

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held at the School and via Teams at 4.15pm on Monday 4th December 2023

Present:	Steve Miles	Chair of Governors
	Svetlana Warhurst	Vice Chair of Governors
	Stephen Lawlor	Headteacher
	Andrew Bonwick	Chair of Curriculum Committee (via Teams)
	Richard Brown	Chair of Facilities & Finance Committee (via Teams)
	Sarah de Souza-Ingle	Chair of Staff & Student Matters Committee
In Attendance:	Jo Cross	Deputy Headteacher (Academic)
	Fiona Harrison	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)
	Melissa Mulgrew	Business Manager
	Wendy Newton	Clerk to Governors

PART A

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies for absence, all committee members were present.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2 The Chair of the Curriculum Committee and Headteacher both reported that their daughters, CCHS Alumnae, were now employed by CCHS as student tutors on a casual basis and the Clerk confirmed that updated declaration of interests forms had been received. The Headteacher had not been involved in the selection or interview process. This was not deemed to be pertinent to the current meeting. There were no other 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 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2023 were agreed as a true record.

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 12, Para 19 – Staff Pay Scales. There had been no changes to the draft Government staff pay scales which had been received and approved in principle at the last meeting. The scales had therefore been formally adopted by the School and staff pay had been appropriately backdated.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION

5. A summary of Chairs' Actions taken since the last Full GB meeting was reviewed and noted. One overnight residential trip to Cambridge had been approved for the School's industrial cadets.

ITEM 6 – COMPANY ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st AUGUST 2023

6. The Consolidated Company Accounts for the year ending 31st August 2023, the MWS auditor's Management Letter, Letters of Representation, and Audit & Regularity Findings Report were received and noted. It was confirmed that the Facilities & Finance Committee had already reviewed the documents and recommended the accounts for formal approval. The auditors had made a small amendment to the Company Accounts relating to the RAAC issue since the version received at the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting which was noted. The Chair of the Facilities & Finance Committee reported that the audit had gone extremely well and that the auditors were very complimentary about the quality of the accounts and the level of support received from the Finance

ACTION

Team. The Chair thanked the Business Manager and Finance Team for their work on the accounts and the quality of their work throughout the year.

7. Governors noted the year-on-year increase in staff costs and questioned the financial support for the staff pay increases. The Business Manager advised that whilst a small proportion of the teachers' pay increase was covered by the Government there was never any additional income for support staff pay increases. The shortfall in the teachers' pay increase and all the support staff pay increase had to be funded from the School's GAG funding for the year. The Chair commended the School for keeping close control of the finances throughout the year. The Committee received the annual accounts for CCHS Capital Development Ltd for information and an explanation was received on the exemption from audit and annual statutory guarantee given by CCHS.

8. **Decisions.**

- a. With delegated authority from the Full GB, the Company Accounts for the year ending 31st August 2023 and Reserves Policy were approved as presented.
- b. The annual statutory guarantee for CCHS Capital Development Ltd was also approved.

ITEM 7 – DATA

9. **Item 7.1 – Year 7 CEM/CAT Comparison.** The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) presented an analysis of the 2023 Year 7 CAT test results and summarised the content. It was noted that the same analysis next year would be interesting following the change in the Year 7 Entrance Test. It was reported that the cohorts were relatively stable year-on-year for both CAT and CEM data. There had been a slight increase in breadth of results data in recent years, but it did not cause the School any concern.

10. **Item 7.2 – GCSE Analysis.** Analysis had been undertaken of the Year 11 GCSE results against previous CEM, CAT and MidYIS results and was discussed. Governors queried the recent lowering the entrance test score for Pupil Premium students in relation to a future reduction in performance at GCSE. A query was raised as to whether there was anything which needed to be undertaken by the School in relation to the broader range of ability in Year 7 in order to maintain strong GCSE results. The issue was discussed in relation to the pandemic, the new entrance test and the new Leaders of Tomorrow Programme. It was reported that the School would start addressing any additional needs of the students entering in Year 7 in September 2024 with lower results immediately after the National Offer Day in March 2024. Details of how the School intended to close the gap, which will be small, were summarised for the Committee and discussed. The data showed a positive correlation between GCSE results and CAT/CEM results, but mainly at the top-end of the data rather than the lower end. It was stressed that the School looks at every student and addresses their requirements on an individual basis. The Headteacher explained the benefits of students supporting each other through the new Year 14 tutoring programme and Year 12 community service.

11. Governors queried the new Year 7 entrance test and asked how the range and breadth of test scores was expected to change and how it would affect the Year 7 CAT results. The difference in the new testing process was acknowledged and it was suggested that the CAT results may reflect the results achieved prior to the CEM test. A change in ability was not expected, but it was suggested there may be a possible change in the skills bias.

12. **TA1 Performance Data.** TA1 data for Years 11 and 13 was received for information and it was reported that the headline figures were very similar to the TA3 data for the previous term. The TA1 headline figure for Year 13 was 86.3% grades A*-B at A level and for Year 11 was 89.8% grades 7-9 at GCSE. There was nothing of concern to report at this point in the academic year. Governors queried areas within the data and asked for further explanation; clarification was given by the Deputy Headteacher (Academic).

13. **Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR).** A summary of the newly published IDSR had been prepared for Governors showing the most significant data, and the Deputy Headteacher (Academic) stated that there was much to be celebrated within the report. Significant areas of the report were highlighted and additional explanation given. Comparison data between the School, the Local Authority and the national average was received, and the significant progress made by CCHS

students against similar students nationally was noted. The KS4 Progress 8 (P8) figure was significantly above average at +0.89, i.e. CCHS students make nearly one GCSE grade more progress than expected, and was in the 97th percentile of the national figures. KS4 P8 Disadvantaged score was +1.16, over one grade more progress than expected. KS4 Attainment 8 (A8) was 82.3, i.e. the average GCSE grade in the School was 8.23, significantly above the national average and all A8 subjects were in the 100th percentile of national figures. KS4 A8 Disadvantaged was 81.6 against the national figure of 50.2. The previous downward trend of P8 Disadvantaged had stopped and was now significantly higher than the 2022 P8 Disadvantage figure of 0.4. It was reported that School's 2023 EBacc entry rate was very strong at 97% due to the Year 9 options process, which gave them great subject breadth. Many of the EBacc GCSE subjects, including all the STEM subjects, were in the highest 20%, which was only awarded if the School's entries were at or above the national standard and if the Average Point Score for the subject was in the highest 20%. There was general discussion about the data contained in the IDSR and it was stated that the IDSR contained key information in relation to the forthcoming Ofsted visit. It was confirmed that there were no P8 or A8 figures for SEND students, which can be the case where the cohort size is too small.

14. Ethnicity information in the IDSR showed the diversity within the School. It was also stressed that the data on attendance related to 2021-22. The School confirmed that CCHS pupil attendance was now climbing again to pre-pandemic levels. One student had left the School to be home-educated and another student was currently a school refuser, with the School doing all they could to support the student. The Headteacher advised of concerns relating to parents asking for leave of absences for their daughters for extended periods of time. Only two sets of parents had been fined for non-authorised absence during the current Headteacher's tenure, but this figure was likely to go up as we respond to the emerging new picture. The actions taken by the School in relation to absence requests were summarised and it was confirmed that each request was looked at on an individual case-by-case basis and fully considered. The amount of lost learning caused by absences was stressed, especially post-Covid. The Headteacher advised the Committee that the recently published Sunday Times Parent Power Guide 2024 had listed CCHS as being: 1st in East Anglia for state girls' schools; 3rd in East Anglia for all state schools; 4th nationally for state girls' schools, up from 7th last year, and 12th nationally for all state schools, up from 17th last year, and the Committee discussed the ratings. The Chair commended the School on the outstanding results and thanked the Deputy Headteacher (Academic) for the IDSR summary.

ITEM 8 – FINANCIAL UPDATE & CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

15. The Business Manager reported that finances would be very tight this year. Of the 6.5% agreed settlement for the teachers' pay rise, only 1.5% of it was actually funded. The remainder of the cost would have to come from general funding. The School would continue to keep very close scrutiny on expenditure and there were no immediate concerns. There had been some recent unexpected but essential expenditure due to Health & Safety issues. One major issue was the Art lift which had broken, it would cost £21,000 to repair or over £50,000 to replace. CIF bids were currently being prepared for submission and the primary bid would be for a new boiler costing £450,000. The second bid would be for the replacement of windows in the Art and Sixth Form Study building, this had yet to be costed but the presence of asbestos in the area would increase the cost significantly. Further details of the CIF bid would be received in due course.

ITEM 9 – SCHOOL TERM DATES

16. **Decision**. The proposed CCHS School term dates for 2024-25 were presented for approval following the late publication of the ECC school term dates. The Headteacher outlined the reasons behind each of the Staff INSET days. The 2024-25 term dates were **approved** as presented.

ITEM 10 – GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE 2024

17. The annual Governor Conference was planned for Saturday 27th January 2024. The Headteacher presented a paper proposing that the conference should focus on a strategic plan for the development of the Sixth Form and details of the day were outlined. It was noted that there would also need to be sessions for Governor safeguarding training and the academy trust AGM. A second paper, previously received in November 2021, proposing a staff position covering enterprise

and public relations, was also presented for consideration in relation to the focus of the conference. The proposed content for the conference was **approved** and a formal programme would be prepared by the School and sent to Governors in due course.

ACTION

ITEM 11 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

18. **Item 11.1 - GB Membership - Decision.** The terms of office and committee membership of the Full GB as at 1st January 2024 were reviewed. The Clerk highlighted the reduced number of Governors on the GB and how it affected sub-committee membership. There were currently two vacant Nominated Governor positions and two further gaps due to the removal of Staff Governors. The meeting discussed the situation and a suggestion was put forward for a possible new Nominated Governor. The Clerk **agreed** to contact Margaret Cousins to ascertain if she would be interested in becoming a Governor. It was confirmed that a skills audit had been carried out in Summer Term 2023 but that no specific skills gaps had been highlighted. A previous area of interest for the GB had been to find a new Governor with knowledge of fundraising.

Clerk

19. **Item 11.2 – Academy Structure.** The Clerk advised that the new Articles of Association had been returned to the DfE on 26th October stating the School's reasoning as to why the two items the DfE had rejected in the proposed Articles should be accepted. The DfE contact had replied on 15th November to say that they had passed our comments on to their legal team for consideration. Nothing had been heard since that date.

ITEM 12 – GDPR

20. The Business Manager reported that there had been a small number of Freedom of Information requests concerning the Year 7 Entrance Test results. There were no other significant GDPR issues to report.

ITEM 13 – PARENTAL FEEDBACK

21. The Headteacher reminded Governors that positive parental feedback was now uploaded onto the School's website for public viewing, comments were often received following School events such as shows and concerts. The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) had recently undertaken a parent survey and stunning feedback had been received from 551 parents. The headlines included:

- *My daughter is happy at school – 96.9% responded positively*
- *My daughter feels safe at school – 99.1% responded positively*
- *Behaviour of the students – 98.2% responded positively*
- *The curriculum is ambitious – 98.4% responded positively*
- *CCHS has high expectations of my daughter – 98.2% responded positively*
- *Pastoral needs being met – 95.8% agreed*
- *Attendance & punctuality – 98.9% agreed*

A few interesting issues had been raised via the free text section of the survey and were being considered. Some of the free text comments had also been added to the School website to share and celebrate the excellent work of staff.

ITEM 14 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22. **Governor Visits.** The Headteacher advised that formal Governor visits had reduced significantly since Covid and stressed that the number of visits needed to return to pre-pandemic levels. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would prepare a programme of termly visits allocated on a rotational basis to ensure that all Governors participate.

Clerk

ITEM 15 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was agreed as 8.15am on Friday 8th March 2024.

All

Part A of the meeting closed at 5.35pm.

S Miles, Chair

1st March 2024

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