

GREAT CHESTERFORD [C.of E.] PRIMARY ACADEMY	LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MINUTES OF THE MEETING	MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2025
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Membership	Type	Office	Term
John Burwood*	General Member		10/09/2028
Joe Edwards*	Parent		14/05/2025
Jonathan Macdonald	Parent		29/10/2027
Sarah Mitchell	Executive Headteacher		Ex-Officio
Wazz Mughal	General Member	Chair	01/09/2026
Andrew Pickering	Foundation		01/09/2026
Nick Patterson	General Member		01/09/2026
Amy Sargeant	Headteacher		Ex-Officio
Natalie Starbuck	Staff		22/02/2029
Rachel Thackray	General Member		18/09/2028
Ros Woodcock	General Member		16/09/2028
Reverend Ella Harris*	Foundation	Incumbent	Ex-Officio
<i>* Signifies absence</i>			
Others in attendance			
Clare Eve		Clerk	

Andrew Pickering opened the meeting with a prayer.

24/25	Welcome and apologies for absence	Action
	The Chair announced apologies for absence from Reverend Ella Harris and John Burwood. Joe Edwards was absent.	
25/25	Notification of AOB	
	There was no notification of any other business.	
26/25	Declaration of business interests	
	<p>a) Rachel Thackray declared her role on the village Parish Council. Jonathan Macdonald declared his wife's leadership of the Smartphone Free School Initiative (to be discussed under AOB).</p> <p>b) No governor declared that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that could or could be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Academy.</p>	
27/25	Risk Management	
	<p>Rank 3: Admissions – updated by the Trustees to include a review of admission arrangements and marketing strategies/publicity. Risk Owners to review website 'Admissions' page.</p> <p>Rank 4: Financial (Funding Gap) – likelihood increased to '4' due to known reductions in GAG funding.</p> <p>Rank 8: Security – risk returned to '3'. No further mitigation required, due to recent installation of Paxton door security.</p> <p>Rank 15: SEND - actions updated by the Trustees to include early budget preparation</p>	

<p>and SENCO recruitment. This can be updated to ‘SENCO induction and training’, following recent recruitment.</p> <p>Rank 18: Parental/community engagement – updated to reflect recent Parent Questionnaire and parent drop-in sessions.</p> <p>Rank 22: Staff Morale – updated to reflect the impact of staff/hours reductions (due to a decrease in the available budget).</p> <p>Ranks 28-30: Trustees have removed further mitigations to items deemed ‘low risk’.</p> <p>Numbers on roll: The board discussed how to improve the mid-year admissions section of the school website to increase applications. EHT suggested a September open day for all year groups to attract people moving to the area and add wording to the website to state that there are spaces further up the school and to contact the school office for more information.</p> <p>The HT informed the board that Saffron Walden schools are over-subscribed and she had enquired about the possibility of a bus to transport SW children to/from GCPA from Essex County Council (ECC). EHT stated this idea has been rejected in the past, due to the distance and cost for ECC.</p> <p>The HT noted several Church of England schools don’t mention named churches on their admissions criteria, in contrast to GCPA which identifies specific churches.</p> <p>The HT stressed the importance of improving numbers on roll, as funding is based on this. EHT suggested adding a page to the school website giving the secondary school destinations of children leaving GCPA to show that children mostly get offered their first choice secondary schools.</p> <p>HT commented that out of catchment children were unable to secure places at GCPA a few years ago, resulting in their younger siblings enrolling elsewhere and also other families believing that it was not worth applying. EHT noted that there is a national declining birth rate.</p> <p><i>Governor K</i> proposed compiling a school marketing pack to distribute to potential home buyers in the village. The Chair will consult his contact at Arkwright estate agents. RT and AS both to speak to a contact at The Hill Group (housing developer in village).</p> <p>Fundraising: The board commended the staff fundraising team for increasing fundraising activity this year. A concern was expressed that it would be unfair to expect the same team to repeat this next year, especially since cuts being made to staff hours would increase pressure on staff. The board discussed the essential fundraising role of ‘The Friends’ and agreed working with them was important. The Chair will try to arrange a meeting with the co-chairs of ‘The Friends’, and JM will invite them to the next Finance & Premises meeting.</p> <p>The board agreed fundraising events outsourced to companies (like ProStrike) should be maximised due to their fundraising benefits and low resource costs to school. <i>Governor I</i> noted they cause little disruption to classroom learning time. HT and Chair to investigate more opportunities like this.</p> <p><i>Governor C</i> commented that focused fundraising projects drive more engagement from families than general school fundraising, and recommended planning three big fundraising projects in the next academic year. HT recommended sharing the playground plans at the Summer Social fundraiser to increase engagement. The Chair</p>	<p>Chair HT + RT</p> <p>Chair JM</p> <p>HT + Chair</p> <p>HT</p>
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	will write a letter to parents explaining what has been achieved with the monies raised this year.	Chair + HT
28/25	The Headteacher's Report	
	<p>Staffing: One teacher has resigned and a replacement teacher has been appointed. One Higher Level Teaching Assistant and two long-term teaching assistants have resigned. These roles have not been advertised due to budget constraints. The HT is in the process of consulting support staff about hours available next term; staffing arrangements for September is subject to change.</p> <p>Primary Admissions: The Reception class teacher has commenced the transition visits for new Reception starters. The Good Level of Development (GLD) assessments are being finalised but are around the 80-83% mark. The Phonics check data is around 76%. The results for some children exceeded expectations.</p> <p>Secondary Admissions: The Year 6 teacher has been overseeing Year 6 secondary school transition events. All children were offered a place at their preferred secondary school.</p> <p>Attainment & Progress: The KS2 results are due in 2 weeks. The school averaged 21.3 on the Multiplication tests, which matched expectations.</p> <p>Monitoring: Following the restructuring of the Diocese education provision, Julie Sarti completed her final visit. The HT acknowledged Julie's valuable contribution to school.</p> <p>Safeguarding: A number of safeguarding incidents were recorded. The HT expressed frustration that consultation with outside agencies proved to be fruitless and slow.</p> <p>Extended Curriculum Opportunities: A high volume of extracurricular activities this term which have included class trips, sporting events and Sports Day with parent picnic lunch. The Music Afternoon and Y5/6 production will take place in July.</p> <p>Ofsted: Ofsted announced a delay to the planned new model, following feedback from their survey. Routine inspections are delayed until November.</p> <p>PE and Sports Grant: The Sports Premium will only be available for one more academic year, further impacting next year's budget. Uttlesford Schools Sports Partnership (USSP) service costs increase sharply from September. These factors will likely reduce the competitive sporting activities available to children.</p> <p>General: <i>Governor G</i> asked if the children not meeting the Phonics screening target was expected. The HT explained this was expected to an extent, due to the diverse learning styles of children. <i>Governor K</i> asked if these children will be given extra support. The HT confirmed they will be given support. <i>Governor I</i> noted there is a specially designed Phonics 'catch-up' module for this purpose and that phonics did not always work for all children.</p> <p><i>Governor C</i> asked about recommendations made during the Diocese visits. The EHT stated these visits will become more focused from September. The board agreed topic-focused reports would support the School Development Plan.</p> <p><i>Governor C</i> asked about the planned reduction to the Reception class teacher's hours. The HT will be teaching the class to cover these hours. Teaching Early Years will help the HT get to know the children and families. The two TAs in the class are qualified teachers who can step-in on occasion, if required.</p>	
29/25	Pupil Premium	
	This was reviewed last year and is covered in the SEND report. Pupil Premium numbers are lower this year. The Pupil Premium grant will continue to be used to support the	

	needs of children; funding clubs, trips, music lessons, uniform etc as well as some focused academic and pastoral interventions.	
30/25	School Development Plan/Self Evaluation	
	<p>Teaching Writing: Time will be spent at the in-set day in July consolidating a consistent approach to the teaching of English in school. The time spent developing Writing in the autumn and spring terms is reflected in the progress made throughout the year.</p> <p>Writing: KS2 outcomes are pleasing and Early Years children have made good progress.</p> <p>DT, PE and History: These have been focused on this term. A progression document has been created for History, to clarify themes. All teachers have taught the new DT unit, which has received a positive response, especially the cooking elements.</p> <p>Whiteboard use: A staff meeting has been held on the use of mini whiteboards and their effectiveness as a teaching tool.</p> <p>On-going Learning Behaviours: Children in EYFS are visibly engaged with their work and keen to share it with staff. There are many opportunities for younger children to work with older children to improve their social skills and aid learning. Collective Worship is an effective forum for older pupils to role model good behaviour to younger pupils. Transition activities will be supported by Growth Mindset principles. A MIND practitioner will run a third group of 'Emotion Explorers'.</p> <p>Potential areas for development next year: Induction of the new SENCO, leadership of LSAs, SIAMS, Music and the continuation of DT development. A new PSHE scheme will be introduced.</p> <p>Music – a visit has been made by the Britten Sinfonia and children have participated in 'Uprising' - a community-based, ecologically themed opera, performed at Saffron Hall.</p>	
31/25	Management Accounts	
	The management accounts for the nine months to 31.05.25 were received and noted. JM highlighted the forecasted small surplus of £3,000. This is after the playground improvements, door security project, roof repairs, IT server update and staff laptop costs have been accounted for. Whilst a surplus is positive, JM anticipated this diminishing over time.	
32/25	Budget 2025-26	
	<p>The board received and noted the draft 'Budget 2025-26' and the comments of the Finance & Premises (F&P) committee on their review of the draft budget.</p> <p>The Finance & Premises Chair noted that the F&P budget is balanced but will be under significant pressure once the General Annual Grant (GAG) reduces in response to decreased numbers on roll. This amounts to an approximate £50,000 shortfall in funding next year. Support staff hours will be reduced and those leaving will not be replaced. The board agreed that it is not sustainable to expect remaining staff to do more to cover these losses. <i>Governor C</i> noted the high expenditure on building repairs this year. <i>Governor F</i> stressed the importance of increasing students on roll to improve the finances.</p> <p>The 'Budget 2025-26' was approved by the LGB.</p>	
33/25	Safeguarding Children	
	The annual Safeguarding Report was received and noted by the board. The Safeguarding Governor concluded that safeguarding procedures and ethos in school were well	

	<p>managed, adding that school does all that it can to keep children safe. The board agreed that the new door security system had increased school security. The Safeguarding Governor raised a concern that the perimeter wall remains a weak point.</p> <p><i>Governor K</i> commented on the importance of monitoring attendance, since children ‘missing in education’ are at increased risk of safeguarding issues. <i>Governor K</i> reported experience of inadequate support from external agencies in addressing this issue.</p> <p>Behavioural incidents involving a small number of children have been reducing term by term. One complaint had been received; the HT and Chair met with the family concerned and created a plan to mitigate concerns going forwards.</p>	
34/25	SEND	
	<p>The annual SEND report was received and noted by the board. The members commended the SEND Governor on their comprehensive report.</p> <p>There are currently 20 children receiving SEND support.</p> <p>An external Link Educational Psychologist recently visited the school, commenting on how well supported children with SEND are. They had no further recommendations due to the high level of support already being offered.</p> <p>The ECC SEND Operations Partner is unresponsive to emails, which presents an on-going challenge. A new school nurse has been appointed and representatives from MIND have visited school. The SEND Governor has liaised with the Chief Finance Officer at the Trust, to better understand SEND funding.</p> <p>The SEND Governor confirmed all One Plans are recorded and accessible and the SEND information on the school website is up to date and legally compliant.</p> <p>The SEND Governor noted the lack of Educational Psychologists delays the formation of EHCPs, presenting serious challenges for the children needing extra support.</p> <p>The SEND Governor congratulated the HT on the fantastic job she has done covering the SENCO role this year, especially given her other duties.</p>	
35/25	Chair’s Action	
	<p>The Chair has signed-off staff sickness cover to cover long-term absence, completed the interim Performance Management Review of the Headteacher, signed the laptop leases and started the Parent Governor election process.</p>	
36/25	Minutes of the previous meeting	
	<p>The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 18 March 2025, were confirmed and approved by the board.</p>	
37/25	Matters Arising	
	<p>Item 19/25 – JM and the Chair to discuss how the LGB should manage press releases going forwards.</p>	
38/25	Correspondence	
	<p>The Chair had received correspondence regarding the Smartphone Free School Initiative, to be discussed under Any Other Business.</p>	
39/25	Minutes/Reports from Committees	
	<p>a) Finance & Premises Committee Minutes. These were agreed by the LGB.</p> <p>b) Teaching & Learning Committee Minutes.</p>	

	These were agreed by the LGB.	
40/25	Governor Visits	
	<p>JM is due to attend the upcoming Music Afternoon.</p> <p>AP has made a safeguarding visit this term, an RE theme week visit and attended Collective Worship. Visiting two Friendship Groups, AP praised the successful introduction of the concept of spirituality during RE week.</p> <p>RT supported the supervision of Y6 SATs and is planning to meet Miss Thorburn.</p> <p>The Chair has met with the HT, attended Collective Worship and supported at cricket events and Sports Day. The Chair commented on the happy, polite children at the School Council Lunch he attended and remarked on the pleasant environment in school.</p> <p>RW has met with the HT and observed small group SEND support. RW attended a school play and volunteered as a 'Mystery Reader' at Book Week, as well as giving SATs support. RW is planning a 'Precision Teaching in action' visit.</p> <p>NP visited during SATs week, has volunteered as a 'Mystery Reader' and visited Early Years children. NP reported witnessing good teamwork between children and an enthusiasm for Bible stories.</p>	
41/25	Governor Training	
	<p>The EHT reported an ongoing problem accessing governor training records on the NGA website but is working to resolve this. The EHT asked all governors to complete a module of training before the next meeting.</p> <p>JB (via the Chair) has attended a ICAEW trustees refresher update course.</p>	All
42/25	Any Other Business	
	<p>Governor Social: to take place on 19 July 2025.</p> <p>Parent Governor opening: Candidate nominations have been received by the Returning Officer. All governors were invited to attend the count at 4:30pm on 14 July.</p> <p>Press releases: The Chair and JM to discuss.</p> <p>Smartphone Free School Initiative: The Chair has received emails from parents in support of this. The initiative is in response to a broad survey consulting parent views on a united ban on smartphones for primary school aged children. The results showed most parents supported the ban so a phased implementation has been proposed. The initiative is supported by four Saffron Walden primary schools and SWCHS. The board discussed this issue, noting the parent emails in support of it and confirmed that GCPA already has a ban on smartphones in school. The LGB agreed to join the initiative. The Chair and HT will write a letter to parents informing them of the plan to join the initiative.</p>	Chair + HT
43/25	Date/Time of Future Meetings	
	<p>The board agreed the following dates of future meetings, to be held at 6:30pm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, 30 September 2025. • Tuesday, 11 November 2025. • Tuesday, 10 March 2026. • Tuesday, 23 June 2026. 	
	Minutes approved by LGB, signed and dated by Chair:	

