

**GREAT CHESTERFORD [C. of E.] PRIMARY ACADEMY  
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY**

**Minutes of the video-conference meeting held on 16 November 2021**

<b>Membership</b>		<b>Office</b>	<b>Term</b>
Andrew Farrimond	Foundation	Vice Chair	01/09/2024
Alex Jeewan	Foundation	Incumbent	Ex-Officio
Joanna Hancock	Foundation		21/02/2025
Gary Benn	General Member		21/02/2025
Jayne Greenwood	General Member		01/09/2024
* Rachel Thackray	General Member		15/06/2023
Adele Peters	General Member	Chair	21/02/2025
* Laura Saunders	Parent		15/06/2023
Joe Edwards	Parent		TBC
Sarah Mitchell	Headteacher		Ex-Officio
Amy Sargeant	Staff		21/02/2025
Natalie Starbuck	Staff		21/02/2025
* <i>Signifies absence</i>			
<b>Others in attendance</b>			
Tom Bennett	Clerk		

*The Rev Alex Jeewan opened the meeting with a prayer*

	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>61/21 Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Laura Saunders and Rachel Thackray.</p>	
<p><b>62/21 Notification of AoB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil Premium Strategy</li> <li>• Pupil Wellbeing</li> </ul>	
<p><b>63/21 Notification of business interests</b></p> <p>Gary Benn declared that his wife worked for the Academy, and he worked for Eddisons that provided services to the Academy. No other governor declared any potential conflicts of interest with any of the items to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that could be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Academy.</p>	
<p><b>64/21 Covid</b></p> <p>The Headteacher reported there had been no changes to the Covid Risk Assessment put in place for the start of the Autumn term. The changes were in line with Department for Education [DfE] guidance, for example no longer operating in bubbles for all activities. The school was following the guidance from the DfE and Public Health England [PHE] for the cases of Covid that had arisen since the start of the term.</p> <p>Essex CC had asked schools to request that primary aged children carry out twice weekly Lateral Flow Tests [LFDs] to help identify any asymptomatic cases of Covid.</p> <p>The school was amending the form used for those visiting the school as schools are no longer required to carry out contact tracing for PHE. All visitors were also being encouraged to take a LFD and the wearing of face masks is still required (unless exempt).</p>	
<p><b>65/21 Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p>The Headteacher highlighted the following points of her termly report.</p> <p><b>Admissions and roll</b></p>	

The number of children in Reception [24] reflected the low birth rate for the year across Uttlesford district and the school had available some spaces in other year groups.

The school had updated its waiting list of children wishing to join the school by contacting those who had previously asked for the children to be included on the list to confirm that they still wished to remain on the list.

### **Attendance**

The overall attendance total was slightly down due to some children self-isolating at home with Covid, winter colds and some parents taking children out of school to visit family members or for short holiday breaks. The level of attendance was still good especially in the current circumstances.

### **PE and Sports Grant**

With the carry over of the unspent grant from the previous year, the planned expenditure was still being finalised. Once completed, it was **agreed** to circulate it to all governors after the meeting.

### **Safeguarding**

A lot of actions have been carried out during the term including safeguarding training for staff and governors, Fire Marshal training completed by five members of staff and the introduction of monthly online safety newsletters for parents, which have been well received.

A letter has been sent to all parents of Year 6 pupils reminding them of the appropriate behaviour and attitudes expected of their children when in class due to a small fall on previous high standard of behaviour for this year group.

### **Staffing**

Staffing remained a challenge due to Covid, not only at the school but across the sector.

Recruitment for support staff including Breakfast Club staff, Teaching Assistants and Midday Assistants was proving difficult. Other members of staff were having to provide cover that was adding to workloads.

Several staff had been off sick which was putting pressure on the remaining staff to provide cover, and this was beginning to affect staff morale. The leadership team are monitoring staff welfare and the impact arising from the number and length of time that staff are absent.

Performance Management Reviews [PMR] have taken place for all class teachers. Targets from last year were reviewed and new targets set. There remains a focus on subject leadership and development.

Carrie Prior, the school's Diocesan Advisor had planned her first visit of the year for 18<sup>th</sup> November.

Worship has become a blended model of face to face and virtual sessions this term. The school has welcomed back parents for class led Friday worships by having just one class in the hall and the remaining classes Zooming in. This has allowed the school to offer the Zoom option to parents of the class leading the worship.

Two Open Mornings have been held this term for the Reception 2022 intake. These were managed in small groups that, while more time consuming, provided a more intimate view of the school. Responses have been positive from both new parents and those parents with children already at school.

The school would like to do more in contacting and engaging with those parents with pupils already at the school, who had yet to visit the school because their children joined whilst the school was unable to offer in-person tours.

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Volunteers have been involved in school life supporting theme weeks and class events. The leadership team were reviewing how best to provide a safe environment to allow more volunteers to come back to help at school.

#### **66/21 School Development Plan [SDP]**

Amy Sargeant provided an update on the actions that had been carried during the term and the progress made in meeting the key objectives on the 2021-22 School Development Plan.

#### **67/21 Risk Management**

The Headteacher introduced the updated Risk Register and reported that each committee had reviewed the risks that they were responsible for.

The Finance and Premises Committee had reviewed the risk arising from low admissions following the low intake to Reception in 2021-22. There had been a lot of enquiries from parents living outside the school's catchment area that needed to be closely monitored with the new housing development currently in progress and planned in the village.

A lot of the children joining mid-year in other classes had high special educational needs which impacts on the school's staff and financial resources. Although additional funding was available for those children with high needs, it did not meet all the additional staff costs that would put further pressure on staff and school resources.

There was also an increasing risk of a funding gap developing between the funds the school received and the increasing costs arising from higher inflation rates, national pay awards and other unexpected cost rises. The school held reserves that could reduce the risk, in the short term.

The Headteacher reported that she had reduced her working hours to three days a week, working two days as Headteacher and one day as Executive Head Teacher. Amy Sargeant had increased her time as Acting Head of School to three days a week. This current job share arrangement will be reviewed by the end of the year. This has been recorded on the risk register under the Strategic Risk arising from the absence of key persons.

The Headteacher reported that parents would be updated on the changes to the leadership team by January.

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#### **68/21 MAT Development**

The meeting noted the proposed expansion of the trust with a federation of two schools joining the trust would not now go ahead due to the federation's current financial position identified whilst carrying out due diligence on the proposal.

It was reported there was a lack of local schools who wanted to joint a MAT or had not already joined one.

The Headteacher reported she had attended a roundtable of other MAT CEO's/ Executive Headteachers and the Regional School Commission [RSC] to discuss expansion.

Those attending felt the RSC and DfE should consider talking first to Local Authority schools, so they fully understood what it meant to convert to an academy and join a Trust. Many CEOs/ Executive Headteachers felt that it would be useful for RSCs to support introductions between schools and trusts rather than trusts approaching schools direct. It was felt that academisation would not be school's priority in the current circumstances.

Sarah Mitchell, in her role as Executive Headteacher of the Trust, had met with Caroline Derbyshire, the CEO and Executive Headteacher of the Saffron Trust to discuss the Saffron Trust [ST] supporting Debden Primary Academy [DPA].

When discussing future expansion of the MAT, the Chair requested clarity on whether non-Church of England schools could join the MAT and whether they would need to convert to become C of E schools if they joined.

The Headteacher reported the MAT could only join another "Church" MAT, but non-church academies could join the MAT. The Headteacher said that she would look into changes that would need to be made to non "church" schools joining.

The Chair felt it was important there should be positive two-way communication between the MAT's Board of Directors and LGB and have an opportunity to meet to discuss the MAT's future development.

#### **69/21 Policies**

Amy Sargeant provided an overview of and the major changes on each policy being reviewed, and it was **agreed** to adopt the following policies:

- a) Staff Code of Conduct
- b) SMSC Policy
- c) Collective Worship Policy

#### **70/21 Safeguarding**

*[covered in the HT's report]*

### **ROUTINE BUSINESS**

#### **71/21 Chairman's action**

The Chair reported she had met with Melissa Challinor, one of the MAT's Directors and the school's Independent Education Advisor to carry out the Headteacher's Performance Management Review in November.

#### **72/21 Minutes of the previous meetings**

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 28 September 2021 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

#### **73/21 Matters arising**

No matters arising were reported other than those already covered on the agenda.

#### **74/21 Minutes/reports of committees**

##### **a) Finance and Premises Committee [F&P]**

In the absence of the Chair, Andrew Farrimond reported on the committee's discussions at its last meeting held on 3 November 2021.

The committee had reviewed its terms of reference and had agreed not to recommend any changes to them.

The committee had received a report on the audit of the school's annual report and financial statements and internal controls and that no problems had been highlighted.

The committee had spent time discussing IT as this has been a significant item with the school changing IT providers and being in the process of upgrading its main server. Once completed, the main IT focus would be on the financial planning for on-going upgrade of school hardware including pupil iPad and interactive class boards that the Committee would take a lead on.

It was **agreed** Andrew Farrimond would take on the responsibility for the technical provision of IT and Adele Peters would take on and monitor computing as part of the school's curriculum provision.

The meeting noted it was planned to use part of the Condition Improvement Fund [CIF] grant of the Watertightness project to fix the roof over the corridor. To do this,

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AF/AP

<p>the school would need to provide funding of £1,070 from reserves. It was <b>agreed</b> to approve the additional funding.</p> <p>The meeting noted that two bids for CIF grants had been submitted to the ESFA.</p> <p>One bid was for the refurbishment of all the roofs costing in the region of £400k with the school contributing 15% [£60k] from reserves.</p> <p>It had also been agreed to resubmit a previous bid to replace the windows in the listed building costing in the region of £67k with a higher contribution from the school's reserves of 30% [£20k]. The reserves were quite high having recently received the school's pre-academy capital reserve that had been retained by the Diocese at the time of conversion.</p> <p>The meeting noted the Management Accounts for the year ended 30 August 2021.</p>	<p>HT</p>
<p><b>b) Teaching and Learning Committee [T&amp;L]</b></p> <p>The Chair, Jayne Greenwood, introduced the minutes of the last T&amp;L Committee meeting and reported the committee had reviewed their terms of reference and agreed not to make any recommendations to amend them.</p> <p>The meeting noted the committee had agreed to review and approve, as necessary, all curriculum related policies. This would allow these policies to be reviewed in more depth.</p>	
<p><b>75/21 Governor visits</b></p> <p>The Governor visits schedule was discussed at both committee meetings, and it was <b>agreed</b> to upload it, meeting reports and proformas together with the Activity Log onto TEAMS to provide a 'live' and accessible portal.</p>	<p>AS/NS/All</p>
<p><b>76/21 Governor training</b></p> <p>The Headteacher reported she would load the details of all governor training and courses onto TEAMS.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> all governors should submit declaration forms confirming that they had read and noted the statutory guidance on safeguarding to the administration office by the end of the week and that the Headteacher would contact governors direct for any outstanding declarations.</p>	<p>HT</p> <p>All/HT</p>
<p><b>77/21 Any other business</b></p> <p><b>Pupil Premium Strategy</b></p> <p>Amy Sargeant reported that the DFE had released new guidance and a proforma for the school's pupil premium strategy. This needed to be based upon research. Schools were now required to report how they would use the funding over a three-year period. The strategy needs to be completed, agreed, and published on the school's website by 31 December 2021.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> to adopt the new Pupil Premium Strategy.</p>	
<p><b>Pupil Wellbeing</b></p> <p>It was <b>agreed that</b> Joanna Hancock would join Alex and Laura to continue their work on pupils' wellbeing, including reviewing behaviour and recent pupil surveys. They agreed that they would update the LGB at the next meeting.</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>JH</p>
<p><b>78/21 Date/time of future meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuesday 22/03/2022</li> <li>• Tuesday 14/06/2022</li> </ul> <p><i>LGB meetings to start at 7:30 pm</i></p>	

**Approved by the LGB on 22 March 2022**