



**Minutes of Godmanchester Community Academy Local Governing Committee  
held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 7pm**

**Present Governors:** Tess Fielden (Co-HoS TF)  
 Richard Bakker (Co-HoS RB)  
 Theresa Shaw (Acting Chair/Community Governor)  
 Polly Desmond (Assistant HoS/Staff Governor)  
 Millie Beach (Community Governor)  
 Beth Clarke (Parent Governor)  
 Rakhee Easley (Parent Governor)  
 Ann Thomas (Community Governor)

**In attendance:** Antonia Drysdale (ACES Director of SEND)

**Apologies:**

**Clerk:** Whitney Whitham (WW)

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| <b>1.</b> | <b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b>   |
|           | <p>CoG confirmed the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>CoG welcomed the committee and introduced Antonia Drysdale (AD), Director of SEND.</p>  |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Declaration of interest</b>   |
|           | CoG asked LGB to raise any new declarations – there were none.   |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Approval of minutes 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023</b>  |
|           | The minutes of meeting on 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2023 were deemed to be an accurate account of proceedings and signed off by the CoG.  |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>SEND Report – Director of SEND (AD)</b>   |
|           | <p>Co-HoS (TF) confirmed report was received and added to Sharepoint folder today.</p> <p>AD introduced her role for the Trust and shared she has worked very closely with Victoria Stanley and both Co-Headteachers and has felt very welcomed since joining the Trust in September 2022. AD was very impressed with the quality of SEND provision at GCA and the imaginative solutions GCA have put in place for such complex cases. Well done to all the senior team and other staff dealing with SEND. In my role I carry out an annual SEND review for quality assurance, I've supported during ofsted inspection, and we have been focusing on a collaborative approach to SEND across the school. SEND needs are increasing every year and this is why we have had to focus on improving care for the highest level of need in pupils. We have been working with SEND staff to streamline processes and are moving the management of SEND into Arbor (SENDCos across the trust are at different stages with this). I have been delivering CPD to teachers and teaching assistants and providing individual coaching where needed. I am also working on providing additional strategies in the classroom for example with sensory needs. I have also supported with escorting high needs pupils at specialist meetings and attending meetings with the Local Authority regarding resourcing to support the school. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with GCA.</p> <p><b>BC asked AD if she felt her role as Director of SEND for the Trust carries more weight with the Local Authority than that of PD or Victoria Stanley (VS).</b> AD responded that she hopes this to be the case baring in mind her wide knowledge and experience. I can't promise solutions, but I believe we can achieve more through collaboration. We have developed a great relationship with the LA but unfortunately, they do not have any more funding to offer.</p> |

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|    | <p>Co-HoS (TF) shared that it feels as though it is always us knocking on the LA's door and AD has supported with this. VS is relentless with this on her 4 days of working per week.</p> <p>AD shared that VS and I are looking at working with a legal advisor for SENDCos and Headteachers regarding LA responsibility in comparison to the school's. BC agreed that having a legal background herself, this is money worth spending. Co-HoS (TF) asked is there any danger the LA step back from support if they see ACES are coping well without it. The number we are looking at from February is 16 EHCPs which is above national average.</p> <p><b>BC queried is there anything more we can do in terms of reaching out to preschools in preparation for student admissions to GCA.</b> Co-HoS (TF) explained VS has great relationship with our preschools and is extremely organized with booking meetings as soon as we have received confirmation of student placements with us.</p> <p>AD raised that full EHCP funding does not cover a full Teaching Assistant on-cost, so VS has provided amazing creative solutions to overcome this. We will trial 'The Hub' and expect we will start with 5-6 pupils over 3 days per week across all year groups. Age groups are most likely to range from year 2-6 as there are unknowns about the children joining us from EYFS. The aim is for this to become a full-time provision. We do not want to fully isolate students from their classroom setting as we feel this can have some negative impacts to their development. AD advised that Hinchingsbrooke School (HBK) have built a reputation for being great with SEND needs due to their nurture provision and cautioned GCA must take care to clearly label it as a separate provision to avoid being at a financial loss.</p> <p><b>RE raised that in her opinion contact with the teacher would be needed and very important.</b> Co-HoS (TF) explained the hub will be open full time ideally but that doesn't necessarily mean the children will be in there the whole time. AD continued it will remain that Teachers are still responsible for the progress of the child. We explored as a Trust the advanced resource provision however after digging into the detail we would have no control over who came and did not feel it would be funded properly and therefore may have turned out as an additional burden.</p> <p>AD explained headlines of SEND report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is high quality SEND provision in place at GCA</li> <li>• School leaders are committed to meeting pupil need</li> <li>• Leadership is very strong</li> <li>• VS is an asset and it's important GCA are forward thinking in succession planning</li> <li>• GCA behaviour way is very clear</li> <li>• Systemic support for SEND, great resourcing, curriculum structure is supportive</li> <li>• Reading club is a great example of how pupil responsibility is encouraged, and this idea is now being used in another academy within the Trust</li> <li>• It has been clear that every SEND pupil is very proud of their school when I have spoken to them</li> <li>• Ofsted feedback was to ensure all activities are matched appropriately to pupils with send</li> </ul> <p><b>BC asked if AD works closely with transitioning the children at GCA to HBK.</b> AD explained students do not always transition to HBK however there is a transition project for the feeder schools which has been led by Emma Smith. The number of EHCPs is increasing and HBK are finding it equally challenging at present.</p> <p><b>AB asked whether other primary schools across the Trust are matching GCA's excellent provision for SEND as she has heard from many external people that GCA is a recommended local school regarding this area of provision.</b> AD confirmed there is high quality provision across all schools within the Trust.</p> |
| 5. | <p><b>Matters arising and review of action log</b></p>  |
|    | <p><b>PREVIOUS ACTION: TF to contact Godmanchester Time Bank (outstanding)</b></p> <p>CoG confirmed all governors are invited to attend GCA Safeguarding refresher training 1<sup>st</sup> September. BC advised she will be on holiday.</p>  |
| 6. | <p><b>Ofsted visit</b></p>  |

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|    | <p>Co-HoS (RB) shared GCA has started working on an area for development (pupil tasks matching). This point was discussed at a previous governor meeting. <b>RE asked which subjects were noted by Ofsted.</b> Co-HoS (RB) explained Geography had not gone through the same quality assurance as other subjects. AB added that the science subject we reviewed was excellent.</p> <p><b>RE asked whether GCA will be doing a targeted review of all subjects or just Geography.</b> Co-HoS (TF) confirmed will be adopting the same model we have used in Science booklets in Geography. There has been a lot of specialist input into the Science booklet which has helped its development and that is why we will be referring to this as an example. Charlie Pettit is currently working as ACES Science Lead however his role next year will broaden from Science, and we can use his contact base from HBK to support us in Geography and in History. Our focus with all staff will be the appropriateness of tasks. There were examples for improvement in activities in RE and phonics. We have September INSET training geared toward this and will continue training 1:1 and with all staff. We will monitor this via subject leaders. Co-HoS (RB) explained we knew about the Geography point prior to the inspection and agreed with Ofsted's findings on this. <b>AB added the booklet is a tool for the teaching and should continue as a support. We are working on including further primary sourcing in subjects.</b></p>  |
| 7. | <p><b>Reports</b></p>   |
|    | <p>1. Data</p> <p>Co-HoS (TF) shared GCA has achieved positive KS2 results and are above national average across the board. Our combined figure has increased from 65% last academic year to 70%. We have worked hard to target children where there can be improvement. We are in line with our Reading data figure from last year of 78% and are pleased with this however nationally the score has declined. Our Teachers are very happy and will share results with children tomorrow before sharing with parents. KS1 data is very strong as with last year which shows a promise for the years to come. By the time these students reach year 6 we hope our percentage will be in the high 80s. Despite being above national average score, we will continue to push for improvement. We will focus on our year 1 group who are a very mixed cohort due to multiple reasons such as Covid-19 impact which we are still seeing the effects of in their readiness to learn in school.</p> <p><b>BC raised a concern regarding two teachers with poor attendance records and how this may impact the class.</b> Co-HoS (TF) responded we have put many support and monitoring processes in place with these members of staff and are seeing an improvement. We always ensure one of our HLTAs are working in the class so they are ready to cover, and this will remain in place when the current year group advance. There are support plans in place for these children in terms of TA allocation and intervention in their year group compared to others.</p> <p>Co-HoS (TF) raised the timing of our phonics screening test came at a very unfortunate time due to a chicken pox outbreak which will have impacted the data. PD added our phonics lead has been working on a plan for this and we have amended our teaching schedule for further learning consolidation prior to testing. Co-HoS (TF) added there has been an adjustment to the SDP to focus on phonics next year to ensure our year 1 group catches up and there is more regular checking to ensure we do not see a continuing trend. We believe this is cohort specific issue.</p> <p>2. EYFS</p> <p>Co-HoS (TF) shared there has been a good level of development in data in this area.</p> <p><b>BC queried whether GCA has many outside admissions for next academic year.</b> Co-HoS (TF) confirmed there are likely to be some, but this is not confirmed.</p> <p>Co-HoS (TF) shared a new multiplication check test is being implemented. There is no pass mark, we only receive the national mean average which is around 20.5 and our score was 20.05. We are expected to report the percentage of students who receive full marks, of which we had 28%. We are happy with this but here is room for improvement in next year's SDP.</p> <p><b>RE asked if GCA are continuing a social focus with the group.</b> Co-HoS (TF) confirmed we are applying a fully holistic approach. If we could, we would split the cohort into 3 classes to impact the student dynamics however this is not</p> |

possible. One of the perks of PD not being class based next year is there will be additional support for this group. Simon Eardley, ACES Director of Primary Education will be doing some work with Year 2 and the new members of staff to utilize his expertise and support them.

3. Safeguarding

CoG asked if there is a small number of regular concerns on parental capacity. Co-HoS (TF) responded this is not the case, there are many and they are often a secondary tag.

BC asked why there have not been any social care referrals. Co-HoS (RB) responded some children have been moved to family support rather than social care therefore we have not made any new referrals. The number of high-level incidents coming to us has dropped since our last report.

**ACTION: Safeguarding provision must be discussed in September.**

4. Behaviour

RE asked why there was a 3-year plan for the GCA way. Co-HoS (RB) explained it is because the expectations need to be revisited repeatedly to ensure they have become embedded throughout the next academic year. Co-HoS (TF) added we have not experienced the transition and have enabled some uniqueness per class and do not yet know how this will transpire and where it will require reinforcing.

5. Staffing

Co-HoS (RB) confirmed the handover with Emma Smith is going very well.

AB asked if RB is handing over like for like. Co-HoS (TF) explained it is difficult with my personal situation considered therefore Emma is learning more than just RB's role.

BC queried whether those teachers who have been moved classroom/class are accepting of the changes. Co-HoS (TF) confirmed there have been no issues.

Co-HoS (RB) confirmed staff absence has improved.

6. Attendance

PD shared persistent absence is at 8% which is better than national average. We now have a process in place to issue letters to parents. From September we will also utilize arbor for a live tracking of attendance that parents can view which will hopefully work as a deterrent. We are looking at sending automated notifications at 95% attendance to prevent further decline.

7. School priorities

Co-HoS (TF) confirmed there are no premises changes this year that impact children. There is some work to be done over summer including the staff room which will become a meeting room and SLT office. It is not an ideal solution and will be difficult to communicate to staff. The current meeting room is going to be turned into a staff room. It already has a kitchen area, and we will be able to provide a proper dining table and independent space that is more aesthetically pleasing with less school traffic disruption.

8. Catch up money

Co-HoS (RB) confirmed it is being used for reading club however this budget may not go on forever. We have inquired about other ways to keep this going. Co-HoS (TF) stated we feel that the increase in pupil premium next year may cover this. CoG added it's a great feature of the school that is always commented on and was praised by Ofsted.

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|     | <p>AB stated the GCA offer on extra-curricular activities is very extensive. Co-HoS (RB) agreed and stated we are lucky to have this provision and that many of our support staff run these. Co-HoS (TF) paid a huge thank you to K Middleton on the approach to clubs and the thought process behind this that she has led on. The children absolutely love the clubs and the variety is excellent.</p> <p>9. Pulse survey</p> <p>Co-HoS (TF) shared we have reduced the surveys to 3 occasions per year. There are 10 questions per survey, and we can submit up to 3 of our own questions each time. We receive a summary of results and a summary of comments. Workload and response rate can be an issue however we are taking steps to address this. Workload was marked very highly in Ofsted inspection, but we are aware we need to address this with staff although I feel there are some areas that will always be lower. <b>CoG suggested we could contact staff directly for their feedback outside of the surveys.</b> Co-HoS (TF) agreed staff would appreciate this.</p> <p>AB raised that a lot of the lower scores such as financial recognition are out of leadership control so it's about accepting this and zoning in on what can be changed or where there is extra support available. Co-HoS (TF) agreed and shared the current response rate is 21/58.</p> <p>10. School council</p> <p>AT shared that Julie Millard asked for the governors to be informed there are 12 members of the school council who are great at bringing concerns to the table and should be commended. They are working on a healthy school program which is a government initiative to combat obesity. The school must put in for an assessment and depending on the rating the school will receive a certificate of achievement and are entitled to use the 'healthy school' logo for 3 years and will be presented with a plaque. The school council are issuing questionnaires to classmates and producing posters for this scheme.</p> |
| 8.  | <p><b>Governor Recruitment</b></p>  |
|     | <p>Co-HoS (TF) advised that parents were advertised to. Our plan is to readvertise in September to new parents. <b>AB suggested we should put this out on the community page.</b></p> <p><b>CoG added that we will have Chair elections in September and should inform the Clerk to Trustees.</b> I am happy to continue for another academic year but will be stepping down subsequently. I think it is important we appoint someone from the school. <b>We must not to forget to re-elect parent governors.</b></p>   |
| 9.  | <p><b>Governor visits</b></p>   |
|     | <p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CoG to confirm a governor visit date for autumn term (previous action)</b></li> <li>• <b>Co-HoS (TF) to propose LGC meeting dates and visits for next year</b></li> </ul>  |
| 10. | <p><b>Governor CPD Training</b></p>   |
|     | <p>Governors invited to attend September safeguarding training in person at GCA as discussed.</p>   |
| 11. | <p><b>AOB</b></p>   |
|     | <p>ACES/HEART Merger</p> <p>CoG updated the LGC regarding the ongoing unease of all the ACES Heads of School following the breakdown in the merger plans. Governors were aware that a letter from all the HoS had been sent to the ACES Chair of Trustees and Executive expressing their concerns about future plans and direction of travel. A further communication has been sent to the Chair of Trustees from all the LGC Chairs, sadly to date there has been no response. The HoS are meeting with the</p>  |

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|            | <p>Executive Board and several Trustees on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July. Governors agreed that the current situation is of great concern and were surprised by the lack of communication from ACES regarding the merger breakdown and future plans. Co-HoS TF RB agreed to update the CoG following the Executive Board meeting and CoG will continue to update the LGC as appropriate.</p> <p>The LGC paid a huge thank you to Co-HoS RB and gave their best wishes for his future.</p> <p><b>ACTION: CoG requested the notes from last week's visit as soon as possible so we can share with staff.</b></p> |
| <b>12.</b> | <b>Date of next meeting</b>  |
|            | <b>Action: Co-HoS (TF) to put together proposed LGC meeting dates and visits for next year.</b>  |

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