

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held at the School at 5.00pm on Tuesday 21st November 2017

Present:	Mike Worboys Yvonne Wickers Nicole Chapman Mark Rowell Lauren Smith Mary Argent	Chair Vice Chair Head Associate Member
In Attendance:	Stephen Lawlor Nicholas Minnican Michael Palmer Wendy Newton	Deputy Head Assistant Head – Teaching & Learning Assistant Head - Head of Sixth Form Clerk
Apologies:	Lee Palmer	

1. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Nicholas Minnican, Assistant Head (Teaching & Learning) to his first meeting of the Curriculum Committee.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Lee Palmer.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3. Yvonne Wickers advised that she was no longer associated with Chelmsford Museum and was to be employed by the Anglo European School with effect from 12th December. There were no other changes to the declarations of interest already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2017.
4. **Decision.** The Clerk agreed to amend the Register of Business Interests on the website.

ITEM 3 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

5. Nominations were sought for the position of Vice Chair of the Committee for the next academic year; Yvonne Wickers offered to remain in the role and the Committee unanimously approved.

ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

6. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th May 2017 were approved and signed as a true record.

ITEM 5 - MATTERS ARISING

7. Item 6, Para 8 – Missing Data. Governors requested clarification on the issue of missing student data. It was explained that the situation arose from delays in receiving personal information on new Year 12 students from their previous schools. The Head confirmed that the data was always received eventually and that it was sometimes difficult to obtain from certain schools.
8. Item 11, Para 17 – STEM Activities. As requested by Governors at the last meeting, a summary of STEM activities taking place within the School was received and discussed. It was recognised that Preena Kurian, as Subject Leader for Physics, is working particularly hard and successfully to provide STEM opportunities. It was suggested that information on the number of students participating in each activity would be useful. The Committee received an update on the work of the two Technology Technicians and the extra-curricular STEM activities currently taking place within the School. A query

ACTION

Clerk

was raised as to whether any students participated in Weizmann Institute placements before they went to university.

ACTION

9. **Decisions.**

- a. The Deputy Head (Curriculum) agreed to update the STEM document to include student numbers.
- b. Mark Rowell agreed to investigate Weizmann Institute placements and advertise them to appropriate students.

S Lawlor

M Rowell

10. A suggestion was made that students in younger year groups may benefit from external visits to technology companies such as Teledyne e2v and BAE on an Enrichment Day; it was noted that the July Enrichment Day might be a suitable opportunity. The extra pressure on teachers to undertake additional STEM activities was raised as a concern in light of also being required to raise examination results. The Chair stressed that staff should turn down incoming suggestions if they were not feasible.

5.18pm – Lauren Smith joined the meeting.

ITEM 6 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

11. The Terms of Reference for the Curriculum Committee were presented for annual review; the document had been recently been received and approved by the Full GB in October.

12. **Decision.** The Terms of Reference for the Curriculum Committee were approved as presented.

ITEM 7 – PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS REVIEW 2017

13. The Public Examinations Review 2017 was received for information and discussed. The Head advised that the School was currently collating TA1 data which would give better information on how School interventions were working and that A level targets were now being set for Year 12 students. All subjects had been reviewed in light of their examination results and staff were aware of what needed improvement. Information was also received on the UCAS early applications.

14. A question was raised on the continuation of Mandarin to A2 in light of the AS results. The meeting was informed that one student intended to re-sit the AS examination and the remainder all wished to continue the subject to A2. The School was re-assessing the examination skills required for Mandarin and more focussed work was being undertaken with the teacher. It was reported that the alternative Pre-U course was still under investigation and that the course would only run next year if there was sufficient student interest. It was also stated that universities prefer to have students with no previous knowledge of the language if their university course includes Mandarin. The popularity of the extra-curricular Mandarin lessons was noted.

ITEM 8 – CURRICULUM MONITORING

15. The Monitoring Report for Year 10, undertaken in June 2017, was reviewed and the Deputy Head summarised the content. It was stated that there had been progress in five of the six areas reported as needing development in the last review (2014). The key development point in this report was the need to strengthen differentiation practice; this issue was to be covered in whole School staff development sessions this year, e.g. Professional Development Groups. Governors queried a low figure reported in the lesson observation data and the Deputy Head explained the reason; the figure only related to two lessons. The Asst Head (T&L) reported that work was also to be undertaken with SLT and Faculty Leaders to support the School's lesson observation practice.

ITEM 9 – KS4 CURRICULUM

16. A proposal was received to revise the KS4 (GCSE) curriculum, with effect from September 2018 with the rationale behind the proposal being explained. The proposal was to reduce the number of GCSE courses studied at KS4 from eleven to ten and re-structure the option choices. Students would continue to study the six core subjects, plus four additional subjects of their choice. The reasons for the change related to the more demanding reformed (9-1) GCSE courses and the additional demands

the new examination would be putting on the students. The need to ensure the well-being of students was emphasised. The Committee received subject numbers and subject time allocation data from other grammar and SSGS schools to show how the CCHS curriculum compared to the other schools.

5.35pm - Michael Palmer, Head of Sixth Form, joined the meeting.

17. The new ten-subject model and re-allocation of subject time was explained to the Committee. The allocation of subjects within the proposed option blocks was debated and Governors noted that the new structure could allow a student to choose three languages or three humanities and that this would reduce the breadth of subject range compared with the current options system, which included a mandatory creative subject. The Head advised that such a student subject choice was unlikely and would be discouraged in options meetings with School staff. It was suggested that having fewer subjects should also produce higher quality GCSE results which would be preferred by universities over greater number of GCSE subjects.

18. The Committee discussed the proposal and the loss of the current mandatory Creative option block. It was suggested that by having fewer subjects students may have more time to participate in creative lunchtime and after-school activities instead. The increasing workload and associated pressure being put on students was highlighted as a real concern to the School, which the reduced subject option was planned to address. Governors queried the staffing implications related to the proposal, it was stated that no major changes were envisaged but that there might be some changes to the number of groups and group sizes. It was also noted that the proposed curriculum would give extra subject time to teachers. Governors stressed the need to link the general GCSE option process to the Sixth Form and university entry process. The Deputy Head reassured Governors that this practice currently exists and will certainly be continued in the future.

19. **Decision**. The new KS4 (GCSE) curriculum for September 2018 was approved as presented. The need to keep track on Creative subject numbers was acknowledged.

Head

ITEM 10 – SUBJECT NUMBERS AT KS4 & KS5

20. The September 2017 subject and group sizes for KS4 and KS5 subjects were reviewed and discussed. The Head advised that the increasing student numbers in future cohorts would allow the School to fill some of the currently smaller groups. It was noted that some schools have larger KS5 group sizes. The meeting discussed the varying group sizes and the reasons behind the variations. It was suggested that there may be a need in the future to restrict student subject choices in order to fit timetabling blocks, and the effect of the loss of Technology on increasing other subject numbers was noted.

ITEM 11 – POLICIES

21. **Item 11.1 – Curriculum Policy - Decision**. The Curriculum Policy, which had been revised to reflect the new 2018 KS4 curriculum, was presented for approval. The meeting debated the policy and it was approved as presented, to be published on the website in Spring Term 2018.

Clerk

22. **Item 11.2 – Sex & Relationship Education Policy - Decision**. A revised Sex & Relationship Education Policy was presented for approval. The meeting reviewed the policy and with the amendments discussed it was approved with a 3-year review.

23. **Item 11.3 – Educational Trips Policy - Decision**. The Educational Trips Policy was presented for approval. The meeting reviewed the policy and with the amendments discussed it was approved with a 3-year review.

24. **Item 11.4 – Gifted & Talented Policy - Decision**. A revised Gifted & Talented Policy was presented for approval. The term 'Gifted & Talented' was queried, it was stated that the terminology was still used in educational practice. With one amendment, the Gifted & Talented Policy was approved with a 3-year review.

ITEM 12 – RISK REGISTER

25. The curriculum-related section of the CCHS Risk Register was received for termly review. It was agreed that no amendment was necessary.

ITEM 13 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

26. The School Development Plan (SDP) 2017-18 was reviewed and the addition of references to the Artsmark and STEM was noted. Some dates in the SDP had passed but outcomes not been recorded, and the meeting discussed the update procedure. Some explanation was given over abbreviated terms. The lack of Governor input to the drafting of the SDP was noted and it was reported that the issue of Governance Competency (in relation to a Governor 'Hot Topic' training event) was on the next Management Committee agenda.

27. **Decision**. It was agreed that the SDP would be checked for updating prior to each meeting.

ITEM 14 – INFORMATION ITEMS

28. **Item 14.1 – Monitoring Schedule for 2017-18**. The monitoring programme for 2017-18 was received for information. The Year 13 and Government & Politics Reviews were currently underway and a Chemistry Review was also due this term. A new Faculty Leadership Review will place in April 2018, the form of which will be planned by SLT.

29. **Item 14.2 - Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes**. The Committee received extracts of curriculum-related items from the minutes of Sixth Form Council meetings held on 26th April and 27th September 2017 and Student Voice meetings held on 10th May and 20th September 2017. The greater focus on debating teaching and learning issues in Sixth Form Council meetings was reported as working well. The meeting discussed issues raised in the minutes and the Head explained the concept of the School's rolling tutor periods.

ITEM 15 – MODIFIED TEACHER ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

30. The Asst Head (Teaching & Learning) advised that a School working party had recently reviewed the TA data system, following the review conducted by the Deputy Head for SLT in the Summer Term, with particular focus on KS3 data where central bunching of grades occurred. The findings of the investigation were summarised and a crib sheet showing the new grade descriptors and allocation was explained. It was confirmed that parents only receive the word descriptors and not the number and letter grades used in the School reporting system.

ITEM 16 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

31. **Computing**. Lauren Smith informed the meeting of the availability of free programmes from the National Cyber Security Service; the School was aware of the resources which would be brought to the attention of the new Head of IT on her arrival in January 2018. It was also noted that IT competitions and scholarships were available for students to apply for.

32. **2018 Celebration**. Yvonne Wickers reported that 2018 was the centenary of women's suffrage in Britain and that a range of county-wide activities were being planned, including a project entitled 'Snapping the Stiletto'. It was suggested that the School may wish to consider getting involved in some of the activities. The School had already been contacted for historic information for this issue and the Head of Sixth Form advised that next year's Senior Prefects were also investigating undertaking something within the School related to this topic.

33. **Student Tragedy**. The Head informed the meeting of a death that had occurred earlier that day of a former student who would have been in Year 13 and summarised the actions to be taken by the School to support students and staff.

ACTION

Head

ITEM 17 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

ACTION

34. **Decision**. The date of the next meeting was agreed as 5.00pm on Wednesday 7th February 2018

All

The meeting closed at 6.48pm.

Agreed as a true record

M Worboys
Chair

7th February 2017