

Approved Minutes for the meeting of the Capella House School Local Governing Body held on 7 May 2025 at 1.00pm at Capella House Secondary School (RTS Conference Room) and virtually via Teams

Members of the Governing Body in attendance : *Peter Bailey, Niale Cleobury, Kirsty Craik, Kate Nepstad, Şecil Ozkan, and Dominic Sunderland (Headteacher).*

Members of the Governing Body in attendance virtually: *Simon Gordon (Chair), Meredith Hamilton, Roger Mills and Claire Richmond.*

Members of the Governing Body absent : *Michele Coleman and Sue Holt.*

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 Michele Coleman and Sue Holt and **agreed** to consent to their absence..
- 1.B The Chair **reminded** all governors that they 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 made.

2. Presentation

The Governing Body received a presentation on use of AI in school.

Summary of AI Presentation by Headteacher

Overview:

The headteacher presented on the use of AI in the school, focusing on its applications, benefits, and the challenges faced. The presentation included practical examples, staff training, and the ethical considerations of using AI in education.

Key Points:

1. **Introduction to AI in School:**
 - The school has been using AI, particularly large language models (LLMs), for about 18 months.
 - AI tools are used to support teaching, save time, and engage students.
2. **Applications of AI:**
 - **Prompt Engineering:** Teachers are trained to craft effective prompts to get high-quality outputs from AI.
 - **Lesson Planning:** AI helps in creating detailed lesson plans quickly.
 - **Creative Uses:** AI is used for generating writing prompts, quizzes, and revision tasks.

- **Role Play and Simulations:** AI can simulate historical characters or interview scenarios to aid learning.

3. **Ethical Considerations:**

- AI cannot replace the teacher's knowledge and the relationships they build with students.
- Importance of being mindful of data protection and the potential biases in AI outputs.

Challenges and Questions:

1. **Challenge:** Ensuring AI does not replace human interaction.
 - **Question:** How do you ensure students still develop social skills?
 - **Answer:** AI is used under supervision, and its use is integrated with traditional teaching methods to ensure balanced development.
2. **Challenge:** Data protection and privacy.
 - **Question:** How do you handle sensitive data with AI tools?
 - **Answer:** Personal or sensitive data is never uploaded to AI tools. The school uses safer, school-specific AI tools where possible.
3. **Challenge:** Reliability of AI-generated content.
 - **Question:** How do you verify the accuracy of AI outputs?
 - **Answer:** Teachers use their professional judgment to verify and cross-check AI-generated content.
4. **Challenge:** Ethical use of AI.
 - **Question:** How do you address the ethical implications of AI in education?
 - **Answer:** The school educates both staff and students on the ethical use of AI, ensuring transparency and responsible use.

Actions:

1. **Staff Training:**
 - Ongoing training sessions for staff on effective AI use and prompt engineering.
 - Sharing best practices and resources among staff.
2. **Policy Development:**
 - Developing a clear policy on the use of AI, including data protection and ethical guidelines.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - Regularly updating and evaluating the AI tools and their impact on teaching and learning.
 - Collecting feedback from staff and students to continuously improve AI integration.
4. **Collaboration:**
 - Encouraging collaboration among teachers to share experiences and strategies for using AI effectively.

3. Minutes

- 3.A The Governing Body **received** the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 and **approved** them as an accurate record of the meeting.

3.B The Governing Body **received** the draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025 and **approved** them as an accurate record of the meeting.

The Headteacher confirmed numbers of pupils remain at 81 at Capella excluding Tangley Park.

The Chair **asked** whether the Hub partnership with Richmond Upon Thames College had been approved. It was **noted** that discussions are still ongoing, and the Headteacher is scheduled to meet AfC on 16 May. The Governing Body **asked** about the purpose of the meeting and outcomes. There is agreement in principle, but Capella needs to finalise details with AfC. The headteacher reported Capella is seeking two key assurances:

- a) AfC will agree to fund the Hub, ensuring it remains cost-neutral for the Trust.
- b) the pupil profile will be agreed upon by Capella and Richmond Upon Thames College.

It was **noted** that the Hub is currently being presented to external pupils as more developed than it is—offering a solution but without full control for Capella. The Governing Body **raised** concerns about potential reputational risks if the initiative fails to deliver. The headteacher reported that if Capella is not happy with the partnership it will not proceed. Currently the agreement is in draft, with no formal commitment made. The Governing Body noted their concerns about the project.

The Governing Body **queried** the project at Tangley Park which will end at the end of the academic year. In terms of therapy provision and additional classes, the Governing Body **asked** what planning had been done for school expansion and staffing needs. There will be one additional class and one additional member of support staff.

The Chair **challenged** whether the school's resources would be overstretched and **questioned** whether a plan was in place to resolve this. The resourcing issue has been addressed and AfC has agreed to fund the additional classes.

It was **noted** in the SIP report there was a lack of functional skills qualifications. The Governing Body **asked** if progress made in substituting comparable courses. The Headteacher advised work is ongoing to identify options.

3.C The Governing Body **noted** all actions from the previous meeting **are** now complete.

3.D The Governing Body **noted** the latest published Board meeting minutes had been published.

3.E The Governing Body **noted** there were no other matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Headteachers Report

The Governing Body **received** a report from the Headteacher [CAP-24-4-04 Capella House School Headteacher Report.pdf](#)

4.A General Update and key risks

4.B Pupil Numbers for 2024-25 and Attendance

The number of persistent absentees has decreased slightly. Capella is working closely with CAMHS and social work teams to address this issue. It was **noted** that there were capacity

challenges with these partners and the AFC Panel, due to their staff turnover and ongoing recruitment difficulties.

4.C Safeguarding and behaviour

The Governing Body **received** the [CAP-24-4-04C DSL Report to LGB.pdf](#).

There has been a further reduction in the number of behaviour incidents. The Governing Body **asked** whether an external safeguarding audit would be conducted. It was confirmed that this has been scheduled for the start of the summer term, to be delivered by AfC.

The Headteacher **reported** that two primary pupils have been referred to the Forest School to support their social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Capella staff have received training on managing challenging student behaviour during the recent INSET day.

The Governing Body **asked** whether there had been any further incidents of discrimination and whether staff are trained to respond to such cases. It was confirmed that no additional incidents have occurred.

4.D Pupil progress and achievements

The headteacher recommended in future to refine the process to reflect individual's progress and needs. Next year the headteacher informed the Governing Body that assessment and progress will be one schools development priorities.

The Governing Body **asked** about the assessment and curriculum review and if this will this delay exam boards. The Governing Body **asked** about progress on trialling a family and support worker who is currently working as a teaching assistant at Clarendon and booked for a trial in the second half of the summer term.

Secondary pupils are being trained with extra skills to prepare them for future careers. Capella is actively seeking partnerships with organisations that can offer students work experience.

Teachers have been co-ordinating work placements for Year 11 students and focusing on career education for Year 10s. This includes collaboration with local colleges to identify the key skills students need for future employment. Brentford College, for example, is running an employability scheme that brings in professionals to speak to students about career pathways.

KS4 at Capella is currently networking with individuals and organisations to visit to talk to the students about careers and the job market.

4.E School Development Plan and Self Review

4.F Visitors Reports

The Governing Body discussed the questions highlighted by the School Improvement Partner.

4.G Partnerships and community links

The school is developing good partnerships with employers and AfC for post-16 students and careers.

4.H Staffing

Capella has recruited a teaching assistant at primary. There was discussion about decreasing class sizes in the borough generally due to changes in demographics and impact this will have on availability of teaching staff recruitment.

4.I Learner, Family and Community Voice

The headteacher gave a headline summary of the recent parent survey, which received 44 responses. Overall feedback was largely positive, with 90% of respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with all the questions. Only one parent expressed disagreement on multiple points.

One area of concern identified was home reading, where 15 parents disagreed that their child regularly reads at home. The Governing Body acknowledged this as a priority for the school in the upcoming academic year. Additionally, four parents did not agree that the school effectively supports their child's learning, and five parents felt that communication from the school could be improved.

The Governing Body also **discussed** the school's proposal to introduce roundtable discussions with senior school pupils in future, as a way to gather more meaningful feedback and address survey fatigue among students.

4.J Finance Commentary

Following a meeting with the Finance Director and the Trust, the headteacher raised with the Governing Body that Capella wants to ringfence its own funds to invest in staff development and teacher training.

CareCalc

CareCalc is now called Formulate and *has had* a significant impact on the school's financial position. The system calculates funding bands for pupils based on their EHCPs. It works similarly to AI relying on the accuracy of input data.

However, serious issues have emerged:

- A number of students have experienced substantial reductions in allocated funding.
- In some cases, individual funding has decreased by over £20,000.
- It was **noted** that given that the cost of a place at Capella ranges between £15,000 and £25,000, these discrepancies suggest a fundamental flaw in the system's calculations.
- Despite repeated reviews, the system continues to produce figures that are significantly lower than expected.

An emergency meeting was held with AfC prior to the half-term break to address these discrepancies. The current funding shortfall has placed Capella in a projected deficit exceeding £350,000. A formal response from AfC was expected on 9 May.

The Governing Body **discussed** SEN funding, alternative funding models and potential solutions. The Governing Body **raised concerns** that the annual pupil review has shifted from being a person-centred to one focused primarily on financial funding decisions.

The Governing Body also **raised concerns** about the implications if an agreement with AfC is not reached. While funding for the current year has been confirmed, the lack of a

long-term solution could impact pupils transitioning to post-16 education, including college placements and apprenticeships. This issue remains unresolved.

It was **noted** that if a pupil requires alternative provision, the school remains financially responsible for their education until a placement is approved by the Panel. The Governing Body **asked** how this ongoing funding uncertainty might affect future expansion plans. Until the funding situation is resolved, any investment or development of additional sites cannot be considered.

4.K Health and Safety / Premises Update

5. Governance

- 5.A The Governing Body **reviewed** the membership overview and agree any actions required [CAP-24-4-05A Governor Overview inc. Training.pdf](#) The Governance Professional reminded all governors need to complete safeguarding training.
- 5.B The Governing Body **noted** the process for LGB self-evaluation and the LGB Strategy Day on 24 June 2025.

Self-evaluation, need to think of strategy session and skills need to recruit to the board to help inform next year's planning and undertake a skills audit. Will be circulated LGB performance and think about at strategy day with new governors joining

- 5.C The Governing Body **received** any other Link Governor Visit Reports since the last meeting not otherwise covered.

The Governing Body **discussed** for governors to focus school visits on their own areas of interest and expertise to add strength to meetings and risk ownerships on different parts of the SDP.

The Governance Professional advised to include link roles and planning next year's school visits at the upcoming strategy day. The LGB budget approval will go to the Trust Board for discussion on 10 July. It was noted that the budget meeting for the draft budget approval for the Finance Committee will be held at the end of June.

The Governing Body discussed combining the strategy meeting and the final LGB of the year for the budget approvals.

ACTION: Julie to check alternative dates for the strategy day and final LGB

6. Approval of Policies / Statements

The Governing Body **noted** there are no policies or procedures for approval.

7. Reviewed impact, planned actions and agreed 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.

The Governing Body **agreed** to:

- have ownership for specific SDPs, choose areas to follow up and confirm with headteacher
- allocate governors and diarise school visits at the strategy day
- to prepare school visit reports ready for Ofsted

It was **noted** there could be an Ofsted visit from September onwards. The Governing Body **asked** about confidence in the proposed report card system. The Governance Professional advised that the consultation had not yet concluded and that as a Governing Body that they needed to continue to undertake their responsibilities as governors in terms of being aware of what happening in school, undertaking link governor roles and school visits etc.

8. 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 Strategy Day is **24 June 2025**.
The date of the next meeting is **9 July 2025** at **1.00pm**

Actions

Number	Extract	Owner	Status
1	Julie to check alternative dates for the strategy day and final LGB	JA	

Asif Mullan
Asif Mullan (Oct 14, 2025 12:15:04 GMT+1)

Asif Mullan

Chair of Capella House School Local Governing Body

14/10/25

Clerks Note: The delay in signature was due to the former Chair of Governors, Simon Gordon not signing the document before he resigned from the role.






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Final Audit Report

2025-10-14

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