussions and -based issues whenever possible.

ITEM 16 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

24. **Ofsted**. A Governor query was raised on what would happen if an Ofsted inspection came on a day when a whole school activity was taking place, such as Decorated Classrooms. The Headteacher confirmed that Ofsted would be aware of the general School calendar and that a visit would go ahead as planned. There would be the opportunity to warn Ofsted of such an occurrence in their initial warning telephone call. The decision to continue would then be theirs.

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ITEM 17 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING | **ACTION**

25. **Decision**. The date for the next meeting was corrected and **agreed** to be 5.00pm on Wednesday 28th February 2024. | **All**

The meeting closed at 6.22pm.

Agreed as a true record.

A Bonwick
Chair 28th February 2024

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