

Approved Minutes for the meeting of the Capella House School Governing Board held on 23 April 2024 at 2.00pm at Capella House Secondary (RTS Conference Room) and via Teams

[Link to Meeting Folder:](#)



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

Members of the Local Governing Board absent: Niale Cleobury, Kate Nepstad and Claire Richmond,

Clerk in attendance : Julie Adams

1. Welcome, apologies, declarations of interest.

- 1.A. The Governing Board **noted** apologies had been received from Niale, Cleobury, Kate Nepstad and Clare Richmond, and agreed to consent to their absence.
- 1.B. The Governing Board was 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.

2. Minutes of the previous Governing Board meeting

- 2.A. The Governing Board **received** the draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2024 [[CAP-LGB-23-4-02A Previous Draft Minutes 260224](#)] and **approved** them as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 2.B. The Governing Board **noted** the completed actions from the previous meeting.

Number	Extract	Owner	Status
1	SIP report to be shared with all governors in once received	DS	Completed
4	The Headteacher to plan arrange a presentation on pupil behaviour tracking to the LGB	DS	Completed
5	DSL to review safeguarding policy online, checking links and references	MLF	Completed
6	The Governance Professional to contact Claire Richmond re policies	JA	Completed

- 2.C. The Governing Board **considered** actions arising from the previous meeting that are incomplete and **agreed** that both actions would be carried over to the next meeting.

Number	Extract	Owner	Notes of discussion	Further Action
2	The Headteacher / Maria Landeira Frias to present to the Local Governing Board on Carecalc	DS /MLF	There is not sufficient clarity at the moment to present to governors. The system is not accurately representing the young person and discussion are ongoing with AFC to resolve this. Following a question the Headteacher confirmed that the Carecalc was being used by other Local Authorities	Carry forward to future meeting
3	Kerri Morgan, Director of Therapies to be invited to a future meeting to present on the plan for outreach	DS /KM	The Governing Board noted the recent training day offered as part of Outreach and agreed they would like to hear more about this in the future.	Carry forward to future meeting

2.D. There were no other matters arising that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

3. References from the Board of Trustees

The Chair **noted** that the Board had not received this item from the Trustees. The Governance Professional **advised** that this was due to changes to the leadership of the Board as the vice chair of the Trust confirmed that due to a change in personal circumstances she will no longer be succeeding as the Chair. Therefore, there was a significant focus on arrangements for Trustee recruitment. Board minutes are still available and published on the website.

The Chair **requested** that Simon Gordon who attended the Trust Board meeting feedback on any highlights for the Board. He **reported** that the main concerns were a successor for a Chair and that this would then open the role of Vice Chair. The Board is looking externally for potential Trustees to ensure the right skills will be in place. The Board is looking at succession planning, school improvement and training opportunities across the Trust. The strategy meeting will look at governance proposals, sustainability, arrangements for a school improvement partner, and strategy.

Risks affecting the Board include funding for the two new sites for Clarendon School and Strathmore school, future place planning and potential financial burdens if CareCalc results in a shortfall in Trust finances over time. AfC are taking on board the Board's concerns and how this impacts the Trust's financial position in future years. In this situation the Board will be obliged to refuse if it is not financially viable.

Concerns were also raised for the future on mental health. There are concerns on strengthening governance as the Board **noted** the increasing complexity for the Trust in running a new site for Clarendon.

The Chair of the Local Governing Board **advised** that Clarendon School are having their Ofsted inspection on Wednesday and Thursday this week. The Chair **advised** that he is supporting the LGB at Clarendon School as they are looking to appoint a Chair of Governors, and will attend the Ofsted meetings.

4. Presentation of Pupil Behaviour Tracking

The Governing Board **received** a presentation on pupil behaviour tracking from the Headteacher. The Headteacher **confirmed** that there were additional statutory behaviour tracking relating to bullying, racism, homophobic, sexual and physical. The Headteacher **demonstrated** a spreadsheet which is used to track pupil behaviour into both minor and major incidents.

The headings were:

Date	Pupil	Class	Staff member	Subject	Location
Session	Tracking	Avoidance	Disruption	Rudeness	Defiance
Physical Minor	Damage Minor	Antecedent What happened before? What triggered the behaviour? (if not sure ask staff who were present)	Behaviour Specifically what did the student do? (fact not opinion) Who was involved? What was said? (by student and staff) Strategies used?	Consequence What happened after? What did the student do? What did you do? Did any strategies help?	

The Headteacher **explained** that they key elements of the tracking were in understanding the antecedent and using these to direct regular training for staff. He **noted** that some of the reporting may be duplicated in both CPOMS (the safeguarding recording software and the telephone log as well if raising with parents. He advised that everything is recorded, SLT review this as part of their SLT meetings, allowing for trends, triggers and support which may be

required. Staff understand that by completing this it helps SLT meet pupils needs and hope staff feel assured that it is not 'left on a shelf' by SLT and results in them being able to teach.

Kirsty Craik, the staff governor gave on **example** of a pupil who was dysregulated every Thursday and when this is tracked and investigated it was due to the pupil moving between separated parents' homes. Strategies could then be implemented to support this, for example a reflection book. The Headteacher also **stated** that there was a significant number of incidents of rudeness being reported. When looking into it more, pupils did not understand what rudeness was and so an assembly was delivered on that issue.

The Headteacher **advised** that staff are also asked to think about the strategies they deploy to deal with challenging behaviour, using 'social stories' or 'comic book conversations' are two powerful tools which can be used to prevent unwanted behaviours. The Governing Board **commended** this approach to help pupils themselves notice the triggers and to prepare them for adulthood, which was recognised by Ofsted in their review of a potentially 'outstanding' area of Personal Development.

The Governing Board **asked** what other areas collecting this information impacts. The Headteacher **explained** that this is used to support the Annual Review process, to evidence that the pupil may not need as much support or vice versa. It is also very useful in the transfer from primary to secondary to get an understanding of the triggers for pupils when being exposed to new staff and surroundings.

The Governing Board **asked** how much time is involved when inputting this information for staff and does it negatively impact their workload. The Headteacher **explained** that many of the answers were selected from drop-down lists. The staff governor explained that if done at the time it can be quite cathartic to complete, and reflect. However, if attempting to complete at the end of the day, when there have been multiple issues this may feel more complex. Staff certainly feel the benefit of doing this. The parent governor **advised** that she had no idea the level of monitoring which happens, and suggested other parents may wish to know more about this in a parent workshop.

The Governing Board **thanked** the Headteacher for this presentation and **agreed** that they would like to see further presentations at future meetings. The Headteacher **explained** that he would be asking the Assistant Head at Secondary to present on pupil voice at a future meeting.

Supporting papers – HT Report – Item D

5. Safeguarding

The Governing Board **received** a Safeguarding update from the Headteacher. The Headteacher **confirmed** that Niale Cleobury had visited the school and undertaken a Safeguarding Link Governor Visit. One of the items which the Headteacher had highlighted during this visit was a case study for a young person, who had been initially refused Early Help. As a result of the school pushing and rejecting the initial refusal the pupil was now receiving the Child Protection support needed. The school's proactive and persistent, unwavering approach had been acknowledged by other agencies as being key in the outcome for the young person.

The Governing Board **congratulated** the Headteacher on this outcome and asked what was in place to help the young person to keep themselves safe. The Headteacher **confirmed** that secondary pupils are supported by an external organisation SPECTRA.

The Governing Board **noted** that fortnightly reports on the filtering and monitoring of the websites are checked by the DSL and should anything concerning be raised these are dealt with immediately. He **advised** that while some of the main areas which are blocked are pop-

ups related to pupil interests, for example, a pupil regularly accesses a sports website, which then launches pop-ups related to gambling. He reassured the Governing Board that the pupils, access to the site is permitted but the pop-ups are blocked.

The Governing Board **asked**, as the school was entering the final term, if the Headteacher is happy with the revised DSL arrangements. The Headteacher **advised** that these were working as had been hoped. All DSL's do Level 3 training, renewed every two years, and there have been opportunities added to support DSL's through 'cross-supervising' as the role is demanding.

ACTION: Safeguarding Link Governor report for recent visit to be shared

6. School Development Plan, School Self Review and Link Governor and other Governor Visit Reports

The Governing Board **reviewed** progress to the School Development Plan and School Self Review, and Link Governor and School Improvement Partner Reports.

The Chair **noted** it was useful to have the SIP Report which flagged issues relating to staffing but which was generally positive. This supported the only SDP area which was 'red' which was a direct consequence of staffing challenges. Other areas that were tracking to Amber should be captured in the SDP for 2024-25.

The Headteacher **confirmed** there have been some formal complaints and several subject access / Freedom of information requests. The Governing Board **asked** about the themes of these complaints / requests and if the complaints process was working. The Headteacher **advised** that these were time consuming and did detract from the time staff should be spending with pupils. They were around decision making regarding meeting need and recommendations for college transitions. The Board **asked** if the formal complaints procedure is working. The Board **noted** it is time consuming and stressful for staff and detracts from staff time that should be spent with pupils. He stated that once you can understand the reason for the requests and engage with the requester directly then these are easily solved. The difficulties come where the relationship has broken down. He confirmed that other schools have seen rises in these areas too.

The Governing Board **asked** if having another gateway to access the school would be useful and discussed the employment of a Family Liaison Worker, which would catch some of the lower-level issues in a more informal way. This was agreed in the planning design stages for Capella House School as it developed its maturity and pupil numbers.

ACTION: Headteacher and Chair to explore options to increase contact with parents including the recruitment of a family liaison worker.

The Governing Board **received** a verbal report from Meredith Hamilton, advising that she had an initial visit with the Headteacher following her appointment as a governor. She **noted** that the school had just appointed a mental health lead and as this is a focus for the school and Trust, she would be interested in a Link governor role in this area. The Headteacher **explained** that the same level of resource is provided to special schools as mainstream. He envisaged mental health and wellbeing would be one of the school development priorities for the next school year.

The Chair **requested** that all governors schedule a visit before the end of the school year.
(ACTION).

6.A. CAP-LGB-23-4-06B Finance Link Governor Report

The Finance Link Governor gave an overview of a meeting he had attended with the Headteacher and Finance Director. The discussion focussed on changes in staff, budget

allowing for pay awards and increments, staff teaching optimum pupil numbers in classes, assumptions on changes in pupil numbers, premises issues that will create future financial risks, assumptions on income and related risks.

He **confirmed** there is a small surplus for the in-year budget in P5 (£18k), however this conceals an overspend of £9k on additional staffing costs impacted by long term sickness. The Governing Board **asked** if the school had insurance cover for the cost of long-term sickness pay. The Headteacher **explained** that there is no insurance because the premium is prohibitive. He worked with the Finance Director to predict a level of sickness for the coming year based on national averages and local knowledge.

Income is expected to be higher than forecast, due to four pupils who started in January 2024. Funding from the DfE will not increase as seventy-two places are block funded at £10,000 each. Additional income is based on pupil need (EHCP) and received directly from the local authority. This may change due to the Carecalc formula calculations.

The Governing Board **noted** that the recovery grant of £24,800 and the £10,000 additional grant for playground equipment had been confirmed. There is a matching expense for the playground equipment. A one-off contribution has been received of just under £3,000 for a reading phonics scheme from Wandle.

A further £28,000 is predicted to be spent on staffing, (£41,000 on staffing, £111,000 on agency staff, £42,000 for therapy against the budget) and overspend of £23,000 for sickness pay. The receptionist role has been expanded to include support in part to cover premises using a previously allocated budget for a handy man.

The Governing Board **asked** if the strategy to increase pupil numbers on the classes and budgets is working. The school has mitigated losing eleven Year 11 students by taking on additional year 7s. In primary, there will be an additional class as demand is very high locally for pupil spaces. The Board **asked** if there is space for primary. The Finance Link governor **suggested** if Capella has more capacity at primary and less at secondary, they could share the buildings to increase capacity for secondary. The Headteacher **explained** that there are covenants on the lease at primary which mean it is not allowed to have pupils over 11 years and they are only have twenty-eight pupils on the site. It was **noted** it would be easier if both primary and secondary were on one site.

The Board **asked** if it is a concern for Capella that support staff unions are negotiating for a 10% pay increase. The Headteacher supports this for recruitment and retention to make the teaching and education profession more attractive. The Board **noted** it is a Trust level risk.

ACTION: Finance Link Governor to circulate finance report for each term

The Headteacher **drew** governors' attention to an audit of the school conducted by the Trust Autism Lead. This had included all Trust schools and whilst there was good practice seen at Capella House, the Headteacher **felt** there is more work to be undertaken to support pupils with Autism.

The Headteacher **confirmed** that AfC are continuing to support the school to develop the Maths curriculum. The school's Maths Lead on is also collaborating with their colleague at Clarendon School.

Supporting Papers: HT Report items (Items 8G, H and I, [SDP](#), SEF, SIP Report, Management Accounts, published Ofsted Report.

7. Headteacher report

The Governing Board received a report from the Headteacher ([CAP-LGB-23-4-07 Capella Headteacher Report](#)).

7.A. Key risks

7.B. General Update

7.C. Pupil Numbers and Attendance

7.D. Behaviour, exclusions and incidents of discrimination.

7.E. Safeguarding (Item 5)

7.F. Pupil progress and achievements (first meeting of each term only)

7.G. School Development Plan Update (Item 6)

7.H. School Self Review Update (Item 6)

7.I. Visit Reports (including Governor Visits Item 6)

7.J. Staffing Commentary

7.K. Learner, family & community voice

7.L. Finance Commentary

7.M. Health and Safety / Premises update

The Governing Board **noted** that absence data had triggered some Single Point of Access (early Help referrals). The interventions are now in place, especially for younger pupils (and families)> The Headteacher is reviewing pupils with school-related avoidance and trying to understand the drivers for this. The LA has appointed a new Educational Welfare Officer who will be coming in to meet with, and help families. The Governing Board asked if lateness was also reviewed as this could be an early indicator of attendance issues.

The Governing Board **asked** about the current staffing position and recruitment for next academic year. The Headteacher confirmed that two secondary appointments have been made, starting in May and September and one place is to be filled by a current agency staff. It was **noted** that the appointments are to fill gaps not resignations. The headteacher **flagged** that recruitment continues to be very difficult particularly for the therapy team. He added that he was not aware of any further resignations although the final date for resignations is 31 May.

The Headteacher **advised** that he was particularly proud of the arrangements for each individual student's options for post sixteen provision. He had worked with AfC and other local colleges to increase their aspirations for Capella House students post-16. This had to be done by supporting colleagues in those organisations to understand the profile of the students. The Headteacher **acknowledged** that the LA had limited funds to be able to match the young persons aspirations post 16, but he felt this was getting slightly better.

The Headteacher **explained** that there continues to be issues on fire risk assessment at primary in relation to snagging that should have been completed. The Headteacher and Chair agreed to escalate this issue as an urgent risk.

ACTION: The Chair and Headteacher to escalate the Fire Safety risk at primary school .

The Headteacher **advised** that following an inspection by the JCQ, Capella had been signed off as an exam centre. Contingency arrangements had been made should it not have passed but are now not required.

The Chair **drew** the Governing Boards attention to the surveys, noting that the staff survey was particularly positive. He was **concerned** at the low level of engagement from the parent's survey and various comments that communication methods were not working well. This is being worked on by Philip John, AHT Secondary. The Governing Board also **noted** there is no Capella House School parents association currently. There have been offers from the other schools to invite Capella parents which might help get the ball rolling. There are new starter cohort "WhatsApp" groups but these are not the right channel to send official messages.

ACTION: The Chair and Headteacher to Consider engagement with parents (including a parent association).

8. Governing Board Membership and Development Plan 2023-24

- 8.A. The Governing Board **reviewed** the membership overview and agreed any actions required. [[CAP-LGB-23-5-08A Governor Overview inc. Training](#)].
- 8.B. The Governing Board **received** and **reviewed** the Governance Development Plan [[CAP-LGB-23-5-08B Governance Development Plan 2023-24](#)], and noted key actions arising from it.
- 8.C. The Governing Board **noted** the process for LGB self-evaluation and the LGB Strategy Day on 18 June 2023. [[CAP-LGB-23-4-08C Self Evaluation Timeline.pdf](#)]

The Board **noted** that all self-evaluation forms for governors to complete have been circulated for completion.

The Chair **noted** when the Board formally reviews self-evaluation at the next meeting, there will have done quite a lot of work against the plan; this year's governance development plan, succession, recruitment, active contributing governors, training, briefings on behaviour, English therapies, increased knowledge, engagement with stakeholders and learning about the school.

ACTION: The Board will review self-evaluation findings to the Strategy Day to aid completion of the Governors Development Plan for next year

The Governance Professional **updated** governors on training courses that needed to be completed by the end of the school year.

ACTION: All governors to complete training as requested by end of term

9. Approval of Policies / Statements

The Governing Board **noted** there were no policies to be approved.

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

The Governing Board **agreed** that the Chair would feedback to Trustees to include the issues with fire risk safety escalation, the family liaison role to help with early intervention and support. He would also note the successes of no more directors review meetings and the approval of the school as an exam centre and Post 16 pathways for its students, the positive staffing position for the coming year looking good. **(ACTION)**

The Governing Board **agreed** to keep the Strategy Day and LGB meeting to be on the same day.

11. 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.

The date of the next meeting is **19 June 2024**

Actions below

Number	Extract	Owner	Status	Due Date
1	The Headteacher / Maria Landeira Frias to present to the Local Governing Board on Carecalc	DS /MLF		when confirmed
2	Kerri Morgan, Director of Therapies to be invited to a future meeting to present on the plan for outreach	DS /KM		when appropriate
3	Headteacher and Chair explore options to increase contact with parents including the recruitment of a family liaison worker, and PTA.	DS / AW		Jun-24
4	Safeguarding link governor report for recent visit to be shared	NC		asap
5	Presentation to be given on parental engagement, student voice etc. at future meeting	DS/PJ		Jun-24
6	All governors to arrange a visit before the end of term	All		Jun-24
7	All governors to complete training as requested by end of term	All		Jun-24
8	Chair to prepare update to the Board of Trustees highlighting successes and concerns	AW		May-24


Andrew Whiteside (Aug 5, 2024 16:07 GMT+1)

Chair of the Capella House Local Governing Board

AJW

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Final Audit Report

2024-08-05

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