

Approved Minutes for the meeting of the Capella House School Local Governing Body held on 27 November at 1.00pm at Capella Secondary School (RTS Conference Room) and virtually via Teams

Link to Papers [CHSC-24-2 271124](#)

Members of the Governing Body in attendance: Peter Bailey, Meredith Hamilton, Kate Nepstad and Dominic Sunderland (Headteacher).

Members of the Governing Body in attendance virtually: Michele Coleman and Simon Gordon (Chair),

Members of the Governing Body absent: Niale Cleobury, Julia Morley, Claire Richmond and Kristy Craik.

Also in attendance: Julie Adams, Governance Professional and Andy Whiteside, Trustee.

Clerk: Gilly Hudson

1. Welcome, apologies, declarations of interest and items from the Clerk

- 1.A The Governing Body **received** apologies from Niale Cleobury, Julia Morley, Claire Richmond and Kirsty Craik and agreed to consent to their absence.
- 1.B The Chair reminded the LGB that all governors 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 them. There were no declarations of interest made.

2. Minutes

2.A The Governing Body **received** the draft minutes of the meeting held on 01 October 2024 [CAP-24-2-02A Draft Minutes 011024.pdf](#) and the associated set of confidential minutes [CAP-24-2-02A Draft Minutes 011024 - CONF.pdf](#) and **approved** them as an accurate record of the meeting.

2.B The Governing Body **noted** completed actions from the previous meeting

Number	Extract	Owner	Due Date
4	DfE approval of Tangle Park proposal would be requested and shared	AW	Completed
5	The Chair and Headteacher to provide update on Tangle Park to be included in the LGB report to the Board	DS/ AW	Completed
7	Safeguarding Slides and update given to staff tp be shared by the HT	DS	Completed
8	Kate Nepstad would conduct a visit to review evidence for pay progression with the Headteacher to ensure that a consistent approach is occurring.	KN	On agenda
11	All mandatory training and confirmations would be completed before end of the Autumn term	All	On agenda
12	AW to feedback to the Chair of Trustees n the Governance proposals	AW	Completed
13	Annual Governance Report was being drafted and circulated	SG	On agenda

2.C The Governing Body **considered** actions arising from the previous meeting that were incomplete

Number	Extract	Owner	Due Date
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1	The Headteacher / Maria Landeira Frias to present to the Local Governing Board on Carecalc when a fuller understanding of Carecalc is available. Presentation from the Director of Therapies on Outreach when it is appropriate	HT / SG	Rolling
2	Governor to attend pupil council meetings	ALL	ASAP
3	The Headteacher and Chair / Vice-chair would consider a programme of presentations linked to school priorities for LGB meetings this academic year	ALL	HT / SG / KN
6	link governor roles for each of the areas would be confirmed outside of the meeting and that at least one focussed visit for each priority would occur in the Autumn term.	ALL	asap
9	Lack of EWO support to be raised with the Board of Trustees	SG	11/10/24
10	Guidance on the LGB role on pay progression to be reviewed by the governance professional in advance of next year	JA	ASAP

- 2.D The Governing Body **received** the latest published Board meeting minutes and other updates from the Board
Kate Nepstad will attend the next Chair and Vice Chari meeting on 3rd December.
- 2.E The Governing Body **noted** there were no other matters arising that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Supporting Papers: [Trust Board Minutes](#), [Capella House School Minutes](#)

3. Headteacher s Report

The Governing Body received a report from the Headteacher [CAP-24-2-03 Capella House School Headteacher Report.pdf](#) including Items A-K.

3.A **General Update and key risks**

The Headteacher reported that students have settled in well to the first term of the year and that behaviour is in line with expectations.

3.B **Pupil Numbers for 2024-25 and Attendance**

3.C **Safeguarding and behaviour**

- i The Governing Body **received** any Safeguarding Link Governor Reports since the last meeting

The Governing Body **raised** concerns about the number of Persistent Absences (PA). The Headteacher had a meeting the EWO last week which highlighted areas for improvement. As a result of this meeting, there are 11 pupils of concern for PA – the Headteacher reported the majority are improving and will refer to the EWO if attendance does not continue to improve. The school is working with families to support pupils. There is one pupil with emotional related school avoidance who will be educated at home.

An issue had been **raised** by the EWO who wanted to fine parents for non-attendance. This is not considered appropriate for special schools or agreed to by the head teacher or the Trust CEO. The school does not authorise holidays during term. The Governing Body supported and agreed with the Headteacher as an academy the Trust does not have to follow the local authority.

The Governing Body **asked** if there is a lock down practice to simulate a threat to premises such as an intruder, chemical leak or bomb threat. The head teacher

confirmed the school has checked all polices and there is warning on dates when this will happen. The Governing Body asked how a lock down situation is resolved for more serious accidents.

The Governing Body **asked** about logging accidents on Arbor. The Headteacher reported this is progressing as an SDP priority for pupil development and enrichment for developing life skills at primary and secondary there is enrichment.

The Governing Body **asked** about goals to build links outside the school. The Headteacher reported the school is building bridges from the school onwards to external providers and for life preparation and careers for pupils which also includes money management.

The Governing Body **asked** about progress on family support worker recruitment. The school has not yet appointed as there were no suitable candidates and will be readvertising.

The Governing Body discussed oversubscription for Year 7 next academic year. The Headteacher reported the consultation for Year 7 pupils for next year has been completed and have been in contact with AfC.

The Governing Body **queried** two exclusions in primary. The Headteacher reported that one pupil is causing the most incidents who has now been placed in a specialist setting that is more appropriate to the child's needs. There are no further concerns. This was the same pupil who had previously been suspended. The Board **noted** there has not been the support from AfC in this case to find the right alternative placement.

3.D Pupil progress and achievements

- i The Governing Body **received** and **approved** [CAP-24-2-03Di Capella Draft Pupil Premium Report.pdf](#) for publication on the schools' website.
- ii The Governing Body **received** and **discussed** the [CAP-24-2-03Dii Overview of Phonics for governors.pdf](#)

The Headteacher reported that phonics is not a strength for the whole school and that all pupils have had their baseline assessments.

The Governing Body asked why there are no longer bandings presented in the report. The Headteacher explained following the introduction to CareCalc this information will be presented in the finance reports. The school reports will only include whether pupil needs can be met or not.

The Governing Body **asked** about the level of pupil premiums and approved the report.

3.E School Development Plan and School Self Review

- i The Governing Body **received** the full SDP [CAP-24-2-03E Capella House SDP - Autumn 24 \(1\).pdf](#)

- ii The Governing Body **received** the School Self Review (SEF) [CAP-24-2-03E Capella House SEF - Autumn Term 24 - MASTER \(1\).pdf](#)

All staff have had their performance management aligned to SDP priorities which is regularly updated. The SIP agreed with SLT on consistency for learners across the different sites and how settled and focused learning is.

The Headteacher reported that pupil numbers have increased by 25% at primary.

The Governing Body approved the new structure of the SDP report.

The Governing Body **asked** about staff numbers and sickness levels. The Headteacher reported that absences are very low and lower than in previous years at the time. A round of recruitment has been completed for the TAs already working at Capella who have come through an agency which has worked well as already knew the applicants. The Governing Body **queried** if recruitment is more costly through the agency. The Headteacher reported recruitment through the teaching agencies can source the best quality staff compared to open adverts.

The Governing Body **asked** what priorities have been agreed with the new SIP. The Headteacher reported the first visit was focused on teaching and learning, attending maths and english lessons at primary and attended all lessons at secondary. Overall, it was a positive visit, and the draft SIP report is due today. Once agreed by the Headteacher, it will then be circulated to the Board before the next meeting at the end of January. There is a termly SIP report.

The Governing Body **asked** if it is the same SIP for all the schools. The Headteacher confirmed this and that she reports to the Trust CEO and Headteacher who has an opportunity to challenge any judgements on visits.

3.F Visitors Reports

CAP-24-2-04F 2024 Autumn SIP Report Capella .pdf.url

A Link Governor for Mental Health reported back on her school visit and shared her particular interests on mental health. She has reviewed the mental health section on the website under safeguarding and made suggestions on improvements of information. She also discussed fundraising for Young Minds Charity.

The Governing Body **asked** if there is a separate remit for the mental health of teachers. The Headteacher reported that the mental health and wellbeing of teachers is overlooked. The Governing Body **noted** that all the teachers struggle with pressures running the school and that Headteachers are under strain. The Governing Body **asked** who is responsible for teachers' mental health and wellbeing and noted that the LGB role is to listen to practical aspects as well as having the CEO as a line manager. The Headteacher responded that the trust heads support each other. The Governing Body **asked** if they feel supported in the Richmond Heads Group. The Headteacher explained that they feel less supported as a SEN trust and that a peer group is important as being a Headteacher is a lonely role. It was proposed that the

Headteacher have a mentor for support. The trust also has proposals for a welfare or mental health trustee.

3.G Partnerships and community links

3.H Staffing

- i. The Governing Body **noted** the Headteacher s Performance Management had taken place and recommendations had been made to the Pay Committee.
- ii. The Governing Body **considered** a response to the consultation on the changes to Autumn Term Half term holidays to be given to the Board [CAP-24-2-03ii INSET Consultation Responses for LGB.pdf](#)

Supporting papers [3Hi Parents Consultation Letter.pdf, HR report](#)

The Governing Body discussed the CEO's proposals for an extension of the inset days which is currently in consultation with teachers, LGBs and parent bodies. This is a proposal for next school year and due diligence is being undertaken by the Trust Board on the business case.

3.I Learner, Family and Community Voice

The Governing Body received the [CAP-24-2-03I November school council bulletin.pdf](#).

The Governing Body **asked** if staff will have time for a fortnightly school council. The Headteacher responded this will have low impact on teachers.

3.J Finance Commentary

The Governing Body **asked**:

- Q. Have all known staffing changes been accounted for?
A. This was confirmed. The Headteacher has regular meetings with Finance and provides an up-to-date staff list.
- Q. Does the budget allow for likely pay awards or increments?
A. This is confirmed and referred to Finance Director. There was a budgeted 2.5% increase last year but not the full amount.
- Q. Are teaching staff teaching optimal numbers of peoples and classes for maximum efficiency?
A. Yes, confirmed.
- Q. What assumptions are made about the change in pupil numbers and how realistic are they?

- A. The Headteacher makes assumptions on the best- and worst-case scenarios, assumptions are realistic but difficult to predict although this is not an issue as Capella is oversubscribed.
- Q. Are there any premises issues that create financial risks that Capella might struggle to cover?
- A. There was an issue recently with a roof had been damaged because the gas and electric intake had not been sealed correctly. This is a financial risk for the trust which chooses not to have insurance but holds contingency funds.
- Q. What generate income assumptions have been made? Is there a high level of risk associated with these assumptions?
- A. Any potential income is always based on assumptions unless it is from grants. Finance has a model based on where they think pupils will score on CareCalc and make any overall trust level assumptions. The risk is held at trust level rather than with the school.

It was **noted** that the last LGB meeting **asked** for more details to be able to see where potential areas of concern there may be.

The Chair **presented** a financial overview on Capella budget, expenditure and **asked** if there is anything that stands out in unexpected costs for example, agency costs. The Headteacher reported that it would be unusual to have any unexpected costs as he works closely with Finance. The Chair presented figures on pupil movement, banding and staff budget. The Governing Body **noted** the total variance is just over what would be expected on the initial budget and there is no concern. The Governing Body **asked** if there was a larger expenditure on agency fees last term and if this has not levelled out.

The Governing Body **asked** about career development for TAS – there is no formal system but there is informal progress.

The Governing Body **noted** that grant incomes are fixed from the DfE.

The Governing Body **asked** if there are any other ways the school can fundraise or generate income from the school grounds or premises during holidays.

3.K Health and Safety / Premises Update

Supporting Papers: SDP, SEF, SIP reports, –[PI Management Accounts](#), HR Summary,

4. Governance

- 4.A The Governing Body **reviewed** the membership overview and agreed any actions required. [CAP-24-2-04A Governor Overview inc. Training.pdf.pdf](#)

The Governance Professional reminded the Governing Body that all the governors need to complete their safeguarding and GDPR training which is need for insurance. Also to acknowledge completed the safeguarding child protection policy. There is training guide to select online training.

- 4.B The Governing Body **noted** approved Governance documentation approved by the Board of Trustees at their meeting on 17 October. [Governance Procedures](#)
- 4.C The Governing Body **received** and **approved** the annual Governance Report for 2023-24.

The Governance Professional confirmed changes the Governing Body have agreed and made recorded in the report. To recap, remaining Local Governing Bodies and governors, some changes to recruiting parent trustees and reducing number of parent governors to one. Governance Nominations Committee will look at how these changes will be implemented.

- 4.D The Governing Body **noted** progress on the Governance Development Plan for 2024-25 and that this would be discussed at next meeting. Discussed recruiting new governors through the Governing Body's own networks. Governance Professional advised on formulation and size of LGB.
- 4.E There were no other Link Governor Visit Reports since the last meeting not otherwise covered.

5. Approval of Policies / Statements

The Governing Body **approved** the following policies and procedures.

- 5.A See also 3Di Pupil Premium report and strategy

6. Reviewed impact, planned actions and agree feedback to the Board of Trustees

The Governing Body **agreed** 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.

- There were good questions around Headteacher's report and some slight redrafting to be done.
- There was positive feedback from new SIP and appears there is good continuity of service which is reassuring. The Governing Body looks forward to receiving the report.
- It is good to see the pupil school council up and running which the Board will look forward to engaging with in line with SDP priorities.
- Welcome the revised SDP and actions being completed in the role of monitoring. The discussion on EWO's arrival is positive.
- Areas for escalation include the family support worker and the focus on Headteacher's wellbeing.

Supporting Papers – 17. Committee reporting template.docx

7. Confidentiality

The Governing Body **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 **28 January 2025**

SG

SG (May 9, 2025 16:13 GMT+1)

SG

09/05/25


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Final Audit Report

2025-05-09

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