

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held remotely via Zoom at 5.00pm on Wednesday 19th January 2022

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

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for possible late arrival were received from Aisha Sohail and accepted.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. There were no declarations of business interest further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2021-22 or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th October 2021 were presented for approval. Comment was made that the minutes did not correctly reflect the level of challenge raised by Governors at the meeting. Two particular sections were discussed and possible revisions put forward.
4. **Decision.** The Clerk agreed to revise the minutes in line with the discussions of the meeting for the Chair's final approval by email.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

5. There were no matters arising which required further discussion.

5.15pm – Aisha Sohail joined the meeting.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION

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

ITEM 6 – SCHOOL UPDATE

7. The Headteacher gave a verbal update on the general School situation. Government guidance had just been received stating that wef 20th January face masks would not need to be worn by students or staff in classrooms, and wef 27th January masks would not be required in schools at all. The School had not seen any significant spike in absences due to the Omicron variant of Covid-19 and student attendance was good. There had been a maximum of 20 students absent at any one time plus a very small number of staff absences. Attendance in year groups ranged from 95% to 99%. The TA1 data cycle had commenced, teaching staff were closely reviewing the data and assessing how best to help the students, especially the Year 11 and 13 cohorts, the latter of whom had not yet sat any formal public examinations due to Covid. Governors queried how the Covid Catch-Up funding was being used and the Deputy Headteacher summarised the various ways it was being spent to help the

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Clerk
Chair

students affected by the Covid pandemic. It was confirmed that the additional Catch-Up work was being covered by current staff but that additional casual staff may be used in the future. The Committee were advised that School events, such as parents' evenings, continued to be held in person at the School.

ITEM 7 – CURRICULUM & TIMETABLING

8. The Deputy Headteacher gave a verbal report on the curriculum and timetabling. Significant timetable changes had been required at the start of the Spring Term due to staff changes and further amendment would be required after the February Half Term as three teachers were due to go on maternity leave. Work had begun on the 2022-23 timetable and staffing needs had been passed to the Headteacher in relation to recruitment. The KS4 GCSE options blocks had been revised for September 2022. GCSE PE was now included as a formal option in the Open Block and Latin had been moved into the Languages Block (in addition to the Open Block) in order to try and increase the take-up of Latin. Governors questioned the Latin move and asked for confirmation that this meant that a student may end up no longer studying a modern foreign language. This was confirmed by the School, the choice would be either GCSE German, French or Latin in the Languages Block. The School was asked to justify the rationale behind the decision and the reasons were explained. It was stated that Spanish would continue to be offered in the Open Block for the time being and the issue was discussed. Governors asked what the effect of the option changes would be financially on the School and on the students and further information was received. It was noted that the School wanted to use the new sports facilities to the maximum both within and outside the curriculum. Year 9 students would begin their GCSE options process shortly.

ITEM 8 – PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS UPDATE

9. The Committee were advised that the Government were intent on holding public examinations in the Summer but that schools also had to be prepared if they did not. A School working group was now running and had made plans for producing Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) if required. Additional of mock exams were to be held to gain additional data which would be used alongside TA data to produce TAGs if necessary. Further clarification was expected from the examination boards in early February but this was later than the School would have liked.

10. The Deputy Headteacher confirmed that plans were in place for a second set of mock exams for Years 11 & 13 and that the School was fully prepared for both public examination scenarios. Students had been fully advised on both possibilities but the situation was very frustrating for students and staff. School examinations for Years 9, 10 & 12 were to take place as normal with as little disruption as possible. Governors noted the problems for teaching staff with having two plans. It was confirmed that teachers were already preparing the second mocks but that this extra work may end up not being required if the public examinations take place. The School was fully aware of the extra workload for teachers and had tried to alleviate things by moving other school exams and by having additional inset days. Governors noted and stated their appreciation of the hard work of the teaching staff.

ITEM 9 – INSPECTION DATA SUMMARY REVIEW

11. The Deputy Headteacher presented the School's own summary report of the Government's newly published Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) which gave the most significant data for Governors. The report had been reviewed by SLT and passed to departments for further discussion. The information in the report primarily related to 2019 results data and would eventually be updated by 2022 data. Details of disadvantaged and students with SEND were received and the low numbers were noted when compared to the national average. Some specific terminology was explained to the Governors regarding the difference between Disadvantaged and PPG, and the explanation was given that Pupil Premium Funding is a specific grant provided to schools by the DfE. Disadvantaged students refers to those students who are eligible for free school meals and have been at any point in the past six years. It was reported that whilst the School is located in one of the most deprived areas of all schools in the country (by postcode), the actual pupil base is from the least deprived (by address). The School cohort does not therefore represent the local community and this reinforced the importance of the School's Fair Access & Partnership Plan in attracting local girls. The largest ethnicity groups were: White British (40%), Asian/Asian British - Indian (17%), Asian/Asian British – Other

Asian (9%) and Black/Black British African (9%). The School has pupils from 11 out of 17 ethnic groups, showing it to be a very diverse community.

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12. School outcomes for 2018-19 showed a GCSE Progress 8 figure of +0.8, i.e. students make over $\frac{3}{4}$ of a GCSE grade more progress than expected, well above the national average (-0.03), and in the highest 20% of all schools. The GCSE Attainment 8 figure was +80.07, also well above the national average and with the average grade for each subject being 8. A level A*-B grades were 84% with a Level 3 Value Added of +0.00 with an upward trajectory. It was noted that whilst CCHS Disadvantaged Progress 8 and Attainment 8 figures had a downward trajectory (+0.36 and +71.92), progress was still better than nationally (-0.45 and +46.29). Progress 8 and Attainment 8 for SEND students had a similar trend (+0.16 and +76.0 respectively) but it was stated that these figures were affected by the very low number of students in those categories. The School was working hard to close the attainment gap for Disadvantaged & SEND students and had a target not to have any gap. PPG financing was being used to reduce the performance gaps. Every student in these categories had an individual action plan addressing their own specific needs and which showed what assistance had been given. Governors noted the very small number of Disadvantaged and SEN students in relation to the whole school and queried if the attainment gap had increased due to Covid, it was confirmed that these groups had been most affected by the lockdown. The Deputy Headteacher summarised the actions put in place to assist the students most affected by Covid.

13. The number of English as an Additional Language (EAL) students in the School is increasing. These students make exceptional progress but a decline showed in 2018-19 and this group is being tracked separately to ensure there are no future problems. Data on the separate Mathematics and English elements of Progress 8 was reviewed and a downward trend in Mathematics was queried. The School confirmed the issue had now been addressed and was confident that progress in Mathematics was now on an upward trajectory. It was stated that students arrive at the School with high levels of Mathematics and therefore it is harder to make further progress. Governors queried whether the reduction in Mathematics progress could be related to the new School Entrance Test and the issue was discussed. Governors asked for further proof that the changes made in Mathematics were working, as recent data was not available due to Covid; it was stated that internal TA data and assessment results were showing positive progress. The Headteacher gave additional information on the situation relating to Mathematics which was accepted by the Governors. Information on Progress 8 Mathematics and English elements for SEND and Disadvantaged student was also reviewed and the trends noted.

14. **Decision.** The Deputy Headteacher agreed to ask the Assistant Headteacher (T&L) to produce some entry and exit attainment data relating to Mathematics and the Entrance Test.

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15. General curriculum data was reviewed (99% of students entered the EBacc and the EBacc Value Added score was 0.94). KS5 data showed 2019 A level Progress of 0.00, ie progress in line with expectation, better than previous years and with a positive trend, against the national average of -0.02. It was stressed that as students do so well at GCSE it is much harder for them to make more progress at KS5. It was hoped that 2022 results would show a positive progress figure. The A level Average Point Score (APS) was 45.84 with an increasing trend and was significantly above the national average of 31.76. It was stressed that whilst the A level progress figure was static the School was getting better results year-on-year. Governors queried how the APS was produced and an explanation was given; it was confirmed that students taking more A levels was advantageous for the School's APS. The A level APS for Disadvantaged students was 40.0, slightly less than the School average but still above the national average. In 2019 97.7% of students completed their A level study programme ie didn't leave the School, this was above the LA and national average.

16. Further data was received on: KS4 APS by subject, KS4 FFT Pupil Progress by subject, and KS5 ALPS progress data by subject, and was discussed by the Committee. Governors recognised that KS4 subject comparisons were not like-for-like due to the nature of being different subjects. The high level of pupil progress in KS4 modern foreign languages was commended by the Governors. The

Deputy Headteacher finished by summarising the key findings of the ISDR report and was thanked by the Chair for producing a very useful and comprehensive report. It was stressed that as the data was historic the ISDR is used as a prompt for SLT and subject staff to always drill down through the data, and that current School data is of greater importance. Governors raised the issue of the reduced Year 7 entry requirements for disadvantaged students from the local area and how PPG money was to be used to assist catch-up if required. The Headteacher confirmed that this was happening and stated that PPG funding was now focussed on teaching and learning rather than enrichment activities.

ITEM 10 – AUTUMN 2021 GCSE & A LEVEL EXAMINATION RESULTS

17. An overview of Summer 2021 GCSE and A level results pre- and post-examination appeals was received for information, there was very little change to the original grade percentages. Information was also received on the Autumn 2021 examination re-sit results of three students against their original Summer 2021 result. Four of the five examinations taken had increased by one grade and one result had remained the same.

ITEM 11 –YEAR 9 & YEAR 12 OPTIONS PROCESS

18. Information on the Year 9 options process had been received in Item 7. The Headteacher summarised recent actions taken by the School in relation to Sixth Form marketing and recruitment, including a new 'Insight Evening' for external students considering joining CCHS in Year 12. The Head of Sixth Form reported that Year 11 students were about to start the A level options process, the students would be guided by form tutors and the Sixth Form team. Governors queried if there was any indication of possible Year 12 student numbers in September 2022. It was stated that numbers would be better known after the application deadline on 10th February and that it was impossible to speculate on Year 11 leavers at this stage. Governors congratulated the School on its Sixth Form recruitment efforts in comparison to other schools. The Committee were reminded that students had become very selective and that sixth form education was a highly competitive market. The Headteacher stressed that Sixth Form recruitment was crucial for the School and the effect on finances was noted. External expertise was now being used to assist with marketing and publicity. Sixth Form retention and recruitment was to be a discussion topic at the next Governor Conference.

ITEM 12 – OFSTED VISITS/DEEP DIVE QUALITY ASSURANCE MEASURES

19. The Headteacher stated that an Ofsted visit could be expected at any time and that the School was prepared. It was reported that Ofsted had a visit deferral policy in place if a school was adversely affected by Covid. The Deputy Headteacher advised of new Ofsted training for individual subject departments. It was a deep-dive activity which aimed to replicate what a department could expect during an Ofsted visit and summarised the activities within the training. The Committee were reassured that it was aimed to be a positive experience for the staff and would hopefully allay fears about Ofsted visits.

20. The Committee were reminded that Lauren Smith, Training Link Governor, had prepared a document of Ofsted areas of Governance concern and related questions which was to be populated with information and means of proof. Information would be taken from documents Governors had already received from the School and would be used as an aide memoir for Governor use during an Ofsted visit. It was stated that Ofsted would ask how Governors had had an impact on items. Once finished, the document would be passed to SLT for review. The Chair thanked Lauren Smith for her work on the document.

ITEM 13 – CHANGE@

21. The Deputy Headteacher advised that a comprehensive update on the Change@CCHS project had been prepared with much student input and was now available for viewing on the School website. New Change and Diversity Prefects had recently been appointed in Years 10 & 12 and would begin

work shortly. It was also reported that the Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher (T&L) were to attend a National Coalition of Girls' Schools Conference on insights into girls' education in Boston, USA, in March 2022 and had offered to speak about the School's Change Project. Governors queried current student feeling in relation to the Change project and were advised that feeling was extremely positive. It was suggested that students had wanted a platform to address inclusion which was now in place within the School.

ITEM 14 – RISK REGISTER

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

ITEM 15 – EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

23. **Decision.** The Educational Visits Policy was received with a minor administrative amendment and approved as presented.

ITEM 16 – INFORMATION ITEMS

24. **Item 16.1 - Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes.** Curriculum-related extracts from the minutes of the Student Voice meeting held on 17th November 2021 and Sixth Form Council meeting held on 25th November 2021 were received for information and noted.

ITEM 17 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. **Thanks.** The Chair thanked Lauren Smith for her work in relation to Ofsted and thanked all the School staff for their hard work over the past six months during very difficult and uncertain conditions.

ITEM 18 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 11th May 2022, the intention was to hold the meeting in person at the School.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Agreed as a true record

Andrew Bonwick
Chair

11th May 2022

All