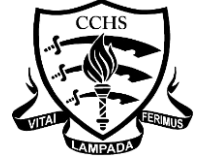




Chelmsford County High School for Girls
Governor Visit Report Form



Governors are reminded not to make any reference to specific staff members or students by name.

Name of Governor:	Andrew Bonwick
Date of Visit:	19 December 2023
Focus of Visit:	Curriculum matters
Lessons/Areas visited:	Approx ½ lesson of each of: Year 11 French Year 12 Further Maths Year 12 English
Summary of activities undertaken: (eg observing classes, talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources) Detailed discussion of curriculum matters before and after classrooms visits with Jo Cross (DHT Academic) and Adam Selby (AHT, Teaching & Learning). Mr Selby present for around ½ of the time. Classroom visits as above.	
General Comments: Principle discussion with JC and AS focussed on: <u>Actual results achieved by school.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generally outstanding, as presented to Governing Body and committees.• Data consistently shows CCHS is amongst the top performing schools in the county and in the county.• Entry into competitive universities reflects this, save that the Oxbridge entries in 2023 was disappointing, and not consistent with previous years or indeed with KEGS, despite CCHS pupils having comparable grades.• Point of 'failure' is broadly at interview stage, i.e. interviews not translating into offers.• Previously CCHS had been conscious of criticism that they 'only cared about Oxbridge'. Increased focus in school now on supporting the more able (work with NACE). Relative underperformance regarding Oxbridge places is being addressed, in particular via early identification of possible candidates, supporting them to believe that they could be that person, and providing support/ information on interviews. Included within this, that it is OK (or indeed deliberate) not to know the answer, as Oxbridge interviews are designed to test thought at least as much as knowledge. Communication skills also key.	

Spread within those results.

- Overall excellent results (A*/A/B), further analysis indicates some subjects where there was relative underperformance at the top (A*) level in particular. This has been discussed and highlighted in the Department Self Review (DSEF) process.
- Particular concerns about Chemistry (which has had significant staff turnover over the 7 years that Yr 13s have been at CCHS), English (where CCHS is in dispute/ appeal with the exam boards over marking as NEAs suggested an excellent cohort) and History (where there is a continued concern about rigidity of assessment by the exam boards following two successful appeals).
- Efforts are made to retain staff, and succession planning is in place for key departments/ posts. It is hoped that staff turnover such as that seen chemistry will not repeat. However, recruitment in core subjects is not easy.
- Re rigidity of assessment, there is a balance between teaching the subject, and teaching to pass the exam (see comment above re. Oxbridge, which relates to, and is in tension with what may be required to achieve top exam scores).
- Re exam board issues, these are widely felt. Many experienced markers have left in recent years.
- Separately, pupils who joined CCHS 6th form from outside tend to perform at a slightly lower level - CCHS often teaches beyond the curriculum at GCSE, whereas it is not uncommon for incoming pupils to have gaps to be addressed by subject teachers. The option of starting the 6th form with 3 subjects rather than 4 will allow more time per subject, and thus facilitate addressing these gaps.
- Re PPG pupils, there is now an individual plan in place for each to track their progress through school, providing support accordingly. This proving to be a valuable tool.
- The impact of the new entry test on expanding access to disadvantaged pupils, and on results generally, will become apparent over time. The CCHS tuition programme is now in place to support these students where appropriate.

External perception of results.

- CCHS still feels that it is perceived externally as performing less well than KEGS, even if this is objectively not the case (very similar overall with CCHS excelling in certain subjects). CCHS will continue to be forthright in public about its achievements.
- However, "better" is a relative concept, and does not depend only on exam results. CCHS and KEGS have very different cultures, and a 'better' question would be which school suits a particular pupil. To exaggerate slightly, if a pupil has spare time, should they take another GCSE ("KEGS" approach), or do something else more enriching.

General Comments Continued:

Re the lesson visits, all three were excellent, in different ways. I am not qualified to comment from an educational perspective. However, I thought:

- French The teacher had a very gently and encouraging manner with the girls, supporting, correcting and/or extending the knowledge of the pupils through gentle questioning and probing. The tools used (quiz, questions, songs) during the lesson were varied, and the level of sophistication build gently towards the end.
- Maths The Maths teacher was extremely impressive, both when supporting girls individually when teaching from the front. He clearly masters his subject at a high level and was able to explain new concepts from different angles to find the explanation that would stick for a given pupil. His poetry (on a mathematical discovery) achieved an additional level of engagement from the pupils.
- English The English teacher facilitated a discussion on Othello very much as a seminar, and again clearly had excellent engagement from the pupils, guiding them through their thought processes in a manner which felt appropriate to the subject, rather than providing the answers.

My thanks to each of them, and to Jo Cross and Adam Selby for setting up and facilitating this visit, particularly at such short notice.

Points Relevant to School Development Plan (if applicable):

See above

Summary of what was learned:

See above

Name in Block Capitals: ANDREW BONWICK

Date: 2 January 2024