

Great Oak Multi Academy Trust
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2019

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
John Luke		23/12/2020
Sarah Mitchell	CEO [Executive Headteacher]	Ex-Officio
Andrew Taylor	Chair	23/12/2020
Liam Tobin	DPA LGB Governor	22/07/2023

In attendance:

Tom Bennett	Clerk
Matt Hawley	DPA Head of School [Item 34/19]

* *indicates absence*

34/19 Welcome and apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Andrew Taylor welcomed Matt Hawley, the newly appointed Head of School at Debden Primary Academy, to the meeting.

Matt provided an overview of what he had undertaken since being appointed and highlighted the following:

- He had met with the teaching and non teaching staff in the summer, had consulted with governors and parents to understand the school's needs and identify the key priorities to be addressed.
- He had reviewed and redefined the school's vision and values and had, with the EHT, set the school's four key priorities as
 1. **Teaching, Learning and Assessment:**
 - Developing a rigorous system of Teaching and Learning monitoring, review and improvement alongside all academic staff
 - Ensuring that assessment systems are rigorous, reliable, and consistently used across the school
 - Monitoring the implementation and use of marking and feedback across all subjects
 2. **Curriculum:**
 - To further develop the school's curriculum offer, ensuring that it is ambitious, coherent, broad and balanced.
 3. **Reading and Writing:** To improve students' progress and attainment in both reading and writing across the school, though:
 - Developing children's passion for reading, through a wide range of 'reading for pleasure' activities and initiatives
 - Ensuring that children have regular, meaningful opportunities to demonstrate their writing skills across the curriculum

Action

- Ensuring that assessment of reading and writing is rigorous and reliable, and that timely, targeted interventions are applied where appropriate

4. **Leaders at all Levels:** To further develop the impact of middle leadership across the school through:

- Establishing ambitious, clearly-defined expectations for middle leadership roles
- Developing middle leaders' aptitude and propensity for inspiring, creating and communicating (leadership skills)
- Developing middle leaders' aptitude and propensity for planning, implementing and reviewing (management skills)

Andrew Taylor provided a background to DPA joining the MAT, the need to improve its academic and pastoral performance that had taken a bit longer due to budget constraints and the time needed to put the necessary resources in place.

He reiterated the MAT's ethos and culture that academies within it should retain their identity and be responsible for carrying out a lot of the MAT's responsibilities locally. They should also remain and been seen as community-based schools.

Andrew Taylor thanked Matt for all he had achieved in the short time since his appointment and that the Board of Directors was available to support him any way to improve the school further.

35/19 Chair

The Clerk took the Chair

The meeting noted Andrew Taylor was willing to be re-elected as the Chair for 2019-20, there were no other nominations and following a proposal from David Boatman, seconded by Gary Benn, Andrew was unanimously elected as Chair.

Andrew Taylor took over the Chair

36/19 Vice-Chair

The Chair reported David Boatman had indicated he was willing to be re-elected as the Vice-Chair for 2019-29. No other nominations were made and following a proposal from Andrew Taylor, seconded by Andrew Armour, David was elected as Vice Chair.

37/19 Notification of AoB

None.

38/19 Notification of business interests/ self declaration

- The Directors updated the business interest register by completing new pecuniary and private interest declaration forms.
- The Directors completed the HMRC Self Declaration form declaring they were fit and proper to be directors of the MAT.
- No Director declared a potential conflict of interest on any matters to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that could compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters of the MAT.

39/19 Governance

a) Board's Code of Conduct

The meeting received and noted the Board's Code of Conduct setting out the roles and responsibilities of the Directors, what is expected of them in meeting those roles and responsibilities and how the Board should conduct its business.

b) Scheme of Delegation

The Directors noted there had been no recommendations from the Academies to change the Scheme of Delegation setting out the Board's, EHT's, LGB's and HT's delegated responsibilities and tasks and it was **agreed** to adopt them as they stood.

c) Audit Committee membership

The meeting noted the following were members of the Audit Committee for a period of two years.

- Andrew Armour [Chair]
- Mellissa Chalinor
- John Luke
- Paul Gray (independent member)
- Ursula Lyons (independent member)

It was **agreed** Liam Tobin should be a member of the committee as an observer to "shadow" its work.

d) Directors' Responsibilities

It was **agreed** the following Directors would oversee and monitor the LGBs to ensure they were meeting their statutory responsibilities.

- Health and Safety – Gary Benn
- Safeguarding and Child Protection – Liam Tobin

e) Annual Programme

The Board received and noted a draft annual programme of business for the year.

40/19 Policies

a) Policies Schedule

The meeting received and noted the schedule of policies detailing those policies that the MAT was responsible for monitoring and updating together with the dates when they were due for review.

It was **agreed** to review three of the six policies due for review at the next meeting and the other three at the following meeting.

It was noted the General Data Protection Regulations [GDPR] Policy was currently being audited and any recommendations would be presented at a future Board meeting.

b) Investment Policy

The meeting received, reviewed and approved the Investment Policy.

41/19 Corporate/ Strategy

a) Academies' Development Plans 2018-19

The EHT provided an overview of previously circulated Academies Development Plans for 2018-19 and the progress and impact made by each academy against their key priorities and highlighted the following:

- The attainment and progress results at DPA had improved significantly at Key Stage One when compared with the previous year.
- There had been a number of staff changes at DPA that had both strengthened the provision of teaching and learning as well as bringing in new skills and good practices at the school.
- Staff and governors had changed their views on the MAT and now recognise the benefits of collaborating, shared work practice and working towards the same goals.

- Staff at DPA were now keen to work together with staff at GCPA having already had joint Academy staff training session and participated in a joint academy Year 6 residential trip.

b) Academies' Development Plans 2019-20

The meeting received and noted the Academies' Development Plans for 2019-20.

c) MAT Development Plan

The meeting discussed the MAT's achievements since it was established and plans to expand and grow it and made the following points:

- The MAT needed to develop and publicise a positive narrative to schools considering joining it based on the improvements that have been achieved at DPA and GCPA.
- Schools need to see the advantages of joining a MAT, the financial and time benefits arising from centralising individual schools' statutory, financial, HR and premises management responsibilities. This allowed schools to focus on the provision of education, marketing the school and engaging with the local community.
- It was important schools understood the important part of the MAT's ethos and culture that academies within it retain their identity and are responsible for delivering a lot of the MAT's responsibilities locally.
- It was felt the MAT should be marketed as a confederation of "like-minded" schools, with examples showing that working, collaborating and sharing good practices has led to improved pupil progress and attainment levels.
- The MAT should plan to find two to three larger primary schools to fully benefit from the economies of scale on the fixed costs of leadership, management and centralised services.
- It was **agreed** to:
 - Draft a marketing and communications plan setting out the benefits of joining a MAT with examples of the MAT's successes to date.
 - Approach the Diocese of Chelmsford to discuss and identify other Church of England Schools that may be interested in joining the MAT.
 - Approach other local primary schools to discuss further collaboration initiatives that might lead to a more formal collaboration structure.

EHT

42/19 Risk Register

The Chair reported that following the publication of the latest Academies Financial Handbook, there was a new statutory requirement for the Board to review and manage risk more effectively.

Under the Scheme of Delegation, the LGBs were responsible for identifying and recording the risks facing each academy and how they were managing these risks to reduce the likelihood of them arising and the impact should they arise.

The key risks identified by the each Academy are reviewed and included on the MAT Risk Register together with MAT specific risks identified by Directors, which are then reviewed and monitored by the Audit Committee.

It was important the LGB's and Board are able to demonstrate to the Audit Committee that risks are being regularly reviewed and monitored by providing evidence when risks change and what progress has been made in reducing risks.

It was **agreed** DPA should provide a risk register for the Audit Committee meeting in November.

43/19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

44/19 Matters Arising

Minute 25/19 Executive Head Report

The EHT reported she had contacted the external School Improvement Partner (SIP) recommended by the outgoing SIP, Anne Fisher.

All other actions arising at the last meeting had been completed or were included on the agenda.

45/19 Finance

a) Requests for expenditure above EHT's approval limit

None.

b) Requests for expenditure from LGBs

None.

c) Charging and Remissions policy

The meeting received, considered and approved the Charging and Remission policy setting out the MAT's policy on providing and seeking voluntary contributions for extra-curricular activities such as swimming and school trips and events.

46/19 Chair's Action

The Chair reported and the Board ratified the urgent action taken by him to appoint Michael O Adeleke as a Foundation Governor on the DPA LGB.

47/19 Personnel

The meeting received the MAT's Staff Grievance and Discipline Policy and Teacher Appraisal and Capability.

It was **agreed** to approve them as they currently stood and that they should be reviewed by the EHT with any recommendations being presented at the next meeting.

48/19 EHT and HT's Performance and Pay

The meeting agreed the membership of the EHT's Performance and Pay Review panel as:

- David Boatman
- Melissa Challinor
- Andrew Taylor
- New SIP

49/19 Any other business

Local Government Pension Scheme

The EHT reported the auditors had advised that following a legal case, the Financial Reporting Standard for pensions [FRS 102] would be changing that would result in a significant increase in the Academies' pension costs for non-teaching staff.

50/19 Date/time of future meetings

- Tuesday 03/12/2019
- Monday 04/05/2020
- Thursday 16/07/2020

All meeting start at 19:45

Signed by Andrew Taylor [Chair] on 3 December 2019