

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2017

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
Joanna Grandfield		23/12/2020
* Lisa Jeremy		23/12/2020
John Luke		23/12/2020
Sarah Mitchell	CEO [Executive Headteacher]	Ex-Officio
Andrew Taylor	Chair	23/12/2020

In attendance

Tom Bennett Clerk

* *indicates absence*

[Sarah opened the meeting with a prayer]

Action

12/17 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Lisa Jeremy.

13/17 Notification of AoB

Debden Primary School planning permission.

14/17 Notification of business interests

- a) Gary Benn reported he worked for Ingleton Wood who had been appointed by Great Chesterford [CoE] Primary Academy [GCPA] to provide building consultancy and project management services. He also reported that his wife worked as a Teaching Assistant at the school.
- b) No other Director declared a potential conflict of interest with any items to be discussed at the meeting.
- c) No Director declared giving or receiving a gift or hospitality that could or be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Trust.

MAIN BUSINESS

15/17 Future Development of the MAT

The meeting discussed the future development of the MAT and made the following points:

- The main objective of the MAT should be to use the strengths within both schools to raise the standards across both schools.
- Collaborating in sharing practice and resources, such as subject leaders, will raise standards at both schools.
- The immediate goal is to raise the overall standard at DPA to a level of being consistently good by next summer.
- Over the longer term, the MAT should look to strengthen its position, resources and ability to provide outstanding standards by seeking other schools / academies to join the Trust.
- MATs with three to five academies allow more economies of scale in the deployment of resources as well as better career opportunities for staff and staff retention.

- The MAT needed to be able to demonstrate that joining a MAT was beneficial, as a lot of local primary schools were interested in the success of the new MAT.
- There was an increasing economic pressure for primary and secondary academies to join MATs.
- The Great Oak MAT was the only Church of England MAT in the local area.
- Following the change in government's academisation policy, the MAT had more time to establish itself as a successful MAT before seeking other schools / academies to join the Trust.

It was **agreed** the first priority should be to consolidate the MAT's current operational arrangements until such a time when it is fully operational and then advertise that it is seeking other schools / academies to join the Trust.

16/17 Governance

a) Articles of Association

The Chair provided an update on the approval of the new Articles of Association. They had been approved by the Charity Commission, Department for Education [DFE] and the Chelmsford Diocese [Diocese] and had been submitted to Companies House for approval. Approval was subject to Companies House receiving a formal resolution to adopt the Articles in their entirety that would be submitted immediately after the meeting.

b) Scheme of Delegation

The Chair reported that the Scheme of Delegations had been reviewed by the working party of Directors set up at the last meeting. The Delegation List had been amended and aligned so they were the same for each school and a comments column had been added as agreed.

The Local Governing Bodies [LGBs] of each school had met and had reviewed the revised Scheme of Delegations. GCPA's LGB had proposed the scheme of Delegations should include specific provisions for representations by LGBs and parents on some of the decisions that were made by the Directors, such as the appointment of the LGB Chair and HT. DPA had proposed that the Scheme of Delegations should include a new provision that LGBs should maintain a Church of England ethos.

Andrew Armour reported the revised Delegation List did not reflect the Board's agreement that the LGB's should propose the achievement targets for approval to the Board who would make the final decision.

It was **agreed** to update the Schemes of Delegation and Delegation Lists and to circulate them with the minutes.

Chair/
Clerk

17/17 Policies

The meeting considered a list of statutory and non-statutory policies, highlighting those that the MAT and LGBs were responsible for.

The meeting considered whether all the current policies could be adopted "en masse" by the MAT so it was compliant and for them to be reviewed over a period of time.

It was noted some of DPA's current policies differed to GCPA's, such as policies on staff conduct, capability discipline and grievance policies and changing them required the school to consult with staff and their trade union bodies.

The MAT was the employer for all staff at both schools and needed to have the same staff policies covering pay, appraisal, conduct, capability, discipline and grievance policies. It was **agreed** the staff policies at DPA should be reviewed and brought into line with the proposed MAT staff policies as soon as possible, allowing for proper

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employment law and practice procedures to be followed

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It was **agreed** to adopt the proposed policies on Child Protection Policies and Procedures and on Central record of recruitment and vetting checks for both schools with immediate effect, to comply with Child Protection law.

It was **agreed** to adopt the remaining proposed MAT policies, subject to reviewing the policies at DPA to identify any others that differed substantially to the proposed MAT policies. These should then be aligned and presented for adoption at a future Board meeting.

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18/17 Executive Head Teacher Report

The EHT presented her report on the operation and performance of the MAT since the last meeting and highlighted the following points:

- The number of parents that had chosen GCPA as their first choice for their child in 2017 was 30 that was the maximum number of spaces available.
- The number of first choices for DPA was 16 that was higher than in 2016. DPA needed a minimum intake number of 20 for it to be financially viable. DPA had been restricted by Essex CC on the maximum number of pupils that could attend the school that had determined the Published Admission Number [PAN] to 23. Schools could admit more than their PAN if the school was not at full capacity and DPA had the capacity to admit up to 30 pupils each year. Following the change to an Academy, DPA was not longer required to follow Essex CC's admission requirements and it was **agreed** to investigate the process to increase the PAN.
- The Chair highlighted there was a difference between the two schools on unauthorised absence and asked whether they were measured on the same basis. The EHT reported that there were a higher number of children from Service families at DPA that could have affected the number and **agreed** to check that the definitions used for authorised and unauthorised absence were the same for both schools.
- The meeting noted the profile of identified groups differed within each school and that DPA had a higher proportion of boys to girls than GCPA. Each school needed to be able to address the differing needs of their pupil groups. Each school was allocated additional funding for a number of the identified pupil groups, that Ofsted expected Directors to know how each school used this funding to support these groups.
- The MAT will be introducing, first at DPA, a new tracking assessment tool to better monitor the progress being made by different pupil groups.
- The meeting discussed the achievement and standard targets and the results to the end of February. Following the introduction of the new assessment system, it would take up to three years of data to be able to properly identify any trends on the performance of pupils and each school. The targets had been based on the assessments in 2016 for each Year 6 pupil group and had been set in the autumn term.
- The EHT and DPA HT were working well together. There had been teacher peer reviews, teacher pairing between the two schools and visits to the other schools. The EHT had received positive feedback from staff teachers had visited the other school.
- The EHT was confident at the level of teachers' performance, however has limited knowledge of the teachers at DPA to be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses. To properly be able to provide support and training. She was

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planning to establish baseline assessment of Teaching and Learning to identify where support was needed and if necessary using capability procedures to improve performance. It was proposed to use the current external schools advisor to provide challenge and triangulate judgments/ baseline assessment.

- The current external schools advisor would also be able to help the DPA HT, in her decision making on managing staff performance.
- The meeting noted that Health and Safety checks had been carried out by external person at both schools and an immediate action plan was put into place to address Health and Safety and Safeguarding issues identified.
- The meeting noted the measures being taken to ensure both schools operated within their agreed budgets, including not using expensive supply agencies, ensuring value for money is considered when making purchases or contracting for services. The meeting also noted that additional financial controls will be introduced at DPA by the start of the next academic year as well as improved financial accounting and reporting systems for both schools.
- DPA are due to receive £40k from Essex CC as part of the transition to an Academy of which £25k will be needed to cover the forecast deficit for the current financial year.
- It was noted DPA will have a reduced budget next academic year as their General Academy Grant [GAG] for 2017-18 will be based on the current pupil numbers. The School will not have sufficient income to meet its current staff budget. The MAT will need to consider the different financial options on the deployment of teachers and teaching assistants, the number of classes to ensure DPA remain within budget, which may involve redundancies. The EHT and DPA had already started reviewing the option of reducing the number of classes from 6 to 5 and having another mixed age group. The MAT needed to make the decision on the number of classes and staff at the school in April to allow sufficient time for consultation on implementing any changes by the new academic year in September.
- It was **agreed** the EHT and DPA HT would review the options, obtain external HR advice and present a proposal covering the number of classes, teachers and LSAs at DPA for the new academic year, at a meeting before Easter.

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19/17 School Improvement Plans

The meeting received and noted the progress being made to deliver the School Improvement Plan for GCPA. The EHT was working with the Debden HT to bring the format and content of the DPA's SDP into line with GCPA's to provide a consistent reporting format for governors and Directors.

20/17 Finance

The EHT reported that the transfer of accounting data to the new Sage accounting software had not gone as smoothly as hoped and further work was being undertaken.

Other matters on finance were reported and discussed under the EHT's report.

ROUTINE BUSINESS

21/17 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2017 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

22/17 Matters arising

Minute 6/17 (c) Governance - Membership

The Chair reported that, under the Articles of Association, the Directors were responsible for appointing the Chairs as well as the members of the LGBs for each school. At its last meeting, the Board had agreed that the governors of each school's former FGBs should be appointed as members of the new LGBs but had not formally appointed the Chairs. Following a proposal from John Luke, it was **agreed** that Andrew Taylor be appointed the Chair of the GCPA LGB and Ursula Lyons be appointed the Chair at DPA LGB.

All other items had either been completed or were on the agenda for this meeting.

23/17 Minutes/reports of committees

a) Great Chesterford [CoE] Primary Academy Local Governing Body

The meeting received and noted the unconfirmed minutes of the first meeting of the Great Chesterford [CoE] Primary Academy Local Governing Body.

The meeting noted the discussions by the LGB on the provision of an After School Club and that it had decided to defer the matter until after the building works were completed.

Melissa Challinor reported that the school where she worked offered parents an After School Club and offered to provide the EHT information on how it operated.

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b) Debden [CoE] Primary Academy Local Governing Body

The EHT reported the DPA LGB had met and draft minutes had been prepared but had not been circulated. It was **agreed** to circulate them after the meeting.

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24/17 Personnel

The Chair reported the MAT needed to set up two review panels and appoint members to appraise the performance of the performance of the EHT and the HTs.

It was proposed and **agreed** that the Chair, Lisa Jeremy and Mellissa Challinor should be appointed to the Performance Appraisal Panel for the EHT and the EHT and Mellissa Challinor should be appointed to the Performance Appraisal Panel for the DPA HT.

25/17 Any other business

The meeting reported that a parent had reported DPA to Uttlesford District Council Planning Department because it had erected a canopy without first obtaining Listed Building Consent. A representative of the Planning Department had been invited to visit the school to advise on the necessary actions to resolve the oversight.

26/17 Date/time of future meetings

It was **agreed** the Clerk and EHT would draw up a draft annual programme of business for the Board and propose dates for future meetings in line with the annual programme and the meetings of the LGBs

TB/SM

Signed by Andrew Taylor [The Chair] on 22 May 2017