

**GREAT CHESTERFORD [CoE] PRIMARY ACADEMY
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY
Minutes meeting held on 15 November 2022**

Membership	Type	Office	Term
Andrew Farrimond	Foundation		01/09/2024
Alex Jeewan	Foundation	Incumbent	Ex-Officio
* Gary Benn	General Member		21/02/2025
Jayne Greenwood	General Member		01/09/2024
Wazz Mughal	General Member		01/09/2026
Nick Patterson	General Member		01/09/2026
Andrew Pickering	General Member		01/09/2026
Laura Saunders	Parent		15/06/2023
* Joe Edwards	Parent		14/05/2025
Sarah Mitchell	Co-Headteacher [Joint]	Executive Headteacher	Ex-Officio
Amy Sargeant	Co-Headteacher [Joint]	Headteacher	Ex-Officio
Natalie Starbuck	Staff		21/02/2025
* Signifies absence			
Others in attendance			
Tom Bennett	Clerk		

The Rev Alex Jeewan opened the meeting with a prayer.

59/22	Apologies for absence		Action
	Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Gary Benn and Joe Edwards.		
60/22	Chair		
	The Clerk reported he had received one nomination from Sarah Mitchell that Jayne Greenwood had expressed an interest in being appointed as Chair of the LGB.		
	Jayne had been a governor for over two years and had gained a lot of experience particularly as Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee and governor responsible for SEND.		
	No other nominations had been received.		
	It was agreed :		
	a) that in the absence of a Chair and Vice Chair, Jayne Greenwood should be appointed as the Chair for the meeting.		
	b) To recommend to the Board of Directors the appointment of Jayne Greenwood as Chair of the LGB for the remainder of the academic year.		SM
	c) To transfer Jayne's subject monitoring responsibilities for Geography and History to Nick Patterson.		NP
61/22	Vice-Chair		
	Andrew Farrimond expressed an interest in being appointed as Vice-Chair of the LGB.		
	It was agreed to appoint Andrew as the Vice-Chair for the remainder of the academic year.		
	All governors were asked to consider the role and responsibilities of the Vice-Chair and putting themselves forward for the position in the future.		All

62/22 Notification of AoB

- Support Staff Pay Award

63/22 Notification of business interests

No governor declared any potential conflicts of interest with any items to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that could be perceived to compromise a governor's impartiality when dealing with matters for the Academy.

64/22 Headteacher's Report

The meeting received the Headteachers' autumn term report and noted the following points:

Attendance

- The school average attendance percentage at 3 November 2022 was 96.44% compared to 95.86% at the same time last year and 97.94% in 2020.
- Letters were being sent to parents of children whose attendance levels were slipping in line with policy.
- In the absence of a welfare/ attendance officer who could visit families, parents were being invited into the school to discuss their children's attendance.

Achievement and standards

Pupil progress and standards

- End of Key Stage 2, Year 6 cohort had achieved exceptional results when compared to national data and were significantly higher [>20%] than national averages in reading and mathematics.

Laura Saunders noted the results were consistently above the national averages over the last four years.

- National data for end of KS1 pupils [Year 2] and Early Years Foundation Stage was still not available to allow comparison of the school's 2022 attainment and progress results.
- The KS1 pupils' attainment results had dipped over the past two years due to COVID and pupils not being in school for over two years but had still exceeded the national averages for those years and had improved in 2021-22.
- The results for Phonics were positive but reflected the need to introduce the new Phonics teaching resource for this academic year.
- Early Years Foundation Stage pupils had also been impacted by COVID with pupils not being able to develop their social and emotional skills ready for school.
- The report included an Inspection Data Summary Report summarising the attainment and progress results which Ofsted have access to, to identify any lines of enquiry. Currently there were no lines of enquiry to investigate.

Staffing

- One member of staff remained on long term sick and was being covered by two part-time teachers. There had been no adverse feedback from parents on the temporary cover measures.
- A new therapist had started offering art, play and other types of therapy.
- Recruitment for a MAT Business Manager was on-going following the resignation of current Business Manager, who had agreed to defer her date of leaving to allow time for a new Business Manager to be appointed.

- Staff had undertaken a lot of training during the term on the new Phonics teaching resource, pupil behaviour and SEND.
- The school had retained the staggered mealtimes, introduced as one of the COVID measures, to reduce the number of children using the playgrounds at any one time.
- Staff wellbeing remained a concern and where needed, external agencies were being offered as support.
- More staff were using the staffroom since the end of the COVID measures that had helped improve the informal support and staff feeling part of a collective team.
- Staff morale was improving and had been helped with all staff working and training together on the installation of the new Phonics teaching resource.

Pupil Premium funding, expenditure, and activities in progress

- The Department for Education [DFE] had introduced a new proforma for all schools to use when publishing their strategy on how they planned to use/spend the Pupil Premium grant in supporting children qualifying for free school meals [FSMs] over a three-year cycle.
- The school's pupil premium strategy was published on its website in December 2021 and followed the DfE template.
- The objectives for the Academy's Pupil Premium Strategy Plan were:
 - To achieve and sustain improved attendance for all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils.
 - To continue to meet the well-being needs of all pupils but especially disadvantaged pupils to reduce potential barriers to their learning.
 - To meet Specific Educational Needs across the curriculum with a particular focus on reading, language acquisition and mathematical fluency.
 - To provide opportunities to raise attainment and aspirations through greater exposure to rich life-experiences.
- Part of the plan included supporting qualifying pupils in attending after school sports and other clubs. There had been a marked interest and attendance at clubs.
- The 2022-23 academic year spending plans were based on the pupil census taken in October 2021 and the number of pupils qualifying for FSMs then, which was lower than the current number of pupils qualifying for FSMs.

Andrew Farrimond noted that one challenge facing the school was an increase in parents seeking more support from school and wondered whether this was a challenge that governors could help with.

Sarah Mitchell reported that additional challenges facing parents include financial and cost of living increases and there are more children with special educational needs which increases staff time to work with parents on meeting those needs.

It was felt there may be a role for governors meeting parents on a more informal supporting basis.

Parents also could attend parent drop-in meetings to view their children's work.

Despite the challenges of rising costs for school trips, it was important to ensure that trips were accessible to all children irrespective of the parents' ability to contribute to the trips and events.

The Chair proposed that governors should be involved in the next open day and perhaps at school events such as the Christmas Play.

The meeting noted there had been a very high attendance of parents and some very positive feedback at the open day/afternoon for the 2023 Reception intake with many parents living outside of the school's catchment area.

65/22 School Development Plan [SDP]

The meeting received and noted the highlighted activities [blue] and ongoing evaluation that had been undertaken during the term and the progress being made on achieving the 2022-23 five key priorities within the SDP.

Amy Sargeant highlighted the following activities:

- Key Priority 1 – Early Years Foundation Stage – There had been an overlap with Key Priority 2 - Phonics – in implementing the new phonics scheme with a lot of across the school training spent on phonics this term.
- There had already been a positive impact and progress in reading.
- Andrew Farrimond noted that the need to address writing had been a major objective for the school and asked whether it should be specifically addressed within Key Priority 4: Curriculum Development and Leadership as it was the area of lowest attainment.

Amy Sargeant reported a lot of time and resources had been spent on writing that had been a key priority in 2021-22. It was still being closely monitored and remained a focus for each teacher.

Sarah Mitchell reported the drop in the level of writing was a national challenge caused by COVID and the most difficult part of the curriculum to teach remotely.

Writing remained a priority, however the SLT also needed to focus on other areas for development.

It was **agreed** to include a special report on the level of writing at the school in the Headteachers' report at the next LGB meeting.

HT/ Clerk

66/22 Risk Management

The meeting received and noted the updated Risk Register.

Both the Finance and Premises Committee and the Teaching and Learning Committee had reviewed the risk register at their last meetings and had updated the following risks:

- Risk 2 - Absence of key persons - The risk reflected the difficulties of recruiting a new MAT Business Manager.
- Risk 4 - Funding gap – new mitigating controls had been added.
- Risk 8 - Security – mitigating controls had been updated to reflect the quotes being sought for control access system for the front door.
- Risk 9 - Statutory / charitable requirements -the mitigating controls section had been updated to reflect statutory monitoring of the use and impact of the pupil premium and PE and Sports grants.
- Risk 15 - COVID -19 –the description of the risk had been changed.
- Risk 18 - Financial information accuracy – the mitigations had been updated to reflect the appointment of a new Responsible Office and the recruitment and need for a smooth handover to the new Business Manager.

- Risk 32 – Industrial Action – new risk had been added though it was noted no action was expected before Christmas.

67/22 MAT Development

Sarah Mitchell provided an update on the development of the MAT.

- The MAT had been set up to allow individual schools joining it to maintain their identity and to a large part, their autonomy on their operations and future.
- The long-term view of the Trust is to expand the MAT and increase the number of academies within it to ensure it is financially stable, provide better opportunities for cost savings, shared learning, and staff development.
- To achieve this, the Trustees felt that the minimum number of academies was in the region of five.
- The Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education [CDBD] had reported that some church schools were becoming interested in converting to academies and joining a MAT.
- The MAT did not have the financial capacity to support schools who have financial difficulties.
- Great Oak MAT could not join another non-church MAT.
- The MAT could join the Vine, a MAT set up by the CDBD, a mixture of primary and secondary academies but geographically quite far away.

Andrew Farrimond asked what had been the basis and criteria used when Debden Primary Academy [DPA] joined the MAT.

Sarah Mitchell advised DPA was a church school, was geographically close to GCPA and the MAT believed that they had the capacity and relevant skills to support school improvement at this similar school.

Since joining the MAT, DPA has a new management team, a motivated teaching and support staff, was financially sustainable with growing financial reserves, had raised teaching and learning standards and was now a school “of choice” for families both locally and further afield and had increased pupil numbers from 89 to 131.

Nick Patterson asked whether the reason for expanding was solely financial and how much sharing of teaching and learning practices had there been.

Natalie Starbuck reported there had been a lot of shared practices flowing both ways between the two academies including training on safeguarding, moderating pupils work, joint Year 6 residential as well as administration and central services.

68/22 Policies

a) Health and Safety and Well-being Policy

Sarah Mitchell reported she had reviewed the statutory advice on Health and Safety and Well-being issued by the Department for Education [DFE].

The sections on handling asbestos and management of infectious diseases had been updated.

Andrew Farrimond reported he had received an email from a member of staff highlighting the risk of physical harm from pupils.

It was **agreed** the provisions under paragraph 19 within the policy was sufficient and in-line with the DFE guidance.

Andrew Farrimond also asked who the named governor referred to in Paragraph 17 on Occupational stress was?

Alex Jeewan **agreed** to be the named governor.

HT

It was noted the draft policy had been sent to and reviewed by the Finance and Premises [F&P] committee.

AJ/HT

It was **agreed** to approve the amended policy.

b) Behaviour Policy

HT

Amy Sargeant reported she was currently updating the policy but would like to seek the views and comments of governors.

A discussion followed covering the following areas:

- Violence towards staff and other children.
- Behaviour associated with SEND, looking at whether behaviour is linked to SEND before considering resources.
- Pupils in Early Foundation Stage who were below their statutory school ages.
- Meeting with parents to discuss pupils having reduced timetables.
- The need for governor involvement in the policy.
- Canvassing views from the children and School Council.

It was **agreed** to circulate the draft for discussion at the next Teaching and Learning Committee.

HT

69/22 Safeguarding

Andrew Pickering, the governor responsible for Safeguarding and PSHE reported he had carried out a safeguarding visit and reviewed the structures and systems. One concern had been raised by a parent. He had met the parent with the HTs to discuss the concern and had agreed to review the situation and have a follow-up meeting in the spring.

70/22 Chairman's action

Andrew Farrimond, as the acting Chair since the last meeting, reported the following actions:

- He had received notification of the forthcoming ballot on teachers taking industrial action.
- He had received notification of the new inspection framework to be used for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) from September 2023.
- The school needed to re-engage with the PTA, the Friends of Great Chesterford Primary Academy [Friends] on the schools needs and what they would like to raise funds for.

Amy Sargeant reported that at this stage, the Friends preference was to support for small, "nice to have" projects like iPads, stage handrails, visits from authors and trips rather than large projects.

71/22 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 27 September 2022 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting subject to the following amendment.

Minute 57/22 AOB – Ofsted

*Should read "The school had provided feedback regarding the draft report but had decided **not** to proceed with a formal complaint."*

72/22 Matters arising

No matters arising from the previous minutes were reported.

73/22 Minutes/reports of committees

a) Finance and Premises Committee [F&P]

- The committee had reviewed their terms of reference and had agreed not to recommend any changes to the previously approved terms of reference.
- The governors noted the committee's minutes and the actions agreed at the last F&P meeting held on the 1st of November 2022.
- The meeting noted the Management Accounts for the year ended 30 August 2022 showing that the financial outcome for the year had been better than budgeted and forecast.
- The budget for the current year was very tight and the committee were scrutinising, reviewing and prioritising each capital project where needed.

b) Teaching and Learning Committee [T&L]

- The committee had reviewed their terms of reference and had agreed not to recommend any changes to the previously approved terms of reference.
- The meeting noted the committee's minutes and the actions agreed at last T&L meeting held on 18 October 2022.

No further questions were raised.

74/22

Governor visits

Monitoring visits carried out by governors since the last meeting included visits on:

- PE and Sports
- Computing
- Safeguarding

Monitoring visits were planned for.

- SEND and PSHE

75/22

Governor training

- Jayne Greenwood reported she had been on a training course on The Importance of Vision.
- The current governor training courses available had been circulated to all governors.

76/22

Any other business

Support Staff Pay Award

The Board of Directors had agreed to award all non-teaching staff a pay increase, back dated to April 2022, in line with the local government pay negotiating body, the National Joint Council (NJC).

The NJC had belatedly recommended the pay award for local public sector workers including non-teaching staff that exceeded the pay increase included in the Academy's budget.

The offer means a 10.5% increase for the lowest-paid and just over 4% for higher earners covered by the agreement. The pay increase included in the budget had been set at 3%.

The Board of Directors wanted to remain aligned to national pay and had felt that not agreeing to the pay award would have an adverse effect on the recruitment and retention of support staff.

77/22

Date/time of future meetings

- Tuesday 21/03/2023
- Tuesday 27/06/2023

LGB meetings to start 18:30 hrs.

Committees to arrange dates for meetings allowing sufficient time for the minutes to be prepared and circulated for the following LGB meetings

Approved by the Board on 21 March 2023