

# CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

## Minutes of a meeting of the CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held at the School at 5.00pm on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Present:	Andrew Bonwick Stephen Lawlor Melanie Gulliver Priya Rangaswamy Manish Unhale	Chair Headteacher  (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. There were no apologies for absence, all Committee members were present. The Chair reminded the meeting that Mary Argent, Associate Member, had resigned at Easter and thanked Mary for her long service on the Curriculum Committee.

### 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 2023-24, or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality reported.

### ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were approved as a true record.

### ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 5, Para 7 – Governor Visits - Decision. Committee members were reminded to contact the Clerk to arrange a School visit and to advise of preferred dates and specific areas of interest.

5. Item 10.1, Para 15 – Homework Policy. It was confirmed that the Homework Policy had been revised post meeting and then Committee-approved by email.

### ITEM 5 – CHAIR’S ACTION

6. There had been no Chair’s Action or approvals taken since the last meeting.

### ITEM 6 – PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS UPDATE

7. The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) reported that public examinations had commenced for Years 11 and 13 and that both year groups were doing well. The Headteacher reminded the meeting that there had been no significant modifications to the public examinations in England this year, as there were not last year. There had been some delayed arrivals by students due to traffic issues and weather. Year 12 examinations had now finished and were being marked. A Trustee queried what happened when students arrive late for public examinations. The Deputy Headteacher explained that there is set of rules for late arrival, dictated by JCQ, which had to be followed by every school. This means that students can arrive up to one hour late and still sit the entire exam. The School has a tightly managed process which prioritises maintaining a sense of calm to ensure late students were looked after and were still able to perform their best. For example, last year the school sent a minibus to Shenfield to pick up students stranded by rail problems, bringing them to school first then calming them before starting the exam (within the one-hour grace period).

### ACTION

All

## **ITEM 7 – SUBJECT OPTIONS**

## **ACTION**

8. The predicted internal subject option numbers for Years 10 and 12 in September 2024 were reviewed. The Deputy Headteacher (Academic) highlighted that as Main School year group sizes were now consistent the identification of trends would be easier. The Committee were reminded that Year 12 numbers may change if any current Year 11 students chose to move elsewhere for their Sixth Form studies and that additional new entrants would also join in Year 12 in September. The increased uptake of French in Year 10 was noted, and the work of one particular KS3 French teacher was commended. The decline in Year 10 numbers for Latin and Art were noted.

9. There have been 388 external applicants for the Year 12 in September 2024 so far; 176 had opted for the 3 A level Pathway and 212 for the 4 A level Pathway. Trustees queried whether any issues or resources problems had arisen from the subject option figures presented and were advised there were none. The Headteacher reminded the meeting that September 2025 would see the first cohort of 180 Year 11 students follow through to the Sixth Form and that it will be interesting to see how this affected Year 12 numbers. It was noted that the DfE capacity was 180 students in each Sixth Form year group. It was suggested that a combined total of 340-350 Sixth Form students was feasible. The summer Sixth Form admissions process was discussed in relation to the capacity of each subject and what happened if subjects were full. It was stressed that capacity was factored into timetable planning and student numbers. Staff were practised in subject trends and skilled in projecting how subject numbers would finish. It was stated that the educational standard of the new Year 12 students was very important and that it may not be in their best interest to increase subject group sizes if the student has not made the required grade as it could cause problems for the student later in their Sixth Form studies. The Chair noted that a couple of last year's Sixth Form entry appeal students had been offered, and accepted, alternative subjects. The Deputy Headteacher advised that the appeal entrants were closely tracked via TA data and that they were working hard, although additional intervention was being considered for one of the students.

## **ITEM 8 – TA2 DATA**

10. TA2 data for Years 10 to Year 13 was received for information. The Asst Headteacher advised that Year 10 was a cohort of specific interest as these students had sat the Entrance Test before Covid, been in Year 6 during the pandemic, and had not taken SATs or had the usual transition into CCHS. It was reported that there was a slight drop in the Year 10 TA2 average figure of 1.1% from the previous year but that the average grade remained consistent. There had been strong results (over 80%) for 10 subjects in the Year 10 mocks. Six subjects had not reached this level and would be analysed. Although the average Year 10 mock result of 81.2% was 5% higher than the previous year's cohort, there were also more students working at lower outcomes than previously. It was stressed that this was a unique year group who would need additional assistance in light of their Covid experience. The School's intervention process, which usually started in the second half of the Autumn Term for Year 11 was to start after this year's Summer Half Term break for a specific group of Year 10 students. It was reported that the CCHS Achievement Strategy was revised each year to take into account the different experiences of each cohort, issues were not only academic but also social and pastoral. The Committee discussed the situation and were advised that there were no massive subject concerns for Year 10 at this point.

11. TA2 data for Year 11 was very similar to last year, the headline figure was 0.5% higher and the average grade figure just higher. It was stated that TA2 predictions were very close to the final GCSE outcomes. Nine subjects had higher TA2 figures than last year and only three subjects had headline figures below 85%. The figures were deemed to be very positive prior to the public examinations. Year 13 was considered to be a strong year group, TA2 figures for A\*-B were 86.4%, 2.7% higher than the 2023 cohort. Six subjects had achieved 100% A\*-B. Four subjects had headline figures below 80% and additional clarification was received. Overall, there were no significant concerns with the Year 13 cohort.

## ITEM 9 – CORE MATHS

## ACTION

12. Following the introduction of the A level Twin Pathways, the curriculum offer had continued to be reviewed to ensure it met the needs of CCHS students and had led to the concept of having a core maths provision for Year 12 students. The Deputy Headteacher presented a paper on the core maths proposal and summarised its content. For some students there was a need for mathematical skills beyond GCSE, but a full A level Maths course may not be appropriate. The content of the core maths course selected by the School, Pearson Edexcel, and the circumstances when core maths would be beneficial were explained. It was stated that core maths was equivalent to an AS level and gained UCAS points for the student. Some universities have already acknowledged the importance of a core maths qualification. It was also reported that core maths now received DfE funding. The School proposed to offer core maths to the current Year 11 as a pilot for Year 12 next September to assess uptake and future viability. The Committee raised further questions on the course and additional information was received. The School confirmed that the course could be covered by the current allocation of Maths staff.

## ITEM 10 – CHANGE@

13. The School continued to focus on the CCHS change project in all aspects of school life. The most significant recent action was a review of the English provision where a new text, 'The Purple Hibiscus', had been added to Year 9. Details of the choice were explained. It was noted that the School was tied to the public examination syllabuses for Years 10 and 11. Each term now had a different change focus: the Autumn Term focussed on cultural awareness, the Spring Term International Women's Day covering gender equality and feminism, and the Summer Term respect and diversity. Pridefest was to be held later in the Summer Term. Work relating to the change project continued within the curriculum throughout the year. The Headteacher advised that the School was currently looking at the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) to assess if accreditation was possible as this would be external validation of the School's practices and a powerful message to the students. The Committee noted the recent publication of DfE guidance (for consultation until 11<sup>th</sup> July) on Relationships and Sex Education and the issue was discussed.

## ITEM 11 – POLICIES

14. Item 11.1 – Curriculum Policy 2024 - Decision. The Curriculum Policy for September 2024 was reviewed and **approved** as presented with a one-year review.

15. Item 11.2 – Careers Education & Advice Policy – Decision. The Careers Education & Advice Policy was presented for review. The Headteacher highlighted the Greater Essex Careers Hub which provides guidance and advice on careers and was deemed very helpful to the School. Trustees queried the comments made by Ofsted at the last inspection and additional explanation was received. It was reported that the School continued to work on careers provision and intended to extend provision by working with the contact networks and the Greater Essex Careers Hub. The School was currently working on an external careers-based day for Year 10 later in the Summer Term. It was noted that the careers activities undertaken in previous years had taken up a lot of teaching time and any new careers activity had to be meaningful for the students. After the deletion of one name and sentence re-wording, the Careers Education & Advice Policy was **approved** with a 3-year review.

## ITEM 12 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-24

16. The Mid Term Review of the School Development Plan for 2023-24 was reviewed. It had previously been received and discussed at the Board Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024. The Final Review of the SDP would be received at the Board Meeting in July. Trustees noted that the Staff Pantomime was to be re-introduced. It was suggested that this would be a great benefit to staff integration particularly since the School had grown and subject departments were now located at different places around the campus.

## **ITEM 13 – RISK REGISTER**

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

## **ITEM 14 – INFORMATION ITEMS**

18. **Item 14.1 - Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes.** The Committee received curriculum-related extracts from the minutes of the Student Voice meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and Sixth Form Council meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024. The meeting reviewed the minutes and noted the issues raised. Trustees commended the minutes and the improvement in content over recent years. Subjects discussed were noted as being more substantial in nature. A query was raised on a comment in the Sixth Form minutes relating to Psychology and further explanation was received from the Assistant Headteacher. New clarity had been given on the issue of mandatory versus optional homework.

## **ITEM 15 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

19. **Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Augmented Reality (AR).** Manish Unhale raised the issue of AI and AR and queried the School's preparation in these fields and the School's willingness to use it in the learning environment. Recent studies suggested that a learning environment using AI and AR had very positive impacts on students including motivation to learn, the learning experience and better grades. It was stated that the School was looking very positively at AI and that the School was now in Year 2 of its Digital Learning Strategy. It was noted that AI could be useful to both students and staff, especially in the area of assessment. The Assistant Headteacher gave additional information on the School's CPD programme for the next academic year which had a digital learning thread through it.

20. **Decisions.** Manish Unhale **agreed** to send the Clerk details of a forthcoming webinar on using AI in marking and assessment. Adam Selby, Assistant Headteacher, **agreed** to send Manish Unhale a copy of the School's Digital Learning Strategy for his information.

## **ITEM 16 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

21. The dates of sub-committee meetings in AY 2024-25 were to be presented for approval at the Board meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

The meeting closed at 6.28pm.

Agreed as a true record.

A Bonwick  
Chair

## **ACTION**

**M Unhale  
ASE**

**All**