

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS****Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2024**

<b>Directors</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Term</b>
Gary Benn		31/08/2025
Lilly Barker	Chair	16/11/2026
Paul Gray	Vice-Chair	10/02/2026
Alison Meadows		11/05/2025
Wazz Mughal		03/09/2027
Sarah Mitchell	Executive Headteacher [EHT]	Ex-Officio
Kate Porch		19/09/2027

*In attendance:*

Tom Bennett	Clerk
Helen Edwards	MAT Finance Manager

\* indicates absence

**19/24 Apologies for absence**

None

**20/24 Notification of AoB**

- New Director

**21/24 Notification of business interests**

Gary Benn declared he worked for Eddisons who offer building consultancy, design, and project management services to education settings.

No other director declared a potential conflict of interest on any matters to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or given hospitality or a gift that could be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Trust

**MAIN BUSINESS****22/24 Governance**a) **LGBs**

The meeting **agreed** to appoint the following as members of each Academy's Local Governing Body from September 2024.

**GREAT CHESTERFORD [CoE] PRIMARY ACADEMY  
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY 2024-25**

<b>Membership</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Term</b>
Vacancy	Foundation		
Vacancy	Foundation	Incumbent	Ex-Officio
Vacancy	General Member		
Vacancy	General Member		
Wazz Mughal	General Member		05/07/2026
Nick Patterson	General Member		05/07/2026
Andrew Pickering	General Member		05/07/2026
Jonathan Macdonald	Parent		29/10/2027
Joe Edwards	Parent		14/05/2025
Amy Sargeant	Headteacher		Ex-Officio
Natalie Starbuck	Staff		21/02/2025

**Action****EHT**

**DEBDEN PRIMARY [CoE] ACADEMY  
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY 2024-25**

<b>Membership</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Term</b>
Vacancy	Foundation:	Incumbent	Ex officio
Tom Caster	Foundation	Chair	02/02/2026
Sarah Belchambers	General Member		27/03/2026
Rachel Stoddart	General Member		TBC
Sarah Mitchell	General Member	Executive Headteacher	Ex officio
Vacancy	General Member		
Henry Crosby	General Member		24/01/2028
Isobel Tunnecliff	Parent		14/07/2025
Jo Hart	Parent		08/10/2027
Matt Hawley	Headteacher	Head of School	Ex officio
Holly Caparelli	Staff		20/09/2027

It was noted the number of vacancies on the GCPA LGB was due to two governors standing down as their terms of office had ended on the same date and a third, who was standing down for family reasons.

Two people had expressed an interest in joining the GCPA LGB.

**a) Chairs for the LGBs**

**GCPA**

The GCPA LGB had yet to nominate one of its governors as Chair for the 2024-25 Academic Year. It was **agreed** to follow the matter up by email.

EHT

**DPA**

The DPA LGB had nominated Tom Caster as the Chair for 2024-25 It was **agreed** to appoint Tom Caster as the DPA LGB Chair for the 2024-25 Academic Year

EHT

**23/24 Strategy/ Future Plans**

**a) MAT development**

The EHT reported that following the previous government's decision that schools must join Multi Academy Trusts in groups of three, the CEOs of a number of church trusts had expressed that they did not have the capacity to take on three schools at the same time. Schools were generally waiting until after the national election to see whether the policy would change with a new government.

It was noted that most of the schools that were interested in joining a Trust were in financial difficulties and saw joining a MAT as a way of saving costs through cost of scale savings and as well as receiving financial support.

Paul Gray asked whether the Labour Party's manifesto included anything relating to academisation and Multi Academy Trusts.

The EHT reported that the party's priorities were focused on improving nursery education and recruiting more teachers.

**b) Risk registers for the MAT and each Academy**

The Board meeting received and noted the risks register for the MAT and each Academy recording the major risks facing the Trust and Academies and the actions to mitigate their likelihood and impact on the running of the Trust and Academies. The following point were made:

**DPA**

**Operational Risk – Staff Morale** – had been updated to reflect increased monitoring due to

issues in recruitment in education and its effect on staff.

## **GCPA**

**Operational Risk – SEND** – the high level of pupils with education and health care plans [EHCPs] in school together with the increasing number of children with social, emotional, and mental health [SEMH] needs and the lack of external support service remained challenging; impacting on the budget, staffing and teacher workloads.

## **MAT**

The EHT reported the mitigating actions for the Finance – Funding Gap risk had been removed following improved finances and forecast outturns for each academy and the decision to continue to prepare budgets earlier to identify any adverse financial trends.

It was **agreed** to update the Risk Owners column at the September Board meeting when the directors' responsibilities are agreed and to reflect the decision of Alison Meadows to stand down as a director and the appointment of new directors.

Gary Benn reported the Trust's external Health and Safety consultant was retiring and asked whether there plans to recruit a new consultant.

The EHT reported she was in discussion with the Consortium of Schools, that each Academy was a member of, on recruiting a new H&S consultant for all the schools within the consortium.

### **c) 2023-24 School Development Plan for each academy**

The meeting received and noted the actions taken during the summer term and the progress made to deliver the key priorities for the current academic year.

No questions were raised.

### **d) 2024-25 School Development Plan Key Priorities**

The EHT reported the provisional SDP priorities for 2024-25 were:

## **DPA**

- 1) **Quality of Education** - Improving the quality of children's oracy and their extended written compositions.
- 2) **Behaviour and Attitudes** - Children make highly tangible contributions to life in the school/ wider community; developing approaches to metacognition.
- 3) **Personal Development** - More precisely map extra-curricular/ curriculum enhancement opportunities. Track the extent to which all children are being developed holistically. Broader participation in student council.
- 4) **Leadership and Management** - Development of the role of classroom assistants. Development of the school's premises through capital auditing and development projects (e.g. kitchen, decorating, H+S).

## **GCPA**

- 1) **Quality of Education** - Consistency and pedagogy in writing to ensure progress is at least expected for all pupils, including SEND.
- 2) **Quality of Education** - Consistency and pedagogy in foundation subjects (three subjects yet to be chosen one will be MFL. Potentially DT, music, or history)
- 3) **Early Years** - To ensure that all children are ready for the next stage of their education specifically in the personal, social, and emotional development.
- 4) **Behaviour and Attitudes** - Ensure behaviour and attitudes are positive and contribute to long-term good academic success.

The DPA leadership team had advised that some of its key priorities for the new academic year would change following the receipt of assessment data and to reflect a number of recent teaching staff changes.

The EHT reported the focus on Early Years at GCPA was due to a growing trend whereby pre-school children had more social and emotional needs starting school and there was a need to build these skills effectively in order to access the full curriculum.

The meeting noted that GCPA used Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP) to understand behaviour and support emotional wellbeing in children and to help them build positive relationships with other children and adults at the school.

The EHT reported a lot of children joining the school were confident, spirited and were able to verbalise their thoughts and opinions.

## 24/24 Policies

### a) Attendance Policy

The EHT reported the policy had been updated to comply with new statutory guidance issued by the DFE to improve attendance and reduce unauthorised attendance. This included the procedures for issuing penalties to families who took the children out of school for unauthorised reasons.

National attendance levels had not returned to pre-COVID levels. The attendance levels at both Academies were above the National average though the number of unauthorised absences was slowing increasing.

Attendance guidance will be provided to parents alongside the updated attendance policy to explain the new statutory expectations and procedures (including sanctions).

It was **agreed** to approve the Attendance Policies 2024.

EHT

### b) Gift and Hospitality Policy

The EHT reported the updated policy only included minor changes to post holders' titles and references to the latest Academy Financial Handbook.

It was **agreed** to approve the Gift and Hospitality Policy

EHT

### c) Reserves Policy

The EHT highlighted that the Board needed to approve the total amount of reserves the Trust needed to hold and the specific purposes for holding them.

The EHT and Trust Finance Manager had reviewed the academies' revenue and capital needs and proposed that the Trust should hold £392k for the following purposes.

	£'000s	
<b>Specific Building Projects</b>		
GCPA Budgeted capital spend	114	Playground project and building repairs/enhancements as identified on the VIR report
DPA Budgeted capital spend	30	Classroom division, kitchen cooker and repairs/enhancements as per the premises improvement plan
	<b>144</b>	
<b>Contingency</b>	<b>248</b>	15% of GAG to cover staff sickness, cost increases and pay rises
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>£ 392</b>	

It was **agreed** to approve proposed level of reserves and designated purposes.

## **25/24 Executive Head Teacher [EHT]**

The meeting received and noted the Summer Term Report from the EHT on the operation and performance of the MAT.

The following points were discussed:

### **Admissions and roll**

Alison Meadows asked whether the number on the roll at DPA was expected to increase.

The EHT reported that DPA had a PAN of 23 being the current maximum number of pupils who could join the school at Reception each year. On this basis, the maximum number of pupils the school could have would be 161. There were currently 151 children on roll. If the numbers exceeded 161, the Trust could go out to consultation and apply to increase the PAN and increase the total number of pupils on roll.

### **Attendance**

Paul Gray asked if children arriving late had an impact on attendance levels.

The EHT confirmed that this was the case that a child arriving after 9:30 hrs was recorded as absent.

The meeting discussed the usefulness of the board having this data so that they could compare actual absence and those late (missing part of the session). It was felt that this breakdown would not be helpful to families as the priority was punctual attendance to maximise learning and limit the disruption of late arrivals to the other pupils.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Phonics**

The EHT reported there had been a dip in the 2023 results of the Year 1 Phonics Checks at GCPA [70%] following the introduction of a new Phonics scheme. This year's results demonstrated a positive increase 2024 [90%] and that the new scheme had also had a positive impact on the Year 1 writing results.

The investment and staff training undertaken to implement the new phonics teaching programme had had a positive impact on early years pupils reading skills and the school had received a lot of positive feedback from parents.

It was noted DPA used a different programme to teach Phonics as their results for Year 1 Phonics checks were already exceptionally good and was a DFE approved scheme.

#### **End of Key Stage 1 – 2024**

The Chair asked why the school target for pupils working at a greater depth for Writing differed between DPA [20%] and GCPA [7%]

The EHT reported targets were set on an individual pupil basis using their attainment levels at EYFS as a baseline and extrapolating them with their expected level of progress. This resulted in large differences when all pupils' targets were combined when calculating the school average and also reflected the different number of KS1 pupils at each school. In small cohorts SEN pupils affected target setting.

The leadership team monitored for trends in targets, attainment, and progress data.

KS1 Assessments were no longer statutory but used to provide attainment and progress data. Extra support and interventions had been implemented at DPA since the first KS1 tests taken in May that had been impacted by a change in the teaching staff. Pupils had recently resat new KS1 tests that had shown a marked improvement.

The high level of pupil mobility at DPA due to service families being reposted also impacted on targets and attainment levels.

### **End of Key Stage 2 outcomes 2024**

The EHT reported she was pleased with Year 6 KS2 outcomes at both schools particularly the percentage of pupils achieving greater depth in Maths that had been a focus of the leadership teams.

### **26/24 Safeguarding**

The meeting received and noted the Annual Safeguarding Reports for each Academy. No questions were raised.

### **27/24 SEND**

The meeting received and noted the Annual SEND Reports for GCPA and DPA.

GCPA had a larger than normal level of children on the SEND register, some with social emotional needs presenting a risk to resources and academic achievements and was included on the school's risk register.

### **28/24 Finance**

#### **a) Managements accounts for the 9 months to 31 May 2024**

The meeting received the management accounts for the period to 31 May 2024 showing the actual income and expenditure totals to date and the forecast for the year-end for the MAT and each Academy

No questions were raised.

#### **b) Trust Development Levy**

The meeting discussed asking each Academy for a levy to fund the development and growth of the Trust.

The levy would be used to fund legal and other costs of other academies joining the Trust. It could also be used for developing and offering central services that would benefit the academies through economies of scale and reduced costs over the long term.

It was noted the Trust currently held reserves in the region of £8k and it was **agreed** not impose the levy this year but to advise the schools that levy would commence from the next year.

#### **c) 2024-25 Budget**

The meeting received and noted the draft 2024-25 Budgets for the MAT and each Academy.

Paul Gray noted that a lot of budget overspends in previous years had been on staff costs and asked how confident was the leadership team that the budgets for the new academic year would be met.

The EHT reported the staff budgets had been calculated on an individual member of staff basis and that both schools had been able to reduce and not replace a number of support staff providing one-to-one support to pupils with complex needs who had since left the schools.

The meeting noted the budgets had been prepared on a prudent and on a worst-case scenario. Income had only been included when it had been confirmed that it was receivable.

The budgets for GOMAT and DPA had been set on a break-even basis and the budget for GCPA showed a small surplus.

EHT

It was **agreed** to approve the 2024-25 following budgets:

## GOMAT

	<b>Total</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	
<b>Income</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	
Central Charge Fee - GCPA	(50,981)	(19,893)	(31,088)
Central Services - GCPA	-	(38,097)	38,097
Central Charge Fee - DPA	(50,981)	(19,893)	(31,088)
Central Services - DPA	-	(24,585)	24,585
Academy Development Levy - DPA		(2,000)	2,000
Academy Development Levy - GCPA		(3,000)	3,000
Bank Interest		(3)	3
<b>Total income</b>	<b>(101,961)</b>	<b>(107,471)</b>	<b>5,510</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
<b>MAT Central Charge</b>			
EHT/CEO Staff Costs	23,125	21,913	1,212
Finance Manager - GOMAT	19,017	1,882	17,135
Office Manager - GOMAT	22,981	1,400	21,581
Premises Manager/Finance Assistant - GOMAT	20,822		20,822
Subscriptions	290	265	25
ICT Licences	1,590	2,050	(460)
Website Support	435	485	(50)
Clerk to Governors	1,200	1,350	(150)
Personnel Fees	800		800
Annual Accountancy/audit	10,500	11,020	(520)
Academy Development Levy			-
Capital Purchases	1,200		1,200
		5,000	(5,000)
<b>Total MAT Central Charge</b>	<b>101,961</b>	<b>45,365</b>	<b>56,596</b>
			-
<b>Total MAT Central Services</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>62,683</b>	<b>(62,683)</b>
			-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>101,961</b>	<b>108,048</b>	<b>(6,087)</b>
			-
<b>Surplus/ (Deficit)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>(577)</b>

## GCPA

	23-24 Forecast	24-25 Budget	
<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Variance</b>
GAG - Total	(894,215)	(915,614)	(21,399)
Pupil Premium	(30,263)	(26,640)	3,623
Rates Reclaim	(3,059)	(4,117)	(1,058)
PE & Sports Grant	(17,730)	(17,720)	10
UIFSM	(34,798)	(34,800)	(2)
Pay & Pensions Grant	(17,083)	(26,811)	(9,728)
MSAG	(30,543)	-	30,543
Recovery Premium	(1,253)	-	1,253
<b>Total DofE Income</b>	<b>(1,028,944)</b>	<b>(1,025,702)</b>	3,242
LA SEN Funding	(23,810)	(19,666)	4,144
ECC Additional Funding	(14,660)	-	14,660
Catering, Trips, Clubs & Swimming	(57,075)	(59,240)	(2,165)
Donations & Interest	(17,722)	(19,070)	(1,348)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(1,142,211)</b>	<b>(1,123,678)</b>	18,533
			-
<b>Expenditure</b>			-
Staff Costs	920,304	923,504	3,200
Other Staff Costs	11,295	5,438	(5,857)
MAT Recharges	(87,878)	(85,946)	1,932
Learning Resources	16,284	15,439	(845)
Trips, Swimming & Clubs	24,984	24,280	(704)
ICT	13,102	13,200	98
Premises Costs	86,984	77,826	(9,158)
MAT Central Costs	61,003	50,981	(10,022)
Administration, Legal & Professional	22,805	21,754	(1,051)
Catering	69,276	72,063	2,787
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,138,159</b>	<b>1,118,539</b>	(19,620)
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>(4,052)</b>	<b>(5,139)</b>	(1,087)



**DPA**

	<b>23-24 Forecast</b>	<b>24-25 Budget</b>	
<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Variance</b>
GAG - Total	(654,339)	(740,358)	(86,019)
Service & Pupil Premium	(39,327)	(40,880)	(1,553)
Rates Reclaim	(2,598)	(3,504)	(906)
PE & Sports Grant	(17,120)	(17,460)	(340)
UIFSM	(24,228)	(24,228)	-
Pay & Pensions Grant	(17,547)	(20,543)	(2,996)
MSAG	(21,422)		21,422
Recovery Premium	(1,000)		1,000
<b>Total DofE Income</b>	<b>(777,581)</b>	<b>(846,973)</b>	<b>(69,392)</b>
LA SEN Funding	(16,418)	(17,100)	(682)
Essex KS1 Class Size Funding	(22,323)		22,323
Catering, Trips & Swimming	(32,505)	(32,440)	65
Donations & Interest	(16,663)	(3,120)	13,543
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(865,490)</b>	<b>(899,633)</b>	<b>(34,143)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Staff Costs	620,181	668,761	48,580
Other Staff Costs	9,604	6,596	(3,008)
Learning Resources	9,922	9,860	(62)
Trips, Swimming & Clubs	17,176	18,035	859
ICT	9,458	9,109	(349)
Premises Costs	76,166	68,207	(7,959)
MAT Central Costs	46,478	50,981	4,503
Administration, Legal & Professional	18,442	17,338	(1,104)
Catering	48,099	49,967	1,868
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>855,526</b>	<b>898,855</b>	<b>43,329</b>
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>(9,964)</b>	<b>(778)</b>	<b>9,186</b>

**d) 2024-25 Capital Funding/ Expenditure Budget**

It was noted that capital funding and expenditure projects were approved on an individual basis once a fully costed business case had been prepared and presented to the Board.

Following a recommendation from the auditors, a five-year capital financial projection had been drawn up detailing the years when major capital projects were due.

It was **agreed** to circulate the five-year capital financial projection after the meeting.

**e) ESFA Budget Forecast Return [BFR] 2024-25**

The meeting received the draft ESFA's BFR 2024-25.

Helen Edwards provided an overview of the assumptions used in the preparation of the BFR 2024-25.

It was noted the return recorded the consolidated data from the 2024-25 budgets and following two-year projections for both Academies and the Trust and used the same assumptions used in the budgets.

EHT

It was **agreed** to approve the 2024-25 BFR for submission to the ESFA.

f) **Requests for expenditure that exceed the EHT's approval limit**

None

**ROUTINE BUSINESS**

**29/24 Minutes of the previous meetings**

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 25 April 2024 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting subject to the following amendment:

**Minute 8/24 Executive Head Teacher's [EHT's] Report - Finance**

*"At the time of agreeing the proposed pay increases for support staff in the current year's budget, the directors gave very careful consideration before approving the increase and ensuring sufficient funds were available. **It was agreed to inform the GCPA governors of the action taken by the Directors when approving the 2023-24 Budgets.**"*

**30/24 Matters arising**

**Minute 8/24 Executive Head Teacher's [EHT's] Report – Finance**

The EHT confirmed the GCPA Finance and Premises Committee was informed of the action taken by the Directors when approving the 2023-24 Budgets.

No other matters arising from the previous minutes not otherwise covered by the agenda were reported.

**31/24 Minutes/reports of committees**

a) **GCPA LGB**

The meeting received and noted the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Great Chesterford [CoE] Primary Academy Local Governing Body held on 25 June 2024.

b) **DPA LGB**

The meeting received and noted the unconfirmed minutes of the last meeting of the Debden [CoE] Primary Academy Local Governing Body held on 4 July 2024.

c) **Audit and & Committee**

The meeting received and noted the confirmed minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee held on the 1 February 2024.

The meeting received and noted the confirmed minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee held on the 25 June 2024.

Paul Gray reported that this was the second year following the appointment of Melissa Challinor as the external Responsible Officer and that she had been both positive and constructive on her review of the Trust's operating procedures and internal controls.

The Trust also received helpful financial management advice from the Trust's Auditors, Griffin Chapman.

**32/24 Any other business**

**New Director**

The Chair reported that Catherine Blostone had expressed an interest in becoming a Director of the Trust.

Catherine has experience of working with children from the age of four to eighteen and had been the Chair of Governors at a Church of England School.

The Chelmsford Diocese felt they could not appoint her as a CDET appointed Director as Catherine was not a member of the Christian faith but had provided their consent for the Directors to co-opt her as a Director under Article 50 of the Articles of Association.

It was **agreed** to appoint Catherine Blostone as a Co-Opted Director to start in September 2024.

The EHT thanked Alison Meadow for her time as a director, providing a lot of guidance and for her important role on the Headteachers Performance Review panel.

**33/24 Date/time of future meetings**

The meeting received and noted the schedule of the proposed meeting dates for the next Academic Year

The next Board meeting would be held on 11 September 2024 at 19:45 hrs

**Approved by the Board on 11 September 2024**