

Great Oak Multi Academy Trust
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 017

Directors	Office	Term
Andrew Armour		23/12/2020
* Gary Benn		23/12/2020
David Boatman	Vice Chair	23/12/2020
Melissa Challinor		23/12/2020
Lisa Jeremy		23/12/2020
* John Luke		23/12/2020
Sarah Mitchell	Executive Headteacher	Ex-Officio
Andrew Taylor	Chair	23/12/2020
Vacancy		
Vacancy		
In attendance		
Tom Bennett	Clerk	
* indicates absence		

The EHT opened the meeting with a prayer

Action

67/17 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Gary Benn and John Luke.

68/17 Notification of AoB

- MAT Office

69/17 Notification of business interests/ Self Declaration

No Directors declared any potential conflicts of interest on any matters to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that could or be perceived to compromise a their impartiality when dealing with matters for the MAT.

70/17 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2017 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

71/17 Matters Arising

All the matters arising from the agenda were covered on the agenda.

72/17 Governance

a) LGBs

The meeting received and noted the minutes of the GCPA LGB meetings held on 26 September 2017 and 7 November 2017 and the DPA LGB meetings held on 29 June 2017, 13 September 2017 and 2 November 2017.

It was noted Gau Gurung had stood down as a governor on the DPA LGB for personal reason. Gau was the representative from Carver Barracks. Fifty percent of the children at DPA come from Carver Barracks and it is important they are represented on the LGB. It has been difficult to build links with Carver Barracks due to the fact that a lot of families are posted to the barracks for only two years and it was difficult for representatives to attend if they were on active service.

It was **agreed** to contact the representative from the Carver Barracks who is a governor on the Joyce Frankland Academy Newport FGB to see if he could help find a replacement governor to represent the parents and children from Carver Barracks.

The meeting discussed the current situation with Oliver's Lodge who run a breakfast and an after-school club at DPA. Issues had arisen on cleaning and there being sufficient staff to meet and receive children being dropped off for the breakfast club. Parental complaints had been made about the problems they were encountering with accessing the club in the mornings. Concerns were also raised regarding there being only one staff member in the morning. In addition to inconvenient routines these points also raised health and safety issues. There was an impression by some that there had also been a deterioration in the relationship between Oliver's Lodge and the school. The Chair of the DPA LGB had written to Oliver's Lodge to raise these concerns.

Oliver's Lodge had responded informing the school that due to the low number of pupils attending, in particular the breakfast club, it was no longer financially viable for them to continue to run the breakfast and after-school clubs and they will stop providing pre and after school clubs in February 2018. Oliver's Lodge have offered to provide a collection service from Debden to take children to the after school club in Newport but this was not seen as a positive alternative by the families using this service. Following this decision, a number of parents were considering withdrawing their children from the school.

Andrew Armour felt it was important the school offered a breakfast and after-school clubs to attract and retain new pupils and help build up the pupil roll. He had been in contact with the company who was in the process of setting up an after-school club in the Great Chesterford community centre, to investigate whether he could provide an after-school club at DPA.

It was noted GCPA operated its own breakfast club using its own staff and several families used Saffron Walden's Oliver's Lodge for after-school provision.

It was **agreed** the final decision on the provision of pre and after-school clubs should be made by the DPA LGB. However, in order to prevent the current situation escalating and parents deciding to take their children out of the school due to lack of pre and after school provision, it was **agreed** the EHT would contact Oliver's Lodge to ask whether it would be financially viable for them to provide an after-school club and discuss with the DPA HT whether the school could operate a Breakfast Club and Andrew Armour would continue researching other options including talking to other providers.

EHT/ AA

The meeting discussed the effectiveness of the current governance arrangements at DPA and it was agreed the LGBs of both schools should be aligned with the MAT's overall governance, strategy and direction. The MAT's Board of Directors had the powers to appoint and remove the members of each LGB's, if necessary, to ensure this happened.

It was **agreed** there should be a team-building session with the governors of each school and the Directors on a topic that would be of interest to all, such as Ofsted inspections. Anne Fisher, the MAT's independent education advisor had been approached by the EHT to provide this training with a date to follow.

EHT

b) Audit Closing Meeting – 8 November 2017

Andrew Armour introduced the minutes of the audit closing meeting held with the MAT's auditors, Price Bailey and highlighted to following points:

- The meeting had received and considered the draft audited Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year to 30 August 2017 and the Auditor's draft Management Letter to the Directors.

- The auditors had recognised the problem in the provision of financial management information due to the IT system change and that it is currently being addressed.
- The financial statements had been drawn up under the Charities SORP 2015 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2016 such final accounts can be more difficult to interpret.
- The MAT leased the school building and land from the Diocese of Chelmsford free of charge. However, the financial statements include an annual charge for the lease based on the insurance value of the buildings, with a corresponding income amount as donated facilities received.
- Under emerging issues, the meeting had discussed the implementation of the new General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR] regulations that need to be in place by May 2018, together with a more rigorous financial penalty regime.

The EHT advised the MAT was working with the local consortium of schools on implementing the new GDPR provisions and appointing a consortium Data Protection Officer. It is planned to have a pre-implementation data audit to ensure the MAT will be compliant with the new provisions.

The EHT reported the auditors had offered to help in setting up the Audit Committee and establishing a programme of business. The auditors commented that the MAT had made a really positive start given the short time it had been in operation; many other MATs were yet to set up audit committees as required by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The meeting noted there are currently three vacancies on the Audit Committee following the resignation of Joanna Grandfield as a Director and Joanna Francis as the independent member. There had already been a vacancy for another independent member, as set out by the MAT's articles of association. It was **agreed** to review the Audit Committee membership at the next meeting.

Clerk/
Chair

It was **agreed** the Audit Committee's programme of business should include reviewing and monitoring the Academies' and MAT's Risk policies.

c) Financial Regulations

It was noted the Financial Regulations had been updated, reviewed and agreed in May 2017 and it was **agreed** to adopt them as they stood for the current financial year.

d) Governance and Financial Oversight

The meeting noted the governance and financial requirements (the "Musts") provided by the Auditors setting out the Director's responsibilities as included in the Academies Financial Handbook. It was **agreed** the Audit Committee should include these as part of their annual programme.

Clerk/
Chair

73/17 Corporate/ Strategy

a) Update on the MAT Development Plan

The EHT provided an update in the development of the MAT and that the Academy had been contacted by the HT of a local primary school to arrange a meeting to discuss the benefits of being part of a MAT.

GCPA had worked well with this School in the past and will be working with them informally in the Spring. This is a strong school that has recently been assessed as "good" by Ofsted.

The EHT has also been contacted by the HT of another school who was interested in what the MAT offered.

b) 2017-18 School Development Plans for each Academy

The meeting received and noted the progress being made on each of the Academy's SDP.

74/17 Safeguarding

Lisa Jeremy, the Director responsible for Safeguarding at the MAT provided her termly report and highlighted the following points:

- She had completed Safeguarding Level 3 – Designated Leader training in Safeguarding.
- She was now in touch with Jo Barclay and her team at Essex Safeguarding Children Board on providing the MAT with news/termly updates and details of training courses.
- She and the EHT were drafting a report showing the MAT's and schools' safeguarding responsibilities and reporting systems including the use of standardised monitoring forms. The draft report will be presented to each school and the Board in the New Year.
- She and the EHT plan to carry out a safeguarding walk-through with the DPA HT and governors responsible for Safeguarding at each school.
- The DPA HT has completed a Fire Warden on-line training during the summer holidays and the GPCA Deputy HT completed a Safer Recruitment course in Autumn 2017.

The EHT reported she will be attending a Designated Safeguarding Lead Refresher course in January 2018.

The EHT reported there have been one referral and two fixed term exclusions, one at each school.

It was **agreed** that both schools need to have a consistent policy and approach when dealing with pupil referrals and exclusions.

EHT

75/17 EHT's Report

The EHT introduced her report that included the 2017 pupil progress and attainment results for both schools and the targets for 2018. The following points were made:

- The outcome from the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools [SIAMS] at DPA was 'Good' and the joint working involved provided a positive example of the successful collaboration between the two schools.
- Data scrutiny, learning walks and monitoring visits by the MAT's independent education advisor, the EHT and SMT's at both schools had identified a number of action points to be addressed, mainly at DPA.
- The MAT needs to focus on raising standards in teaching and learning at DPA, ensuring there is consistency across the school and implementing a robust monitoring programme by all stakeholders including directors, governors, the external advisor and staff to ensure progress is being made.

David Boatman asked what progress had been made at DPA over the past year.

The EHT reported Year 6 at the school had made really good progress and the school had received a good outcome from the recent SIAMS. The MAT had also received a positive letter from Essex CC on the progress being made.

David Boatman asked whether the MAT had sufficient Leadership and Management Capacity to meet the challenges of setting up the MAT and improving the standards at DPA as the EHT was having to spend a disproportionate amount of her time in trying to meet them.

Concerns were shared regarding monitoring feedback; pupil progress and negative parental feedback and all agreed that all stakeholders need to embrace any work required on improving standards at DPA. The issues raised on challenging classroom behaviours, staff turn-over and the decision by Oliver's Lodge to end the pre and after-school was having a negative effect on parents with some withdrawing their children from the school.

David Boatman reminded the meeting the Board had the powers to address the issues on leadership and management as well as governance.

It was important to provide sufficient resources to help the EHT in setting up the MAT and improving the standards at DPA. The ESFA had provided £40k for these purposes and the MAT could use this funding to "backfill" the EHT's time and provide capacity to address these issues.

Andrew Armour suggested the MAT should use the DPA's funding allocation to fund the additional work needed to improve the performance and standards at DPA.

The EHT reported she was spending additional time covering the Business Manager who was currently off temporarily on sick leave and would have more time on her return.

It was **agreed**:

- a) To consider and prepare a proposal on obtaining additional capacity and resources to help in setting up the MAT and raising the teaching and learning standards at DPA including options on how this will be funded. EHT
- b) To draw up and implement a robust monitoring programme at DPA by the external education advisor, SMT, governors and directors. EHT
- c) To review the MAT's current governance, leadership and management once the current interventions have been implemented and reviewed. Chair

76/17 Finance

a) Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year to 30 August 2017

The meeting received and noted the draft audited Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year to 30 August 2017 the Auditor's Management Letter. These had been reviewed and discussed in detail at the Audit Closing Meeting held on 8 November 2017.

It was **agreed** to adopt the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements and Value For Money Statement included in the Annual Report.

b) Requests for expenditure above EXCEO approval limit

None

c) Requests for expenditure from Local Governing Bodies/ Committees

The EHT had received a request for more funding to implement a number of changes at DPA. It was **agreed** to consider the request at the next meeting and subject to the monitoring programme being put in place. Clerk/
Chair

77/17 Personnel

a) The appointment and departure of staff to satisfy itself on the operation of appropriate policies

The meeting noted two part-time administration assistants and a teacher had resigned at DPA and a teacher was leaving GCPA.

David Boatman reported that he and Melissa Chalinor had conducted an exit interview with one of the administrative assistant and planned interview the other in a week's time. They would also be interviewing the two teachers and will consolidate their findings and provide a report to the next meeting.

DB/MC

The EHT reported that due to the timing of the notice given by the DPA teacher, i.e. in the middle of the academic year when few teachers are looking for new opportunities at other schools, it is likely DPA may need to use more expensive agency staff to cover the period before a new teacher is appointed.

The EHT reported the decision by the DPA administration assistants to leave had provided an opportunity for the MAT to centralise more of its accounting, HR and administration services. One of the administrative assistants leaving DPA had expressed an interest in joining the MAT's centrally administered services. This will help strengthen the MAT's central services operations.

b) the MAT's pay policies and the structure of the pay bands to be operated and the extent of the EHT's delegation to make decisions on pay

It was noted the Board had reviewed and agreed the new teacher and non-teaching staff pay bands at its last meeting.

78/17 EHT and HT's Performance and Pay

The meeting noted and **agreed** the EHT's 2017-18 objectives, targets and development priorities.

The Chair reported he would be holding a review meeting with the EHT and Anne Fisher' the MAT's external education advisor, to review the progress being made on the current year's objectives.

79/17 Any other business

None

80/17 Date/time of future meetings

- Tuesday 22 May 2018
- Tuesday 17July2018

All meetings start at 19:45hrs

Signed by AndrewTaylor [Chair] on 13 March 2018