

MEETING OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE

Monday 26 September 2022

6:32pm – 8:37pm

MINUTES

Constitution and Attendance:

Headteacher (1)	LAC Members (9)
Christian Kingsley Headteacher	Judi Dumont-Barter Chair
	Jehangir Byramji Vice Chair
	Elsbeth Bracken LAC member (staff)
	Jo Davies LAC member
	Sarah Guerra LAC member
	Clare Holley LAC member
	Lucinda Merritt LAC member (staff)
	Jacques Szemalikowski LAC member
	Conrad Withey LAC member – <i>remote attendance</i>

Apologies: **Elsbeth Bracken** **Clare Holley** **Lucinda Merritt**

Also in attendance: Louise Hake – Governance Professional
 Parneeta Davis – Senior Deputy Headteacher
 Jon Taylor – Deputy Headteacher & Director of Sixth Form
 Rebecca Jackson – Deputy Headteacher

Papers issued for review:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minutes of the previous meeting and status of actions ● 2022 CGA Governance Self-Evaluation ● Template for Governance Development Plan ● Governance monitoring report – Safeguarding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Headteacher's Report Autumn 2022 ● 2022 Summer A Level Governor Report ● 2022 Summer BTec Governor Report ● CGA Safeguarding Audit Report ● WLT Safeguarding Policy – CGA |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance monitoring report – HoD visits • CGA School Improvement Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGA mandatory policies matrix • CGA Behaviour for Learning Policy |
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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 of the meeting and accepted as outlined above.</p>	
ii.	<p>Elect/Appoint Chair</p> <p>It has been agreed by the Trust Board that Judi Dumont-Barter will serve another year's term as Chair for the Chestnut Grove Local Academy Committee.</p>	
iii.	<p>Elect/Appoint Vice Chair</p> <p>Jehangir Byramji was voted in to remain for another year's term as Vice Chair for the Chestnut Grove Local Academy Committee.</p>	
iv.	<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.</p>	
v.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting and status of actions</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held 27 June 2022 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 the following was noted:</p> <p>Action 1 from the previous minutes regarding identifying a student with an interest in journalism to interview the Chair and write an article for the school newsletter. The Chair reported that a student had been identified and the Chair now needs to <u>(ACTION) make contact with the student to set up the interview meeting.</u></p> <p>Action 6 from the previous minutes regarding reporting the website audit findings. This is covered under Item 6 of the agenda.</p>	JDB

	<p>(a) Note for the structure and content of future LAC meetings</p> <p>There was a general agreement that the number of documents that the LAC members needed to read and digest prior to this meeting was too burdensome. Some <u>ACTIONS</u> to mitigate this were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Policy Working Group meeting (which includes discussion of the agenda) will be held 2 weeks before the LAC meeting, so that the agenda will be sent out 1 week before the LAC meeting.</u> • <u>The Chair will signpost the highest priority papers to read.</u> • <u>The Headteacher will cut down on the amount of information he includes in his Report, by avoiding repetition with the school newsletters and highlighting statistics (whilst also keeping in mind that background context is important).</u> • <u>The Headteacher will produce one Report per term, and this will be discussed at the second LAC meeting of the term. The Report will be circulated 2 weeks before the meeting.</u> • <u>Questions will be invited before the meeting to be sent to the Governance Professional no later than 4 days before the meeting date (which enables the Headteacher to have time to respond).</u> 	<p>JDB/LH</p> <p>JDB</p> <p>CK</p> <p>CK</p> <p>LH</p>
	<p>(b) Matters arising from the previous meeting (and not covered on the agenda)</p> <p>Item 1.iii from the previous minutes referenced the Communications Strategy. Q: Is there an update on the development of a Trust-wide Communications Strategy? R: <u>an ACTION was taken to set up a separate meeting with the Headteacher and 2 LAC members to discuss.</u></p> <p>It was noted that there had been a link role meeting for Health & Safety/Premises. The link role member took an <u>ACTION to report back on this at the next LAC meeting.</u></p> <p>Regarding SEND provision; Q: What SEND support does Chestnut Grove Academy have in place for this academic year? R (CK): <i>The school still buys SEND support from the Trust for 2 days a week. The school has also recruited 2 new in-house SENCo positions which represents better value for the school.</i></p>	<p>CW/CH/ CK</p> <p>JS</p>

<p>2.</p>	<p>GOVERNANCE & LAC DEVELOPMENT</p>	
<p>i.</p>	<p>Appointments, vacancies, and succession planning</p> <p>The Chair reminded colleagues that her term of office would end July 2023. She acknowledged that no LAC member had come forward to train for the role of Chair or Co-Chair. Whilst the Trust could recruit for a new Chair to start in September</p>	



2023, it was felt that this new Chair would not have a transition period and meaningful handover. For this reason, the current Chair is considering extending her term of office. However, she needs to review her current workload and so she will review her position in January 2023.

It was noted that other vacancies are for 1 parent-elected LAC member (an election will take place at Chestnut Grove Academy this term) and 2 community LAC members. The Chair expressed her view that skills in community engagement or fundraising would be particularly beneficial for the LAC skillset.

ii. Annual confirmation of key documents

It was acknowledged that not all LAC members had had time to read these 9 documents, but their importance was understood. All LAC members took an **ACTION to read all the documents and sign the 2 forms** (Annual declaration of interests and Annual governance confirmations) that are embedded in the agenda.

All

iii. Receive the WLT Handbook for the Local Tier 2022

Whilst considering this useful document, the Academy Committee's attention was drawn to the flowchart on page 5, which shows governance accountability and reporting structures in the Trust, noting sub-committees and LACs. This led to a discussion about the link roles and whether the "flat model" would lead to gaps in the LAC's responsibilities (especially because Chestnut Grove Academy is the only secondary school in the Trust). **Q: What areas do the governance link roles cover?** *R: The 5 main areas are Finance, Health & Safety/Premises, Safeguarding, SEND, and People/Stakeholders. If the LAC feels that an area is not being covered, it can create additional roles as needed to monitor specific priorities related to the School Improvement Plan. A LAC member was concerned that areas such as Inclusion, Community Engagement, Curriculum, and Diversity might be overlooked. The Headteacher confirmed that these areas are still covered in the LAC meetings. Any area can be explored in a governance monitoring report if it will lead to school improvement.*

The Chair noted that each link role area has a WLT lead (see p.19/20 of the Handbook), and, together with the LAC link role leads from each school, they form a cross-MAT committee that meets regularly (every half term) to share common trends, ideas, and best practice. In this way, key areas of school improvement are monitored in detail, and the Trust Board gets regular feedback. The Headteacher shared that he feels that the level of expertise and scrutiny has increased in the Finance link role group, which is up and running. This allows for less finance-related discussion in LAC meetings.

The Chair concluded that the LAC members should monitor the efficacy of the "flat model" and raise any concerns in meetings.

<p>iv.</p>	<p>Outcomes/Recommendations from the Governor Self-Evaluation</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the feedback she had received was constructive, and that she had received some clear instruction on how to move forward and grow in her role.</p> <p>Other LAC members felt that the data was not robust enough for accurate results (4 people provided the feedback). Another LAC member felt that the outcome report offered no actionable insight – a summary list of 3 areas of strengths and 3 areas of improvement would have been more useful. The Governance Professional will <u>(ACTION) take this feedback to the Head of Governance.</u></p>	<p>LH</p>
<p>v.</p>	<p>Agree Governance Development Plan, and identify training requirements</p> <p>The Chair introduced the template to be used for Governance Development Plans. Each link role holder will <u>(ACTION) populate the template with priorities/objectives for their area by consulting the SIP.</u></p>	<p>All</p>
<p></p>	<p>The Chair has an example of a completed Governance Development Plan from the Finance link of another trust school that she will <u>(ACTION) circulate to the CGA LAC.</u></p>	<p>JDB</p>
<p>vi.</p>	<p>Assign link roles</p> <p>The CGA LAC currently has 2 unfilled link roles. Sarah Guerra agreed to take on the SEND/Inclusion link role for the Chestnut Grove LAC.</p> <p>The People/Stakeholder link role remains vacant. <u>(ACTION) The Chair will cover this position at the link role MAT-wide meeting next week.</u></p>	<p>JDB</p>
<p>vii.</p>	<p>Receive governance monitoring reports</p> <p>The LAC member linked to Finance reported that he had not received the minutes from the trust-wide Finance link meeting yet. He will <u>(ACTION) write a summary of the meeting and circulate the report before the next meeting.</u></p> <p>Two reports were submitted pre-meeting: (a) Heads of Department Visit Summary Report and (b) Safeguarding Report from the Safeguarding Links Forum (Autumn 2022).</p>	<p>JB</p>
<p></p>	<p>(a) HoDs Summary Report</p> <p>The LAC member declared that participation was good (65-70%), and he summarised his findings (as outlined in his written report). He felt there were 5 key themes that were discussed in the one-to-one meetings with the Chestnut Grove Academy Heads of Department. The first was a strong team spirit and resilience in the challenging years of COVID: but another LAC member remarked that the</p>	<p></p>



	<p>danger of seeing this as a positive might ignore the risk of staff burnout. The second was a need for training in order to support students' mental health. The third was a lack of guidance regarding behavioural policy – each teacher was prioritising what to enforce, and this was leading to a lack of consistency for students. The fourth was that CGA staff feel they have a voice that is heard at the top levels of school management. Finally, the fifth theme was an uncertainty around the value of being part of the wider Wandle Learning Trust in terms of staff opportunity and job security.</p> <p>In order to demonstrate how the data is used to report to the school Senior Management Team, this Report is to be <u>(ACTION) shared with all the interviewees.</u></p> <p>The Headteacher thanked the LAC member for his useful report and invited questions from the Academy Committee. Q: How are you addressing the guidance for staff as regards school behaviour? <i>A: School management are already aware that this is an issue and they have prioritised behaviour as an area needing clearer guidance. The updated CGA Behaviour for Learning Policy has been provided pre-meeting to be discussed in agenda Item 6.</i> Q: Please could you comment on the value of the MAT? <i>A: Perhaps the MAT needs to communicate better with the individual schools. One of the values of the MAT is in providing Trust-wide training for staff. Another value is the job opportunities it provides – greater challenge and opportunity results from job growth as the Trust grows in size. Many of the benefits of the MAT happen behind the scenes – for instance, the Trust team are continually applying for, and securing, funding grants.</i></p> <p>Q: Do HoD interviews happen annually? <i>A: A staff survey happens annually, but other specific groups might be chosen to take part.</i> This led to a general discussion about which group might be chosen next, and how to choose the interview group, so that results are useful for school improvement. A LAC member suggested that the SIP might be used because this highlights the school priorities, but it was pointed out that this might lead to a teacher-oriented focus which ignores support staff. It was decided that the best approach would be to decide on what questions needed to be asked first, before focusing on the interviewees that are best placed to answer them. The Chair intends to <u>(ACTION) create a policy meeting in October, to identity the questions and therefore decide on the interviewee focus for the next staff stakeholder survey.</u></p>	<p>CW</p> <p>JDB</p>
<p>(b) Safeguarding report from the links forum</p>	<p>The LAC member linked to safeguarding was unable to attend this committee meeting. The Chair noted that her report was insightful, and clearly shows the benefits of the MAT in terms of centralising all policies (with personalised appendices for each school), which will lead to more consistency in record-keeping.</p>	

	<p>It was noted that Safeguarding must be considered as a strategic item on all LAC agendas, and so committee members must all have knowledge in this area.</p> <p>It should be noted that there is Trust-wide online safeguarding training for everyone on Thursday 20 October.</p> <p>Safeguarding was also discussed under agenda Item 5.</p>	
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3.	TRUST DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	
	<p>CEO briefing and WLT 3-year Strategic Development</p> <p>In advance of the meeting, LAC members were asked to read these 2 Trust documents and to submit queries for the Headteacher.</p> <p>The LAC members' queries list with the Headteacher's answers is to follow as a separate document.</p>	

4.	ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	
i.	<p>Agree key strategic monitoring priorities and objectives for the coming year, and agree KPIs (using SIP)</p> <p>This item is to be discussed at the next LAC meeting.</p>	
ii.	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>The LAC members thanked the Headteacher for the Autumn Report. Questions had been invited prior to the meeting – this list, with the Headteacher's answers, is to follow as a separate document.</p>	
	<p>(a) The Senior Deputy Headteacher gave a presentation on the summer exam results. She began by examining the context of these exams. These were the first exams to take place in 2 years, amidst uncertainty about whether they would happen (or whether TAGS/CAGS would be used to assess), and much studying time lost to ongoing COVID illness. The exam season was spread out over a longer period of time, causing heightened anxiety. The whole school community found the exam process emotionally difficult.</p> <p>However, the results were extremely pleasing. Ofqual stated: "schools that get higher than in 2021 will be few and far between, if any", but Chestnut Grove Academy achieved this benchmark. The exams in 2022 had 26% grades 9 to 8 (compared to 2021 TAGS at 24%) and grades 9 to 7 results were the same in both years, at 41%. The 2022 results are well above the national average. Both the</p>	

	<p>students and the teachers worked hard to achieve these results, and both should be commended.</p> <p>Finally, the Senior Deputy Headteacher would like to thank The Friends of Chestnut Grove Academy parent group for supplying invigilators when the school faced recruitment problems.</p> <p>The Senior Deputy Headteacher invited questions. Q: Do these results show progress/improvement? <i>A: Yes. Our achievement percentages are even higher above the national average than they have been before. Chestnut Grove Academy is currently second in the borough for most improved results. It is also worth noting that good results for a specific subject area mean more students invest in that area in the following years.</i></p> <p>Q: Do you separately examine the results for the Art or Language specialist students, to compare them to the rest of the year's results? <i>A: No. Although that would be an interesting exercise, not all of the students follow through with their specialism.</i></p> <p><u>ACTION: The Senior Deputy Headteacher will circulate the slides of the presentation when the results are finalised</u> (there are still some re-marks and appeals taking place).</p>	<p>PD</p>
	<p>(b) The Director of Sixth Form gave a presentation on the summer A-Level results. These exams took place under the same challenging context as the GCSEs, and when this is taken into consideration, the results are phenomenal. Although grades A*–A pass rates are below the national average, the gap is closing. Grades A–E are above the national average; and Chestnut Grove Academy's average score of B- is the same as 2019.</p> <p>The BTEC results have slipped but given the context and the profile of the students, teachers concentrated on getting a pass (rather than a top grade). Q: Did Chestnut Grove Academy suffer from late BTEC results, as was in the national news? <i>A: No – all results were in by the end of results day.</i></p> <p>In terms of leavers' destinations, Chestnut Grove Academy is very proud to have 2 students securing a place at Oxford, and 1 securing a place to study Dentistry at KCL. Other students secured places at some of the most prestigious UK universities, spanning the Arts, Humanities, Sciences, Social Sciences and Maths. It is also worth noting that girls and boys perform equally well at CGA.</p> <p><u>ACTION: The Director of Sixth Form will circulate the slides of the presentation in due course.</u></p>	<p>JT</p>

5.	SAFEGUARDING	
i.	<p>Safeguarding Audit Report</p> <p>The Deputy Headteacher noted that the audit was mostly a positive report, with many effective procedures already in place at Chestnut Grove Academy. The key focus area for improvement is the medical needs and first-aid policy. These responsibilities have recently been transferred to in-house SENCo staff, who will clarify procedure and policy in these areas, and train staff appropriately.</p>	
ii.	<p>Updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)</p> <p>It was emphasised that all LAC members need to update their Level 1 Safeguarding training once a year, in respect to the updates in KCSIE. It is therefore important to attend the online training on 20 October: but note that this session will be recorded and can be watched later.</p> <p>Procedures for some areas of change – including carrying out searches of children, definitions of abuse, safe IT systems, and LGBTQ+ inclusivity – are already successfully embedded into Chestnut Grove Academy working practice. There are 2 areas that needed further investigation and improvement. Firstly, CGA needs to check that proper and appropriate safeguarding measures are in place for lettings and hiring of the school premises, including checks on lessees. Gary Pearson (WLT Estates and Facilities Manager) has put in place a centralised system for these checks. Secondly, internet checks need to be undertaken in the staff recruitment process. Graham Wolfe (WLT HR lead) is investigating how to build these checks into the Trust-wide recruitment policy.</p>	
6.	POLICIES, REVIEWS, AUDITS	
	<p>The LAC member tasked to carry out the CGA website audit (to check all information is up-to-date and compliant with government legislation) will <u>(ACTION) report website audit findings by the end of next week.</u></p> <p>The updated CGA Behaviour for Learning Policy was distributed in advance of the meeting. Due to time restrictions, related discussions have been <u>(ACTION) moved to the next LAC meeting agenda, to take place after half-term.</u></p>	<p>CW</p> <p>LH</p>


7.	CLOSING ITEMS	
i.	<p>Summary report to the Trust Board</p> <p>The Academy Committee was asked to reflect on the meeting and suggest items to report to the Trust Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outstanding exam results. • The ongoing need for policy meetings in the “flat” structure of LACs. • The need to keep tracking stakeholder engagement. • To report back on essentials of the monitoring visits. <p>The Chair noted each point and took an <u>ACTION: to prepare and submit the summary report to the Trust Board by 10 Nov 2022.</u></p>	JDB
ii.	<p>Dates of visits and school events</p> <p>The following dates were noted, with all LAC members invited to attend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 7 Interhouse Performing Arts Project Showcase Wed 19 Oct • Safeguarding training for all LAC members (online) Thurs 20 Oct: 5pm • KS5 Parent Tutor Evening Thurs 20 Oct • Presentation Evening Thurs 17 Nov • Y8 Parent’s Evening Thurs 1 Dec • Winter Concert Wed 14 Dec 	
iii.	<p>Thank yous</p> <p>The Chair thanked all LAC members for their contributions which made an active and vibrant meeting.</p>	
	PART II	
	<p>It was confirmed that there are currently no ongoing actions at Chestnut Grove Academy.</p>	

DETAIL OF NEXT MEETING:

Local Academy Committee

Monday 14 November 2022 6.30–8.30pm

Signed:



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Date:

18/11/2022
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Summary of Actions: CGA LAC Meeting: 26/09/22

Action No	Item No	Action	Responsible	Timescale
1.	1.v	Minutes of the previous meeting and status of actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the student with an interest in journalism to set up an interview with the Chair in order to write an article for the school newsletter 	JDB	Priority
2.	1.a	Structure and content of future LAC meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up the Policy Working Group meeting 2 weeks before the LAC meeting; and circulate the agenda 1 week before the meeting Signpost the highest priority papers to read Reduce the amount of information in the Headteacher Report, and produce only one Report per term, to be sent out 2 weeks before the LAC meeting Questions to be sent to the Governance Professional no later than 4 days before the LAC meeting 	JDB/LH JDB CK All	Next meeting Next meeting Next meeting Next meeting
3.	1.b	Matters arising from the previous meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a meeting between the Headteacher and 2 LAC members to discuss a Trust-wide Communications Strategy Report back on the Health & Safety/Premises link role meeting 	CW/CH/CK JS	Autumn Term Next meeting
4.	2.ii	Annual confirmation of key documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To read all the documents linked into the agenda and sign the 2 forms (declaration of interests and governance confirmations) 	All	Priority
5.	2.iv	Outcomes from the Governor Self-Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer LAC feedback to the Head of Governance 	LH	Priority

6.	2.v	<p>Agree Governance Development Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each link role holder to populate the template with priorities/objectives • Circulate a completed Governance Development Plan as an example 	<p>All</p> <p>JDB</p>	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>Priority</p>
7.	2.vi	<p>Assign link roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover for the unassigned position at the People/Stakeholder link role meeting next week 	<p>JDB</p>	<p>Next week</p>
8.	2.vii	<p>Receive governance monitoring reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the Finance link role meeting to be circulated for discussion at the next meeting • Share the HoD Summary Report with all the interviewees • Create a policy meeting to identify the next stakeholder survey 	<p>JB</p> <p>CW</p> <p>JDB</p>	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>Autumn Term</p> <p>October</p>
9.	4.a & b	<p>Presentations on summer exam results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate the presentation slides to the LAC 	<p>PD/JT</p>	<p>Priority</p>
10.	6	<p>Policies, Reviews, Audits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back on the website audit findings • CGA Behaviour for Learning Policy – move to the next LAC meeting 	<p>CW</p> <p>LH</p>	<p>Next week</p> <p>Next meeting</p>
11.	7.i	<p>Summary report to the Trust Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and submit the summary report to the Trust Board by 10/11/22 	<p>JDB</p>	<p>By 10/11/22</p>