

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

Minutes of the video-conference meeting held on 22 March 2022

Membership		Office	Term
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
Vacancy	General Member		
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

* *Signifies absence*

Others in attendance

Tom Bennett Clerk

The Rev Alex Jeewan opened the meeting with a prayer

1/22 Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Gary Benn.

2/22 Notification of AoB

- Wellbeing Group

3/22 Notification of business interests

No governor declared a potential conflict 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. No items were declared that would require listing on the gifts and hospitality register.

MAIN BUSINESS

4/22 Risk Register

a) **Leadership**

The Chair reported she had discussed a request from the Headteacher to permanently reduce her hours from 60% to 50% (to work as Headteacher for 30%) for personal family reasons. This had been approved by the Board of Directors and the Academy would need to recruit a Co-Headteacher for four days a week.

The Headteacher provided an overview of the process to implement the new leadership structure and that currently the decision was still confidential to the Board of Directors and LGB. She planned to advise the staff and parents of the proposed changes at the end of the week and that an advert for the new position would be placed shortly after.

The MAT Board would be setting up a recruitment panel to interview and select the final candidates that would include representatives from the GCPA LGB as well as a representative from the Diocese (Deputy Director of Education, Interim).

Action

The Headteacher advised she would be providing details of the dates when the panel would be meeting for interviews.

The Headteacher reported she had sought advice from the Academy's external HR advisors who had confirmed the Trust could advertise the post internally.

It was **agreed** that governors wishing to be a member of the recruitment panel should advise the Headteacher.

b) Risk Register

The meeting considered the updated risk register.

The risk register had been reviewed and updated at the recent meeting of the Finance and Premises [F&P] Committee to reflect a few changes since the last meeting.

The committee had reviewed the funding gap risk and had increased the likelihood considering the rise in inflation and in particular energy prices. However, the committee felt the Academy's strong reserves mitigated the impact and risk from the increase in prices and costs on the school's operations.

The committee had reviewed school security and were evaluating the installation of an access control for the recently replaced glazed front door.

The committee had reviewed the risk on admissions with the potential for a significant increase in applications for places due to the new houses being built within the village and catchment area. It was felt the increase in new residential housing would not lead to an immediate increase on admissions and it was **agreed** to monitor the situation regularly.

It was noted the Academy had received a higher number of mid-year admissions including a significant proportion with higher educational needs.

5/22 Headteacher's Report

a) Spring Term Report

Amy Sargeant highlighted the following key points of the Headteacher's Spring Term Report

Primary Admissions

The Academy had received more applications for the thirty available places in the 2022 Reception intake that have been ranked in accordance with the Academy's Admissions policy. Thirty of the applications were from families within the school's catchment area and others outside.

Comments received from parents applying had highlighted parents were attracted to the school due to it being a Church of England School and its strong Christian ethos and culture.

Secondary Admissions

All children leaving the school had secured their preferred secondary school choices.

Attendance

Attendance levels were lower but in line with national averages. This was mainly due to the Spring term Covid outbreak across the school; more parents had also been more careful and had not sent children to school with potential symptoms such as high temperatures; a few parents had kept children off school due to concerns of their child catching Covid.

In line with regular attendance monitoring, letters had been sent to parents where their children's attendance was poor or a cause for concern.

Achievement and standards

The results of the Year 2 Phonics check showed that 86% of children had achieved the expected level which was a good reflection considering their starting points.

All

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The school was planning for the return to pre-Covid Statutory Primary Assessments for the current academic year.

The Teaching and Learning [T&L] Committee had reviewed the targets set for the end of the academic year and had agreed they did not need amending to reflect the ability of children joining and leaving the school since the beginning of the year when the targets were set.

Safeguarding

There had been one fixed term exclusion for one day for a pupil using inappropriate behaviour and one reported e-safety concern that has been logged and the parents informed.

Staffing

Staffing was the biggest challenge facing the Academy now with both short-term and long-term absences.

Staff absences due to Covid and other illness had been very high this term which was having a major impact on staff well-being across the school. The leadership team have been challenged having to take-on increased teaching commitments while also supporting staff during these challenging times.

A Learning Support Assistant [LSA] had requested a term of unpaid leave to support her family while two MDAs were on maternity leave. Added to this, there were unfilled vacancies for a Breakfast Club supervisor and LSAs. Adverts have gone out for these positions but there had been limited interest due to the hours and pay levels for these positions.

It was **agreed** to ask the external after-school clubs' provider whether they would be interested in supervising / running Breakfast Club.

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The Headteacher reported recruiting for staff vacancies was a national problem and there was very limited capacity within schools to provide cover. Outside agencies were expensive but they too had a shortage of available staff.

It was **agreed** staff needed to be commended for being flexible in their time and willingness to provide covering when vacancies arose.

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Building works

P. Woods had completed the watertight project over the link corridor during the February half term break.

Ground works

During half term, the Astro turf area around the tree in the KS2 playground had been completed. The children were very happy with new surface, and it had significantly reduced the amount of mud being trailed into the school.

Performance management of staff

All teaching staff have had their performance management meetings for target setting. Teaching and learning mid-year reviews were scheduled to take place by the end of term. Monitoring of teaching and learning, including coordinator roles, had been impacted by high levels of staff absence and low staff morale this term.

Church School

At the end of the autumn term, the school had held a whole school virtual Christmas service led by Rev Alex Jeewan and was planning an Easter Service in the church for all children and staff.

Collective worship had remained a hybrid version of both face to face and virtual services during the spring term.

Carrie Prior, educational advisor for the Diocese, had visited the school on 1st March 2022 and following a tour of the school was impressed with the evidence of school's vision and values in all classrooms as well as the RE work on display and Archbishop of York's Young Leader Award implementation.

Highlights

Highlights so far for the spring term included:

- The installation of the new IT server;
- Maths parents workshop held via Zoom with positive feedback.

Challenges

- Covid – outbreaks have put additional work on staff and increased anxiety.
- Very high level of pupil and staff absence in February.
- Recruiting staff
- Supply cover – due to staff absence and limited supply, the amount of release time for subject monitoring has been impacted.

Continuing Professional Development

Natalie Starbuck had been very busy reviewing and leading the Religious Education Curriculum. This has included the introduction of the Archbishop of York's Young Leader Award for pupils in Year 4.

Calendar of events for Spring Term 2022

One of the highlights of the term's events had been the Fitness Theme Week. The children had really enjoyed working with other classes and the school was looking into organising more activities to allow different groups to work together.

A lot of school trips have taken place including trips to museums.

Governor monitoring visits

The Headteacher thanked those governors who had had meetings with subject leaders who valued their support and the ability to share some of the challenges as well as the highlights facing teachers and support staff.

b) SEND Peer Review: Self Sustaining School Improvement Collaborative Challenge Cluster

The Headteacher reported of a visit by headteachers from other schools to carry out a peer review of practice with a focus on SEND. It had been a very positive day with many areas of strengths highlighted and some constructive recommendations received where further developments could be made specifically regarding SEMH (Social, Emotional & Mental Health).

6/22 School Development Plan [SDP]

The meeting noted the updated SDP 2021/22 and the progress being made in achieving the key priorities highlighted in green in the "ongoing evaluation" column.

The Headteacher reported a lot of work had been done on Key Priority 4 – to support and develop children's social, emotional and physical well-being.

The school was using some of the PE and Sports Premium grant to fund an external agency called Kick to provide a coach one day a week to help deliver the PE curriculum and to provide one-to-one mentoring for pupils. Kick had been recommended by other schools and would help support both sport and mentoring at the school.

Joe Edwards asked whether there was any scope for Kick to supervise the Breakfast Club.

The Headteacher advised that she would discuss this with Kick.

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The Headteacher reported governors were welcome to visit to engage and share views with the children on the school's council.

Governors were also welcome to join the school's collective worship that would also be recorded as a governor monitoring visit.

It was **agreed** to circulate the dates for future collective worship to all governors.

HT

7/22 Safeguarding

Joanna Hancock, the governor responsible for safeguarding and child protection reported she and Amy Sargeant, the Designated Lead for Safeguarding [DLS], had attended a safeguarding forum run by Essex CC. Jo had also undertaken a full-day training course on safeguarding and resources are available to all governors on the Academy's Teams files.

It was recommended that a governor needed to complete the Safer Recruitment Training course.

8/22 Admissions

The Headteacher reported Essex CC had updated their procedures for mid-year admissions and that they would no longer be involved in forwarding applications from parents to the schools that parents wished their children to attend. Parents would now send the application forms direct to their school[s] of choice.

Essex CC had provided guidance and training to all school on how to manage the new procedures.

The Headteacher reported the new procedures would not affect the Academy's current admission policy or the appeal procedures where a school was unable to accept a new child at the school.

Laura Saunders asked whether there were any concerns on the changed procedures.

The Headteacher reported the change was quite simple, any issues would arise when parents applied for places when the school was full. The school would not be able to know if the parents had applied to other schools that may be more suitable for their children.

Amy Sargeant reported the school had received enquiries from four families considering looking after Ukrainian children. The Academy had not received any guidance from the DFE or Essex CC on dealing with these applications and what support the school would receive when accepting these requests.

It was **agreed**:

- a) To ask Essex CC for any advice on the procedures and funding for children of migrant families;
- b) To discuss the matter with Headteachers of other schools
- c) To consider and report on the impact on future year school admissions.

HT

9/22 Policies

a) Exclusion Policy 2022

It was **agreed** to adopt the Exclusion Policy 2022.

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b) Business Continuity Plan 2022

The meeting noted the Business Continuity Plan, including the appendices, had been reviewed by the Finance and Premises [F&P] Committee at its last meeting.

It was **agreed** to adopt the Business Continuity Plan 2022.

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ROUTINE BUSINESS

10/22 LGB Membership

The meeting noted the current membership of the LGB, and that Rachel Thackray had stood down due to family commitments.

The Chair reported that she herself would be standing down as a governor at the end of the academic year.

The Chair felt it was important for the governing body to review what skills and experience it may need to strengthen it before advertising for candidates to fill these vacancies.

With the Chair standing down, the governing body would need to consider who it wished to take on the role as Chair.

It was **agreed** that any governors considering becoming Chair should contact the current Chair and Headteacher to fully understand the responsibilities, skills and time commitment required.

All

11/22 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 16 November 2021 were **approved** as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

12/22 Matters arising

All matters arising from the previous minutes had either been completed or were covered on the agenda.

13/22 Committee Reports

a) Finance and Premises [F&P] Committee

The committee chair, Laura Saunders, highlighted the items discussed at the recent F&P Committee meeting. It was **agreed** to circulate the minutes following the LGB meeting.

The meeting noted the financial reports for the period to 31 January 2022 and the explanations provided for the changes to the forecast income and expenditure totals and surplus now expected for the year.

Andrew Farrimond reported the Academy would know by the next LGB meeting whether it had been successful in its applications for funding from the ESFA's Condition Improvement Fund [CIF] to replace/ refurbish the roof and windows in the listed building.

LS/
Clerk

b) Teaching and Learning [T&L] Committee

The meeting noted the minutes of the [T&L] Committee meeting held on 8 February 2022.

The committee chair, Jayne Greenwood, highlighted the following points:

- The committee had reviewed the process for reviewing curriculum policies and invited all governors who had not already done so to comment on the updated review process.
- The Covid 19 measures had disrupted the governor monitoring visit programme that had been rescheduled following the relaxation of the measures and guidelines that all school should follow.
- The committee had reviewed the data from the assessments completed at the beginning of January. The data for EYFS highlighted that since the end of the Autumn term the predictions for the number of children achieving the Good Level of Development [GLD] standard had fallen due to increased need of some children in specific areas.

All

- The committee meeting minutes detailed the current challenges facing the school together with the achievements since the last meeting.
- The Year 6 Residential Trip would be going ahead.

14/22 Chair's action

No actions had been taken by the Chair or Vice-Chair on behalf of the governors since the last meeting.

15/22 Correspondence

Refer to confidential minute.

16/22 Governor training

The Headteacher advised she would email details of the dates and times of any upcoming training courses to all governors.

17/22 Any other business

Wellbeing Working Party

Laura Saunders reported Alex Jeewan, Joe Edwards, Jayne Greenwood, and she had met to discuss further the way the school currently supported the wellbeing of both staff and pupils and whether further support could be provided.

One recommendation made had been to hold a summer social event for staff and governors to allow staff to discuss issues and challenges and feel better supported by governors.

18/22 Date/time of future meetings

- Tuesday 14/06/2022 at 19:00 hrs, in person at the school.

Approved by the LGB on 14 June 2022

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