

Governance Impact Statement | Chestnut Grove Academy | 2023

Introduction

As a Local Academy Committee, we have a delegated responsibility from the Trust Board to:

- Provide strategic oversight of the education provision in the school.
- Ensure that stakeholder voice (pupils, parents, carers, guardians, staff, and relevant local community members) is heard and that it helps to inform strategic decision-making.
- Be assured that the school is compliant with policies, including those set by the Trust.
- Champion the Trust and its strategic aims to support effective governance across the organisation.

Who are our members?

Our members are appointed from across the school community. There are two places reserved for parents who are elected by the parent body. The Head Teacher is also part of our membership. Other members are appointed for the skills and experience we need to carry out our delegated responsibilities.

We know that our current membership brings an excellent cross-section of professional and personal skills and experience, and we are confident these underpin all current endeavours in a robust way, also supporting our succession planning strategy.

We are particularly keen to welcome expressions of interest from individuals from diverse backgrounds, for example, people of colour.

How do we fit with the Trust's governance structure?

In 2022, the Board of Trustees implemented a 'flat model' of local governance which aimed to achieve a high-performing governance structure across the organisation.

This change means that our Local Academy Committee meets once every half-term, in person at the school. The Local Academy Committee has a clearly defined role and accountability for the governance of standards, safeguarding, special education, and stakeholder engagement.

To help the board gain oversight of how these delegated responsibilities are fulfilled in our schools, a 'Link Role Network' is established whereby the governance of specific areas is led by a trustee and a link committee member in each school. This system also ensures that policies and practice is aligned across the Trust in a cohesive and collaborative way.

Our link roles are Safeguarding; People & Stakeholder; SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disability); EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion); Health & Safety.

What have we done and what is our impact?

Achievements in 2022/23

Priority area	What we have done	What is our impact?
Safeguarding	Made sure all academy committee members receive annual safeguarding training.	All members of the Academy Committee understand their role and responsibilities under the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education and can challenge the leadership regarding the measures in place to ensure children are safe.
	Our safeguarding links visit the school and meet every term with the Designated Safeguarding Leads to scrutinise process and procedure.	The Academy Committee has assurance that safeguarding arrangements in our school are effective and that children are safe.
	The Headteacher reports to us about safeguarding every term, which details how pupil needs are being addressed.	We understand how well the school is meeting the needs of our students across all year groups and those with specific needs.
	We receive reports and recommendations from external audits of safeguarding, and triangulate data.	The Academy Committee can be sure that data provided is an accurate reflection of the experience of our students and employees.
	Our safeguarding links spot check the Single Central Record.	We are assured that safer recruitment checks and vetting are adhered to.
	We challenge the Chestnut Grove Senior Leadership Team (SLT) around disadvantaged student's achievement , with a focus on post Covid gaps in attainment. This is an ongoing process.	We are satisfied that CGA results continue to be well above national, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve as well or better than their non-disadvantaged peers.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion	The Academy Committee continues to raise any equality issues identified in terms of pupils accessing education (mental health, attendance, punctuality, and behaviour), enrichment during school and career opportunities post education.	Members' skills and lived experience is used to contribute to the improvement conversations about students' experience of education at Chestnut Grove Academy; we have made recommendations for consideration by school leaders; and reviewed the impact of any action taken.
	The Academy Committee holds school leaders to account for delivering a broad, cultural, and inclusive enrichment programme, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.	Continued monitoring and tracking of take-up in the extra-curricular offer provide assurance that it is truly inclusive for all learners.
	Involved in the 'Race Conversation' events facilitated by Citizens UK and spoke with parents and carers that attended these meetings.	Opinion and experience of parents and carers sought and taken into consideration to inform action planning, monitoring, and follow-up.
Parental engagement	Led by the People link, the Academy Committee explored ways in which to engage with parents, including being present at parent/pupil progress meetings. Governors explored what this looks like, beyond attendance at parent progress evening events. A bespoke parent satisfaction questionnaire has been developed to launch once the new MIS system (Arbor) comes online.	Parent voice is heard directly by the Local Academy Committee, and considered to evidence school improvement, understand areas for development, and help inform strategic decision making.
	Supported by the Trust, a new policy and systems were introduced to manage complaints from parents. Patterns and themes of complaints are tracked, and the recommendations made as a result of governance investigations are followed-up by the Academy Committee.	Findings of investigations are used to develop school and trust policy where applicable, and the Academy Committee has assurance that parental voice contributed to policy and decision making.

<p>Student outcomes</p>	<p>Received data and reports and asked the right questions about students' outcomes (particularly in mathematics and science, and EBACC % for disadvantaged students by boosting the uptake of Modern Foreign Languages.)</p> <p>The Academy Committee celebrated the EBACC levels exceeding 78% compared to the national average of 39%.</p>	<p>The Academy Committee holds leaders to account and is confident that there are high aspirations, and that there is targeted and effective support for all learners.</p>
<p>School improvement</p>	<p>Continued to track progress against the School Improvement Plan priorities, notably the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3.</p> <p>The Academy Committee welcomed presentations from both Science and Maths leaders following the introduction of the new pedagogic framework.</p>	<p>The Academy Committee knows its school and can celebrate successes whilst understanding the areas for development.</p> <p>The Academy Committee studied the impact for students of the new framework, particularly the way in which deeper learning builds knowledge incrementally throughout their school career.</p>
<p>Wellbeing</p>	<p>Wellbeing is a focus for the Academy Committee – both within the student population and the staff team – and we continue to hold leaders to account in this area.</p> <p>We have also worked closely with the Trust and school leadership team to undertake a wellbeing survey for staff, receiving detailed feedback.</p>	<p>The Academy Committee is confident that there is adequate support provided in school for students through social work and counselling / coaching interventions.</p> <p>We have a full understanding of our employees' experience, and know the action required to address concerns.</p>

Local Academy Committee focus for 2023/24

In considering the areas for focus, the Academy Committee evaluated our progress against our goals last year, and aligned with these with the Trust's strategic priorities, and the Chestnut Grove Academy School Improvement Plan.

As we develop our full plan for the coming year, the following provides an overview of our priority areas.

- **Continue to diversify our Academy Committee membership** when vacancies arise.
- Assess the **Y7/Y8 reading programme**, piloted through the Little Wandle Phonics programme.
- Gain a greater understanding of how to **support disadvantaged and underperforming pupils** and organise learning walks and staff interviews to support the process.
- Provide **challenge to the SLT regarding attendance** and support the school to consider effective interventions.
- Fully **prepare for an Ofsted** inspection.
- Collect and respond to **stakeholder voice**, particularly parent voice; and investigate how best to communicate the value and impact of the Academy Committee to parents and staff.
- Stakeholder engagement – monitor the establishment and **roll-out of Arbor** (MIS) and ensuring parents are well communicated with.
- Identify ways to hear **students' voices**.
- Continue to develop **bespoke parents' questionnaire** (Arbor).
- Understand the issues for staff workload and follow up on the **employee wellbeing survey**.
- **Early Careers Teachers** – support and track the development and embedding of the new pedagogy.
- Assess what can be **learned from the complaints** that have been investigated.
- Continue to monitor **student wellbeing and mental health needs**, considering ways to maintain counselling, social work, and coaching provision.



Summary

As the Academy Committee embeds to the governance structure of the Trust and there is greater collaboration with our family of schools, Chestnut Grove continues to go from strength to strength.

Applications to the school are at an all-time high and our Sixth Form is a very popular choice for local families. Our students will always remain our focus and while academically many are exceeding our highest expectations, we pride ourselves on the pastoral support we provide.

We know that the partnership of students and families, employees, and those governing is essential to provide a place of flourishing and a creative learning environment in which all can succeed.

Local Academy Committee

Chestnut Grove