

**Approved minutes for the meeting of the Capella House School Governing Board
held on 27 February 2024 at 2.00pm virtually on Teams**

Members of the Local Governing Board (LGB): Peter Bailey, Michele Coleman, Kristy Craik, Simon Gordon, Meredith Hamilton, Julia Morley, Kate Nepstad, Claire Richmond, Dominic Sunderland (Headteacher) and Andrew Whiteside (Chair).

Clerk: Julie Adams

Also in attendance: Rosie White, SDP 3 Lead, Maria Landeira Frias (Assistant Headteacher, Primary) and Philip Hall (Assistant Headteacher, Secondary)

1. Welcome, apologies, declarations of interest.

- 1.A The Governing Board **noted** apologies were received from Michele Colman and agreed to consent to her absence. The Governing Board have not received apologies from Niale Cleobury.
- 1.B The Chair **welcomed** the new governor, Meredith Hamilton and new staff governor, Kirsty Craik.
- 1.C The Chair **reminded** that all members of the LGB must abide by the Auriga Academy Trust Declarations of Interest Policy and should **declare** if they have an interest in any matter that comes before the LGB. There were no declarations of interest made.

2. Presentation – SDP Priority 3

The Governing Board **received** a presentation from Rosie White, SDP Lead for Priority 3: 'Focus and enhance the teaching of phonics and spelling, across both sites, to develop writing fluency and consistency' [[English update.pdf](#)]

The Chair **noted** the purpose of the presentation is to help the Local Governing Board to better understand the work of the teachers in line with School Development Plan (SDP) priorities. The presentation covered four key areas:

1. Identified areas to improve quality of phonics instruction.
 - A phonics curriculum review has been conducted and provided CPD for teachers on effective phonics instruction methods. Training has been delivered for primary on OneDoor and in Secondary on Little Wandle.
 - Half termly phonics assessments monitor pupil's progress.
 - Future work will include phonics, observations at primary and secondary to identify further areas for development to support staff.
2. Strengthen spelling skills and strategies.
 - A spelling programme has been developed which is integrated into daily language and writing lessons catering for pupils' individual needs.
 - Primary are using spelling lists linked to national curriculum and secondary are using a 'spelling shed' programme.
 - Future actions will introduce morphology work in lessons at secondary and there will be adaptive training programmes for staff.

The Governing Board **asked** how programmes are differentiated for learners where there is a big discrepancy in reading and developmental ages. The Headteacher **advised** that teachers have developed alternatives and adapt to the pupils needs.

The Governing Board **asked** if the pupils are positive about Spelling Shed and Little Wandle in Secondary as they might think it was too like primary. The Governing Board **asked** if it is possible for parents to support children at home. The Headteacher **reminded** governors that the school does not give formal homework to the pupils but provides learning materials/cards that parents can use to support their children's learning at home. There had been no queries relating to the similarity to primary resources.

3. Writing fluency and consistency

- Primary has created a structured writing curriculum supported by phonics and spellings. Secondary developed a version of Capella house writing stages for a new assessment system. There are half termly English meetings to work collaboratively, classes work and choose books around pupil interests to engage them.
- Future work will include monitoring and writing moderation to support pupil's writing process.

4. Monitor and assess progress in phonics, spelling and writing.

- Communicating progress to parents through specific updates. Introduced standardised written tests in primary.
- Further work will include exploring alternative and more individualised spelling assessments that are more relevant to child's needs.

The Governing Board **thanked** the staff and the subject lead for their hard work in supporting the pupils on their communications, language and spelling needs.

The Governing Board **acknowledged** the level of thought that is put into decision making on using standardised nationalised data versus something that is bespoke for the pupils. The Governing Board **asked** whether pupils had performed as expected in their mock GCSEs. The headteacher **reported** that they had. The school had used these to evaluate the access arrangements to ensure they were the right ones. The second set of GCSE mocks are in March. The Governing Board **noted** that the School Improvement Partner (SIP) visit will occur on 28 February (tomorrow) and his report should further evidence progress in this area. The report will be circulated when available.

ACTION: SIP report to be emailed to all governors once received.

3. Minutes of the previous Governing Board meeting

3.A The Governing Board **received** the draft minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023 [[CAP-LGB-23-3-03A Previous Draft Minutes 221123](#)] A minor amendment (item 5 – it should read 'additional detail is required in Carecalc') was requested. Subject to this amendment the minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.

Actions arising from the last meeting.

1. The Ofsted report is available and is on the website.
2. Governor safeguarding visit is completed, in addition the Chair undertook a social, emotional and learning visit.
3. The Headteacher **reported** there has been real time semi-lockdown procedure at Capella due to a bomb threat made to the neighbouring college, so this had to be

implemented at secondary centre. The Governing Board **asked** how the students responded to this situation. The students were unaware which is part of the procedure to minimise disruption to the students.

4. There is a new parent governor, Meredith Hamilton. The Governing Board is now clear on what the recruitment process is if the school needs new governors.
5. The Governing Board meetings have now been moved to Tuesdays.
6. The Chair has written to the Trust Board and raised concerns over the difficulties about Carecalc calculations.
7. All the governors were reminded by the Governance Professional to complete training in Keeping Safe in Education and Safeguarding.
8. Subject leaders have come to Governing Board meetings for development which has started today's presentation.
9. **ACTION:** The Headteacher / Maria Landeira Frias to present to the Local Governing Board on Carecalc.

3.B There were no other matters arising that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Minutes of any Panels or Chairs Resolutions since the previous Governing Board meeting

The Governing Board **noted** the Interim Performance Management of the headteacher took place on 20 February attended by Kate Nepstad to fulfil LGB's role of monitoring and tracking the headteacher's performance.

5. References from the Board of Trustees

The Governing Board **received** and **noted** a report from the Board of Trustees following their Board meeting on 11 December 2023. [[CAP-LGB-23-3-05 Governors Briefing Note](#)]

The Chair **confirmed** that Simon Gordon had attended the meeting in his place, the key issue was Carecalc and AfC funding for therapies. Simon **reported** there was discussion on creating a better link between stakeholders decided on by the Trust and to incorporate link governors into decision making. Adele Kimber, Trustee, has taken on Stakeholder Engagement Link Trustee and is currently having conversations with Local Governing Body Chairs to find out what stakeholder engagement is already happening. It was noted that stakeholders also include pupil learners in schools, not just staff, parents, and the wider community.

The Board **raised concerns** that 'agreements in principle' are being entered into with AfC without full funding commitment from AfC. It was **discussed** that the Board may make large decisions without considering second order consequences and proposed a remedy would be to take 'a system of systems approach'. It was **recognised** parameters need to be set in place around agreements with AfC. The Chair will work with the Governance Professional to capture this message to feedback to the Trustees. The Governance Professional confirmed that the Trust Board minutes record that they will not agree to any future growth unless it is properly funded.

6. Governing Board Membership and Development Plan 2023-24

6.A The Governing Board **reviewed** the membership overview [[CAP-LGB-23-2-06A Governor Overview inc. Training](#)].

- The Governance Professional **reminded** the governors to read Keeping Children Safe in Education and to ensure declarations of interest are up to date.
- Safeguarding training is due to be completed by 28 February.
- The Governance Professional will send out reminders on other training required by governors if not already completed.

The Governing Board **asked** if there is a timescale on renewing training. The Safer Recruitment training is normally required to be updated every three years, other courses have been detailed in the training guide. The Governance Professional is working with Sarah Baker, Trustee and Chair of the Pay Committee, to ensure guidance materials will be available regarding Headteacher Performance Management and Pay Progression in advance of September. The Chair **reminded** governors on the importance of keeping up to date on training. Peter Bailey **advised** he has regularly undertaken Headteacher Performance Management training.

6.B The Governing Board **received** and **reviewed** the Governance Development Plan [[CAP-LGB-23-2-06B Governance Development Plan 2023-24](#)],

The Governing Board **noted** that there is progress and action in hand on the GDP. Two areas were highlighted as making significant progress:

- Better understanding the schools with the support of the headteacher. The SLT will continue to present to the LGB as exemplified by the excellent presentation to the meeting today. This is so important in helping governors get to know the school better.
- Stakeholder engagement The Chair will be meeting with the Trustee undertaking this work next week.

6.C There were no other matters arising.

7. Link Governor and other Governor Visit Reports

7.A The Governing Board **received** the reports of the link governors for Safeguarding and Finance

- [CAP-LGB-23-3-7A LG KN NC 240124](#)

Safeguarding

There have been three governor link meetings. Kate Nepstad and Niale Cleobury undertook governor school visits at the end of January. The headteacher and DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) **thanked** the governors for their visits and triangulating their work.

Finance

The Finance Link Governor gave a verbal report and **asked** if the school has a realistic, sustainable and flexible strategy in place for the next 3 years. The Headteacher **advised** that there have been issues finding the right staff and an increase in staff retention has impacted the staff budget. Last year there was a 1% increase in funding to banding values, a 1.5% increase for Richmond pupils. In addition, the school is receiving a 72-pupil place funding at £10k per student which means the school is also eligible for a recovery grant. The

headteacher **confirmed** DfE funds is used for the use of St Mary's School playground. It was **noted** although there are four new pupils, funding is still based on 72 places.

The Governing Board **queried** agency staffing costs. The Headteacher **advised** a large part of this related to cover for admin staffing, He **reported** that development of staff had led to one HLTA being supported to an unqualified teacher position and two sports staff progressing to HLTA's.

The Governing Board **asked** about the opportunity of renting out the sports hall. The Headteacher **explained** that the sports hall is not being let currently due to staffing and insurance costs. There have been a couple of interested groups that have viewed. However, there is an additional operational difficulty in that Capella does not own the whole site and the sports hall building comes under the remit of the premises team which is provided by Richmond upon Thames School.

The Headteacher **reported** the Trust is co-ordinating an outreach therapy offer to develop another income stream to support Auriga, AfC and other local schools. The Governing Board **noted** that parents would be willing to pay for their children to attend social skills groups as there is a gap in the market within this area. Furthermore, NHS therapy teams are no longer delivering therapies for children from outside of borough that attend mainstream Richmond schools which mean schools are having to buy in therapeutic support.

The Governing Board **asked** if the income from the Clarendon car park is related to the rugby. The Headteacher confirmed it is used by media companies when rugby matches are on.

ACTION: Once the plan for outreach has been confirmed then Kerri Morgan, Director of Therapies should be invited to the LGB and brief them.

7.B The Governing Board **received** the reports of Governor Visits not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

- i. [CAP-LGB-23-3-7Bi LG PB Teaching and Learning 010224](#)
- ii. [CAP-LGB-23-3-7Bii LG AW SDP 5 070224](#)

8. Safeguarding

The Governing Board received the Safeguarding report from the headteacher within the HT report [\[CAP-LGB-23-3-8 Capella House Safeguarding Report\]](#) including an update from the Link Governor, which was discussed within item 9E.

9. Headteacher report

The Governing Board received a report from the Headteacher [\[CAP-LGB-23-3-9 Headteacher Report\]](#) which included:

- 9.A Key risks
- 9.B General Update and Organisation Plan
- 9.C [Pupil Numbers](#) and Attendance

The Board **asked** if the school knows how many pupils will be joining in Year 7 and if this should be communicated to the parent carer community. The Headteacher **reported**

pupil numbers are healthy and the school is oversubscribed. Capella has had 98 consultations this year to date.

9.D Behaviour, exclusions and incidents of discrimination.

The Governing Board **asked** about the racist incident at secondary. The policy is very rigorous, and the school is taking steps to understand why it happened. The Board **noted** that in a small school like Capella if it can make it difficult to know if this racist incident is a trend or if it is individual children and **asked** if there is a way for the Board to be informed on this.

ACTION: The Headteacher to set up a presentation on pupil behaviour tracking

The Governing Board **noted** that there had been an incident of aggressive behaviour by a secondary student. They **asked** what happens if the primary needs of a student are met, and secondary needs become the predominant issue would the school continue to be the most appropriate placement. The Headteacher **advised** that there are natural transition points between primary and secondary and continuous assessment points that identify if a pupil would need a different provision. The Headteacher **reported** there is time to plan for change in behaviour or presentation as the pupil gets older. There is also an annual review process with parents and the school will highlight as soon as possible with parents if a pupil's needs change. He gave an example of a pupil in primary whose needs have changed which would enable them to attend a mainstream secondary in Year 7, two years away. This has already been discussed with parents.

9.E Safeguarding (including link to Safeguarding Report Item 7)

The Headteacher **acknowledged** that the school has good tracking and recording systems in place. The Governing Board **queried** who is trained in child exploitation and online protection (CEOP). The Headteacher confirmed that he is CEOP trained. The Board **asked** what security arrangements there are for laptops and devices that go offsite, if there is sensitive data that can be accessed and what is the process for keeping it safe. The Headteacher **reported** that Capella has filtering systems, and that no external data goes offsite. Pupils do not normally take a school device home and if they did, the filtering would recognise the IP address is different so they would not be able to access anything.

The Headteacher receives fortnightly reports from London Grid for Learning that identifies any concerning terms that come up on staff and student searches and web history. Staff awareness and vigilance was emphasized as key when pupils are on devices. Students are very good at self-reporting or reporting other pupils if they have seen or something has been shared that is inappropriate. The school provides online safety workshops with parents and staff on good personal data protection and online habits. The Governing Board **asked** if online streaming services to be included as well as gaming and social media. They **noted** that the termly newsletter has links on how to set up consoles and mobile phones etc.

The Safeguarding Link Governor **noted** there was a lot of overlap in the last governor school visits and proposed to **follow up** on anti-bullying and bullying within secondary and the school's targeted response to the increase in the number of sexualised incidents.

The Governing Board **noted** that Safeguarding Policy still references the CCG (p.5) which has now changed to the Integrated Care Board. It was **noted** that internal Links were not

working in the report, for example, when to call police guidance or CAMHS. The Governance Professional **informed** the Board that the current Safeguarding Policy is based on a template developed from an AfC document and this will be updated for the next review. The Board **agreed** that safeguarding needs to be local school specific policy, whereas some other documents could be Trust wide.

ACTION: The DSL would review the online policy and amend.

9.F Pupil progress and achievements

9.G [School Development Plan](#) Update

9.H [School Self Review](#) Update

9.I Visit Reports (including Governor Visits (Item 5 and SIP reports)

9.J [Staffing Commentary](#)

The Headteacher **highlighted** that it is incredibly challenging to recruit agency staff whilst prioritising high standards. The Board **asked** if the Headteacher feels supported by the Trust in recruitment. Capella is exploring opportunities for secondments through AfC or and other schools via the School Improvement Partner signposting to Capella. The Governing Board **discussed** if the school was of a significant size now for the plans to employ a family support or liaison role to be implemented. This should lighten the load on teaching staff who are currently providing the pastoral care.

The Governing Board **noted** the vision from Capella and the CEO was to develop organically, and **asked** where this is seen as an opportunity and how sustainable it is. The Governing Board **asked** about workable solutions for the staff recruitment issue. The headteacher **highlighted** that teacher pay and conditions need to be better as cannot compete on pay with Amazon for example. The Chair **noted** because of the teaching and staffing pressure, some of the SDP priority areas are not moving forward as quickly as planned. The headteacher **agreed** and **advised** that this was inevitable as his priorities are quality of teaching and learning, safeguarding, staff and pupil learning. The Governing Board would like to know what support is in place for staff in terms of ongoing wellbeing.

9.K Learner, family & community voice

9.L [Finance Commentary](#) (inc. Lead Governor Report from 6A)

9.M [Health and Safety update](#)

The headteacher **reported** that recruitment has been a key issue particularly in secondary. The quality of the agency staff is very varied, and it is frustrating for parents if the school is having to use agency staff but tries to minimise the changes. The quality of applicants is extremely poor; this is a national issue. Capella has appointed a new teacher at secondary who joins after Easter. Primary has a stable team but emphasised it has been a struggle to recruit at secondary.

10. Approval of Policies / Statements

There were no policies to formally approve. The Board **asked** for the Equality and Diversity Policy to be an agenda item for discussion in the next meeting.

ACTION: The Governance Professional to contact Claire Richmond re the policies.

11. Review of Impact, planned actions and feedback to the Board of Trustees

The Governing Board **agreed on** the impact of this meeting, **confirmed** any planned follow up actions by governing board members and any references to be made to the Board of Trustees.

The Chair **noted** the key risk on staffing recruitment and recapped on the learning presentation on the phonics element and feedback on the three governor visits. He also noted there will be SIP report coming up to circulate and discuss after the SIP visit tomorrow. The Chair would also raise significant IT issues that Governors are experiencing in the Chairs Network meeting.

The Chair will work with the Governance Professional on review of impact and actions to feedback to the Board of Trustees, which will be shared with the LGB, for the Trust Board meeting on 27 March. The Governance Professional **advised** to email any further questions following this meeting or before the next meeting which will be included as evidence of discussions and included in the next set of minutes.

The Chair **concluded** that there has been lots of questions, challenge and new information shared in this meeting. The minutes show the Board fulfilling its role as school governors, holding the leadership team to account, supporting the school and recognising success and progress in many places.

12. Confidentiality

The Governing Board agreed that the discussion at the meeting, the background papers, and any reports identified as confidential above, should remain confidential and be excluded from the published minutes and papers.

Meeting ends.

The date of the next meeting is **23 April 2024**

Actions arising from this meeting.

Number	Extract	Owner	Status	Due Date
1	SIP report to be shared with all governors in once received	DS		ASAP
2	The Headteacher / Maria Landeira Frias to present to the Local Governing Board on Carecalc	DS /MLF		23/04/2024
3	Kerri Morgan, Director of Therapies to be invited to a future meeting to present on the plan for outreach	DS /KM		
4	The Headteacher to plan arrange a presentation on pupil behaviour tracking to the LGB	DS / PJ?		23/04/2024
5	DSL to review safeguarding policy online, checking links and references	MLF	Completed	
6	The Governance Professional to contact Claire Richmond re policies	JA		23/04/2024

Andrew Whiteside
Andrew Whiteside (Aug 5, 2024 16:05 GMT+1)

Chair of Capella House School Local Governing Board

CAP-LGB-23-3-00 Approved Minutes 270224

Final Audit Report

2024-08-05

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