

**MEETING OF THE  
LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE  
Monday 19 June 2023: 6:33pm–8:33pm  
MINUTES**

**Constitution and Attendance:**

Headteacher (1)	LAC Members (11)
Christian Kingsley      Headteacher	Judi Dumont-Barter      Chair
	Jehangir Byramji      Vice Chair ( <i>left 7.32pm</i> )
	Mo Asif      LAC member
	Jo Davies      LAC member
	<b>Alex Dixey</b> LAC member
	<b>Sarah Guerra</b> LAC member
	Lucinda Merritt      LAC member (staff)
	<b>Danielle Morley</b> LAC member (elected parent)
	<b>Emma Oliver</b> LAC member
	Jacques Szemalikowski      LAC member (elected parent)
	Conrad Withey      LAC member

**Absent with apologies:**      Alex Dixey  
    Sarah Guerra  
    Danielle Morley  
    Emma Oliver

Also in attendance:      Louise Hake      Governance Professional  
    Parneeta Davis      Senior Deputy Headteacher  
    Rebecca Jackson      Deputy Headteacher  
    Adam Gordon      Head of Science (*in attendance for Item 1 only*)

**Papers issued for review:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minutes of the previous meeting and status of actions</li> <li>● First Draft of School Improvement Plan (23/24)</li> <li>● Self-Evaluation Form (May 2023)</li> <li>● Headteacher's Report</li> <li>● Combined Governor Action Plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Output to self-evaluation exercise</li> <li>● Safeguarding Monitoring Report</li> <li>● Draft Parent Questionnaire</li> <li>● WLT Chairs Group Summary Report</li> <li>● WLT Governance Forum Powerpoint Slides</li> </ul> |
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BUSINESS	ACTION
<p>1. <b>ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT – Part 1</b></p>	
<p><b>Presentation: Science deep dive – understanding the pedagogical framework (attainment and progress)</b></p> <p>The Head of Science gave an insightful presentation regarding the success and implementation of the new pedagogical approach in teaching Biology, Chemistry and Physics.</p> <p>He began with a summary of the results obtained in Science, revealing that more pupils have opted to take Triple Science (now 2 classes), and results were above the national average. For Combined Science, the results showed a dip in the number of pupils achieving a 7+ grade, but this was attributable to the fact that these more capable pupils have now moved to take the Triple. The steady improvement in results, as shown in the graphs, has been sustained over 5 years, with the result that more pupils were now opting to take a Science A-Level at Chestnut Grove Academy.</p> <p>The Head of Science outlined the pedagogical approach now used in Science for 2 years, encapsulating targeted assessment (use of questioning), development of scientific vocabulary, and promotion of scientific practical skills and problem-solving techniques. With a vast curriculum content in Science, the whole curriculum has been organised into building blocks that are steps to developing cognitive understanding. These curriculum roadmaps offered a clear progression in learning and understanding, and they addressed misconceptions.</p> <p>The presentation concluded with areas that the Head of Science intended to develop further next year, including: to onboard four new Early Careers Teachers; to teach the new scheme to Year 9 and to develop the scheme for Year 10; and to focus on the consistency of implementation for all pupils, including SEND and disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>The Head of Science invited questions:</p> <p><b>Q: Will it be a challenge to train four new ECTs next term, and how will you meet this?</b> <i>A (AG): The Science department is adept at sharing best practice, and coaching and mentoring. We will also ensure that the new recruits attend career progression training, as appropriate.</i></p> <p><b>Q: Do you feel that pupils have struggled with their practical skills because they have missed lab time during the Covid pandemic?</b> <i>A (AG): Yes, practical skills have suffered – but teachers have prioritised these skills on return to school. Practical work is at the heart of our curriculum, and pupils enjoy lab time.</i></p> <p><b>Q: How do you manage the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school?</b> <i>A (AG): We use Science stories to outline prior learning, and then we have assessments and diagnostic questions early in Year 7 to ascertain knowledge gaps.</i></p>	



<p><i>We can then make sure that every pupil has the basic grounding with which to progress in Science.</i></p> <p><b>Q: Can Combined Science pupils progress to take an A-Level in Physics, Chemistry or Biology?</b> <i>A (AG): Yes – but they must get a grade of 6+. The problem being that, with Combined Science, the pupil does not receive a separate grade for each Science, so they cannot be sure in which specific Science they excel. For this reason, we have a 2-week probation period at A-Level, so the pupil can be sure that they have the necessary ability to continue.</i></p>	
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<b>2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS</b>	
<p><b>i. Welcome and apologies for absence</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting of the Chestnut Grove Local Academy Committee.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received in advance of the meeting and accepted as outlined above.</p>	
<p><b>ii. Declarations of interest</b></p> <p>When asked by the Chair, all LAC members confirmed there were no conflicts of interest related to the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>iii. Minutes of the previous meeting and status of actions</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held 22 May 2023 were agreed by the Academy Committee as a true and accurate reflection of discussion and were signed by the Chair.</p> <p>The Chair talked through the status of actions, and it was noted that all items had been addressed or were included in the meeting agenda, except for the Link Governor Development Plans, which will be reviewed in September, and the new Associate Assistant Headteachers, who will present at the LAC at a suitable time in the next academic year.</p>	
<p><b>iv. Appointments, vacancies, and succession planning</b></p> <p>The Chair revealed that the discussion regarding succession plans for a new Chair had been put on hold until the timing was more appropriate, in order to keep stability within the Chestnut Grove LAC. She also noted that the Committee was now fully recruited for members.</p>	
<p><b>v. Governance training</b></p> <p>The Chair and Headteacher acknowledged that LAC member attendance to Trust-wide training had been low this year, and this was disappointing when the</p>	

	<p>presenters have given their time and effort. Those LAC members that have attended the training noted how insightful the training had been.</p> <p>The LAC had a short discussion regarding how best to maximise attendance to training. The suggestion that online attendance could be arranged was dismissed because this may mean that the presenter talks to an empty room, which would be disheartening. Other members remarked that morning sessions were difficult to attend due to work commitments, but it was acknowledged that seeing the school in action, and observing the teaching, was a crucial part of the training. The LAC concluded that the sessions should be re-branded as 'workshops' rather than 'training', which would emphasise the collaborative Trust-wide element, as well as the exposure to the school. The Governance Professional took an <b><u>ACTION: to relay this feedback to the Head of Governance.</u></b></p>	LH
vi.	<p><b>Streamlining communications within governance</b></p> <p>In response to feedback that communications can be confusing, the Governance Professional (on behalf of the Head of Governance) wanted to ascertain whether a Trust-wide 'weekly bulletin' would be useful for LAC members. This would be an email with links to all communications and important information from the week. Each LAC member could therefore easily access the information that was relevant to their link role and Local Committee.</p> <p>In response to this suggestion, the LAC members revealed that there was some confusion between what information is delivered by email and what is posted on Teams, with most members agreeing that email was preferable. In this way, a weekly email with easy links and signposts might be beneficial in that when a member accesses their email to read the bulletin, they can be sure that they have not missed any postings on Teams. The Governance Professional took an <b><u>ACTION: to relay this feedback to the Head of Governance.</u></b></p>	LH
vii.	<p><b>Meeting dates and start time</b></p> <p>The Governance Professional confirmed that LAC meeting dates for next year were being finalised and would be circulated soon.</p> <p>The Committee members were asked if a start time of 6pm would be feasible for LAC meetings next year. Those present confirmed that this would be suitable, and the Governance Professional took an <b><u>ACTION: to confirm this new start time with those LAC members not present.</u></b></p>	LH
<b>3.</b>	<b>ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT – Part 2</b>	
i.	<p><b>First draft of School Improvement Plan 2023/24</b></p> <p>This document had been circulated before the meeting. The Senior Deputy Headteacher pointed out that some of the priorities listed in the Tier Model for School Improvement were similar to last year because many development</p>	

	<p>strategies take more than a year to plan, introduce, embed, and evaluate (such as the high-quality teaching in the new subject-specific pedagogy).</p> <p>The Senior Deputy Headteacher then highlighted two new emphases in the Plan for the forthcoming year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong emphasis on reading. This targeted academic support was felt to be crucial in improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The Senior Deputy Headteacher invited the LAC members to attend a reading intervention at Chestnut Grove Academy next year, to see first-hand what the literacy teaching involved.</li> <li>• A closer working relationship with parents in order to help support pupils with curriculum learning and behaviour management. This would be achieved by streamlining communication with the introduction of the new MIS system.</li> </ul> <p>A question was tabled, <b>Q: Can you give us more information about the new MIS system?</b> <i>A (HT): The Trust felt a need to introduce consistency in the process of school communication and record keeping. After a tender process, the software chosen was Arbor, and this will be up and running in September (although we will keep Bromcom as a back-up system). Staff will need training, but Arbor will make parent communication much easier, and will also be useful for Trust-wide information gathering, such as attendance records.</i></p> <p>There were no further questions regarding the draft CGA School Improvement Plan 2023/24, and the draft was approved.</p>	
<p>ii.</p>	<p><b>Reflect on CGA's strategic priorities</b></p> <p>The LAC members confirmed that the school's strategic priorities aligned well with those of the Trust. The next step would be to directly link CGA's priorities to the link governor role aims, and this would be reviewed in September.</p> <p>The Headteacher reminded the LAC that the Self-evaluation Form (which evaluated performance and outlined areas for development) was constantly re-evaluated and updated throughout the academic year. Its first review would be in September when the school exam outcomes were published.</p> <p>The LAC was aware of the imminent approach of an Ofsted inspection at Chestnut Grove Academy. It was noted that the Trust-wide governance training 'Preparing for Inspection' had unfortunately been cancelled, but the Headteacher felt that a meeting specifically concerning CGA would be beneficial for the LAC. It was proposed that this would be an in-person meeting early in September, and the Chair took an <b><u>ACTION: to find a suitable date for all LAC members.</u></b></p>	<p>JDB</p>
<p>iii.</p>	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p>The Headteacher apologised for the late circulation of the Report, due to staff illness, and declared he would welcome any questions after the meeting if LAC members needed more time to absorb its contents. The LAC resolved to <b><u>ACTION:</u></b></p>	



<p><b><u>email any further questions for the Headteacher to the Governance Professional.</u></b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p>The Headteacher shared a flowchart with the LAC, which illustrated the structure and responsibilities of the new Senior Leadership Team for the next academic year. There were five Deputy Heads and five Assistant Heads in the new enlarged Team.</p>	
<p>The Headteacher invited questions regarding the Headteacher’s Report:</p>	
<p><b>Q: Is fundraising more difficult in these times of inflation?</b> <i>A (HT): We’re doing OK. We get some large grants from charities such as the Wolfson Organisation (we have the money but we need to report back to them on how it has been spent). The Friends of Chestnut Grove continue with their fundraising efforts but the school is in good repair at the moment, so people are perhaps not thinking we need additional funds.</i> The Headteacher further confirmed that finances had been healthy this year. CGA had benefitted from investment into IT and new library furniture, and all subject areas had been able to make a bid for new resources and equipment.</p>	
<p><b>Q: With a PAN of 220 pupils, are you concerned that only 185 offers have been accepted?</b> <i>A (HT): No. It takes some time for Wandsworth Council to report the latest numbers – we are now at 204 offers accepted. Our PAN is actually 210, but we take an extra 10 if we can. I’m confident the Year 7 intake will be full.</i></p>	
<p><b>Q: I note that the number of pupils participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is high, which is fantastic for pupils’ personal growth and skills – but how many of these pupils are disadvantaged or from black ethnic minority backgrounds?</b> <i>A (HT): I don’t have this breakdown of data but I will find out.</i> The Headteacher took an <b><u>ACTION: to ascertain the breakdown of pupils taking part in Duke of Edinburgh, in particular the cohort from black ethnic minority backgrounds and the disadvantaged.</u></b> There ensued a general discussion regarding participation in all school trips: some trips were expensive and therefore prohibitive for low-income families. The Headteacher shared that the grant available for disadvantaged pupils to use for trips had not increased in years. It was suggested that perhaps an additional trip could be organised only for those pupils who have never partaken in a school trip.</p>	<p>CK</p>
<p>The Chair congratulated Chestnut Grove Academy on achieving no permanent exclusions this year. She also recognised the reduction in the number of suspensions, especially from black ethnic minority backgrounds, where an increasing number of boys were accessing therapeutic interventions. The Headteacher was pleased to share that the FBB’s (Football Beyond Borders) mental health support programme, currently offered only to Year 8, is extending to Years 9 and 10 next year. The Deputy Headteacher reported that the new social worker from Wandsworth Council had started working at Chestnut Grove Academy (after a term’s recruitment gap), and this in-house offering was proving effective. A question was tabled, <b>Q: What is the difference between a managed transfer and a managed move?</b> <i>A (DHT): A managed move is when a pupil is moved to another</i></p>	



	<i>mainstream educational setting, either temporarily or permanently; whereas a managed transfer is when a pupil moves to a more appropriate setting for their needs, and this move is permanent (but must be agreed by parents).</i>	
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<b>4.</b>	<b>REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION</b>	
<b>i.</b>	<b>Review output to self-evaluation exercise</b>  The Chair thanked all LAC members who had responded to the four short questionnaires in the governance self-evaluation exercise. She acknowledged that this output would be especially useful for ascertaining any gaps in members' knowledge that could be filled with targeted governance training.  The Chair shared that she was still learning about how to achieve best practice in the new 'flat' governance structure. She felt that some personal connections and a sense of team between the CGA LAC members had been lost. Link role holders now connect more closely with their counterparts in the Trust rather than with other CGA LAC members.  In summary, the Chair listed LAC objectives for next year as including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Onboarding all new members to the LAC.</li><li>• A closer look at FSM pupils and their resources and outcomes.</li><li>• Continuing with all governance procedural improvements.</li></ul>	
<b>ii.</b>	<b>Safeguarding update</b>  The Safeguarding Monitoring Report was acknowledged as insightful and there were no questions. The Chair thanked Mo Asif for agreeing to take on the role of Deputy Safeguarding link for the Chestnut Grove Local Committee.	
<b>iii.</b>	<b>Stakeholder engagement</b>  The link role holder for Stakeholders had circulated a new (draft) Parent Questionnaire for use at CGA Parent Evenings. The LAC members felt that its short length and tick boxes would be effective in gaining a high number of responses. The members also thought it appropriate that it was based on an Ofsted questionnaire and then personalised for CGA's target areas (e.g., inclusion and communication). The Chair reported that she had emailed some slight amendments to the questionnaire, but the LAC had no further changes.  The link role holder declared that she would present the questionnaire to the CGA Senior Leadership Team for comment in September, and that it was intended to send out the questionnaire to school parents on an app with the new MIS system.  The link role holder for Stakeholders gave a short verbal summary of the WLT link meeting, where she reported that the main concern was the self-care for senior leaders in the Trust, which was being prioritised for next year.	



	<p>The link role holder suggested that LAC members might receive training in the effective handling of complaints, but the Chair reassured the Committee that she would deal with all complaints, and that this was procedure. The Governance Professional reminded LAC members that there were relevant training modules on the NGA's Learning Link website if they were interested in learning more about complaints handling and panel reviews.</p> <p>The link role holder pointed out that the governance pages on the CGA website were very out of date. The Governance Professional took an <b><u>ACTION: to update all the information in the Governance section of the school website.</u></b></p>	LH
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<b>5.</b>	<b>REPORTS FOR NOTING</b>	
<b>i.</b>	<b>The WLT Chairs' Group Summary Report</b> <p>This Report was acknowledged as insightful. There were no questions tabled.</p>	
<b>ii.</b>	<b>WLT Governance Forum slides</b> <p>The Chair declared that the PowerPoint slides from the WLT Governance Forum were especially useful in listing and detailing the overarching Trust priorities.</p>	
<b>iii.</b>	<b>Leadership wellbeing feedback</b> <p>All school leaders in the Trust have been asked to complete a wellbeing evaluation tool. The Trust Board will examine output in July and report back to Local Committees.</p> <p>The Chair commented that there was no formal occasion for the LAC to acknowledge Chestnut Grove Academy staff commitment. She took an <b><u>ACTION: to liaise with the link role holder for Stakeholders regarding a strategy for acknowledging staff commitment.</u></b></p>	JDB/JD

<b>6.</b>	<b>POLICIES, REVIEWS, AUDITS</b>	
<b>i.</b>	<b>Policy management update</b> <p>The Governance Professional confirmed that a centralised system for school policies management was being worked on at Trust level. The aim was to simplify the process by making templates of policies that can be personalised at school level.</p>	
<b>ii.</b>	<b>CGA website audit</b> <p>The links for Safeguarding took an <b><u>ACTION: to carry out a full website audit for the Chestnut Grove Academy website in September.</u></b></p>	CW/MA





## Summary of Actions: CGA LAC Meeting: 19/06/23

Action No	Item No	Action	Responsible	Timescale
1.	2.v	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To relay feedback regarding Trust-wide governance training to the Head of Governance.</li> </ul>	LH	Priority
2.	2.vi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To relay feedback regarding a weekly email bulletin to the Head of Governance.</li> </ul>	LH	Priority
3.	2.vii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To confirm a new start time of 6pm for all LAC meetings with those members not present today.</li> </ul>	LH	Priority
4.	3.ii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To find a September date suitable for all members for a meeting to discuss Ofsted priorities for the CGA LAC.</li> </ul>	JDB	Priority
5.	3.iii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To email any further questions for the Headteacher to the Governance Professional.</li> </ul>	All	Priority
6.	3.iii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ascertain the breakdown of pupils taking part in Duke of Edinburgh, in particular the cohort from black ethnic minority backgrounds and the disadvantaged.</li> </ul>	CK	Next meeting
7.	4.iii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To update all the information in the Governance section of the Chestnut Grove Academy website.</li> </ul>	LH	Autumn term
8.	5.iii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To form a strategy for acknowledging Chestnut Grove Academy staff commitment.</li> </ul>	JDB/JD	Priority
9.	6.ii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To carry out a full audit for the Chestnut Grove Academy website.</li> </ul>	CW/MA	Autumn term
10.	7.i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To prepare and submit the summary report to the Trust Board by 26/06/23.</li> </ul>	JDB	By 26/06/23