

**MEETING OF THE  
LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE**

**Monday 20 May 2024, 6:00pm – 8:01pm**

**MINUTES**

**Constitution and Attendance:**

<b>Headteacher (1)</b>		<b>LAC Members (10)</b>	
Christian Kingsley	Headteacher	Judi Dumont-Barter	Chair
		Jo Davies	Co-Vice Chair
		Jacques Szemalikowski	Co-Vice Chair
		Mo Asif	LAC member
		<b>Alex Dixey</b>	LAC member
		Sarah Guerra	LAC member
		Lucinda Merritt	LAC member (staff)
		<b>Danielle Morley</b>	LAC member
		Emma Oliver	LAC member
		<b>Conrad Withey</b>	LAC member

**Apologies:**

**Alex Dixey**  
**Danielle Morley**  
**Conrad Withey**

*Also in attendance:*

Louise Hake	Governance Professional
Jon Taylor	Deputy Headteacher & Director of Sixth Form
Richard Cheesbrough	Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)
Violeta Fabiani	Deputy Headteacher (Professional Development)
Duncan Holding	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)

**Papers issued for review:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of actions from the last meeting</li> <li>• Ofsted Report (March 2024)</li> <li>• School Improvement Plan (draft)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Evaluation Form</li> <li>• Sixth Form SEF</li> <li>• LAC 16 questions self-evaluation</li> </ul> |
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<b>BUSINESS</b>		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>COMMITTEE BUSINESS</b>	
<b>i.</b>	<p><b>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 and accepted at the meeting, as outlined above.</p>	
<b>ii.</b>	<p><b>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>	
<b>iii.</b>	<p><b>Status of actions from the previous meeting</b></p> <p>The Chair talked through the status of actions from the previous meeting held 04 March 2024. It was noted that the reports from the governance monitoring visits completed in the period since the last meeting would be reviewed at the next meeting. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onboarding new staff and probationary procedures.</li> <li>• Student voice from disadvantaged students (regarding inclusion, a sense of 'belonging' and levels of engagement with the school community).</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety.</li> </ul> <p>Other actions to be discussed at the next meeting were listed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To speak to SEND pupils about how they felt on a day-to-day basis regarding the help and resources they received.</li> <li>• To carry out interviews with ECTs in order to track their development, and to ascertain their views on classroom behaviour, workload and wellbeing.</li> <li>• To receive an update and to evaluate the progress of CGA's literary strategy.</li> <li>• To consider the level of emphasis placed on Oxbridge students by CGA.</li> <li>• To discuss the updated CGA Gifted and Talented Policy.</li> </ul> <p>The Governance Professional took an <b><u>ACTION: to carry these items over to the next agenda.</u></b></p> <p>The Chair summarised the LAC's current vacancies and recruitment status. She confirmed that five current CGA parents had applied to be potential members, and the whole-school parent vote was imminent. It was also agreed that, since his children had now left CGA but his skills and experience were valued, Jacques Szemalikowski would start a new four-year term of office as a community member, with immediate effect. The Chair announced that staff member Lucinda Merritt would leave Chestnut Grove Academy at the end of the academic year and would thus relinquish her place on the LAC. The Chair acknowledged that the LAC would not recruit a new staff member, since</p>	<b>LH</b>

staff voice was provided by the members of the SLT who regularly attended LAC meetings.

The Chair confirmed that the annual Governance Statement had been uploaded to the school website, and that the Governance Development Plan had been shared on Teams.

The Chair declared that she would continue with her one-to-one meetings with each LAC member to check-in on their progress in their roles.

<b>2.</b>	<b>ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b>	
<b>i.</b>	<p><b>Feedback from the Ofsted inspection</b></p> <p>The Headteacher declared that he was very pleased with the positive report, and he felt proud of his staff with their calm and positive outlook throughout the inspection.</p> <p>The presentation began with the Headteacher underlining that the inspection had been ungraded, and so the school had achieved the best possible outcome – that the previous judgement of ‘Good’ was upheld, but that the evidence gathered suggested that the judgement might have been ‘Outstanding’ if the inspection had been graded. For this reason, the school’s next inspection would be graded and was expected to take place within the next two years. The Headteacher shared that this was a rare occurrence – that only about 5% of ungraded inspections recommend that a school might be ‘Outstanding’ if a full inspection was to be carried out.</p> <p>The Headteacher confirmed that a graded inspection could therefore be expected any time after May 2025, and that this was a challenge that needed some focus.</p> <p>Giving a summary of the positive comments raised by Ofsted, the Headteacher outlined that the pupils were happy, behaved respectfully and were kind to each other, and that the school leaders had high expectations for learning and behaviour, with an ambitious curriculum that was knowledge-rich with effective assessment. Ofsted noted that adaptations for SEND provision were successful. The efficacy of the reading and phonics strategies were also praised, as were the interventions for improving attendance and the arrangements for safeguarding. The provision of careers education, and the range of extracurricular activities, were deemed impressive.</p> <p>The Headteacher summarised that the areas for improvement noted by Ofsted were that written feedback should be targeted, that both the literacy strategies and the application of the behaviour policy should be consistently implemented, and that the engagement in enrichment activities for SEND and disadvantaged cohorts should be monitored.</p> <p>The Headteacher reminded LAC members that a full inspection would grade five areas (Quality of Education, Leadership and Management, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, and the Sixth Form). Furthermore, the number of deep dives would increase to ensure that good quality was found in all areas of the school (the areas that the Headteacher thought most likely were History, English, Science, Drama and Music, and PBE).</p>	

Concluding the presentation, the Headteacher outlined next steps in preparation for the full inspection and shared that the school had already been carrying out mock deep dives for the BTEC subjects in order to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses.

A question was tabled from a member, **Q: Exactly what difference does an outstanding judgment make, in practical terms?** *A (HT): It is personal validation for me, but it also means that the recruitment of pupils and of staff is made so much easier. I thought that the school was captured well, and it gives us a mandate to continue to improve the school. But it makes no difference in terms of funding.*

A committee member commented that it was important to keep the Ofsted preparation and training flexible, because a new assessment framework might be in place in two years' time. The Headteacher agreed and declared that he was keen to get LAC input into the School Improvement Plan, so that link roles clearly aligned with the Plan, and key strategies were formally tracked.

The Chair reiterated her thanks to all CGA staff who work tirelessly to deliver the best education possible for all students.

#### ii./iii **Strategic vision/Evaluate SIP and priorities for next academic year**

The Deputy Headteacher explained that the School Improvement Plan for 2024/25 was in early development and hence he was sharing a work-in-progress.

After the DHT outlined the aims for improving Leadership and Management, a member tabled a question, **Q: How can the Trust aid with staff induction? Can Arbor be used in some way?** *A (DHT): CGA uses a bespoke programme for staff training. The offerings from the Wandle Learning Trust are mostly aimed at primary education. The English Hub only caters to this level, but the Maths Hub is developing a numeracy programme for secondary schools, so this may change. But at the moment, we plan for ourselves, and Teams has all the documents related to staff induction.*

When discussing High Quality Teaching, the DHT shared a RAG-rated version of the plan for last year, so that members could clearly ascertain areas that still needed priority. Regarding the need to improve assessment strategies including written feedback, a member queried, **Q: The Headteacher also briefly discussed written feedback in his Ofsted presentation – what does effective written feedback look like?** *A (DHT): The teacher gives written feedback to a student, but we need to see that it has been understood and worked upon. We need to see that the feedback has been put into practise to improve the quality of the student's work. This will take different forms. For example, it might mean that the student attempts some extra maths problems, or that they re-write a certain paragraph to address a misconception, or that they write out a correct spelling three times.*

A member wanted to probe improved feedback further and questioned, **Q: What does effective feedback look like in subjects such as the performing arts?** *A (DHT): The teacher shares the assessment criteria with the student, so they know how to construct a successful performance. Peer assessment is important – a performance is observed by both the teacher and the peer group, who all give verbal feedback.*

The other priority areas, as outlined by the DHT, were to address the disadvantaged gap, to continue to focus on the literacy strategy, and to more closely link the pastoral and academic curriculums in a holistic approach for each age group.

Regarding Targeted Academic Support, the DHT confirmed that, along with the existing reading and SEND interventions, numeracy interventions would also be introduced. He shared that the numeracy interventions were currently being researched, but that they would be bespoke, and would target specific barriers to learning.

A member was considering a comment made to her by a student who was frustrated that he did not receive enough steel pan lessons, and so she wanted to query, **Q: How do these interventions and clubs fit into the timetable when the students are studying a full and challenging curriculum?** *A (DHT): Time is tight in our timetable, and there is always an element of juggling priorities. We rotate the timetable so that students attending interventions do not continually miss the same subject. Student voice tells us that lunchtime clubs and interventions are not wanted because this is precious time to be sociable with their friends.*

Another member wanted clarification about a specific intervention and she queried, **Q: What is a reading dog?** *A (DHT): It is an actual live dog that comes into the school to listen to students read. The children love the dog – it helps students to read with confidence because a dog is not critical and does not try to correct them.*

The discussion concluded with some consideration of the wider strategies in the SIP. The DHT acknowledged that SEND support needed triangulation, that enrichment activities needed to be fully inclusive, and that behaviour strategies needed to be implemented consistently and also to celebrate success. A final challenge for the school was noted to be parental engagement, where levels had been low since the pandemic.

A member who had been present at a parent feedback meeting declared that she had felt a sense of community, and that face-to-face meetings had helped to reinvigorate this feel. Another member commented that the school needed to be honest when a parent made a request that was not within the school's responsibility or was outside of the budget. She suggested that effective signposting to other agencies might help with managing parental expectations. The LAC concluded that stakeholder voice was an area that they could track next year, especially with the introduction of the new parent questionnaire.

**iv. Sixth Form: Evaluate SIP and priorities for next academic year**

The Director of Sixth Form explained that while the Sixth Form had a separate SIP and would have a separate grade in a full Ofsted inspection, the Sixth Form SIP mirrored that of the main school in many ways because CGA was a continuous school journey. The DSF pointed out two main areas for focus in the Sixth Form: the BTEC and the T-Level offerings.

The fact that CGA was currently on the eighth percentile for BTEC results clearly underlined the need for improvement. Whilst results were good for Science and Health & Social Care, Sport needed improvement, and Business and IT results were low. Whilst the weaker progress in Business could be explained by long-term staff absence, the DSF felt that an action plan was needed for all BTEC teachers in order to raise

standards. Echoing the Headteacher’s earlier comments, the DSF proclaimed that the mock deep dives for BTEC subjects had pinpointed the weaknesses that needed to be addressed, and he felt more confident that results would improve for BTEC students this year.

A member tabled a question, **Q: If BTEC is proving difficult to teach, with outside assessments, would you consider changing to the more traditional format of A-Level?** A (DSF): *They are very different offerings, and we would need to be sure that the students were robust enough to handle an A-Level syllabus. A-Levels are not the most appropriate route for all students.*

The DSF wanted to update the committee regarding T-Levels, which CGA had spent some time researching. He commented that T-Levels had had some bad press and that uptake at other institutions had been low. Considering the large investment needed to begin to offer T-Levels, and the low levels of interest from students, CGA had decided not to pursue this route.

A member wanted clarification regarding government policy and questioned, **Q: Do you have a legal obligation to offer T-Levels?** A (DSF): *No. We are now exploring the option of teaching AAQs. The small AAQ can be taken alongside A-Levels, and the large AAQ is taken instead of A-Levels. They are BTEC Level 3 qualifications so they have a more applied and practical focus than A-Levels. We could start to teach them in the 2025/26 cohort.*

The Chair thanked all the Deputy Headteachers for their insightful presentations. In reply, the DSF wanted to thank the committee members for their input into the recent Careers Fair at CGA, which had inspired many of the student attendees.

<b>3.</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b>	
<b>i.</b>	<b>LAC self-evaluation of governance</b> The Chair led the committee discussion regarding the 16 questions for self-evaluation, and the Governance Professional completed the form online. The Governance Professional confirmed that the Trust-wide results would be shared in due course.	

<b>4.</b>	<b>EVALUATION OF IMPACT</b>	
<b>i.</b>	<b>Summary report to the Trust Board</b> The Academy Committee was asked to reflect on the impact of discussion on school improvement and to matters for reporting to the Trust Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school was to be congratulated on the excellent feedback from Ofsted.</li> <li>• The Committee had gained useful insight into the school’s strengths and weaknesses, and how these were translated into a strategy for school improvement.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee was looking forward to further translating the schools' SIP into specific link role actions and foci for monitoring in school visits.</li> <li>• The Committee felt confident that CGA was making progress in all areas that needed improvement.</li> <li>• The Committee appreciated the opportunity to reflect on how they worked as a group when considering the self-evaluation questions.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair noted each point and took an <b><u>ACTION: to prepare and submit the summary report to the Trust Board by 7 June 2024.</u></b></p>	<b>JDB</b>
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IMPORTANT DATES		
<b>Local Academy Committee</b>	<b>Mon 17 June: 6–8pm</b>	<b>CGA</b>
WLT workshop: Equality, Diversity, Inclusion	Mon 24 June: 6–8pm	Teams
Leaning Walk (linked to EDI and Reflecting Realities)	Tues 02 July: 10–11am	Paxton
Chestival	Thurs 18 July	CGA
<b>WLT Annual Safeguarding Training</b>	<b>Tues 10 Sept: 6–7.30pm</b>	<b>Teams</b>

**Signed:**  .....

**Date:** 18/6/24 .....

## Summary of Actions: CGA LAC Meeting: 20/05/24

Action No	Item No	Action	Responsible	Timescale
1.	1.iii	<i>Status of actions brought forward from the previous meeting:</i>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Governance Professional to add Governance Monitoring Reports for discussion/noting to the next agenda:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Onboarding of new staff and probationary procedures at CGA.</li> <li>Student voice from FSM pupils with regard to inclusion, their sense of 'belonging', and levels of engagement with the school community.</li> <li>Health &amp; Safety.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	LH	Next meeting
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To speak to some SEND pupils about how they felt on a day-to-day basis regarding the help and resources they received.</li> </ul>	AD	Next meeting
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To carry out interviews with ECTs in order to track their development, and to ascertain their views on classroom behaviour, workload and wellbeing.</li> </ul>	JDB	Next meeting
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To receive an update and to evaluate the progress of CGA's literary strategy.</li> </ul>	All	Next meeting
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To further discuss the level of emphasis placed on Oxbridge students by CGA.</li> <li>To discuss the updated CGA Gifted and Talented Policy</li> </ul>	All	Next meeting
2.	5.i	Summary report to the Trust Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To prepare and submit the summary report to the Trust Board.</li> </ul>	JDB	By 07/06/24