

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held at the School at 5.00pm on Wednesday 23rd October 2019

Present:	Mike Worboys Stephen Lawlor Andrew Bonwick Lauren Smith	Chair Head
In Attendance:	Emma Ledwidge Michael Palmer Wendy Newton	Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) Assistant Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form) Clerk
Apologies:	Sarah Clements Mary Argent	Associate Member

1. The Chair opened by welcoming Emma Ledwidge to her first Curriculum Committee meeting.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mary Argent and Sarah Clements.

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 2019-20 or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

4. Nominations were sought for the position of Vice Chair of the Committee for the next academic year. Andrew Bonwick volunteered his services and the Committee unanimously approved.

ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

5. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd May 2019 were approved as presented and signed as a true record.

ITEM 5 - MATTERS ARISING

6. Item 9, Para 14 & 15 – Policy Amendment. The Clerk confirmed that actions relating to the amendment of the Curriculum and Examinations Policies had been completed.

ITEM 6 – CHAIR’S ACTION

7. There was no Chair's action since the last meeting to report.

ITEM 7 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

8. The Terms of Reference for the Curriculum Committee were presented for annual review. The Committee discussed the document and proposed three minor amendments.

9. **Decision.** With the three agreed amendments, the Terms of Reference for the Curriculum Committee were approved.

ACTION

10. The Public Examinations Review for 2019 was received for information and discussed. The Headteacher advised that the School had recently received a provisional DfE KS4 Progress 8 score of +0.81, indicating that CCHS students had achieved 4/5 grade higher, on average, at GCSE than similar ability students nationwide. The meeting reviewed the examination results data presented and noted that GCSE results were marginally down on the previous year with 84% of results at Grades 7/8/9. A level results were highly commended, being significantly better this year with 84.1% at Grades A*-B in comparison to the previous two years (75.5% and 75.3%). The hard work of the teaching staff was acknowledged and thanked by the Governors. The effect of students dropping their fourth subject after Year 12 was discussed in relation to achieving better final grades. It was noted that based on raw results the KS5 Level 4 Value Added figure should be higher this year when received, a figure close to zero was hoped for.

11. The result of A level Mathematics was noted in relation to it being the first linear examination for the subject and the hard work undertaken by department staff to achieve the result was commended. The great improvement in A level Science results was specifically discussed in relation to Year 11 retention into the Sixth Form. It was reported that the CCHS A level results in Biology, Physics and Further Mathematics were higher than those of KEGS. The Head advised that great efforts were going to be made this year to address the misconceptions of Year 11 students about moving to other sixth forms. Governors queried the reason for a reduction in the number of students taking the EPQ in Year 12 and the issue was discussed. It was stated that students opt to take this course, some deciding to drop the course during the year as the reality of their A level studies become apparent. The effect of syllabus changes within the GCSE courses was noted along with the increased difficulty of the reformed GCSE courses.

12. The Committee were informed that issues still remained with the standard of examination marking and examination boards. Remarks had been undertaken in GCSE English Language and Literature which had resulted in higher scores, one from Grade 6 to Grade 8. The School had queried the marking situation but had not received a satisfactory answer from the exam board and had now taken the issue to Ofqual. Governors queried the effect of erroneous marking on students and in particular the discriminatory effect of the cost of remarking. It was suggested that Pupil Premium money could be used for the cost of remarking papers in applicable situations.

13. Information on the Year 11 leavers' destinations was reviewed and it was stated that additional information on whether the receiving destination was a girls, boys or mixed establishment would be useful. Figures relating to Year 11 students not achieving the Sixth Form entry criteria were questioned and additional background information was received. Governors also queried the reduction in the number of new Year 12 students and various reasons were put forward for the issue and discussed. It was reported that there was a variation in the conversion rate from applications to actual acceptances and that the School intended to address this with additional follow-up contact with external students during the year in order to increase the take-up of places in September. A Governor concern was raised that the wording on the Sixth Form section of the School website gave an incorrect impression of the number of available places for current Year 11 students. The format of the Year 13 destinations data was discussed in relation to clarity of information.

14. **Decision:** The Head of Sixth Form agreed to review the current wording on the Sixth Form section of the website in relation to admission numbers.

15. A detailed breakdown of Year 11 and Year 13 examination results by grade was received and discussed. The attainment of D and E grades at A level was noted and it was suggested that there was a need to focus on students who achieve these lower grades. It was stated that many interventions would have been put in place during the year to assist such students which may or may not have been accepted and that there were sometimes other pastoral background issues which would affect the final grade outcomes. The Headteacher summarised the subject review process following on from the receipt of the public examination results. Comparison data on examination results of SSGS and Essex grammar schools was received and discussed.

ITEM 9 – CURRICULUM UPDATE

ACTION

16. The Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) gave a verbal update on recent activity within each year group. Year 7 had attended an activity day at Danbury and had recently undertaken the CAT test. Year 9 had had a Roman culture day, been to Ypres and had taken the MIDYIS test which gives the School a target for expected student progress and predicted GCSE grades. Year 10 had chosen their GCSE options and only four students had changed their initial options. Year 11 were holding their Leadership Conference on 25th October and would have their mock GCSE examinations after the Half Term. There had been a whole range of STEM activities across the School and within each year group, there was particular interest in electronics and the Rampaging Chariots competition. Contact with external experts on STEM and computer science was being made in order to advise students on alternative career options. The combination of STEM and Artsmark activities was also being investigated. It was also reported that the School's current Enrichment Day plan was being reviewed in light of the larger student cohorts and the effect and amount of time enrichment activities take from the curriculum timetable.

ITEM 10 – SUBJECT NUMBERS AT KS4 & KS5 AND SIXTH FORM SUBJECT OFFER

17. The data for September 2019 KS4 and KS5 subject and group sizes was received and discussed. The reduction in group sizes between Year 12 and Year 13 was noted and discussed, this related to dropped subjects which no longer result in an AS qualification as it was stated that AS and A levels were not co-teachable in many subjects. It was noted that starting with four A levels in Year 12 was good for marketing the School as well as allowing a student to drop a subject at the end of Year 12 if necessary to improve the final results of the remaining three. Governors queried the effect of a 'wasted' year for a student as well as the financial impact of running the additional, unnecessary classes. A suggestion was made that a dropped subject could be redirected into an EPQ in order to achieve some a qualification out of it but it was deemed impractical for the timetable. The meeting discussed the issue of dropping the fourth A level subject in relation to the final grades achieved. The School confirmed that up to 50% of students could drop down to three subjects, some at their own request, and Governors suggested this figure was too high. The School suggestion was made that the fourth subject could be considered as enrichment for a student and also enabled some additional breadth of curriculum. It was reported that students did not seem to be upset about studying a subject for a year and not getting a qualification out of it. The point was made that a student deciding to go from four subjects to three subjects was another part of the specialisation and personalisation of a programme of study, which are features of the A level system. The issue of subject clusters was also discussed.

ITEM 11 – TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY

18. The Teaching & Learning Policy was presented for re-approval with one minor update in terminology. It was noted that following a change in SLT responsibilities one bullet point relating to monitoring was no longer valid and needed revision.

19. Decisions:

- a. The Head agreed to revise the monitoring bullet point to reflect current processes.
- b. With the amendment above, the Teaching & Learning Policy was approved with a 4-year review.

**Head
Clerk**

ITEM 12 – RISK REGISTER

20. The curriculum-related section of the CCHS Risk Register was received for termly review. In light of the earlier discussion on poor examination board marking a suggestion was made that a new risk pertaining to the issue should be added.

21. Decisions:

- a. The curriculum-related section of the CCHS Risk Register was approved as presented.
- b. The Head agreed to draft a new risk relating to exam marking for receipt at the next meeting.

Head

ITEM 13 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

22. The new School Development Plan for 2019-20 was reviewed and the curriculum-related sections noted. An error in section numbering was noted. The Headteacher highlighted the strong KS5 focus within the document aimed at maintaining the strong Summer 2019 A level results and re-building confidence in the Sixth Form.

ITEM 14 – INFORMATION ITEMS

23. Item 14.1 – Teaching & Learning Report. A Teaching and Learning Report dated October 2019 prepared by the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) was presented for information. The Committee were informed that as a result of the reduced SLT capacity this academic year, the usual year group and subject-related monitoring reports were to be replaced with key stage reviews. A KS5 review would be undertaken this term and a KS4 review would be undertaken in Spring Term 2020.

24. Item 14.2 - Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes. The Committee received curriculum-related extracts from the minutes of the Student Voice meeting held on 25th September 2019 and Sixth Form Council meeting held on 18th September 2019. Governors asked for confirmation that action was taken as a result of the student discussions and the Head confirmed that staff action followed the meetings and that feedback on the agreed actions is received by students at the next meeting or sometimes even sooner through the student representatives. It was stressed that both meetings were student-led and that staff were there primarily for guidance. The meeting was content of the minutes was noted.

ITEM 15 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. Teaching Opportunities. The Headteacher informed the meeting that the School was currently advertising for a teacher of computer science in order to support the current teacher who had recently taken on additional pastoral responsibilities and also with the aim of possibly expanding the subject into KS5 within the School. Information on teacher training opportunities for parents had also recently been included in the School's weekly bulletin and had raised a few enquiries.

ITEM 16 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26. Decision. The date of the next meeting was agreed as 5.00pm on Wednesday 5th February 2020.

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.

Agreed as a true record

M Worboys
Chair

5th February 2020

ACTION

All