

**Approved Minutes of the meeting of the Clarendon School Local Governing Body held on 2 October 2024 at 5.00pm at Clarendon Secondary School (RTS Conference Room)**

Link to Papers [CSC-24-1 021024](#)

**Members of the Local Governing Body in attendance** : Niall Brady (Chair), Nataliya Bennett (appointed at Item 1), Niall Dumigan (Headteacher), Kelly Faulkner, Bharat Gopalan, Chris Reynolds (appointed at Item 1) James Rimmer, Hanna Shepard, Michael Sinanan and Aminta Townshend.

**Also in attendance:** Angela Mason (Head of Primary), Andrew Whiteside (Trustee), John Johnson (School Improvement Partner), Susie Connor (Trust Finance Director).

**In attendance virtually:** Jayne Grey (Gateway)

**Clerk in attendance:** Julie Adams

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

- 1.A The Governing Body **noted** no governors were absent .
- 1.B The Governing Body **considered** the appointment of Nataliya Bennett, Chris Reynolds and Jenny Bisset to the Local Governing Body for a four year term with immediate effect. The new members were welcomed and introduced. Chris is the deputy head of ArtsEd, a private school in Chiswick. Nataliya is a business manager at a secondary school in Kingston where she leads operations and finance. Jenny who had sent apologies for this meeting due to a prior commitment works as Head of Display at Sainsbury's. The Governing Body **agreed** to their immediate appointment.
- 1.C The Governing Body was reminded that all members of the Governing Body 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.

**ACTION:** Governors will be asked to confirm and update their declarations of interest and complete their personal details on GovHub.

## 2. Presentation

The Governing Body **received** a presentation from the Auriga Academy Trust Finance Director, Susie Connor on the Clarendon School Budget for 2024-25 and 3 year forecast which focussed on three priority areas agreed with the Headteacher. She advised she would be happy to take questions:

1. Role of the Finance Link Governor
2. Clarendon's deficit budget
3. Financial position of the Trust
1. Role of Finance Link Governor

The role of the Finance Link Governor is to work with the Headteacher and to challenge and support. It is the responsibility of trustees to sign off the financial statements for the Trust as a company and as a going concern for the upcoming financial year. The Governing Body **noted** that the Finance Link Governor reviews financial statements and identifies any issues.

By way of example, the Finance Director **explained** that the Finance Link Governor would identify that the high agency costs is an issue. It was **noted** that the majority of agency staff are justified as there is a need to cover vacancies but that the high level of sickness absence was unexpected highlighting the responsibilities that the school needs to meet both the education needs of the pupils but also to keep staff safe. It was **reported** that the agency staff budget was overspent by double and advised the Finance Link Governor would investigate with HR as to why the sickness absence is high.

## 2. Clarendon deficit budget

The Governing Body **noted** that Clarendon is operating in a deficit from a position of breaking even over the previous 3-4 years. This is due to the change in pupil profile which has become more similar to Strathmore. Funding for the higher level pupils does not cover the cost of the support they require and noted Strathmore has always operated in a deficit position. The Finance Director **explained** the Trust is in continual negotiations with AfC to change banding values to reflect pupil needs. CareCalc, the new system being introduced by AfC, has complicated this process. Although it is considered a fairer system overall, funding for pupils and the Trust from AfC is still not at the right levels.

The Finance Director **reported** the annual budget is baselined in May via a detailed budgeting model. This is reviewed and signed off by the Headteacher as the initial budget. When pupil and staff numbers are confirmed in September, this budget is revised.

The Governing Body **noted** agency costs were significantly higher in September due to the fact that three agency positions that had been overlooked at Gateway. To avoid this oversight in future, financial controls have been improved between HR and finance.

## 3. Financial position of the Trust

The Finance Director **reported** a budget has been submitted to the DfE, showing a deficit in the third year. The Trust will regularly review staffing to meet both the needs of pupils and for staff to be working in a safe environment. Key areas of focus are where there is high expenditure such as staff agency costs, negotiate competitive rates with supplier and identify ways to generate additional income streams - for example, to let out school premises which has the added benefit to support Trust goals to be seen as part of the community.

The Governing Body **noted** the primary function of the Trust is to educate the children and were advised that the third year budget deficit will not be solved by looking for alternative sources of income. It was **noted** as a remedy to the situation, that the Trust is in discussion with other Trusts for a potential partnership.

The Finance Director **reported** that the financial position changes continually. For example, the Trust has a cash account of £3 million and after the budget was submitted on 30 July, and the Trust received an unexpected additional grant of £400,000.

The Board **asked** about options to remedy the deficit and **proposed** that the Trust should use this Local Governing Body for advice.

The Headteacher **confirmed** the budget miscalculation last year was as a result of the unaccounted for agency staff at Gateway and is confident the current budget is accurate. He **proposed** a strategic approach to remedy some of the deficit for example by adjusting the staffing ratios and focusing on achieving value by budget holders. It was **noted** the Governing Body has oversight on large spend decisions and the Headteacher welcomes input on this.

The Headteacher **reported** that Clarendon no longer automatically replaces staff for short term absences but makes adjustments internally for cover for the first 2 days. He **explained** that feedback from teachers is that agency staff can be disruptive for 1-2 days.

The Governing Body **asked** about the transparency of information available to make these budget decisions. The Finance Director **answered** that a new auditing and accounts system was introduced last year. Staff now have to log into the system for their budget and the finance team delivers monthly budget summaries.

The Governing Body **asked** if the Trust HR Policy is robust enough for long term sickness absence and the implications on costs. The Finance Director **answered** that HR Policy is fair with provision for long and short term sickness.

The Headteacher referred to long term absence in the Headteachers report. He **explained** the data on long term absences is skewed by two long term sickness absences in particular but when these are extracted from the calculations, the data is in line with expectations.

The Board **asked** if Clarendon has its own pool of cover teachers, retired or otherwise possibly working on zero hours contracts. The Headteacher **answered** that short term absence tends to be from the support staff.

Supporting papers: [P11 Management Accounts](#), [02 AAT 3 Year Budget Summary.pdf](#), [02. 24.25 3 year budget DRAFT 26.6.24 Clarendon.pdf](#) Headteacher report Item 10.

### 3. Minutes

- 3.A The Governing Body noted that the minutes of the meeting of the 8 July 2024 were not
- 3.B available and would be presented at the next November meeting of the LGB (**ACTION**).
- 3.C
- 3.D The Governing Body **noted** the Board and school LGB meeting minutes are published on the respective websites
- 3.E There were no other matters arising that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Supporting Papers: [Trust Board Minutes](#), [Clarendon School Minutes](#).

### **Headteachers Report**

The Governing Body received a report from the Headteacher [CLA-24-1-04 Clarendon School Headteacher Report.pdf](#) to include Items 4-13: Link governor reports were included and considered at the most relevant section. Questions were invited section by section.

### 4. **General Update and key risks**

The Governing Body **asked** about the risk headlines and core function in terms of why there is a risk of safeguarding failure for Clarendon. The Headteacher **explained** the risk register is a Trust level document and that the difference in risk headings have been categorised, for example risk headlines comes under core function for the school and the appetite is rated as 'cautious'. It was **noted** the risk register is always cautious on safeguarding. The November LGB meeting would contain a more Clarendon specific report.

Supporting Papers: [CLA-24-1-04 Risks 2024.25 Headlines.pdf](#)

## **5. Pupil Numbers for 2024-25 and Attendance**

The Governing Body **noted** trends on pupil numbers in relation to staffing ratios. The majority of pupils come from Richmond or Kingston creating high demand for local places. The trend towards higher staff ratios is because of the complex needs of pupils.

It was **noted** there has been very little change in attendance which has been above 90%. There has been a marginal dip in attendance at the start of this year because of pupil sickness but this is considered a short term trend. The Governing Body **stated** they are pleased with the decrease in persistent absence and suggested that Clarendon shared best practice with the other schools.

It was **noted** there have been a significant number of families taking unauthorised holidays compared with last year. The Headteacher has written to the families and updated the Attendance Policy in relation to unauthorised holidays.

The Governing Body **asked** about follow up with these families since the family partnership worker left. The Headteacher **responded** it is more challenging currently and the school is working with families hardest to reach. The admin team follow up digitally daily with children not in school and highlighted the importance of appointing a new family partnership worker to continue to build relationships with these families.

The Governing Body **asked** how recruitment is progressing. The Headteacher **reported** candidates are currently being shortlisted and interviews are scheduled in the next 2 weeks with the aim to have the post filled after half term. The new family partnership worker will be shared with Capella, working 4 days a week at Clarendon School and 1 day at Capella School.

The Governing Body **asked** if Family Relationship Worker's Safeguarding Lead Role had been covered. The Headteacher **responded** there is an interim plan to provide additional short term cover with Angela Mason, stepping into this role in the interim and confirmed there are deputy DSLs on every site at Clarendon.

The Governing Body **approved** the Attendance Policy.

## **6. Safeguarding and behaviour**

The Governing Body:

- 6.A **Received** report from DSL on Safeguarding for 2023-2024 [CLA-24-1-06A Safeguarding report to LGB - 02 10 24.pdf](#)
- 6.B **Received** training on safeguarding from the Headteacher on changes to KCSIE 2024.
- 6.C **Noted** safeguarding arrangements and training within the school for 2024-25.
- 6.D **Received** any Safeguarding Link Governor Reports since the last meeting

The Headteacher **presented** the termly safeguarding report and noted the updated policy also to be approved by the Governing Body. The Governing Body **noted** a concern about the increase in secondary Year 11 pupils' sexualised behaviour. The Headteacher responded this behaviour linked to mental health issues and the school is responding to support the pupils.

The Governing Body **asked** how the data compares to last year. The Headteacher **responded** that comparative data is not available in the same format as a new system was introduced last year. However, it was **noted** the frequency of safeguarding concerns recorded indicates the staff are vigilant on safeguarding incidents and reporting.

The Governing Body **queried** the high representation of pupil premium children on suspensions and exclusions. The Headteacher **explained** the sensitive nature of this data and that pupils who come from more deprived or pupil premium backgrounds are more representative as they tend to have wider difficulties and for example, a pupil may need to move somewhere more appropriate.

The Governing Body **asked** about the Behaviour Policy and training for staff and **queried** why there is no reference to parent's role in engaging on Behaviour Policy or how to address behaviours. It was **agreed** there is not enough focus on parental involvement or engagement in the policy. The Headteacher **explained** the School's pastoral team drafted the policy. The Governing Body **asked** if it would be possible to produce a shorter, user-friendly version of the Behaviour Policy to go on the website as the existing policy document is voluminous.

**ACTION:** HT to consider parental role / communication / engagement in application and development of policy ensuring user friendly - behaviour and safeguarding.

The Governing Body **asked** for clarification on the drafting of the Clarendon Safeguarding And Child Protection Policy 2024/25 at page 13 section on roles and responsibilities of the governing board, board of trustees. It was agreed the drafting needs to be tightened up and this section is referring to the Board of Trustees not the LGB. The Governance Professional **clarified** that the legal responsibility and accountability is retained by the Trust Board. This has been ratified at Trust level and recognised need to use the right terms. The Governing Body **noted** this policy is adapted from a local authority template and the importance of using the right definitions.

**ACTION:** Ensure safeguarding Policy accurately reflects the role of the LGB and is clear on the delegations between the Board and LGB's. GP to review the Trust policy with IP

The Governing Body **asked** what safeguarding training has been undertaken at the LGB level. The Governance Professional **responded** there is annual mandatory training for Governors to Level 1 and the Safeguarding Link Governors undertake extended training.

**ACTION:** Governors reminded to undertake all mandatory training including safeguarding and update confirmations / Register of Interests on GovernorHub

The Governing Body **queried** if the policies are out of date and the Headteacher **explained** updated policies are published on the website only once approved by Governors.

**ACTION:** HT and GP to review website policies for any that are out of date and ensure approved policies added

The Governing Body **approved** the Clarendon Safeguarding And Child Protection Policy and the the Behaviour and Regulation Policy.

Supporting Papers: [CLA-24-1-14A Clarendon School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024-2025.pdf](#)

## 7. **Pupil progress and achievements**

The Governing Body **received** a presentation on pupil progress for school year 2023-2024, including external assessments

[CLA-24-1-07A Clarendon School Examination Results 2024.pdf](#)  
[CLA-24-1-07A Gateway Centre exam results 2023-2024.docx.pdf](#)

Overall the Headteacher is pleased with maths results and that English is being worked on to improve. The Governing Body **noted** this is the first term predicted grades are being presented. There was discussion around the new qualifications and certificate options now available to pupils.

The Governing Body **noted** the success in KS4 maths and arts but agreed there were shortcomings in English that the SLT was addressing as a priority. The Headteacher **responded** that the English curriculum at KS4 was not preparing the pupils sufficiently to prepare for qualifications and that KS4 curriculum has been redesigned. In response to addressing questions on the quality of teaching issue, the school is targeting the strongest teachers to KS4 classes this year. The Governing Body agreed with this strategy.

The Governing Body **asked** how pupils grades are predicted and if the school baselines new pupils. The Headteacher **responded** that pupils are baselined on entry to Clarendon and run annual assessment to measure progress. It was **noted** that all pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The target setting process, this is the first year at KS4 and to agree predictions with pupil's teachers and best estimates on how generate predictions for qualifications.

## **8. School Development Plan and School Self Review**

The Governing Body:

8.A Received and approved the detailed School Development Plan.pdf

8.B Agreed monitoring arrangements for the School Development Plan.

8.C Received the link Governor Report for Teaching and Learning [CLA-24-1-08C LG TL HS 230924.pdf](#)

8.D Noted the SEF would be presented in the November LGB meeting

8.E Noted arrangements for the SIP visits for 2024-25.

The Link Governors from last year are still assigned, James and Hannah agreed to continue and are planning school visits.

The Governing Body **noted** the Link Governor on a page suggests there are 2 Link Governors per priority area. There was discussion on which positions are open and who can step into these roles. It was suggested pupil pastoral wellbeing is modified as it is not a SDP priority.

**ACTION:** Governor Visits to be planned as per Link Roles discussed - 2 per year per governor

- Curriculum - Hanna Shephard supported by James Rimmer (and potentially Jenny Bissett with agreement)
- Teaching and Learning - James Rimmer supported by Chris Reynolds
- Leadership and Development - Niall Brady and Kelly Faulkner incorporating stakeholder engagement.
- Safeguarding - Minta Townshend and Chris Reynolds
- Finance - Bharat Gopalan and Nataliya Bennett

The Governing Body **proposed** for further presentations to the LGB for deep dives and discussion on priority areas similar to the Finance presentation today. The Headteacher **agreed**.

Supporting Papers: [Link Governor on a Page](#)

**9. Visitors Reports**

**10. Partnerships and community links**

[CLA-24-1-08 Clarendon School Partnerships & Community Links 24-25.docx.pdf](#)

**11. Staffing**

See also Confidential Appendix A to these minutes

Supporting Papers – [09. Guidance for LGB's on recommendations for Teacher Pay Progression.pdf](#) , [09. AAT HR Report 23 24 - 23.24.pdf](#)

**12. Learner, Family and Community Voice**

The Governing Body noted the [CLA-24-1-10 School leavers survey 2024.pdf](#)

**13. Finance Commentary**

The Governing Body noted this had been discussed during the presentation from the Finance Director (Item 2)

**14. Health and Safety / Premises Update**

**15. Governance**

- 15.A The Governing Body reviewed the membership overview and agreed to undertake the necessary mandatory training in advance of the next meeting.
- 15.B The Governing Body received draft Governance documentation to be approved by the Board of Trustees at their meeting on 17 October. They noted that feedback to the Governance proposals must be received by the Board via the Chair or GP by the 11 October.
- 15.C The Governing Body noted that the Annual Governance Report would be circulated to the November LGB meeting.
- 15.D The Governing Body noted that the Governance Development Plan for 2024-25 would be updated and
- 15.E The Governing Body received any other Link Governor Visit Reports since the last meeting not otherwise covered.

[CLA-24-1-08C LG MT Sports Day 050724.pdf](#)  
[CLA-24-1-08C LG TL HS 230924.pdf](#)

**ACTION:** Governors advised to send any feedback to the Governance proposals to the Board via the Chair or GP by the 11 October.

**16. Approval of Policies / Statements**

The Governing Body **noted** the Clarendon Safeguarding and Child Protection, Attendance and Behaviour and Regulation Policies had previously been agreed at items 4b and 4c.

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

The Governing Body **noted** the helpful presentation from the Finance Director, appointment of three new governors, detailed discussions related to safeguarding, pupil numbers, attendance and examination data and communications and parental input to policies.

The Governing Body noted the actions arising from this meeting.

Number	Extract	Owner	Due Date
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1	The Governance Professional to complete Minutes for 8 July 2024 for submission to November LGB	JA	27/11/24
2	HT to consider parental role / communication / engagement in application and development of policy – behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.	ND	ongoing
3	Ensure safeguarding Policy accurately reflects the role of the LGB and is clear on the delegations between the Board and LGB's. GP to review the Trust policy with IP	JA / IP	asap
4	HT and GP to review website policies for any that are out of date and ensure approved policies added	ND / JA	01/12/24
5	Gateway Results to be reviewed at the next LGB meeting	ND/JG	27/11/24
6	Governor Visits to be planned as per Link Roles discussed - 2 per year per governor *Curriculum - Hanna Shephard supported by James Rimmer (and potentially Jenny Bissett with agreement) *Teaching and Learning - James Rimmer supported by Chris Reynolds *Leadership and Development - Niall Brady and Kelly Faulkner incorporating stakeholder engagement. *Safeguarding - Minta Townshend and Chris Reynolds *Finance - Bharat Gopalan and Nataliya Bennett	ALL	ongoing
7	Governors to be invited to support recruitment or additional SLT to begin subject to approval by Board Pay Committee.	ND	Asap
8	Governors reminded to undertake all mandatory training including safeguarding and update confirmations / Register of Interests on GovernorHub	All	ASAP
9	Governors advised to send any feedback to the Governance proposals to the Board via the Chair or GP by the 11 October.	ALL	11/10/24
10	MT and JA to meet to discuss rationale for proposals	JA / MT	by 11/04/24
11	Annual Governance Report to be circulated to governors	NB / KF/ MT	asap

Areas to be raised with the Board will be ensuring policies are clear on Trust Board and Governing Body roles and that policy review schedules are adhered to.

Supporting Papers – [15. Committee reporting template.docx](#)

## 18. Confidentiality

The Governing Board **agreed** that the discussion at the meeting, the background papers, and any reports identified as confidential above, and the minutes contained in the confidential appendix to the minutes relating to item 11 , should remain confidential and be excluded from the published minutes and papers.

*All staff were asked to leave and a confidential matter was discussed relating to Item 11.*

The date of the next meeting is **27 November 2024**

*Niall Brady*  
Niall Brady (Mar 28, 2025 11:26 GMT)

Niall Brady

28/03/25






# CLA-24-1-00 Approved Minutes 021024

Final Audit Report

2025-03-28

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