

MEETING OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE

Monday 25 September 2023, 6:08pm – 8:02pm

MINUTES

Constitution and Attendance:

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

Apologies:

Sarah Guerra

Conrad Withey

Absent without apologies:

Alex Dixey

Lucinda Merritt

Danielle Morley

Also in attendance:

Louise Hake	–	Governance Professional
Parneeta Davis	–	Senior Deputy Headteacher
Jon Taylor	–	Deputy Headteacher & Director of Sixth Form
Duncan Holding	–	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)
James Wildman	–	Assistant Headteacher (Safeguarding)

Papers issued for review:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minutes of the previous meeting & status of actions ● CGA Governance Report to the LAC ● KS 3 & 4 Action Plan (draft) ● KS 5 Action Plan (draft) ● School Improvement Plan (SIP) ● CGA Self-evaluation Form (SEF) ● WLT 3-Year Strategic Development Plan ● CEOs' message to the LACs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLT Safeguarding Policy – CGA ● CGA Behaviour for Learning Policy ● Curriculum Policy ● Marking, Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy ● Teaching & Learning Policy ● Careers Education (CEIAG) Policy ● Provider Access Policy (CEIAG) |
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BUSINESS		ACTION
1.	COMMITTEE BUSINESS	
i.	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</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 and accepted at the meeting, as outlined above.</p> <p>Absence without apology was noted and recorded.</p>	
ii.	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>When asked by the Chair, all LAC members confirmed there were no conflicts of interest related to the meeting. The Chair reminded all LAC members to <u>(ACTION:) complete their annual declaration of interests</u> (by following the link given in the Governance Report to the LAC) so that the Trust could ensure compliance for audit.</p>	All
iii.	<p>Appointment of the Chair</p> <p>The Trust Board had invited nominations for the Chair at Chestnut Grove Local Academy Committee. Judi Dumont Barter self-nominated for the role and the Trust Board agreed that JDB would serve another year's term as Chair of CGA LAC. It was noted that her nomination supporting statement could be read in the Governance Report to the LAC.</p>	
iv.	<p>Elect/Appoint Vice Chair</p> <p>It was announced that the current Vice Chair, Jehangir Byramji, was stepping down from his LAC role in order to assume the role of Trustee for the Wandle Learning Trust. The Committee congratulated JB and thanked him for his hard work and insight. JB confirmed that he would engage in a handover period with his successor.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that there was now a vacancy for the role of Vice Chair and she invited nominations. The Governance Professional took an <u>ACTION: to invite nominations for the Vice Chair via email so that an appointment could be made at the next LAC meeting.</u></p>	LH
v.	<p>Appointments, vacancies, and succession planning</p> <p>It was noted that the Chestnut Grove Local Academy is currently fully recruited.</p>	
vi.	<p>Confirm link roles and receive annual Link Role Planner / plan visits</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the resignation of the Vice Chair would leave a vacancy for the Finance link role. The Governance Professional took an <u>ACTION: to invite volunteers for the Finance link role via email so that an appointment could be made as soon as possible.</u></p>	LH

The Governance Professional confirmed that the Link Role Planner could be found by following the link given in the Governance Report to the LAC, and that this information included dates for the Trust-wide link meetings.

A discussion ensued regarding school visits and the need for each link role holder to plan a relevant and meaningful visit to Chestnut Grove Academy. The Senior Deputy Headteacher reminded the Committee that she had invited all LAC members to attend a reading intervention at Chestnut Grove Academy, to see first-hand the emphasis that the school was placing on reading and vocabulary. A committee member remembered that another school priority was related to Mental Health and that she intended to take a closer look at mental health interventions for pupils. It was noted that other school priorities related to SEND provision and outcomes for Disadvantaged students in comparison to their Not Disadvantaged peers. The Chair took an **ACTION: to compile a list of potential investigation areas, related to school priorities, that link role holders could pursue.**

JDB

vii. **Governance training**

The Governance Professional shared that plans for Trust-wide workshops had not yet been finalised. The Chair reiterated the importance of attending all training in order to increase governance skills. She shared that attendance to the LAC Ofsted training had been disappointing, and the Governance Professional took an **ACTION: to share the Ofsted training PowerPoint slides with the LAC.**

LH

The Governance Professional pointed out that the annual Governance Forum date had already been published and a high level of attendance was expected.

In response to a discussion at the last LAC meeting regarding training in the effective handling of complaints, the Governance Professional confirmed that more LAC members might be needed to sit on Trust panel reviews, and she recommended the NGA e-Learning unit 'How to: run an effective complaints review panel'. She advised that members who complete this training should contact the Head of Governance to confirm their interest in handling complaints.

viii. **Minutes of the previous meeting and status of actions**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 19 June 2023 were agreed by the Academy Committee as a true and accurate reflection of discussion and were signed by the Chair.

The Chair talked through the status of actions, and the following was noted:

Action 6 from the previous minutes regarding a breakdown of pupils taking part in Duke of Edinburgh (in particular the cohort from black ethnic minority backgrounds and Disadvantaged groups): the Headteacher took an **ACTION: to include this data in his Headteacher's Report at the next LAC meeting.**

CK

<p>Action 7 from the previous minutes regarding updating the Governance section of the CGA website: the Governance Profession took an <u>ACTION: to continue with this task and chase all outstanding Governors' Biographies.</u></p>	LH
<p>Action 8 from the previous minutes regarding forming a strategy for acknowledging Chestnut Grove Academy staff commitment: the People link role holder took an <u>ACTION: to work on this matter with the Senior Deputy Headteacher.</u></p>	JD/PD

2.	ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	
i.	<p>Summary of summer outcomes and rationale for target setting</p> <p>The Senior Deputy Headteacher (SDHT) began her insightful presentation on Chestnut Grove Academy's Exam Results 2023 with a reflection on the context of the exams. These pupils had their education significantly disrupted by Covid lockdowns (especially the A-level students, who did not experience the rigour of sitting GCSE exams). Despite this, Ofqual asked exam boards to return to pre-pandemic grading standards. The increase in pupil numbers and the long exam season put pressure on both students and teachers. Yet despite these factors, Chestnut Grove Academy reported some excellent results.</p> <p>For GCSE, the results were above national standards in all areas. Furthermore, the efficacy of the curriculum was demonstrated in the fact that all attainment groups (Upper, Middle, and Lower) have achieved one grade higher this year, as compared to pre-pandemic 2019 results.</p> <p>Regarding top grades (7–9), the SDHT reported that CGA results were double the National Average. Furthermore, CGA ranked second in Wandsworth borough in areas such as Attainment 8 and Ebacc strong passes. The SDHT concluded that this was all fantastic news for the school's intake: CGA remained full at a time when some school rolls were falling.</p> <p>A LAC member wanted to table a question about the impact of the Ebacc, Q: How has the greater uptake of the Ebacc impacted on the more creative subjects? A (SDHT): <i>The number of pupils choosing creative subjects has fallen. For instance, only one Art GCSE class is needed this year.</i></p> <p>The SDHT shared that the gap between Not Disadvantaged and Disadvantaged students' results still existed. Addressing the underperformance of Disadvantaged students remained a priority for Chestnut Grove Academy, especially considering that the majority of the CGA Disadvantaged cohort were in the Upper and Middle attainment groups. A question from a LAC member was tabled, Q: When a Disadvantaged child arrives at Chestnut Grove Academy as an Upper Attainer, why might they not perform well in their Year 11 exams? A (SDHT): <i>Attendance is the key factor: when a pupil regularly misses school, they are unable to catch up.</i> Another LAC member wanted some data for comparison and questioned, Q: When will the national Disadvantaged pupil results be published? A (SDHT): <i>I find this data difficult to find, although I suspect that we are slightly above the National average of about 4.</i> Another</p>	



LAC member wanted some local context, and queried, **Q: How do CGA's total number of Disadvantaged pupils compare with other local schools?** A (SDHT): *Our numbers of Disadvantaged pupils is low, and this has been the trend for the past 3 years. It means we can offer personalised support. Our Disadvantaged cohort is also from a more able profile, and so we know that they are able to do better with the right support. CGA intends to prioritise closing this gap, and we know it is achievable.*

The SDHT confirmed that the LAC members could examine the results data more closely, and the Governance Professional took an **ACTION: to share the PowerPoint slides of the Results presentation on Teams.**

LH

The Director of Sixth Form (DSF) reported that he felt that the Sixth Form results were robust. Attention had been given to improving the top-level grades, and although the gap had been reduced and CGA results were good when compared to other Wandsworth borough schools, Chestnut Grove Academy results were below the National average.

The DSF shared that the GCSE teacher-assessed grades for this pupil cohort had made it difficult to accurately place students on suitable courses, especially for pupils new to CGA. He pinpointed the 4 U-grades in Maths, where it was felt that these students would not have been accepted onto the Maths A-level course if they had been more accurately assessed at GCSE. The DSF reported that the Head of Maths at CGA had left the school at Easter, and so the low grades for these students were not picked up from the in-year data report. The DSF declared his intent to look more closely at the teaching of A-level Maths in Chestnut Grove Academy, and he felt that Ofsted would want to carry out a Maths Deep Dive if they were to inspect this year.

Regarding BTEC results, the DSF reported that CGA had low numbers of Distinctions and Merits, and so tracking BTEC pupil progress (especially concerning outside assessments) would be a priority for CGA Sixth Form.

The DSF concluded his presentation with a list of Exceptional Achievements at A-level, which he declared to be an inspiration for all CGA students.

A LAC member commented that although the presentation included a list of UCAS Destinations, there was no list of apprenticeships, which should also be celebrated as a valued route. The DSF reported that the apprenticeship route was a respected route at CGA, and that competition was especially fierce for degree apprenticeships. He explained that a full list of Destinations, including apprenticeships, could be shared with the LAC once names had been made anonymous.

The Chair congratulated the SDHT and the DSF on some fantastic results and asked for these congratulations and the LAC's gratitude to be passed on to the whole CGA staff team. She questioned **Q: Are there areas where you think the LAC would be most useful in offering challenge or support?**

A (DSF): *The Sixth Form is launching T-Levels next year, and so any assistance with setting-up this offering would be appreciated. We are always looking for connections with industry in terms of apprenticeships and T-Level placements.*

A (SDHT): The LAC needs to track CGA's progress data, especially in regard to Disadvantaged pupils. As I have already mentioned, it is a priority for the school to close the gap between Not Disadvantaged and Disadvantaged pupils.

Regarding tracking progress, a further question was tabled, **Q: With a large cohort of more-able students, is it harder for CGA to add value?** *A (SDHT): We can still add value with a challenging curriculum and robust teaching. However, our success does lead to more challenges, such as an increased intake for the Sixth Form and so a related increase in class sizes.*

A LAC member wanted more information about the new T-Level offering: **Q: Do you anticipate there to be a large uptake for T-levels next year?** *A (DSF): The initial uptake will be small – we need a certain level of caution to ensure that the offering is successful. Although initial start-up costs will be high, CGA is committed to this new route and confident that it will become a valued qualification for employers.*

ii. Agree key strategic monitoring priorities and objectives for the LAC

It was felt that this had been discussed at the summer LAC meeting and earlier in this LAC meeting. The Chair reiterated her intention to draw up a list of priorities to circulate before the next meeting, where it could be finalised as objectives for all relevant link governors.

iii. Feedback from the Ofsted training session

This had been covered in Agenda Item 1.vii.

iv. Complaints – are there any trends?

It was acknowledged at the last Local Academy Committee meeting that parental complaints to the school have increased in the last year. Rather than looking at the reason for the complaints, the Chair and Headteacher agreed that a useful investigation would be to study how best to avoid the complaints escalating to a formal panel hearing. The link governor for Stakeholders took an **ACTION: to ascertain from the Head of Governance if there were any patterns in the reasons for complaint escalation.**

JD

v. Update on Arbor installation

The Headteacher confirmed that the transition to Arbor (the new Trust-wide MIS system) had been smooth. He passed an **ACTION: to invite the Deputy Headteacher for Operations to a LAC meeting in the Spring term for a full update on its efficacy for all stakeholders.**

CK

3.	REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION	
i.	<p>Review of governance development priorities</p> <p>The list of the governance development priorities, as given in the Governance Report to the LAC, was acknowledged to be a useful foundation for the LAC's work. The Committee members expressed a keen desire to translate these objectives into concrete measurable activities that were directly linked to the improvement of Chestnut Grove Academy.</p>	
4.	REPORTS FOR NOTING	
i.	<p>Governance Report: Annual confirmation of key documents</p> <p>All LAC members were encouraged to read this document in order to understand the changes made to the Code of Conduct, Terms of Reference, and Governance Handbook. Acknowledgement of receipt and understanding will follow in due course.</p>	
ii.	<p>Receive Message from the CEOs and WLT 3-Year Strategic Development Plan</p> <p>These documents were received, and it was commented that the new format of the 3-Year Plan was especially clear in presenting the information.</p>	
5.	POLICIES, REVIEWS, AUDITS	
i.	<p>Updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)</p> <p>It was emphasised that all LAC members needed to update their Level 1 Safeguarding training once a year, in respect to the updates in KCSIE. It was noted that online training had recently taken place. It was acknowledged that the CGA Safeguarding Policy had been amended to reflect the KCSIE updates.</p>	
ii.	<p>Website audit</p> <p>The deputy Safeguarding link took an <u>ACTION: to complete the website audit and report back at the next meeting.</u></p> <p>It had already been confirmed in Agenda Item 1.viii that the Governance Professional is continuing her work on updating the Governance page of the CGA website.</p>	MA
iii.	<p>Receive the six updated policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Behaviour for Learning:</i> The re-launch of the CGA Behaviour Policy was discussed in the January 2023 LAC meeting, and this Policy has been updated to reflect the changes. A LAC member queried the lack of clarity for 	

	<p>Appendix 8 (Reasonable Adjustments) and it was agreed that some examples of the different scenarios would be useful. The SDHT took an <u>ACTION: to revisit this section of the Policy with a view to adding more clarity/examples.</u> The amended Policy will be brought before the next LAC meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Curriculum Policy, Marking & Assessment Policy, Teaching & Learning Policy:</i> These Policies were accepted by the LAC and will be finalised on the CGA website. • <i>Careers Education Policy:</i> LAC members were reminded that the careers education offering at CGA was discussed at the May 2023 LAC meeting. The Assistant Headteacher explained that he had streamlined this Policy to better reflect how the Gatsby benchmarks would be met by the school, and to include more detailed information on the apprenticeship route. The Policy was accepted by the LAC and will be finalised on the CGA website. • <i>Provider Access Policy:</i> LAC members disclosed that they had not been able to access this Policy document on Teams. The Governance Professional took an <u>ACTION: to re-circulate this Policy to all LAC members for comment.</u> Acceptance of the Policy will be reported at the next LAC meeting. 	<p>PD</p> <p>LH</p>
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6.	EVALUATION OF IMPACT	
i.	<p>Summary report to the Trust Board</p> <p>The Academy Committee was asked to reflect on the impact of discussion on school improvement and to matters for reporting to the Trust Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole staff team at Chestnut Grove Academy is to be congratulated on the outstanding exam results. • The LAC intends to explore the careers offering at CGA in more detail. • The LAC has re-focused on the SEND and Disadvantaged priorities and will work to track progress in these areas. • The meeting has reignited the LAC's ambition to challenge and support the Senior Leadership Team in order to improve all outcomes for the pupils. • Chestnut Grove Academy is bucking the trend of decreasing school roll numbers – its successes have led to an excellent reputation. <p>The Chair noted each point and took an <u>ACTION: to prepare and submit the summary report to the Trust Board by 06 Oct 2022.</u></p>	<p>JDB</p>



IMPORTANT DATES

WLT Community Forum	09 May 2024: 5.30–7.30pm	CGA
Local Academy Committee	Monday 13 November, 6–8pm	CGA

Signed:


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Date:

30/11/2023
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Summary of Actions: CGA LAC Meeting: 25/09/23

Action No	Item No	Action	Responsible	Timescale
1.	1.ii	Declarations of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To complete the annual declaration of interests form. 	All	Priority
2.	1.iv	Elect/Appoint Vice Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To invite nominations for the Vice Chair via email so that an appointment can be made at the next LAC meeting. 	LH	Priority
3.	1.vi	Confirm link roles/school visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To invite volunteers for the Finance link role via email so that an appointment can be made as soon as possible. To compile a list of potential investigation areas, related to school priorities, that link role holders can pursue. 	LH JDB	Priority Priority
4.	1.vii	Governance training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share the Ofsted training PowerPoint slides with the LAC. 	LH	Priority
5.	1.viii	Minutes of the previous meeting and status of actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To include data regarding a breakdown of pupils taking part in Duke of Edinburgh, in particular the cohort from black ethnic minority backgrounds and Disadvantaged pupils, in his Headteacher's Report. To update the Governance section of the CGA website and chase all outstanding Governors' Biographies. To form a strategy for acknowledging Chestnut Grove Academy staff commitment. 	CK LH JD/PD	Next meeting Priority Priority

6.	2.i	Summary of summer outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share the PowerPoint slides of the Results presentation on Teams. 	LH	Priority
7.	2.iv	Complaints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ascertain from the Head of Governance if there are any patterns in the reasons for complaint escalation. 	JD	Autumn Term
8.	2.v	Update on Arbor installation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To invite the Deputy Headteacher for Operations to a future LAC meeting for a full update on Arbor's efficacy for all stakeholders. 	CK	Spring Term
9.	5.ii	Website audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To complete the website audit and report back at the next meeting. 	MA	Next meeting
10.	5.iii	Policies, Reviews, Audits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Behaviour for Learning Policy</i>: To revisit Appendix 8 with a view to adding more clarity/examples. <i>Provider Access Policy</i>: To re-circulate this Policy to all LAC members for comment. 	PD LH	Next meeting Priority
11.	6.i	Summary report to the Trust Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and submit the summary report to the Trust Board by 06/10/22. 	JDB	By 06/10/22