

DEBDEN [C.of E]. PRIMARY ACADEMY	LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MINUTES OF THE MEETING	MEETING HELD ON 03 APRIL 2025
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Membership	Type	Office	Term
*Rebecca Beach	General Member		06/01/2029
*Sarah Belchambers	General Member		27/03/2026
*Holly Caparelli	Staff		20/09/2027
Tom Caster	Foundation	Chair	02/02/2026
*Joanne Hart	Parent		08/10/2027
Matt Hawley	Headteacher	Head of school	Ex-Officio
Jamie Millership	General Member		06/01/2029
Sarah Mitchell	General Member	Executive Headteacher	Ex-Officio
Rev'd Lynda Sebbage	Foundation	Incumbent	Ex-Officio
Isobel Tunnecliff	Parent	Vice-Chair	14/07/2025
* <i>Signifies absence</i>			
Others in attendance			
Sarah Bailey			
Clare Eve		Clerk	

Rev'd Lynda Sebbage opened the meeting with a prayer.

1/25	Welcome and apologies for absence	Action
	<p>The Chair accepted apologies from Joanne Hart and Rebecca Beach. Sarah Belchambers was not expected to attend.</p> <p>The Chair announced that Henry Crosby's funeral had taken place that morning and commemorated Henry on his great and impactful career as a governor. The Chair commended Henry's enthusiasm and courage in always speaking his mind and respected his strong presence and views in LGB meetings. Henry will be sorely missed.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Jamie Millership, who works at SWCHS and brings extensive education experience. Rev'd Lynda Sebbage was also welcomed. The Chair introduced the new clerk, Clare Eve.</p> <p>Sarah Bailey, congratulated by the Chair on her Headteacher appointment, will attend the remaining LGB meetings this academic year to ensure a smooth transition.</p>	
2/25	Notification of AoB	
	There were no notifications of AoB.	
3/25	Declaration of business interests	
	<p>a) No governor declared a potential conflict of interest with any items to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or had given any gifts or hospitality that could compromise or be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Academy.</p> <p>b) There were no declarations of business interests.</p>	
4/25	Minutes of the previous meeting	
	All members of the board agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.	

5/25	Matters arising	
	There were no matters arising.	
6/25	Headteacher Recruitment – CONFIDENTIAL ITEM	
	To be minuted separately.	
7/25	Headteacher's Report	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing – one teacher is currently on sick-leave, and their role has been covered successfully. One LSA has resigned – their hours have been covered by existing LSAs. • Pupil numbers – these have fallen slightly since September. High turnover of children is an expected characteristic of a school with many military families. School visits usually result in applications from visiting families. Reception applications were the highest ever, which is very positive, especially given it is a low birth rate year. • Characteristics – numbers of military families on roll has decreased slightly. Children applying from a broader range of backgrounds supports the long-term stability of numbers on roll. • Quality of Education – change of leadership and a small number of staff absences noted. • Monitoring – this has been supported by visits from Julie Sarti and Craig Duncan. • Teaching & Learning – The school has launched a metacognition approach based on the 'Early Lifelong Learning Inventory.' There has been a significant focus on Oracy, using the Voice 21 Oracy Framework. A report on the effectiveness of these approaches will be shared in the summer T+L committee meeting <p>The school's CPD has been based on 'Walkthrus' this academic year, particularly questioning, modelling and feedback. Craig Duncan's feedback reported positive behaviour and great use of teaching strategies by teachers. He recommended teachers regularly signposting learning objectives and success criteria to embed learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND – there have been minor changes to the number of children with EHCPs, and a modest increase in funding to reflect this. The school's SEND needs are still officially slightly below the national average, however there are 3 EHCPs pending, which would bring the school above the national average. • Attainment – Y6 assessments have been taking place in school. The results are not yet in for Writing. The results for Reading are on target. The results for Maths are slightly lower than expected. The school will offer in-person sessions over the Easter break to support selected children in Maths. <p><i>The Chair asked if the papers are written based on the children's current ability or the expected level in the summer term? HT confirmed they are based on the</i></p>	

	<p>ability of the children in the spring term for children in years 1, 3, 4 and 5. Children in Years 2 and 6 sit SATs practice papers, which are designed for the end of the academic year.</p> <p>HT noted that this time last year, all children expected to pass the assessments had done so by Easter and consequently the school will maximise all opportunities to support children catching up.</p> <p>HT highlighted significant improvements in attainment in one class. There has been a dip in one class, but a program is in place to address areas for improvement.</p> <p><i>The Chair asked if the Maths attainment of one class was below expectations in Year 5?</i> HT answered that the data is misleading, because many of the lower marks were only very slightly below the average score. The average score for reading and maths in year 5 is actually the same.</p> <p><i>The Chair inquired if the school should prioritise maths expertise when recruiting?</i> HT agreed this would be desirable.</p> <p><i>IT commented that it's very hard to recruit maths specialists.</i></p> <p>HT noted that reading progress is exceeding expected levels. Maths attainment is meeting expected levels.</p> <p><i>IT noted that there is a broader range of children doing well overall in Maths than in Reading, so it is difficult to compare the two.</i></p> <p><i>The Chair stated a desire for the school to enhance the standard of Maths to match the levels of other subjects.</i> HT responded that the current teaching team has more strengths in English than Maths. To compensate for this, HT focuses on training staff and incorporating Ofsted research in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance – this is currently 1% higher than the national average. Persistent absence is isolated to a very small number of families. • Serious behaviour incidents – warranting a behaviour incident form occur around once a week. This is about the same as the last two academic years. <p>The Behaviour Survey garnered predominantly positive results. The response to the clubs section of the survey was disappointing, as the school now offers more clubs. HT clarified that some of negative responses were isolated to one or two respondents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trips - the school's Tag Rugby team achieved notable success by finishing 6th place out of 20 participating Essex schools. <p><i>The Chair asked if more trips have been organised this year?</i> SB answered that this would need to be reviewed to check if progress has been made. EHT recommended both MAT schools working together to share information on successful trips.</p> <p>HT noted that there have been several theme days this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music – Subsidising music lessons for service children has increased participation. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community/courageous advocacy - initiatives include the community garden and a staff member attended a Global Neighbours course. The Diocese Schools' Advisor was due to visit collective worship in the next visit. Numerous classroom observation visits have been conducted. IT highlighted two visits that had been made that weren't reported on – HT agreed to update the report. • Pupil and Service Premium expenditure/activities - 85% of children who are in interventions to boost their academic progress are from Service Premium/Pupil Premium families. LSA interventions alone almost exceed the funding provided. FSM children receive one free Active Sports session per week. More clubs are offered and now run all term. Since December, £655 is owed for trips (not covered by service/pupil premium funds), necessitating the reallocation of budget funds. • Staff wellbeing – lower absence rates suggest an improvement in morale. A wellbeing survey will go to staff in the summer term. • CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System) – this has been adopted by school to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide a comprehensive narrative of a child. b) Record all incidents, regardless of severity. <p>Members of the board agreed CPOMS can also be used to note conversations with parents and facilitates the transfer of safeguarding information to secondary schools.</p> <p><i>The Chair asked to observe its use at the next safeguarding visit.</i></p> • Other matters - the Easter service is scheduled for 04.04.25. <p>Parent complaints are received approximately once a week. There are recurring concerns about disrespectful email communication from parents. In-person communication remains satisfactory.</p> <p><i>JM asked whether there is a communication policy for parents?</i> HT confirmed this is available on the website.</p> <p>Information disseminated via parent WhatsApp groups often gets distorted. EHT commented that this reflects a cultural shift towards discussions on these platforms. HT alerted governors to this ongoing challenge for HTs.</p>	HT
8/25	Risk Register	
	<p>The board is made aware of the following changes to the Risk Register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continued development under current leadership - increase in likelihood due to upcoming changes in staffing and leadership. b) Admissions - increased risk of not having enough space for children as another year group will be full next year. c) Funding gap – the risk has been reduced as the school is now knows the salary changes for this year. d) Governance - governor vacancy risk reduced as vacancies have been filled. e) Security - risk reduced as the gate has been fixed. f) Parental/community engagement - this risk has increased, due to recent issues with WhatsApp groups etc. 	

	<p>g) Attendance - risk has been reduced as attendance has remained strong.</p> <p>h) Rising SEN roll effecting finances – increased risk due to unfunded SEN needs.</p> <p>i) Rising SEN needs effecting outcomes – the risk has increased.</p> <p>j) Challenging behaviours - increased risk as SMT dealing with more low-level behaviour incidents than before.</p> <p>k) Child with severe medical issues – risk eradicated since child no longer on roll.</p>	
9/25	School Development Plan [SDP]/Self-Evaluation Form [SEF]	
	<p>Oracy and writing - summer term monitoring and outcome checks are in progress, with significant monitoring already completed.</p> <p>Pedagogy – teaching and learning remain considerably stronger in some areas than others, although there have been improvements over the year.</p> <p>Behaviour – the Metacognition approach will be introduced and reviewed.</p> <p>Curriculum – there have been some ‘wow’ moments in class as well as on trips. This will be focused on in the Autumn term.</p> <p>LSAs – LSAs have received more training compared to previous years, to better understand teachers' methods. LSAs face time constraints. Worship time has been extended to accommodate this.</p> <p>SIAMS - <i>LS asked how spirituality is demonstrated in school?</i> HT referenced a framework for this, focusing on loving, connecting, relationships with oneself, others, the environment and beyond.</p> <p><i>LS stated that this should be evident around the school.</i> HT notes that this is emerging.</p> <p><i>LS explained that Demonstrating Spirituality and Courageous Advocacy are challenging aspects for many schools and offered support in both areas.</i> HT plans to address Religious Education (RE) at the start of the summer term and agreed to collaborate with LS.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the SIAMS inspection will take place in the next academic year. The board agreed that recruiting teachers with strengths in both RE and Maths would be desirable.</p>	
10/25	Policies	
	<p>To consider and approve, as necessary, the following policies:</p> <p>a) <i>ECT induction policy</i> JH noted (by email) a minor error in this policy which HT will correct. The board then agreed to APPROVE this policy.</p> <p>b) <i>Curriculum policy</i>: The board agreed to APPROVE this policy.</p> <p>c) <i>Health & Safety policy</i>: The board agreed to APPROVE this policy.</p> <p>d) <i>Medical policy</i>: The board agreed to APPROVE this policy.</p>	HT
11/25	Minutes/reports of committees	
	<p>a) Finance and Premises Committee The board received and noted the minutes of the F&P committee meeting held on 20 March 2025. The board agreed the window replacement quote needs to be seen by the committee. HT to chase this up with SBM (Schools Business Manager). The board noted the high costs of replacing leaded windows. HT to</p>	HT HT

	ask Sally (office) to discuss the feasibility of repairing them with a contractor. The CIF bid outcome is not yet known, and there is no timeframe given for this.	
	b) Teaching and learning Committee The board received and noted the minutes of the T&L committee meeting held on 23 January 2025.	
12/25	Chair's Action	
	New headteacher appointment.	
13/25	Correspondence	
	None received.	
14/25	Safeguarding Children	
	No safeguarding issues had arisen since the last meeting.	
15/25	Church matters	
	<p>LS informed the board that Rev'd Hilary Walker has been conducting regular school assemblies and will continue to do so.</p> <p>'Church Mice' takes place once a month and is led by LS and Catherine Gibson. Sessions follow a Bible theme and include storytelling, singing, watching a video and prayer.</p> <p>A new initiative, 'Eco church', has been launched to encourage engagement with nature in the churchyard. School families are not currently attending church and LS hopes that offering special services (e.g. a Pet Services) will increase attendance.</p> <p>LS hopes to start 'Open the Book' (OtB) from September - a monthly 10-15 minute interactive Bible storytelling project to make Bible learning engaging.</p> <p>LS hopes to foster collaboration between the church, community and school. LS asked HT to continue updating the noticeboard.</p>	HT
16/25	Governor visits	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair has attended several HT meetings. HT detailed visits for RE (weeks 1-2), Maths (EHT - weeks 3-4) and Science (weeks 5-6). The board discussed moving away from a subject-based approach. HT noted these are no longer required under new Ofsted guidelines, and EHT recommended waiting for Ofsted confirmation of this change. HT encouraged governor engagement with the current Ofsted consultations. 	
17/25	Governor Training	
	EHT encouraged all governors to take an NGA (National Governors Association) course and asked governors to inform her of any training undertaken (for SIAMS monitoring).	
18/25	Any other business	
	There was no other business raised.	
19/25	Date/time of future meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 03/07/25 19:15 hrs. 	

	Apologies given in advance from LS and JM who won't be in attendance. <i>Committees to organise their meetings to feed into these meetings, allowing sufficient time for the minutes to be prepared and circulated for the following LGB meetings.</i>	
23/25	Minutes signed and dated by Chair:	
	Agreed by LGB at meeting on 03.07.25.	