

Great Oak Multi Academy Trust
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 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*

Action

28/17 Apologies for absence

The meeting received notification that the Chair would be late due to transport disruptions. David Boatman took the Chair.

29/17 Notification of AoB

None.

30/17 Notification of business interests

No Directors declared a potential conflict of interest with any items to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that could or be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Multi Academy Trust [MAT].

MAIN BUSINESS

31/17 Policies

The meeting received and considered the following policies:

- Accessibility Plan
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy 2017
- Charges and Remissions Policy 2017
- Complaints Policy 2017
- Data Protection Policy 2017
- Freedom of Information Policy 2017
- Investment policy 2017
- Privacy Policy 2017 GCPA
- Privacy Policy 2017 DPA
- Racial Equality Policy 2017
- Recruitment and Selection Policy 2017
- Staff Grievance and Discipline Policy 2017
- Teacher Appraisal and Capability 2017
- Whistle blowing Policy 2017

The EHT advised many of the policies were former policies of the Great Chesterford [CoE] Primary Academy [GCPA] FGB that had been adapted for the MAT and that they did not conflict with Debden Primary Academy's [DPA] policies. The EHT had worked with the DPA's HT when reviewing and updating the Academies' and MAT's statutory policies to ensure they did not conflict.

It had been agreed at the last meeting that the policies at DPA relating to staff should be reviewed and brought into line with the MAT's, allowing time for proper consultation and employment procedures to be followed. The EHT confirmed the new policies relating to staff being considered did not conflict with DPA's previous staff policies.

The meeting considered the Complaints Policy 2017 and **agreed** to include a provision that the LGB and MAT Board should be informed of any complaints covered by the policy prior to informing the Local Authority.

EHT

When considering the Charges and Remissions Policy 2017 it was noted parents' contributions for school trips were voluntary. A Director raised the question: are there a number of parents, other than parents whose children were eligible for Pupil Premium, who do not pay. This was not a current issue for GCPA. It was **agreed** to write to parents to remind them that although the financial contributions were voluntary, the MAT expected those parents who could pay, to contribute if necessary.

EHT

All the policies were approved, subject to the amendment to the Complaints Policy 2017.

32/17 Finance

a) **Managements Accounts**

The EHT reported Alison Daltrey was currently working on preparing new consolidated financial reports for the MAT that would be completed soon after the meeting. The EHT had been unable to provide the necessary time on finance due to time spent on restructuring and integrating the staff and their responsibilities at both schools.

b) **Draft 2017-18 Budget**

The EHT reported the 2017-18 Budget would be completed by the end of June. The budget will be tighter as it will be based on the number of pupils at both schools in 2016 and not on the higher numbers due to start in September 2017.

There will be expenditure savings at DPA following the restructuring of the teaching and other staff and the decision to reduce the number of classes by one.

The EHT confirmed DPA had been able to pay off its debt by operating more efficiently and there will be no debt to carry over to the MAT.

c) **Draft 2017-18 Capital Funding/ Expenditure Budget**

To be presented with the operating budget at the end of June.

d) **Requests for expenditure that exceed the EHT/ CEO approval limit**

None.

e) **Requests for expenditure from LGBs**

None.

f) **Annual review of all contracts and leases**

It was **agreed** to schedule this on the MAT's Annual Programme of Business for consideration at a future meeting.

g) **Value for money statement**

It was **agreed** to schedule this on the MAT's Annual Programme of Business for consideration at a future meeting.

33/17 Governance

a) Annual programme of business

The meeting noted a draft had been drawn up and would be reviewed first by the EHT and clerk to bring it in line with annual programme of business plans for the LGBs, which will also help make the roles of each body clearer.

b) Membership

The meeting considered and agreed a Director should be responsible for Safeguarding and a Director responsible for Health and Safety, covering both schools.

It was **agreed** that Lisa Jeremy would be the Safeguarding Director.

I was also **agreed** that Gary Benn would be the MAT Health and Safety Director.

c) LGB's Chairs

The meeting noted Ursula Lyons was standing down as a governor and as Chair of the DPA LGA and that a number of other governors were also standing down. A new curate had been appointed and would fill one of the vacancies on the DPA LGB. A few local people had expressed an interest in being a governor at the school and it was **agreed** the school should recruit more governors over the summer.

EHT

The Chair reported he would also be standing down as the Chair of the GCPA LGB but would remain a governor.

It was **agreed** the LGBs for each Academy should be asked to choose and nominate a governor to be the Chair of each LGB.

EHT

The meeting discussed having a governor on the DPA LGB to represent the families and children at Carver Barracks. The school had had a representative in the past but there had been difficulties due to overseas postings and a general lack of interest.

It was **agreed** the EHT would contact the Senior Officer/ CEO at the Barracks to discuss finding a representative from the Barracks to be a governor on the DPA LGB.

EHT

34/17 Strategy/ Future Plans

a) Future expansion of the MAT

David Boatman set out his views on the future of the MAT and made the following points:

There were increasing drivers for schools and academies to join MATs from both the government, as well as increasing pressure on school's budgets and HTs. Many HTs were leaving due to increasing workload, bad work/ life balance and worries about academisation.

When agreeing to become a MAT in 2014, the Governors had done as an "early adopter" to take advantages of the opportunities at the time and to be able to control the type of schools to sponsor

There was increasing competition among local and the Diocese MATS to find suitable schools and academies to join them.

There was a danger that a MAT with only two academies would not be sustainable for the long term and could be subject to joining a larger MAT.

GOMAT had the resources and a very capable EHT to take on more academies.

If the MAT could demonstrate early improvements in progress at DPA, it will give it a strong case to attract other schools.

The Directors needed to consider whether the MAT should only include primary schools or the primary and secondary school model.

David Boatman recommended a federation model of, say, seven primary schools that would provide around 1,000 pupils that would provide a substantial and viable organisation for the future

Large MATs were able to:

- Take on a Business Manager to take on the responsibility for the financial, facility and HR operations as well as strengthen the MAT's management skills.
- Achieve economies of scales from shared back-office services and stronger purchasing power.
- Share teaching resources such as shared subject / lead teachers.
- Free up the time of HTs and teachers to allow them to focus on the "Chalk face" and teaching pupils.
- Collaborate and provide support across all the schools at all levels.
- Provide more opportunities for professional learning and career development that would also help in recruiting good teachers.

Joanna Grandfield felt that this model supported the ethos of the small village primary school by providing smaller village schools the wider skills and resources necessary to survive and the ability for HTs and teachers to focus on nurturing and equipping children for secondary schools.

Andrew Armour felt the MAT was having a very positive effect so far at DPA in providing support provided to the HT and teaching and non teaching staff and in sharing knowledge and expertise.

Small schools have difficulties to remain sustainable financially and recruit high quality HTs and teachers as independent school.

The EHT reported a lot of HTs at small schools did not want join a MAT with secondary academies, preferring primary academy MATs.

The MAT needed to put together a marketing plan setting out the purpose of the MAT and the benefits it could provide to smaller village schools in reducing the burden of management, administration and finance and allowing teachers to focus on teaching children.

The MAT needed to define and profile the proposed model it wanted to offer now and target those primary schools in its catchment area and start to "plant the seed" with primary schools' HTs and governors before they are approached by other MATs.

The MAT Should also consider targeting schools in Cambridgeshire as well as Essex that would help reduce any competition with other MATs.

The MAT could have an open evening and invite the HTs and Chairs from other primary schools and academies to come and hear about the experience of being a MAT and the advantages and benefits a MAT could offer. This would also allow the MAT to hear the needs of primary schools and how best to meet them.

It was **agreed** to set up a working party to review the current Values Document, draft a vision and mission statement to define the type and profile of a larger MAT for presentation at the next meeting.

Chair/EHT

b) 2016-17 School Improvement Plan for each academy

The meeting received and noted the progress being made to deliver the 2016-17 School Improvement Plan for each academy.

35/17 CEO Report

The EHT/CEO presented her report on the operation and performance of the MAT since the last meeting.

There had been an increase in the number of pupils wishing to join the school following the decision to close the Walden School in July.

The number of children joining the Reception Class at DPA in September 2017 will be 19 compared to 13 in 2016. The number applying to join the Reception Class at GCPA was 30, i.e. a full intake. It was likely there will be a number of appeals from those families who were unsuccessful in getting a place at the academy for their children.

The EHT and DPA HT had reviewed the current staffing structure and number of classes and had agreed to reduce the number of classes by one and restructure the others. This will help reduce the financial pressure due to the reduced per capita pupil funding that the academy will receive from 2017 that is based on the low number of pupils in September 2016.

The EHT set out the proposed class structure at Debden and the new mixed year classes and reported the re-allocation of pupils to the new mixed ability class structure had gone smoothly due to the profile of each year group. Mixed year 5 and 6 classes worked well in other schools.

The review of the staffing structure included how best to use job sharing staff and using qualified teachers to run PPA rather than using an external sports company. This will help save costs.

The DPA HT will be involved in teaching three different classes that will allow her to better monitor pupils' progress and achievements. Following her recent appointment, the governors had agreed to reduce the time she should teach so she could focus on settling in to her new role and implementing the actions needed to address the issues raised by Ofsted, this teaching time could now be recommitted.

Following a question raised at the last meeting on authorised and unauthorised absences, the EHT had reviewed the bases and methods for measuring absences at both schools and confirmed that they were consistent.

The EHT reported she and the DPA HT would be carrying out a number of class room observations, with the help of external advisor Anne Fisher, to assess the standard and consistency of teaching at DPA.

Andrew Armour asked about the improvement in the progress and attainment assessments at DPA and whether they reflected what was expected at the end of the academic year end and whether this was down to the quality of the teaching or the ability of the pupil cohorts.

The HT was confident that the forecasts in Year 6 would be achieved as DPA was well staffed with good teachers and the class was small. Concerns remained for Year 2 where there had been numerous staff changes during the year. To support this class DPA HT had also been working with Year 2.

TINE BUSINESS

36/17 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 7th March 2017 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

37/17 Matters arising

None

38/17 Minutes/reports of committees

- a) The meeting received and noted the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Great Chesterford [CoE] Primary Academy Local Governing held on 27 March 2017
- b) The unconfirmed minutes of the last meeting of the Debden [CoE] Primary Academy Local Governing Body were not presented to the meeting.

39/17 Any other business

The EHT reported on a risk assessment review carried out at DPA covering safeguarding and Health and Safety and confirmed the earlier identified issues had or were in the process of being resolved.

The meeting received an update on the planning issue raised by a parent on a canopy installed at DPA without first obtaining listed building consent. It was **agreed** to send the letter from the Uttlesford District Council's Planning officer to the Chair to follow up.

EHT/Chair

40/17 Date/time of future meetings

Early July to allow the working group time to work on the MAT's value propositions.

Signed by Andrew Taylor [Chairman] on 10th July 2017.