

Dear parent,

As members of Cottenham Village College Local Governance Committee, we wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate the school's achievements over the last year and to give you more information about our work.

As part of the Astrea Academy Trust, the school has a dedicated local committee. You can find out more about us and our remit on the school's website.



We have framed our summary of the last year around the Astrea value partners.

### **Responsibility and leadership**

*"Individuals in the Astrea community are accountable for their own decisions and actions and are supported by strong leaders, while trailblazers are encouraged to develop skills and talents in others. The Trust has a strong commitment to developing and nurturing our own leaders."*

The 2020-21 academic year saw a transition in leadership for CVC with Helen Cassady moving on at the end of the Spring term to a new post with The Active Learning Trust. We are grateful to Geraint Brown who took on the role of interim Principal for the summer term laying strong foundations for our new Principal Zoe Andrews. We are also pleased that Kath Goudie has taken on the role of Deputy Principal. Members of the committee were involved in the appointment of Zoe and are confident that she will ensure that Cottenham Village College continues to flourish providing a fully rounded and exciting education for all our pupils.

This year has also seen changes in the Local Governance Committee. We are grateful to Sean Blandford, Joanne Mills, Kristy Taylor and Sally Roberts all of whom have supported the school over a number of years and wish them well for their future endeavours. We have welcomed two new parent governors, Cerian Webb and Paul Williams, and two community governors, Will Hall and Burcu Benderli, who are looking forward to supporting the school over the coming years. Cerian has replaced Sean as Chair of Governors. All non-staff members of the committee have a specific focus meeting with relevant members of staff and reporting back to the committee: Will - Pupil Premium and fundraising link, Paul - Safeguarding/Behaviour, Cerian - Teaching & Learning. Burcu joined at the end of the summer term and will take on SEND or Curriculum & Assessment. We are currently recruiting for an additional non-parent governor.

### **Enjoyment and innovation**

*"We know that everyone learns best when they enjoy what they do and can follow their innate desire to achieve. Astrea pushes boundaries so that pioneering ideas are tried and tested so that our academies remain leaders in the advancement of teaching and learning methods."*

The 2020-21 academic year was challenging for all members of the community with an extended period of home-school learning in the Spring term, and adaptations to the in-school learning environment to minimise the risk of disease spread. The committee has fully supported the measure the school has taken, including the continuing use of masks in the summer term and will continue to support and measures to minimise further disruption to learning for all pupils. Public Health England praised the school on its strategies to minimise the risk of within school spread of the virus.

In January 2021, all UK schools moved to online learning for the second time since the start of the pandemic. Cottenham Village College were well prepared having already trialled live lessons in the summer and autumn terms. Staff and pupils were quick to adapt with a range of innovative methods used by staff to deliver material and engage students. In early March 2021 Cerian, the link lead for Teaching and Learning, spent a day observing a sample of online lessons across subject and year groups. The lessons demonstrated the dedication by the teachers to ensuring that pupils received the same high quality of education online as within a face-to-face classroom. Staff worked incredibly hard to make sure that all students participated in lessons and were provided with additional equipment and support if needed.



In the summer term members of the committee were finally able to visit the school in person. We observed a range of lessons and were impressed by the calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. We also made use of 'pupil voice' speaking to a group of year 10 pupils who talked positively about their experience of science lessons and excitement to be restarting practical lessons. Watching a teacher simultaneously manage a physics practical in person and ensure that an isolating student was fully included via a live link, left us in awe of the energy and commitment by staff to delivering a high-quality education to all pupils.

### **Aspiration and development**

*"Every member of the Astrea community, from the youngest pupil to the oldest member of staff, is encouraged to cultivate opportunities to grow. We achieve excellence by being inspired to become the best we can be. The progress and well-being of pupils is our top priority, at the centre of every decision."*

Sadly, the 2020-2021 activities week, work experience and many school trips were once again cancelled due to the pandemic. However, pupils were still able to showcase their talents via the lockdown anthology produced by Mr Langley and a virtual Christmas Celebration. In addition, teachers facilitated participation in a wide range of development activities including the UK Mathematics Challenge, the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver awards, virtual careers fairs and the schools own Shine awards. We are grateful to the many extra hours staff have put into providing these opportunities.



### **Collaboration and inclusion**

*"Astrea honours and applauds the differences that make us unique whilst actively seeking and celebrating the common ground that binds us together as a strong community. We work together in a productive environment where dynamic ideas are shared in partnership, so that every member of the community may thrive."*

In holding school leaders to account for the educational performance of the school, the inclusion of all pupils and the response to the most recent Ofsted report, the committee have scrutinised and challenged information presented by the senior leadership team at twice termly meetings. An important focus has been reviewing strategies to improve how the school deals with any bullying incidents and in class behaviour. The governance strongly encouraged the separation between behavioural and homework detentions so that homework detentions can be used to support struggling students. In May, the committee ascertained what arrangements CVC have planned to reinstate Year 10 Science practical lessons and Geography field work, in line with AQA expectations and we were pleased to see hands on

Science practical demonstrations return in the second half of the summer term. The requirement for geography field work for the 2022 GCSEs has been removed by Ofqual.

In support of ensuring committee member's strength and development, members have taken part in Child Protection/Safeguarding/Prevent training and regular governance webinars which are provided by the Academy Trust. Safeguarding updates are presented at our bi-termly meetings alongside statistics on pupil achievement.

The committee were pleased to hear that CVC have implemented strategies resulting in achievement gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students to continue to close. Sean, in his committee monitoring role as Pupil Premium/SEND Lead, identified that doorstep visits were implemented during the national lockdown to support students identified as PP and SEND.

### **Honest and integrity**

*"We are honest and open. Astrea decisions and responses are grounded in time-honoured moral principles that remain constant in the face of challenges and change."*

In the last year we have reviewed policies relating to: safeguarding; behaviour; bullying; alternative provision; attendance; remote learning; and online safety.

The spring term saw the introduction of a weekly parent newsletter which has enabled rapid and clear communication of information to all parents. A parallel newsletter is also produced for staff within school to aid communication across year groups and departments. The committee have reviewed the school website and we will be checking on progress next term.

*The 2020-2021 academic year was a challenge for all education settings, but as Cottenham Village College Local Governance Committee, we are proud of both our achievements, and that of the school's achievements which have reinforced its resilience in dealing with challenges the school, staff and students have faced."*

*Cerian Webb, Chair CVC LGC*