

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held at the School at 5.30pm on Wednesday 22nd February 2023

Present:	Andrew Bonwick Stephen Lawlor Sarah Clements Priya Rangaswamy Lauren Smith Aisha Sohail Mary Argent	Chair Head (via Teams from 5.35pm) Associate Member (via Teams)
In Attendance:	Jo Cross Adam Selby Wendy Newton	Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) Asst Headteacher (Teaching & Learning & Staff Development) Clerk to Governors

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for expected late arrival absence were received from Sarah Clements.

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 2022-23, or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3. Two typographic errors had been noted and with their correction, the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2022 were approved.

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 8, Para 11 – GCSE German Results. The School had contested, for a second time, the marking of the Summer 2022 GCSE German examination. The examination board, Pearson, had now apologised for the quality of the initial marking and offered to re-mark the whole exam cohort with the guarantee that no grades would be reduced. Forty-two papers had been remarked to date and had resulted in: 7 increases in grade, 21 increases in marks and 14 exam paper marks remaining the same. A further 20 papers were still to be remarked. The reason for the poor marking was queried and it was reported that a nationwide shortage of modern language examiners had exacerbated the situation. A single examiner was responsible for the initial marking of all the CCHS papers. Governors commended the School's persistence in continuing with the challenge despite the additional work involved.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION

5. There was no Chair's action to report.

ITEM 6 – SCHOOLING & CURRICULUM UPDATE

6. The Headteacher brought to the attention of the Committee the new CCHS Achievement Strategy and summarised the content and purpose of the document. It had been sent to parents and students to show what the School undertakes to assist students, both pastorally and academically, and particularly related to the examination cohorts and how the pandemic may have affected them. The Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) gave further information on standard actions taken within the

ACTION

School and on interventions taken when necessary. There had been the first mass review of teaching and learning since the pandemic, beyond standard quality assurance practices within departments and with their SLT line managers, the result of which had identified areas for intervention and best practice to inform CPD. The findings of the learning walks were to be presented to Extended SLT for greater discussion and then passed on to teaching staff. Governors queried the content of the document and additional clarification was received. It was reported that student progress meetings were going from strength to strength and were highly beneficial for certain students. The increase in parent input into student discussions was also noted. The reaction of School staff to the document was queried and the Committee were advised that all School staff were fully committed to helping students, particularly those teaching Year 11 and 13 students. It was stated that staff teaching the examination year groups were particularly stretched at this point in the academic year, but remained very generous with their time, undertaking extra teaching at lunchtime and after school, and by answering student email queries. The great commitment of the teaching staff to support students was commended.

ITEM 7 – PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS UPDATE

7. Data was received on the mock examinations of Years 11 and 13. The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) advised that the overall Year 13 headline figure of 78.7% A*-B was very slightly lower than last year, but only by 0.4%. Seven A level subjects showed an increase in mock outcomes compared to the previous year. The subjects with lower than hoped results were highlighted and discussed. Chemistry (56% A*-B) had been identified and immediate initiatives had been put in place to assist the students and the department. Additional timetabled formal support had been started for specific students who were timetabled to attend. All departments had reviewed mock papers in detail to identify where students had not performed well and would address any areas found. Additional SLT guidance was also being given to specific teaching staff in relation to teaching and learning and best practice. It was reported that there was a clear difference in the ability and knowledge of the students studying Chemistry who had joined the School in Year 12 from other schools and a refined plan had been made to continue to address this issue next September. Psychology (62% A*-B) had also been identified and recent changes in the Psychology staffing were explained. It was stated that new strategies were being put in place by the new team to assist students further. It was also noted that the small cohort size of some A level subject groups adversely affected the mock result figures but were not considered a significant concern. Governors raised the past situation within Economics and details of the current teaching structure were explained. It was a very positive team of teachers and the School had confidence that good results would be attained later this year. Further questions were raised on the data presented and additional clarification was received from SLT members.

8. The data for Year 11 mock examinations was reviewed. The Assistant Headteacher (T&L and SD) advised that the overall Year 11 headline figure was 82.4% Grade 7-9, a small drop of 2.7% on last year, and that two subjects were showing improvements on last year. The English mock results had been lower than expected and investigated by the School. Details of what was being done to address the issues were summarised, including a teacher change and interventions for students who are struggling, both collective and one-to-one sessions, including disadvantaged students. Governors queried the effect of the teacher change and it was explained that it had come about due to the end of a period of maternity cover and that the permanent member of staff was now back in place and would be addressing the situation. Religious Studies mock results were also lower and unexpected, subject staff had discussed the mock results with each individual student, were addressing any issues found and putting interventions in place.

ITEM 8 – INSPECTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT (IDSR)

9. The Deputy Headteacher presented the School's own version of the Government's recently published Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR), which summarised the most significant data for Governors. In explanation of context, it was reported that the School is located in one of the most deprived areas of the country (by postcode) but that the actual student cohort did not reflect this. The commitment of the School to address this issue had been a point of discussion at the recent Governor Conference. The very diverse nature of the student population was highlighted, with 15 of the 17

DfE-recognised ethnic groups. The School outcomes for 2021-22 showed a GCSE Progress 8 figure of +0.91, i.e. students achieve nearly a whole GCSE grade more progress than expected, compared to their similar ability peers nationally, and well above the national average (just below zero) and the Local Authority figure (-0.2), and in the highest 20% of all schools. Governors queried why 20% of students did not have prior data and were informed that this was because they came from independent primary schools who did not take SATs on which the IDSR figures were based. It was stated that the School used other data Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT) and Teacher Assessments (TA) to ensure that every student had an individual profile from which to check progress. Governors voiced concern over the missing data in relation to the completeness of the Government's statistics. It was highlighted that there would be gaps in future IDSRs due to the lack of SATs results during the pandemic.

10. The GCSE Attainment 8 figure was +85.1, well above the national average and Local Authority (in the high +40s) with the average grade for each subject being 8.5. The CCHS Disadvantaged Progress 8 figure had been in a downward trajectory from 2017-19 but was now increasing (+0.36 to +0.4), however Disadvantaged progress was still better than nationally (+0.15). The meeting was advised that the number of Disadvantaged students in this cohort was very small (6) and that this affected the statistics. It was stressed that the School was working hard to close the attainment gap for Disadvantaged students and that the CCHS Disadvantaged students outperformed the National Average. The School's overall Attainment 8 figure had increased annually since 2018. The official definition of Disadvantaged was discussed, and it was reported that the School had many students just outside this formal category who were also being assisted by the School.

11. The data showed that students who are registered as having English as an Additional Language (EAL) generally outperform their peers. The number of EAL students has increased year on year and the Main School has an above average number of EAL students. It was suggested that this may be because families are now more willing to register their daughter as having EAL. The increase in diversity and EAL was stated as being a positive thing in relation to cultural celebration both within and outside the School. Data on the separate Mathematics and English elements of Progress 8 was reviewed. Historically, English always outperforms Mathematics. The downward trend in the Mathematics figure had now stopped following a lot of School analysis and systems changes and had doubled from 0.33 in 2019 to 0.65 for 2022. Governors noted that it would be interesting to see if there were any variations after the change to the new Year 7 Entrance Test in September 2023.

12. Other areas of the IDSR were also summarised. It was noted there was no National Average or Value Added for 2022 in the KS5 (A level) IDSR information because this cohort received CAG results in 2020 during the Covid pandemic and there was therefore no baseline data, this would also be true for the 2023 Year 13 cohort. The KS5 Average Point Score continued to have an upward trend with a score of 49.1 for 2022 and was significantly above the Nation Average. The KS5 Disadvantaged students were only slightly behind the rest of their cohort. Student absences were in the lowest 20% of all schools, suspensions in KS4 were negligible and there were no permanent exclusions in either KS4 or KS5. One area being investigated by the School related to an incongruous statement in Prior Attainment, there had been no reply from DfE to date. A Governor queried the reason why the School did not have a 100% EBacc figure and was advised that this related to a few students whose timetables had been reduced for personal or pastoral reasons.

ITEM 9 – YEAR 9 & YEAR 12 OPTIONS PROCESS

13. The Year 9 & 11 options processes had started for students and details of the School subject option processes were summarised. This included curriculum booklets, parents' evenings, option evenings, and RTP discussion periods before students made their final subject options choices. Year 11 students also have individual careers interviews to assist their subject decision making. The Year 11 option process was already open and Year 9 would make their final choices by the end of March. The School would then start planning in relation to staffing and timetables for September 2023. It was stated that there was a lot of support for students to ensure that they made the best possible subject choices. Governors queried if there were any changes happening within the School

curriculum, the only change was the addition of A level PE in September 2023, allowing students who took GCSE PE to continue with their studies in the Sixth Form.

ACTION

ITEM 10 – CHANGE@CCHS

14. The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) advised that there had been a number of exciting events directly coming from the Change@CCHS project including the Black Excellence Fest and the Culture Fest. Details of the events were summarised for the Committee and the work of the Change & Diversity Prefects was commended. The Headteacher advised that the School had been mindful to listen to the students and act on their suggestions. The Change events had been brought about by the direct requests of students. Governors queried the general atmosphere of the School in relation to the events of June 2020 and were advised that it was good. The School had responded as a community and the change@cchs project had flourished becoming an important part of school life. All the staff were committed to the change@cchs initiative and feedback from both staff and students suggested the School was in a good place. It was noted that there was awareness amongst staff that curriculum and resources need to be addressed but the School was limited by the current examination specifications. It was stated that as an Academy the School had total control of the content of the KS3 curriculum as long as it was 'broad and balanced'.

ITEM 11 – EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

15. The Educational Visits Policy was presented for re-approval following the addition of new content relating to local area trips. A local area trip is one within a 2-mile radius of the school or a PE trip to any MESH member schools. The concept of a local area trip was now clearly defined within the Policy and the Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) explained the reasons for the new content. The intentions of the School in relation to introducing school trips post pandemic was queried. It was confirmed that three overseas trips were planned for this academic year and that there was an appetite amongst School staff to return to a more pre-Covid programme of trips. It was recognised that that mechanics for trips was becoming harder due to the bigger cohorts and post-Brexit administrative arrangements.

16. **Decision.** After one typographic amendment, the Educational Visits Policy was approved as presented with a two-year review.

ITEM 12 – RISK REGISTER

17. **Decision.** The curriculum section of the CCHS Risk Register was received for termly review. It was suggested that the addendum relating to Covid was in need of revision to now highlight the long-term effect of Covid on student cohorts. The Headteacher **agreed** to revise the Covid addendum and the Clerk would send the revision to Committee members for approval by e-mail.

**S Lawlor
Clerk**

ITEM 13 – INFORMATION ITEMS

18. **Item 13.3 - Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes.** The Committee received curriculum-related extracts from the minutes of the Sixth Form Council meeting held on 16th November 2022 and the Student Voice meeting held on 23rd November 2022. The new structure of the minutes was noted as being more constructive and having a far greater focus on teaching and learning.

ITEM 14 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19. **Strike Action.** Governors queried the effect on the School of the NEU industrial action day on 1st February 2023. The Headteacher advised that 55% of teaching staff and all members of SLT were in School on that day. Only CCHS and KEGS had been fully open to all year groups, all other MESH schools had chosen to only bring in specific year groups.

20. Change of Committee. The Committee were informed that Aisha Sohail had kindly agreed to take on the role of Safeguarding Link Governor which required becoming a member of the Staff & Student Matters Committee. Aisha was thanked for her contribution to the Committee.

ACTION

21. Curriculum Survey. The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) advised that she was currently running a survey of all GSHA schools on their curriculum offering which was hoped would give a good insight in relation to the CCHS curriculum offering. Once completed, further information would be presented to the Committee.

ITEM 15 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22. Decision. The date of the next meeting was agreed as 5.00pm on 10th May 2023.

AII

The meeting closed at 7.07pm.

Agreed as a true record.

A Bonwick
Chair

10th May 2023

DRAFT