

**MEETING OF THE
LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE
Monday 06 March 2023
6:30pm – 8:40pm
MINUTES**

Constitution and Attendance:

Headteacher (1)		LAC Members (8)	
Christian Kingsley	Headteacher	Judi Dumont-Barter	Chair
		Jehangir Byramji	Vice Chair
		Jo Davies	LAC member
		Sarah Guerra	LAC member
		Lucinda Merritt	LAC member (staff)
		Danielle Morley	LAC member
		Jacques Szemalikowski	LAC member
		Conrad Withey	LAC member

Apologies: Sarah Guerra

Also in attendance:	Louise Hake	–	Governance Professional
	Parneeta Davis	–	Senior Deputy Headteacher
	Rebecca Jackson	–	Deputy Headteacher
	Violeta Fabiani	–	Deputy Headteacher
	Ann Jones	–	Lead teacher, Maths
	Jo Taylor-Campbell	–	Equalities & Health Lead (<i>in attendance for Item 1i only</i>)
	Mo Asif	–	Observer, as a possible incoming LAC member
	Alex Dixey	–	Observer, as a possible incoming LAC member
	Emma Oliver	–	Observer, as a possible incoming LAC member

Papers issued for review:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of the previous meeting and status of actions • Reappointment to Governance (JDB & JB) • Headteacher's Report (and LAC Questions with Answers) • Wellbeing Survey & Action Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND governor visit Feb 23 • Governance Development Plans – SEND and People • Link Governor's Connections (Flowchart) • CGA SEND Information Report for Parents |
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BUSINESS		ACTION
1.	ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT – Part I	
i.	<p>Presentation: EDI and the Curriculum</p> <p>The Lead teacher for Equalities & Health gave an insightful presentation regarding how Chestnut Grove Academy had embedded Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into the school ethos and experience using a three-tiered approach. (1) Policies have been rewritten to reflect a zero-tolerance approach to any behaviour infringements, and to make sure that all policies are fully inclusive (often using Awards, such as Equaliteach, as a framework). (2) EDI has been totally embedded into the curriculum: race, gender and sexuality are not run as separate strands in any subject. (3) Community engagement has been encouraged, via forums, so that feedback can be given and acted upon.</p> <p>A LAC member commented that this work was of crucial importance and must continue to receive funding. Another LAC member wondered whether the students felt its importance, Q: Are there any students who don't feel that this EDI work is important or relevant to their lives? <i>A (J T-C): Yes, some students complain that there is repetition concerning this area, so it is important to keep the conversations fresh, and build on these themes as students progress through the school.</i></p> <p>A LAC member observed that role models were powerful, and queried Q: How many of CGA's teachers are of colour? <i>A (J T-C): We recognise that not enough teachers are of colour, and that the majority of the information is given by white teachers. However, we invite in guest speakers regularly. Chestnut Grove Academy holds an Equality Day, when 30 speakers who represent all the protected characteristics, communicate with students. This is an enormous workload, and I could not organise this more than once a year.</i></p> <p>Both the Lead teacher and the LAC members acknowledged that CGA's social media presence needed to be improved in order to strengthen a sense of community and to encourage more parental engagement. The LAC members also felt that guest speakers might be found using links and contacts in other Trust schools.</p>	
2.	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, with a special welcome to three observers, who were considering joining the LAC as co-opted members.</p>	

	Apologies for absence were received in advance of the meeting and accepted as outlined above.	
ii.	Declarations of interest When asked by the Chair, all LAC members confirmed there were no conflicts of interest related to the meeting.	
iii.	Minutes of the previous meeting and status of actions The minutes of the previous meeting held 23 January 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 it was noted that all items had been addressed or were included in the meeting agenda.	
iv.	Appointments, vacancies, and succession planning The Chair noted that the Trust-wide recruitment drive had been successful. Interviews had taken place, and candidates were now meeting headteachers and observing meetings before their final appointments. Written submissions for reappointments were considered and the individuals concerned reflected on their long-standing contributions to governance at the school and shared their thinking for their new term of office. Both reappointments were agreed by the LAC: Judi Dumont Barter would begin a new four-year term of office from June 2023; and Jehangir Byramji would begin a new four-year term of office from March 2023.	
v.	Governance training The LAC was reminded that the 'Governance Training Programme' was a convenient summary of the training and development opportunities available to LAC members, including a series of centrally delivered sessions alongside the NGA's eLearning offer. All of the Learning Walks dates were now confirmed, and all members of the LAC were encouraged to attend a session that interested them.	
3.	ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT – Part II	
i.	The Headteacher's Report The Headteacher's Report was circulated ahead of the meeting when questions were invited. The Appendix lists the questions from LAC members with the Headteacher's answers. The Headteacher indicated that the financial situation at Chestnut Grove Academy was, overall, in a secure position: CGA had moved from a £350k deficit to a £21k	

	<p>surplus in this academic year. This was achieved with some savings in the staffing budget; additional funding for the Sixth Form (due to an increase in pupil numbers from 302 this year to 325 next year); the Trust Lead for SEND successfully chasing government back-payments; and more funding for the additional intake in Year 7.</p> <p>The Headteacher invited any further questions concerning the report:</p> <p>Q: Are you concerned that the funding from the National Tutoring Programme is ceasing next year? <i>A (HT): The school currently pays for 40% of this offering, and this will be increased to 75% next year. Obviously, the need for this offering decreases with time post-Covid, but we will always provide targeted interventions for those students who need it.</i></p> <p>Q: On page 4 of your report, the table for Ethnic Composition adds up to a total of 60% – what ethnicity are the other 40% of pupils? <i>A (HT): You are correct that these figures do not seem accurate. <u>ACTION: The Headteacher will study these figures more closely, amend the table as necessary, and re-circulate to the LAC.</u> [After the meeting, the Headteacher confirmed that the data in the table was correct: only the Top 10 ethnicities are included (as identified by the Department for Education).]</i></p> <p>Q: In the exclusion data, I note that the majority of exclusions concern Black students – is this an anomaly or a trend? How can you mitigate this? <i>A (HT): It is true that a high number of exclusions concern Black and mixed heritage male students – and this trend is national. CGA is focusing on offering mental health support for these students. This intervention will take time to have an effect, but there has been a shift in attitude in that more boys are now accepting and accessing this support than ever before. We have also trained staff in delivering high-quality teaching for pupils with EHC plans. It should also be remembered that these numbers are actual pupils (i.e., not percentages), and so actual numbers are small. A follow-on question was tabled, Q: How can you measure the impact of these interventions? <i>A (RJ): The simple fact that we are preventing reaching permanent exclusions – we have had no permanent exclusions this academic year because we have managed to find alternative learning environments that have suited the student’s needs better.</i></i></p> <p>A LAC member remarked that she was pleased to see a reduction in the number of bullying incidents. The Headteacher confirmed that CGA aimed to offer pastoral support for each individual young person, so that they can receive a meaningful education.</p>	CK
ii.	<p>Presentation: Pedagogical Practice in Maths</p> <p>This presentation was organised as a response to a request in the November LAC meeting to see the new Chestnut Grove Academy pedagogical approach in practice. It was decided to concentrate on Maths because results in Maths at CGA had tended to be weaker historically, and so it was an area of focus on the School Improvement Plan.</p>	

	<p>The Senior Deputy Headteacher began with some results that demonstrated how Maths results had improved over recent years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For A-levels, 69% were predicted A*–B this year, and 21 students were taking Maths. • For GCSE Grade 7+, the pass rate historically was 20%, but this increased to 38% last year, and it was predicted to be 44% this year. And for Grade 5+, the historical figure was 50%, rising to 69% last year, and predicted to be 79% this year. <p>She indicated that these results were testament to the efficacy of the new Maths pedagogical practice, which was discussed in more detail by the Maths Lead teacher.</p> <p>The Lead teacher shared that the new framework in Maths had evolved over the last four years and tracked the steps/tasks that students needed to progress from ‘Novice’ knowledge to that of ‘Expert’ knowledge. After six weeks of learning on a topic, a summary sheet was used to check progress and to aid revision. At the meeting, members were given the opportunity to follow an individual student’s progress in their book, and members agreed that they felt better informed regarding the everyday practice of the pedagogy.</p> <p>At the end of the presentation, a question regarding another area of focus for the School Improvement Plan was tabled: Q: Are the results for disadvantaged students also improving with this teaching framework? <i>A (Senior Deputy Headteacher): The results for disadvantaged pupils are still below the national average. We are giving this area priority – money has been made available for Year 8 to access the National Tutor Programme. It was decided that the LAC would (ACTION:) invite another teacher from a different curriculum subject to present on progress for disadvantaged pupils in the Summer Term.</i></p>	PD
iii.	<p>Feedback from the Wellbeing Survey</p> <p>The Deputy Headteacher reported that there had been 100 respondents to the survey from staff at Chestnut Grove Academy, and that the feedback reported in the Bulletin was not broken down by role. Feedback was anonymous, and results revealed trends (such as that newly qualified staff had a more positive outlook than more experienced staff). She acknowledged that the resulting Action Plan focused on the negative feedback because this was where the focus for improvement was needed.</p> <p>A key area for improvement was discussed: communication between teachers was generally good, except for high dissatisfaction levels amongst the Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and support staff. Although the LSAs received performance management, it might be seen that the line management was lacking because they were agency workers with limited career progression. Training opportunities (e.g., mental first-aid qualifications) had been offered to address this. It was recognised by LAC members that salaries for LSAs were low, and this had an effect on job</p>	

	<p>satisfaction. It was reported that the dissatisfaction felt by support staff was being addressed with more regular meetings directly with the Senior Deputy Headteacher.</p> <p>A question was tabled by a LAC member, Q: Do you notice any positive trends from staff feedback over the years? A (VF): <i>Yes, there is improvement in how management is perceived. The staff feel listened to – the new Behaviour Policy system is a direct response from staff feedback and has reduced their workload. However, the workload for management has increased.</i></p> <p>A discussion ensued regarding the context of the survey, including the current teaching industry recruitment crisis. The Headteacher reported that, nationwide, teaching vacancies were increased by 40% and leadership vacancies by 72% in comparison to the previous year. He reported a general trend that many teachers had left the profession, rather than changing schools, and he noted that the general dissatisfaction felt by the teaching profession was reflected in the current strikes.</p> <p>A general question was tabled by a LAC member, Q: Apart from salary, what motivates teachers in their job? A (VF): <i>I think teachers value a sense of autonomy – they want to feel supported and empowered to be able to improve pupils' lives. At CGA, we value staff wellbeing with initiatives such as professional days (which give teachers time for planning and marking), staff dance and yoga classes, as well as healthy treats in 'healthy eating week'.</i></p> <p>Committee members concluded it was important to seek reassurance from the Trust Board that wellbeing and workloads for headteachers were considered and managed. The LAC agreed it was essential to find ways to engage with staff and make time to listen.</p>	
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4.	REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION	
i.	<p>Safeguarding (Update on SCR check)</p> <p>Due to timing restrictions, it was decided to review this document at the next LAC meeting. The Governance Professional took an <u>ACTION: to ensure a review of the SCR check is on the agenda for the next meeting.</u></p>	LH

5.	REPORTS FOR NOTING	
i./ii.	<p>The SEND Governance Monitoring Report and the SEND and People Governance Development Plans were acknowledged as insightful. There were no questions tabled.</p> <p>The Chair took an <u>ACTION: to produce a short document amalgamating the headlines from each link role Governance Monitoring Report, to discuss at the next LAC meeting.</u></p>	JDB

iii.	The Chair introduced the Information Flow for Link Governors & LAC Monitoring, Communication and Planning. It was acknowledged as a useful summary document that clarified the LAC link roles, especially useful for new LAC members to understand workflow.	
6. POLICIES, REVIEWS, AUDITS		
i.	The Policy Management Approach document was shared as a link to the WLT website. It was noted that page 4 listed a useful set of questions for a LAC member to consider when reviewing a policy.	
ii.	<p>CGA SEND Information Report</p> <p>The Deputy Headteacher explained that this document was a summary of the provision for SEND and EHCP pupils that Chestnut Grove Academy offered. She shared the fundamental point: CGA was unable to offer small-group classes, and capacity was reached for specialist teaching under current budgetary conditions. By representing the reality of the offering at CGA in this report, prospective parents of children with special needs should question whether CGA is the most suitable educational offering for their child.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the link role LAC member for SEND had reviewed this policy, and her feedback had been addressed. The SEND Information Report was currently published on CGA's website in draft form. There were no objections from the LAC regarding final publication.</p>	
7. 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"> • Chestnut Grove Academy should be congratulated for carrying out such powerful and successful EDI work – it should be shared across the Trust and further afield in the teaching sector. • The LAC now feel more knowledgeable about the everyday reality of teaching with the new pedagogy and will be able to vocalise this for Ofsted. • The Wellbeing Staff Survey has been shared, and the LAC feel confident that the school SLT are addressing the negative feedback. • The Headteachers need supporting with their workloads at Trust level. <p>The Chair noted each point and took an <u>ACTION: to prepare and submit the summary report to the Trust Board.</u></p>	JDB

Appendix: Headteacher's Questions and Answers

<p>1. Pg 10-11: Can you expand on the strategy for how to improve U & E predicted grades? Is there any room within the NTP budget to target these grades? How can we secure additional fundings for NTP for future years?</p>	<p>NB. The data you have is from Sixth Form Progress Report Number 2 (November Mocks)</p> <p>Strategies used to shift U/E grades to more secure passes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish <u>why</u> the grade was given? Classwork effort and/or engagement? Homework completion? Behaviour? Attendance/punctuality? It will likely be one or more of these concerns as all students are carefully placed on the right courses at enrolment, based on prior attainment at GCSE (inflated TAGs made this process much harder with the current Year 13 cohort). • Close scrutiny of the Progress Report data by JT3, and double-checked by FH, informs compilation of an interventions list. Such interventions are circulated to HODs ahead of their Raising Standards Meeting with me in early Jan. • At the Raising Standards Meeting, the barrier to progress is identified and discussed at length on a student-by-student basis, and double checked against our intervention list to ensure we understand the issue(s) blocking progress for laser sharp targeting of interventions. • Students are placed on report for a two- to three-week duration – either Subject, Tutor or Heads of Sixth Report, depending on the severity/extent of change required. These reports contain personalised targets to raise attainment. • New data in Progress Report 3 informs parents' evening discussion (Feb) and indicates progress made by the student since the November PPE. Progress Report Number 3 is given to parents at the sixth form parents' evening (Feb) with next step targets to inform and direct the student/parent about what needs doing for improved performance. • Year 13 March PPEs (mocks) provide the chance to weigh and measure the progress made while on report, and the increased effort shown. From this we finesse further interventions based on paper/question level analysis of the March PPE. • Easter interventions laid on by department staff to drive up standards further still, often focusing on exam technique (identified in the March PPE). • New data in Progress Report Number 4 relays progress back to student/parent. Praise letters. Last chance to shift the student on before public exams.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year group assemblies constantly reinforce the need for revision, how to revise and how to deal with exam stress at all times across the year. Ongoing. Tutors academically mentor students in form time to raise attainment. <p>NB. This is a simplified version of the highly nuanced strategy, in a nutshell.</p> <p>NTP cannot be used with sixth formers. The sixth form uses the 16-19 Tuition Fund – originally ring fenced for students without GCSE retake English and/or maths at pre-16 only, but now open to other areas of the curriculum. Only c.£12,000 per year and at the end of this academic year it's gone for good (withdrawn by national government). The government believes that the NTP money provided for pre-16 means that students are now caught up (if spent wisely), so no more money should be necessary at post-16. Those students awarded CAGs and TAGs will have passed through the post-16 school education system!</p>
<p>2. Pg 17 (Staff well-being/workload): good to see additional support – with the upcoming further teachers strike actions, what are the plans to mitigate the effects?</p>	<p>This is a difficult question to answer as the purpose of the strikes is to cause maximum disruption and so mitigating against the fact that most of our teachers will not be here and students will not be taught is a challenge. Y13 will be onsite as we feel that their KS4 education was severely disrupted and they need to be in school as much as possible. Intervention sessions are being run by staff who are not striking. Some Y11 students will also be attending intervention sessions working with staff who are not on strike. All other students will be set work on Teams with a focus on English and Maths. FSM pupils are invited into school for a hot lunch.</p>
<p>3. The recent EDI training session for trustees and governors highlighted the significant achievements of embedding EDI into the curriculum and culture at CGA. How can we showcase the excellent work to our stakeholders and even to a wider audience, e.g. the NGA?</p>	<p>Andrea Arbiter (Head of Governance) is looking into a national award that she thinks the Trust would have a good chance of receiving recognition in.</p>

Summary of Actions: CGA LAC Meeting: 06/03/23

Action No	Item No	Action	Responsible	Timescale
1.	3.i	The Headteacher's Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To amend data in the table for Ethnic Composition on page 4, and re-circulate to the Committee 	CK	Priority
2.	3.ii	CGA strategic priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To invite a teacher from a non-Maths curriculum subject to present on progress for disadvantaged pupils 	PD	Summer Term
3.	4.i	Safeguarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure a review of the SCR check is included on the agenda for the next LAC meeting 	LH	Next meeting
4.	5.ii	Academy Committee Governor Development Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To produce an amalgamation of the headlines from each link role Plan 	JDB	Next meeting
5.	7.i	Summary report to the Trust Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare and submit the summary report to the Trust Board by 22/3/23 	JDB	By 22/3/23