

**GREAT CHESTERFORD [CoE] PRIMARY ACADEMY
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY
Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2023**

Membership	Type	Office	Term
Andrew Farrimond	Foundation	Vice-Chair	01/09/2024
Alex Jeewan	Foundation	Incumbent	Ex-Officio
Gary Benn	General Member		21/02/2025
Jayne Greenwood	General Member	Chair	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]		Ex-Officio
Amy Sargeant	Co-Headteacher [Joint]		Ex-Officio
Natalie Starbuck	Staff		21/02/2025
* <i>Signifies absence</i>			
Others in attendance			
Tom Bennett	Clerk		

The Rev Alex Jeewan opened the meeting with a prayer

19/23 Apologies for absence

None

20/23 Notification of urgent AoB

- Staff and governor social event

21/23 Declaration of business interests

Gary Benn declared that he worked for Eddisons who have provided the Academy with building consultancy, design, and project management services.

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

MAIN BUSINESS

22/23 Risk Management

The meeting received and noted the updated risk register recording the major risks facing the school and the actions in place or planned to mitigate their likelihood and impact on the running of the school.

Sarah Mitchell reported the Finance and Premises Committee had reviewed those risks that it was responsible for monitoring at their meeting held on 26 June 2023. The following risks were reviewed and updated.

Strategic Risk – Loss of key persons – The likelihood and impact of this arising were reduced following the successful recruitment of a new qualified Trust Finance Manager, Helen Edwards.

Action

Strategic Risk – Admissions – The committee had agreed to add further mitigations to address the low numbers in the 2023 Reception intake to ensure future years' intakes were fully subscribed by reviewing marketing and open day structures. The dates for these have already been set.

Financial Risk – Funding gap – The committee had reviewed and agreed not to add any further mitigations due to the improvement in the current year's financial forecasts and a planned budget surplus for 2023-24.

Operational Risk – Business Continuity – It was agreed to update the owner of the risk following the change in personnel.

Financial Risk - Financial information accuracy – The committee noted there had been a successful hand-over to the new Responsible Officer and the appointment of the new qualified Trust Finance Manager had reduced the likelihood of this risk arising.

Operational Risk – Staff Morale – There had been no change to the likelihood and impact of low staff morale.

Operational Risk – Industrial Action – The committee had agreed to increase the likelihood from 2 to 3 and reduce the impact from 4 to 3 to reflect the current industrial action taken and planned.

Nick Patterson asked what the cause of the lower pupil intake for 2023 Reception had been.

Amy Sargeant reported the local [Essex] birthrate for this cohort of children was lower than previous years. However, there was a concern that the Reception numbers were lower than other local schools that could be due to current marketing strategy and the need to update some of the facilities at the school.

Sarah Mitchell reported the impact of lower pupils joining the school would be reflected in the following year's DFE funding. The school received in the region of £3,800 for each pupil included on the school's October census in the previous year.

Nick Patterson asked who the school's competitors for pupils were.

Sarah Mitchell reported the school competed against town primary schools in Saffron Walden but more so with private schools in Saffron Walden and Cambridge. Some parents felt that their children needed to go to schools in Saffron Walden in order to continue secondary education at Saffron Walden County High School, which was not the case. Transport was also an issue for village schools. All children in the school catchment for Reception 2023 attending state schools were enrolled at Great Chesterford.

The school had been successful in attracting pupils from outside its catchment area such as Ickleton and Elmdon.

23/23 The Headteacher's Report

The meeting took the Headteacher's Summer term report as read.

Nick Patterson asked a question on attendance levels for SEN and FSM pupil groups and whether they differed from mainstream pupils.

Amy Sargeant reported that targets for attendance levels for SEN and FSM pupil groups were set and monitored, being one of the areas Ofsted reviewed. Attendance levels for these groups were lower and looked worse due to some pupils from these groups being recorded as absent when arriving late in the morning.

It was noted that not all children in these groups had attendance issues.

Andrew Pickering noted that although school average attendance levels [94.76%] were lower than pre-Covid average levels, they were still good.

Sarah Mitchel reported that recent communication with Ofsted recognised 94% - 95% attendance levels as good when compared to school attendance levels nationally.

It was noted that unauthorised absences were high [1.28%] when compared to pre-Covid levels (but still low compared to national levels) and reflected the increase in number of parents working at home, and taking children out of schools for holidays.

Amy Sargeant reported the Academy had been successful in recruiting two new teachers, one an Early Careers Teacher, following the retirement and resignation of two teachers for health and family reasons and one teacher moving and taking up a teaching post at DPA.

The organisation of LSAs/ TA hours was still under review with some children with EHCPs moving to different schools for September and another child with an EHCP application currently being processed.

LSAs/ TAs only needed to provide one month's notice and often changed days worked that made it challenging to provide continuity of support to pupils with additional educational and behavioural needs particularly if notice is given close to or during the summer holiday.

The shortage of MDAs was being covered by the SLT and the headteachers continued to spend a considerable amount of time supporting the behaviour of a couple of individuals within school although this had reduced since alternative provision has been provided for one child.

Nick Patterson asked about this year's unsuccessful bid for funding from the DFE to repair the main roof.

Gary Benn reported that a lot of schools had made applications for funding for building works, some with buildings in a very bad state of repair when compared with the Academy's. The success rate for funding had been between 30% - 35%.

The schools' bid included replacing and insulating all the school roofs that would now be repaired piecemeal where necessary in the short term.

The Chair provided an update on the plan to improve the staff room reporting staff had been consulted on their wishes, an interior designer was helping in designing a space for staff where they could work, rest, and have meals.

Governors were asked for help in emptying the staff room of the old furniture. It was **agreed** to provide dates when governors could help.

[Laura Saunders left the meeting]

Chair

24/23 Pupil Premium

The use of the Pupil Premium grant and the impact on disadvantaged pupils who were eligible for the funding was reported within the Headteachers termly report and on the Academy's website.

25/23 Academy Development Plan/ Self Evaluation

Amy Sargeant highlighted the actions taken and progress made during the Spring term to implement each priority within the Academy's Development Plan for 2022-23.

Alex Jeewan asked whether the implementation of the new Phonics learning resource and training carried out by staff in the Autumn and Spring term was beginning to have a positive impact on pupil's progress and attainment.

Amy Sargeant reported that there had been a marked improvement in the fluency of reading in the Reception and Year 1 reading groups and it was planned to extend the model further within the school.

The meeting noted that under Key Priority 3: Special Educational Needs including Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), the Academy was experiencing difficulty in obtaining quality/timely external support to implementing a whole school approach to SEMH.

Amy Sargeant reported that within Key Priority Leadership, Natalie Starbuck had successfully completed Level 3 Child Protection training and it was **agreed** she should be appointed as the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

HT/ NS

26/23 Management Accounts

The meeting received and noted the Management Accounts for the 9 months to 31 May 2023.

Sarah Mitchell reported that having cut a lot of essential expenditure to ensure the Academy had a balanced budget for 2022-23, the Management Accounts forecast that the Academy would end the financial year with a surplus of £9k.

This has been achieved by the Academy receiving additional funding provided to all schools by the DFE that more than offset additional staff cost expenditure following the Board of Directors' decision to award non-teaching staff a higher than budgeted pay increase in line with the local government pay negotiating body and an increase in the forecast for supply agency staff costs to cover staff with long-term health absences and staff vacancies.

27/23 Budget 2023-24

The meeting received and noted the second draft Budget for 2023-24, that had been considered by the Finance and Premises Committee meeting on the 26 June 2023.

Sarah Mitchell reported that with the higher funding from the DFE [£50k], and savings in teaching staff costs due in part to the recent movement in teaching staff, the leadership team had been able to reverse the budget cuts made for 2022-23, include a 4% uplift for CPI on current year spending and re-invest in curriculum resources, staff training and CPD and maintain a £20k surplus.

It was noted teacher staff cost saving arose in the main from implementing a new model of Planning Preparation and Assessment time [PPA] which was still being finalised. If this could not be implemented, the Academy would need to revert to the current model that would result in an additional cost of around £20k. This would be offset by making £10k of expenditure savings from the planned booster / intervention programmes.

The Capital Budget 2023-24 included an estimate of the unspent capital budget from 2022-23 for completion in 2023-24.

Andrew Farrimond reported the F&P Committee had requested more detail on the top-up SEND income budgeted for 2023-24 as it was significantly lower than the current year.

The committee had also agreed that the costs of the 2022-23 capital projects approved by the Directors would need to be reviewed to take account of the unsuccessful CIF bid and rising costs and would need to be re-presented for approval by the Directors.

It was **agreed** to recommend the second draft of the Budget 2023-24 to the Board of Directors for approval at their meeting on 13 July 2023.

HT

28/23 Policies

Epilepsy Policy

Amy Sargeant reported that a pupil with epilepsy would be starting at the school in September. The school had been advised by the LA Nursing Team that the guidance and

advice for supporting a child with epilepsy was covered within the Academy's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, approved by the LGB in September 2022.

A draft health plan for the child will be drawn up following the home visit and will involve online staff training. The draft plan would be reviewed and updated with the child's parents to ensure it fully met the child's needs.

Andrew Farrimond asked whether the school could offer the child's teaching and support staff one-to-one training if they felt they needed it over and above online staff training.

Amy Sargeant reported that the LA Nursing Team used to provide one-to-one or group training but no longer had the resources.

It was **agreed** to find alternative medical agency/ individual who could provide one-to-one or group training for those that wanted it.

HT/ WH

29/23 Safeguarding children

Andrew Pickering, the governor responsible for safeguarding introduced his annual report and highlighted the following.

- After reviewing the policies and practices including staffing and staff training for safeguarding, governors should be re-assured on their robustness and effectiveness.
- The report included a number of recommendations including making plans in the future to take account of the growing impact on safeguarding from the increasing number children requiring Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) support.
- The report acknowledged the increasing amount of staff resources, particularly leadership time to manage safeguarding that needed to be addressed.
- The final recommendation was a need to review and provide a clearer definition, structure of the respective responsibilities for safeguarding between the staff, the leadership team, and the governor responsible for safeguarding.

It was **agreed** to feedback Ofsted's recent investigation and findings on DPA's management of safeguarding.

HT

30/23 SEND

The meeting received and noted the annual SEND report.

Nick Patterson noted from the report that all children on the SEND Register have been identified as those who have made significantly slower progress than their peers and require additional support and asked the school monitored and provided additional support.

Sarah Mitchell reported that the progress of each pupil at the school was monitored individually, and interventions applied to meet their needs and help close identified progress and attainment gaps.

ROUTINE BUSINESS

31/23 Chairman's action

The Chair reported she had approved expenditure on erecting new fencing to prevent pupil access to air conditioning units.

She had also responded to a letter from a member of staff.

32/23 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 March 2023 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

33/23 Matters arising

Minute 10 - LGB Membership

Sarah Mitchell reported that Gary Benn had decided to step down as a governor at GCPA but would remain a Director for the Trust.

Gary reported he had been a governor for a considerable period and had taken the decision to step down due to increasing work commitments and not have the time to properly carry out his duties and responsibilities as a governor and member of the F&P Committee.

The Chair thanked Gary on behalf of all the governors for his long service as a governor and time and expertise in helping to manage the school's premises and infrastructure.

Sarah Mitchell reported the Board of Directors had agreed to re-appoint Laura Saunders as a General Member following the end of her term as a parent governor. This left a parent governor vacancy on the LGB that would be advertised in September to all parents and if more than one parent wished to be considered, a parent governor election would be held.

34/23 Correspondence

The Chair had received one letter from a parent at the time of the meeting that they would be responding to.

35/23 Minutes/reports of committees

a) Finance and Premises Committee

Andrew Farrimond introduced the unconfirmed minutes of the F&P Committee meeting held on the 26 June 2023 and highlighted the following:

- The committee had reviewed and approved the Budget 2023-24.
- Work to sand and restore the school hall floor would be undertaken during the summer holidays.
- The Academy would revisit and continue to bid for DFE capital funding to replace and insulate the roofs.
- Quotes had been received for replacing the Crittal windows and repairs to Years 3 and 6 classrooms' lower roofs would go ahead as soon as possible.
- The committee agreed to go ahead to find a specialist to produce a specification to improve both KS1 and KS2 playgrounds and seek external funding.
- The committee agreed to investigate costings and the feasibility of installing an air conditioning unit in the main school kitchen.
- The committee agreed to obtain costings to create a meeting room to be used for meetings and therapy work.

b) Teaching and Learning Committee

The meeting received and noted the minutes of the T&L Committee meeting held on 14 June 2023.

No questions were raised.

36/23 Governor visits

Nick Patterson reported he had carried out two monitoring visits to see the teaching of Geography and History. He was impressed by the pupils who were very articulate, knowledgeable and engaged. He was also impressed with the ambition of the curriculum.

Alex Jeewan reported he had visited Reception and had observed Maths being taught.

Joe Edwards helped out at the Sports Day.

Several governors had visited the school to observe pupils taking KS1 and KS2 SATS exams.

Sarah Mitchel thanked the governors for giving their time and supporting events like SATS and Sports Day.

37/23 Governor training

Some governors had completed training on exclusion. No other training had been reported. Governors were reminded to email and provide a certificate to Sarah Mitchell when completing a course of training.

38/23 Term Dates 2024-2025

It was **agreed** to consider and agree the term dates for 2024-25 at the next meeting.

39/23 Any other business

Staff/ Governor Social

Governors were reminded of the staff/ governor social to be held on Wednesday 5th July 2023.

40/23 Date/time of future meetings

It was **agreed** the next meeting would be held on 26 September 2023 and to confirm the dates of the other LGB meetings at that meeting.

Clerk/ HT

All

Approved by the Board on 26 September 2023