

## GREAT CHESTERFORD [C. of E.] PRIMARY ACADEMY

### LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the video-conference meeting held on 29 June 2021

| 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 |
| 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        |
| Nick Rowe        | Co-opted       |            | 31/08/2021 |
| 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*

#### 19/21 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies, the Chair welcomed Joe Edwards to his first governors' meeting.

#### 20/21 Notification of urgent AoB

Subject Access Request [SAR].

#### 21/21 Notification of business interests

Gary Benn declared that his wife worked for the Academy, and he worked for Eddisons that sometimes provided services to the Academy. Rachel Thackray declared she was a Parish Councillor and on the Friends of Great Chesterford Primary Academy Committee [PTA].

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.

### MAIN BUSINESS

#### 22/21 MAT Development

The HT reported the Directors would be next meeting on 15 July 2021 and would consider the questions raised and feedback from the governors of both academies at the recent consultation meeting.

The HT had attended a meeting with the Regional School's Commissioner [RSC] to discuss the announcement made by Secretary for State for Education on the 28 April 2021 on encouraging more schools to join Multi-Academy Trusts [MATs]. No timeframes had been given on schools joining MATs. The RSC advised they were there to encourage and support MATs in expanding and taking on more schools.

Action

Those attending advised the RSC that they 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 felt that it would be useful for RSCs to support introductions between schools and Trusts. It was felt that this academisation would not be school's first priority while having to manage COVID-19.

## **23/21 Risk Management**

### **a) Covid Risk Assessment**

The HT highlighted the colour coded changes that had been made to the Covid Risk Assessment since the last meeting.

There had been no further information or guidance from the government and local authority and no indication on the likely guidance from September.

A key issue facing the school was managing parents' expectations on being able to come into school. Currently, parents were not allowed into school as part of the measures put into place to maintain social distancing.

The school was trying to use the outside spaces for teacher meetings and school activities as much as possible, weather permitting.

There had been a slight relaxation in the measures to allow singing within "bubbles" and group seating for pupils in Year 1.

It was noted that it was a challenge for staff with the lack of adult face-to-face contact, in addition to the constant pressure on keeping pupils and other staff safe.

The school was looking at other ways of supporting staff, but the weather had not helped in providing opportunities of coming together outside.

Alex Jeewan advised he was available to any staff finding the isolation particularly difficult.

The Breakfast Club had re-opened for a small number of children and the new STEM Hub was being used for this. Working well in terms of space and own external access into the KS2 playground. Swimming classes had resumed and were seen to be a positive benefit to the children in Years 3 and 4, being involved in activities outside school.

### **b) Risk Register**

Gary Benn reported the Risk Register had been reviewed and updated where necessary at the last Finance and Premises Committee [F&P] meeting.

There had been a few amendments to the governor responsibilities listed on the register following the retirement and appointment of new governors.

A new risk had been added to the register for SEND. The increased numbers of pupils within school with a high need had greatly increased. This high number impacts on the school's finances, resources, and staffing. The school is required to fund the first £6k for each child with high education needs with the LA funding the balance, in arrears.

Other risks where changes have been made were: staff morale and admissions. Staff morale has been impacted due to the pandemic and operating within these challenging restrictions. Numbers in KS1 would be monitored given the low numbers in the Uttlesford area for the 2021-22 Reception intake.

The Chair reminded governors to review and monitor the areas on the risk register that they were responsible for.

## **24/21 The Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher introduced her summer term report and highlighted the following:

## **Pupils on Roll**

The school had recorded the highest number of children joining and leaving the school. Most children had moved out of the area with several relocating to be closer to extended families and some parents had moved their children to independent schools. The school had also admitted a large number of pupils moving into the area.

## **Attendance**

The attendance figures had been exceptionally high with children keen to return to school after lockdown and the school closure. The high rate also reflected that parent felt the school was a safe place for their children.

There had been a slight upward increase in the number of parents taking children out of school for weekend breaks recently, this will be closely monitored in September.

## **Primary Admissions**

There were 24 confirmed pupils for September 2021.

Transition activities have been adjusted due to the current social distancing requirements. In addition to nursery visits/contacts, the following activities had been planned:

- An evening meeting for parents via Zoom;
- Two outdoor story telling session for children;
- Home visits (outdoor) will be taking place in July to allow parents to ask individual questions or raise concerns.
- The Summer term transition afternoons will be replaced by 'Stay and Play' transition sessions at the start of the Autumn Term in small groups.
- There may be a Teddy Bear's Picnic if the current guidelines and DFE guidance permit this.

## **Year 6 transition / leavers' activities**

No secondary schools planned to hold a transition day for those joining them due to COVID-19. Several SWCHS Year 7 pupils had visited the school to meet Year 6 pupils. The school had managed to arrange more activities for Year 6 pupils than in 2020 to celebrate the end of their primary school education. Staff have been most generous in giving their own time to facilitate transition activities.

## **Profile of Identified Groups within school**

There were currently 10 pupils with Education and Health Care Plans [EHCP] at the school and there would be more with the new cohort in 2021-22, which was higher than the national average.

The school was required to fund the first £6,000 for each child with a EHCP and applied for "top-up" funding from Essex CC that is always paid in arrears.

The higher number of parents choosing the school for the children with high education needs was due to a variety of factors including: the school's reputation and success in supporting this pupil group, families moving into the area and the high number of children with high needs in Uttlesford.

## **Pupil Premium and SEN Attendance**

Ofsted Inspectors, during an inspection, always focused their time on children in any vulnerable group, their attendance and needs and how well the school used Pupil Premium funding to support them.

A lot of Pupil Premium funding was used on providing additional staffing for additional teaching, one-to-one support, learning mentors and other activities such as art and play therapy that were very helpful and in high demand.

### **Pupil progress and standards**

Due to Covid-19, statutory primary assessments have not taken place during this academic year. The teacher assessments for the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 will be shared with governors once completed.

### **PE and Sports Grant**

The Secretary of State for Education has confirmed that the unspent PE and Sports Grant for 2020-21 arising due to school closures would be carried forward to the next academic year, which will be very important to help children post lockdown.

### **Governor Monitoring**

The increased involvement of governors in the monitoring of specific subjects and coaching subject leaders has been very well received. Staff have felt valued, and these subject dialogues have supported them in their own monitoring and action planning for their subject throughout the school.

### **Staffing Update**

Covid 19 has had an impact on staff morale and the senior leadership team were trying to support all staff during this challenging time. Examples included providing additional time for planning, preparation, and assessment [PPA] and report writing time as well as one-to-one support. Planned staff meetings were also reviewed to ensure that time was being used in the most helpful way.

Being able to share and collaborate with other teachers helped morale but was difficult to arrange while maintaining social distancing between teaching staff and pupil "bubbles". There were outside areas that teachers could meet safely, weather permitting. The school provided an outsource wellbeing service that staff could access if necessary.

The leadership structure had changed with Amy Sargeant now leading the school on two days per week, as Acting Head of School. This has been very successful and well received by all stakeholders. This has provided the HT more time for her Trust work and it has been a very positive step in managing both roles.

The current Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator [SENCo] had decided step down as and a new SENCo has been recruited and will start in September. There will be a full year's transition to provide a comprehensive handover from the current SENCo whilst the new post holder also completes the SENCo qualification. SENCo hours have been increased from one day to one and a half days next year due to the high number of pupils within school with an EHCP.

The hours of the Assistant SENCo will be increased next year from half a day to one full day to provide additional support for the increased number of children with high needs.

**25/21**

### **Assessment**

Rachel Thackray provided a presentation on assessment.

The presentation showed how the school sets targets and assessed pupils' attainment and progress; provided Year 1 to 6 data for all subjects as well as data compared to targets set for reading, writing and maths.

The presentation also set out how early years were assessed, how Covid had had a temporary impact on assessment and attainment throughout the school, the current

trends that would impact on the school's overall assessment and what interventions were being used to address gaps in achievement and progress.

The Chair thanked Rachel and advised the meeting that the data would be updated with the final outcome data and reported at the November meeting.

## **26/21 Academy Development Plan/ Self Evaluation**

### **a) Academy's Development Plan for 2020-21**

The meeting received and noted an update on the progress being made to implement the Academy's Development Plan for 2020-21.

No questions were raised.

### **b) Academy's Development Plan for 2021-22**

The HT set out the following areas for development in 2021-22;

- Social, emotional, and physical well-being;
- Early Years Foundation Stage - new curriculum, base-line assessment, enhance outdoor provision;
- To consolidate and develop English across the school;
- Foundation Subject Leadership and Development;
- Governance.

## **27/21 Budget 2021-22**

Laura Saunders reported the draft budget had been reviewed by the F&P Committee at its last meeting.

2021-22 would be another financially challenging year with the draft budget showing a small surplus of £2k.

The Department of Education had not confirmed whether further COVID-19 funding would be made to help children catch-up. Further funding for the additional teaching pay and pension costs that came into effect on 1 September 2018 and 1 September 2019 would not continue.

The draft budget for catering and breakfast income had assumed the level of school meals and number of children using the Breakfast Club would return to pre-Covid levels, however the return may take longer.

The draft budget total for each expenditure line had been set very tightly and there was little room for any movement on the budget set.

The school had been unsuccessful in its bid to the Condition Improvement Fund [CIF] to fund the capital works to replace the windows in the listed building. The draft capital budget included a provisional sum of £400k for the future repair or replacement of the school roofing that would be needed shortly. Funding the repair and replacement of the windows and roofing may have to be partly funded from the school's reserves.

It was **agreed** to recommend the draft 2021-22 Budget to the Trust's Board of Directors for approval.

## **28/21 Policies**

### **a) Homework Policy**

HT

Amy Sargeant reported the Homework Policy had been updated following the parent survey. It was **agreed** to approve the policy.

HT

**b) Educational Visits Policy**

HT

The Education Visits Policy had been updated using guidance from Essex CC. It was **agreed** to approve the policy.

**c) Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) Policy**

The school had taught PSHEE during 2020-21 including the changes required for Relationships and Education (RSE). The new RSE provision becomes statutory for all schools from September 2021. The policy was **approved**.

HT

**29/21 Safeguarding children**

The meeting received the annual safeguarding report that had been prepared by both Amy Sargeant and Jo Hancock, the governor responsible for safeguarding.

Jo Hancock reported she had reviewed the safeguarding records and confirmed all the policies were up to date, all designated senior staff and other staff had undertaken appropriate training and all safeguarding procedures had been properly followed. apart from a few occasions when some external building contractors had not followed the correct procedures.

It was **agreed** all governors should complete NGA safeguarding module and/or attend the training in September (certificates are required) considering the new statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" being introduced in September 2021.

All

**30/21 Special Education Needs and Disabilities [SEND]**

Jayne Greenwood, the governor responsible for SEND, introduced the annual report on the statutory provision made by the school to pupils with SEND.

As previously noted, the proportion of children with high learning and behavioural needs had risen and was higher than a normal school of the same size. This had had an impact on the school, its funding, the recruitment and number of staff and their deployment. It would also have an impact on the school's overall assessment results.

Rachel Thackray asked whether teachers received a minimum level of training.

SEND training was part of Teachers CPD and the level of training was dependant on the learning and behavioural needs of children in each class. Courses and training for children with SEND were available to all teachers and support staff.

**ROUTINE BUSINESS**

**31/21 Chairman's action**

The Chair reported that no urgent action taken by the Chair or Vice-Chair since the previous meeting.

**32/21 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 March 2021 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

**33/21 Matters arising**

Matters arising from the previous minutes had either been completed or were included on the agenda.

|       |   |           |
|-------|---|-----------|
| 34/21 | <p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>The Headteacher reported the school had received a Subject Access Request [SAR].</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> that any governors holding information relating to the applicants should forward it to the school by the 2 July 2021 to allow the SAR to be completed within the required timeframe.</p> <p>There was no other correspondence relevant to the Governing Body.</p>  | All       |
| 35/21 | <p><b>Minutes/reports of committees</b></p> <p>a) <b>Finance and Premises Committee</b></p> <p>Laura Saunders summarised the key items from the committee minutes.</p> <p>The school was looking at acquiring a new server and increasing ICT support to meet growing ICT needs.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> to contact all parents to find any parents with ICT skills who could potentially support the Academy.</p> <p>b) <b>Learning and Teaching Committee</b></p> <p>Nick Rowe summarised the key items from the committee minutes. Much work had been done with the governors meeting with the subject leads at school and this had been very beneficial for both parties.</p> | HT        |
| 36/21 | <p><b>Governor visits</b></p> <p>The meeting noted the Record of Governor Visits for 2020/21 that had been quite extensive despite the circumstances preventing governors visiting the school.</p> <p>Natalie Starbuck reported staff appreciated having the opportunity to speak to and share with governors how they their subjects were taught and the challenges they sometimes face.</p>   |           |
| 37/21 | <p><b>Governor training</b></p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> that all governors should attend the new safeguarding course on 1 September 2021, if possible or alternatively do an equivalent course in a timely manner. Certificates of all courses completed should be forwarded to the HT (Link Governor).</p>   | All       |
| 38/21 | <p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> that the Chair and the Chairs of the F&amp;P and T&amp;L committees would meet to discuss how they could thank staff for all they have done this year.</p>   | Chairs    |
| 39/21 | <p><b>Date/time of future meetings</b></p> <p>The meeting received a list of provisional meeting dates for the 2021-22. It was <b>agreed</b> to find an alternative date for the Summer LGB term meeting outside the meeting and circulate the amended list of meeting dates to all governors.</p>  | HT/ Clerk |
| 40/21 | <p>The meeting ended with the Chair repeating her welcome to Joe Edwards the new parent governor. The Chair then thanked Nick Rowe, who will be stepping down at the end of August, for his hard work and support as a parent governor – particularly in his roles as Vice-Chair and Chair of Teaching and Learning. The Headteacher also expressed her thanks to Nick Rowe, on behalf of the whole school community, for all his hard work and support – his thoughtful feedback and gratitude was always greatly appreciated by the staff.</p>  |           |

**Approved by the governors on 28 September 2021**