

Approved Minutes for the meeting of the Clarendon School Local Governing Body to be held on Wednesday 9 July 2025 at 5.00pm Clarendon Secondary School (RTS Conference Room) and virtually via Teams

[Link to Teams Meeting](#)

Link to Papers [CLA-24-5 090725](#)

Key:- ➤ Note; ⦿ Discussion; ☑ Discussion and Decision; **XX** Sponsor/Lead; **X mins** allotted time.

Items in square brackets are references to documents related to this agenda found in the folder CLA-24-5 080725.

Members of the Local Governing Body in attendance: Natalyia Bennett, Niall Brady (Chair), Jenny Bissett, Niall Dumigan (Headteacher), Chris Reynolds, James Rimmer, Hanna Shepard, and Aminta Townshend.

Members of the Local Governing Body absent: Kelly Faulkner.

Also in attendance: Angela Mason (Head of Primary), Michael Sinanan (Head of Secondary) and Ivan Pryce, (AAT Chief Executive Officer).

Clerk in attendance: Julie Adams.

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

- 1.A The Governing Body **noted** apologies had been received from Kelly Faulkner and agreed to consent to her absence. The Chair noted that apologies had also been received from Andy Whiteside, trustee and Jayne Grey, Head of Centre at Gateway.
- 1.B The Chair reminded that all members of the LGB 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. Briefing and Questions

The Governing Body **received** a briefing from the CEO on the accountability and oversight of the Clarendon new build at Meadlands Drive, Petersham.

The CEO **clarified** the intended pupil profile, explaining it was for pupils with severe learning difficulties but lower support needs, specifically bands 13-14. He described this as a profile that would overlap between Strathmore's highest-attaining pupils and Clarendon's current cohort, aiming to narrow the breadth of need and allow for a rebalancing of pupils across the Trust's schools over time. The Governing Body **noted** this was a significant clarification.

The Governing Body **asked** about the government's push for more children to be in mainstream schools and the potential impact of policy changes on the profile of students sent to specialist schools. The CEO **opined** that this could lead to special schools like Clarendon being overwhelmed by pupils whose parents are anxious about mainstream provision, noting that

parental preference is a powerful factor in placements, but added that the expansion of Strathmore was intended to create capacity for pupils with higher support needs.

The Governing Body **expressed** significant concern and alarm that the pupil profile and operational plans for the new build were not formally documented, repeatedly requesting a written statement or overarching document. The Headteacher **acknowledged** that key decisions were made before he was in post and **agreed** there was value in setting out clear profile guidelines in writing, stating he would analyse recent consultations to ensure sufficient demand for the proposed pupil profile.

The CEO **explained** that a central consultation panel, with representatives from each Trust school, had been established and now meets fortnightly to manage admissions and review all pupil consultations. The CEO provided consultation figures for the current year for Clarendon School: 40 for Year 1, 37 for Year 2, 21 for Year 3, 13 for Year 4, 17 for Year 5, 81 for Year 6, and 60 for Key Stage 3. He also highlighted that there had been 130 consultations for Key Stage 2, where only 16 spaces were available. The Headteacher **explained** that the number of available spaces would probably be fewer than sixteen. He **stated** the consultation panel was initiated to ensure a strategic and collective approach to placements across the Trust, noting that in total they had handled over eight hundred consultations this year. The CEO **advised** that these figures gave him absolute confidence that there was sufficient demand for places.

The Headteacher **confirmed** that the full School Development Plan (SDP) in September would contain a detailed work plan with concrete milestones for the new build, including timelines for staff recruitment and agreeing internal pupil movements. **(ACTION)** The CEO **added** that an old Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Achieving for Children AfC, governing the allocation of places, was being revisited.

A significant discussion was held on the risk of the new build being delayed. The Headteacher **stated** that he and the CEO had received verbal assurances from AfC that they would hold the legal and financial responsibility for educating any new pupils admitted for the new site if the build was not ready for September 2026. The Governing Body **stressed** the significant reputational risk to Clarendon regardless and the urgent need for this assurance to be documented in writing, expressing concern about relying on verbal agreements. The CEO **confirmed** he had stressed to AfC that the Trust could not be held responsible for damaging relationships with families due to building delays and advised that a copy of the extract of the minutes of that meeting would be shared with the LGB. **(ACTION)**

Following a question, the CEO **explained** that all recruitment is managed centrally by the Trust's HR department. A meeting was scheduled for the heads to understand HR's information requirements for recruiting for the two expanding schools at a similar time. He **stated** that the new school buildings would not be filled entirely with new staff, but would include a degree of experienced staff moving over.

The Headteacher **clarified** the phased opening plan. The school planned to open four classes in its first year of operation, five in the second, and two additional classes in the third year, which would include post-16 provision. The CEO **outlined** the recruitment timeline, noting that the first deadline would be in January for the Head of Centre role. The successful candidate would take

up their role at the beginning of the summer term 2026, after which the leadership team would appoint teachers as part of the normal recruitment cycle.

The Governing Body **asked** whether it would be difficult to recruit for the two expanding schools. The CEO **acknowledged** that recruitment fluctuates but it was currently quite easy to find good quality teachers, noting that local primary schools were shedding classes and the national economic situation had an influence. The CEO **mentioned** strategies such as promoting the Clarendon name, considering early career teachers, and taking on two teacher apprentices next year to 'grow their own'. The CEO **clarified** that while the school's leadership team would contribute to what was advertised and how, it was the Trust's responsibility to advertise the roles as widely as possible.

The Headteacher **stated** that operational, school-based planning for the expansion would be a significant focus for him next year. This would include parent communication strategies, recruitment, and resourcing.

The Governing Body **suggested** establishing a working party to oversee the project, though the CEO expressed reservations, questioning its value at this stage and highlighting the risk of duplicating the leadership team's workload. The Governance Professional **noted** that the Trust Board shared the governors' concerns and would not approve the project without sufficient information and assurances. She **advised** that the LGB's concerns could be escalated to the Board via Committee Summary which would be discussed by the Board at their upcoming meetings and through the Chairs Network **(ACTION)**.

The Headteacher **acknowledged** the project's significant impact on leadership capacity, noting that time spent on the new build is time not spent on current provision, and confirmed this risk would be identified as an explicit risk on the risk register and would be managed through the SDP, agreeing that requests for written agreements and formal documentation were reasonable.

3. Update from Strategy Day (Planning for 2025-26)

- 3.A The Governing Body **formally agreed** the areas of focus for the School Development Plan for 2025-2026 which had been fully discussed and reviewed at the Strategy Session.
- 3.B The Governing Body **formally agreed** to carry over the areas of focus for the Governance Development Plan 2025-26 from this years plan as they were still relevant , and timeline for producing the Governance Report 2024-25 by the October meeting.
- 3.C There were no other matters arising from the Strategy Day.
- 3.D The Governing Body **noted** and **agreed** the calendar of 2025-2026 meetings

Supporting papers: Draft SDP priorities 25_26

4. Election / Appointment to key LGB roles for September 2025-26

- 4.A The Governance Professional **advised** that there had been no nominations received for role of the Chair, however, Niall Brady had agreed to remain in role, subject to the agreement of the LGB and Board. The Governing Body **agreed** to recommend the appointment of Niall Brady as Chair to the Board, for a period of one year from 1 September 2025.
- 4.B The Chair advised that Aminta Townshend had advised she wished to step down as vice Chair and Kelly Faulkner had agreed to remain in role as vice chair for a further year, subject to the LGB's agreement. The Governance Professional **advised** that succession planning for a vice chair role should be an action on the Governance Development Plan for 2025-26. Jenny Bissett **advised** that she would be interested in taking on a co-vice chair role. The Governing Body **agreed** to recommend the appointment of Jenny Bissett and Kelly Faulkner as Co- Vice Chair's to the Board, for a period of one year from 1 September 2025.
- 4.C Natalyia **Bennett advised** that she was willing to continue as the Finance Link Governor, however, she would appreciate a co-link being appointed. The Governing Body **agreed**.
- 4.D The Governance Professional **advised** that Chris Buckley-Reynolds, current Safeguarding Link Governor would be leaving the LGB as he would be proposed by the Board to take on the role of Chair of the Strathmore School Local Governing Body. Aminta Townshend **advised** that she is also stepping back from this role, however, would actively support the incoming Safeguarding Link governor. The Headteacher **highlighted** the critical nature of the Safeguarding Link Governor role, particularly with the possibility of an Ofsted inspection at any moment. The Governing Body **agreed** that recruitment should focus on someone who had previous experience in the safeguarding role the Safeguarding Link role. **(ACTION)**. Chris Buckley-Reynolds **advised** that although he was leaving the LGB, he could still be present to offer support as he remains within the trust, should an Ofsted inspection occur.
- 4.E In addition, the Governing Body **agreed** the following Link roles:
- Niall Brady - SDP 4 Expansion
 - Kelly Faulkner – SDP 3 Leadership & Management - with a focus on Stakeholder Engagement
 - Hanna Shepard – SDP 1 Quality of Education
 - Minta Townshend – SDP2 Personal Development
 - Jenny Bissett - SDP 3 Leadership & Management

5. Presentation from on Careers Strategy statement and Policy

The Governing Body **received** a presentation from the Head of Secondary Centre

Michael Sinanan, Head of Secondary Centre **presented** the statement which had been included in the meeting papers. He **explained** that the previous version needed tweaking and that he had worked with the Careers Hub to improve it and include details of the progress made in careers provision over the past year. He stated that the document was now ready to be published on the website and invited questions.

The Governing Body **agreed** that asked the document was comprehensive and agreed to its publication. Subject to recruitment for new governors the Careers Link Governor would be confirmed next academic year.

Supporting Papers: 5. GatsbyBenchmarkScoreJune2025

6. Headteachers Report

The Governing Body **received** a report from the Headteacher CLA-24-5-03 Clarendon School Headteacher Report.pdf [.](#)

6.A General Update and key risks

The Headteacher **introduced** the proposal for the Twickenham Education and Enterprise Campus Hub (TEECH), a collaboration with the head of Capella and the heads of the other secondary campus schools (Richmond upon Thames College and Richmond upon Thames School). He **explained** that the project, prompted by the completion of construction works after seven years, including the sports pitches over the summer, would create a campus identity. The proposal included an opening ceremony with dignitaries invited, a central portal website to showcase the unique nature of the campus, and joint publicity for lettings, and he sought governor approval in principle, clarifying there were no legal implications for Clarendon.

The Governing Body **asked** what the consequences would be if the governors did not approve the proposal. The Headteacher **responded** that it would be reputationally damaging for Clarendon not to participate, especially if dignitaries such as the Mayor of London attended the opening ceremony.

The Governing Body **enquired** about the impact on branding, signage, and security. The Headteacher **confirmed** that individual school identities, branding, and signage would remain unchanged, but there would be a central campus logo and portal. He also **noted** that Clarendon's branding would likely need updating when the new site opens regardless.

The Governing Body **asked** who would manage the TEECH website. The Headteacher **explained** that the College's marketing team would manage it and had also offered to produce a promotional video for Clarendon at no cost.

The Governing Body **enquired** about the financial implications. The Headteacher **clarified** that Clarendon School would only contribute to the costs of the opening ceremony, such as refreshments. He **noted** that the college was covering the website domain and hosting costs, which were approximately £10 per year and £10 per month respectively, and these were not being passed on to Clarendon.

The Governing Body **questioned** the practical arrangements for lettings and how associated costs would be covered. The Headteacher **explained** that enquiries from the central portal would be redirected to Clarendon School and managed by the existing shared premises team under the current Service Level Agreement (SLA), with no additional cost or percentage fee taken. He **highlighted** that the initiative was an opportunity to increase Clarendon's lettings income, particularly from the new Multi-Use Games Area

(MUGA), as current lettings were minimal, and viewed the TEECH project as a way to promote Clarendon's letting opportunities to a wider audience.

The Governing Body **questioned** whether the proposal would improve the relationship with the facilities team. The Headteacher **responded** that it was unlikely to, and might in fact increase the workload for the facilities team if lettings at the secondary site proved successful.

The Governing Body **agreed** to the proposal in principle and commended the Headteacher for progressing the initiative and expressed hope that it would become profitable for the school. The Headteacher **stated** he was hopeful, rather than expectant, that it would generate additional lettings income.

6.B Pupil Numbers for 2024-25 and Attendance

The Governing Body **noted** this had been discussed extensively in relation the new build and pupil demand.

6.C Safeguarding and behaviour

The Headteacher **reported** on a discussion with the Safeguarding Link Governor following a visit, clarifying that a previously identified action related to behaviour and safeguarding reporting would be deferred until the autumn term. He **explained** this was to allow for the transfer of data to the CPOMS system and for the associated categories to be updated first. The Governing Body **agreed** that this should remain as an outstanding action for the next term. **(ACTION)**

6.D Pupil progress and achievements

Angela Mason **reported** that the school received and fully spent the £16,480 PE and Sport Premium grant from the DfE. The primary focus was to increase pupil involvement in competitive sport, which resulted in 60% of eligible pupils participating in activities including boccia, swimming and a cheer event. One pupil participated in a 'fastest girls in the Borough' race and met Olympians.

Governors **suggested** that the DfE's accounting process for this relatively small grant was overly bureaucratic and time-consuming. Ms Mason **explained** that the grant is vital for enriching the primary curriculum, funding activities such as horse riding, two terms of swimming, yoga and Forest School. She **noted** that the funding is not guaranteed past the next year, which would necessitate fundraising to continue these activities.

Ms Mason **noted** that the new digital reporting form was confusing and required the Chair of Governors' sign-off, which was provided. Ms Mason **confirmed** that the report would now be published on the school website.

6.E Receive School Development Plan and Self Review

The Governing Body **noted** that progress on this had been explored in depth during the strategy session.

6.F Visitors Reports

The Governing Body **noted** the detailed visit reports for the .

- 2025 Summer SIP Report Clarendon
- Clarendon Peer Review Discussion 21_05_25 Final.docx
- Helena Moore Clarendon NOA 14.5.25
- Helena Moore Clarendon NOA 25_06_25
- Helena Moore Clarendon NOA 5.6.25

6.G Partnerships and community links

The Governing Body **asked** about further opportunities for multi-site shared events and what the Headteacher's ambition was for Clarendon's contribution to partnerships.

The Headteacher **stated** that the school was exploring joining the 'Open House' initiative, which opens public buildings to the public on designated days. He **explained** this could increase community engagement, reinforce the sense of a campus community, and potentially generate income from lettings, for example, of the MUGA.

The Headteacher **noted** that while links with Richmond upon Thames School were excellent for Year 11 college days, he wanted to develop more pupil-to-pupil connections. He **cited** the example of Strathmore School and the St Richard Reynolds and Russell campuses, where pupils manage a tuck shop and cafe, as a model he would like to see more of. He clarified that adult connections were good, but pupil connections needed development.

6.H Staffing

The Governing Body **noted** the previous discussion regarding recruitment.

6.I Learner, Family and Community Voice

The Governing Body **clarified** that while the trust provides the website platform, it is the school's responsibility to update the content. The Governance Professional **advised** that she would be updating governor profiles over the summer and would also address non-compliance issues flagged by an AI tool called Robin, which had found the school to be approximately 60% compliant, however, the areas of non-compliance are more linked to School Performance tables applicable to mainstream provision.

The Headteacher **reported** that the Clarendon admin team has a task scheduled for the September inset day to tidy the website. This work would include removing duplicate content and replacing images of former pupils with more up-to-date pictures of current pupils.

The Governing Body **questioned** who uses the website and whether it meets their needs. The Headteacher suspected its main use was for checking term dates and staff contacts, and that its primary audience was prospective parents. He also noted that the parent

survey had indicated a desire for a more visible curriculum and specific activities to do at home, which could be added to the website.

The Governing Body **raised** the point that for a special school, it is important for the website to be clear about the needs of the pupils it caters for, such as autism or specific learning disabilities. The Headteacher **agreed** and acknowledged that this was a tricky balance for communications, as it needed to be done sensitively to avoid reinforcing stigma for pupils who also access the site. He confirmed that some of this data, such as the percentage of pupils with an autism diagnosis, was already on the website but conceded the user experience was not as good as it could be, and information could be hard to find.

Governors **suggested** adding questions to a future parent survey to gather feedback on the website's usefulness and what content they would find helpful.

6.J Finance Commentary

The Headteacher **advised** governors that previously incorrect information had been provided regarding a deficit in the Gateway accounts. He **clarified** that this error was identified after the Finance team separated the Gateway accounts from the main Clarendon account as part of due diligence for discussions about Gateway potentially moving back within the Bourne Educational Trust. The Headteacher **confirmed** that Gateway's budget has been relatively stable for the last three years, showing a small surplus each year, with only a very small projected deficit for the current year.

The Headteacher **reported** that following conversations with the Finance Link Governor regarding an action from the last meeting, a voluntary contribution scheme would be launched in September. He **explained** that a link would be added to the Clarendon website to allow parents or other interested parties to make direct donations, with a suggested donation of £10 per month encouraged to fund enrichment and school trips.

6.K Health and Safety / Premises Update

6K. 24.25 Estates Reporting 20.05.25.docx

7. Minutes

7.A The Governing Body **received** the draft minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2025 CLA-24-4-02A Previous Draft Minutes 070524.pdf and **approved** them as an accurate record of the meeting.

8.B The Governing Body **noted** the completed actions from the previous meeting and that
7.C incomplete actions had been addressed during the course of earlier discussions.

7.D The Governing Body **noted** that the latest published Board meeting minutes and other updates from the Board had been published.

7.E Angela Mason, Head of the Primary Centre, **requested** approval for the PE and Sport Premium grant funding report which had been tabled. She reported that the school received and fully spent the £16,480 PE and Sport Premium grant from the DfE. The

primary focus was to increase pupil involvement in competitive sport, which resulted in 60% of eligible pupils participating in activities including boccia, swimming and a cheer event. One pupil participated in a 'fastest girls in the Borough' race and met Olympians.

The Governing Body **suggested** that the DfE's accounting process for this relatively small grant was overly bureaucratic and time-consuming. Ms Mason explained that the grant is vital for enriching the primary curriculum, funding activities such as horse riding, two terms of swimming, yoga and Forest School. She noted that the funding is not guaranteed past the next year, which would necessitate fundraising to continue these activities.

Ms Mason **noted** that the new digital reporting form was confusing and required the Chair of Governors' sign-off, which following the approval of the Governing Body was provided. Ms Mason confirmed that the report would now be published on the school website.

There were no other matters arising that had not previously been discussed.

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

5. Approval of Policies / Statements

The Governing Body **noted** their approval of the Careers Statement and the PE and Sports Premium Statement.

8. Review impact, planned actions and agree feedback to the Board of Trustees

The Governing Body **agreed** that feedback to be provided to the Board of Trustees must focus on the new build project. Concerns were raised about the governance structure, which was seen as overly reliant on two individuals, and it was recommended that a formal working group be established. The Governing Body also highlighted the significant reputational risks and the impact on leadership capacity, requesting formal written agreements to mitigate these issues.

The Governing Body **noted** the actions arising from the meeting.

Number	Extract	Owner	Due Date
1	Detailed work plan to be developed for the new build to include concrete milestones to include staff recruitment and internal pupil movements	ND	ongoing
2	Extract of minutes of meeting with where verbal assurances from AFC that they would hold the legal and financial responsibility for educating any new pupils admitted for the new site if the build was not ready for September 2026 to be shared with the LGB	IP	asap
3	Committee summary to escalate concerns regarding the new build to be completed for the Board of Trustees	ND	01/07/25
4	Recruitment for new governors to specifically address gaps in Safeguarding, Finance and Careers to be undertaken	JA / All	01/09/25
5	Behaviour data - to see if there would be a better way of presenting the data following CPOMS data transfer		01/09/25

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

9. Confidentiality

The Governing Body **agreed** that the discussion at the meeting the background papers and the reports identified as confidential above should remain confidential and excluded from the published minutes and papers.

The date of the next meeting is **1 October 2025 at 5pm**

Niall Brady

Niall Brady (Oct 28, 2025 16:41:33 GMT)

Chair of the Clarendon School Local Governing Body

28/10/25






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Final Audit Report

2025-10-28

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