

## DEBDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY

Minutes of the video-conference meeting held at 16:00 hrs  
on 25 March 2021

Name	Type	Office	Term
Vacancy	Parent		
Sarah Belchambers	General Member		27/03/2022
Catherine Gibson	General Member		23/02/2023
Sarah Mitchell	General Member	Executive Headteacher [EHT]	Ex officio
Lin Stephenson	General Member	Chair	01/01/2025
Liam Tobin	General Member		27/03/2022
Matt Hawley	Headteacher	Head of School	Ex officio
Sarah Bailey	Staff		03/12/2023
Rev. John Saxon	Foundation: Incumbent	Vice-Chair	Ex officio
Michael Adeleke	Foundation		07/08/2023

### In attendance

Tom Bennett Clerk

\* *indicates absence*

*The Rev. John Saxon opened the meeting with a prayer*

#### 1/21 Apologies for absence

None.

#### 2/21 Any Other Business

None.

#### 3/21 Declaration of business interests

No governor declared any potential conflicts of interest with any of the items to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that could be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Academy.

#### 4/21 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 November 2020 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

#### 5/21 Matters arising

No matters from the previous minutes, not otherwise covered on the agenda, were raised.

#### 6/21 Policies

##### a) English Policy 2021

The HoS reported the English Policy had been comprehensively reviewed and updated to reflect the development of the subject over the past two years. A lot of work and effort had been put into redeveloping the subject and the new policy would help to ensure it was consistently implemented.

It was **agreed** to approve the English Policy 2021.

##### b) Business Continuity Plan

Action

HoS

The HoS reported he had drawn up a new Business Continuity Plan using the GCPA's plan as a template.

This business continuity plan provided a framework for dealing with a major disaster affecting the day-to-day operations at the school. It also identified the current measures the school has either in place or in hand to prevent or minimise the impact of a disaster.

It was **agreed** to approve the Business Continuity Plan 2021.

HoS

## **7/21 Head of School's Spring Term Report**

The Head of School [HoS] introduced his termly report and highlighted the following points:

### **a) Staffing**

The responses to the recent advert for a new Year 5/6 Teacher, following Gary Brown's decision to retire at the end of the academic year, were very encouraging.

The advert for a new part time Year 1/2 Teacher would go out after Easter.

### **b) Progress/ Achievement and Standards**

The overall attainment results were largely on track apart for writing. The lower results for writing reflected the lack of in-school writing following the closure of the school.

The HoS was very pleased with the progress made on reading following the introduction of whole class reading, theme weeks and encouraging children to explore new authors.

### **c) Covid 19 issues-impact and recovery**

Re-opening the school had been easier this time. The leadership team had learnt and gained a lot of experience when re-opening the school after the first lockdown.

Maintaining social distancing when dropping up and collecting children had improved significantly.

The school has been able to minimise the contact of children and staff at lunches by maintaining tight self-contained "bubbles" in the dining hall.

No staff or children had contracted Covid 19 since re-opening.

The leadership team were currently reviewing government guidance and assessing what school activities could resume such as PE, sports, school trips and visits.

### **d) PE and Sports Grant**

Full details of the planned PE and Sports expenditure funded by the PE and Sports Grant 2020-21 [£17,100] was set out in the report as well as on the school's website under the "Statutory" tab.

### **e) Safeguarding**

One referral had been made to Essex Children and Families Services for a child and family that the school was unable to contact during lockdown. The case had now been resolved with the child returning to school.

There had been two one-day fixed term exclusions and no permanent exclusions since the last LGB meeting.

One of the fixed term exclusions had prompted some repercussions with parents that had now been resolved.

The Chair thanked the HoS for his very comprehensive termly report.

## **8/21 School Development Plan/ Self Evaluation Form**

### **a) School Development Plan [SDP]**

The meeting received the updated SDP 2020-2021 circulated before the meeting and noted the progress made for each key priority during the Spring term.

The HoS reported the plan included new objectives following feedback from staff and pupils and to meet unplanned events that had arisen.

The HoS had included a new section to provide background contextual information on the school for governors and Ofsted to help understand better the school's overall attainment results.

Factors affecting the school's attainment levels included the pandemic, the number of children with high level additional educational needs and the high percentage of service children. A lot of service children were below their age-related curriculum standard levels when joining the school due to the disruption to their education from having to move from school to school because of their families being reposted to different towns.

The most important metric for assessing how well the school was doing was pupil progress and the extent the school improved children's academic, behavioural and social abilities, and standards from the levels when they first joined the school.

The SDP also included a new addendum on the intervention and learning support programme that was being provided to close the attainment gap for those pupils who fall below their expected ability levels.

The HoS and Sarah Bailey provided an overview of the new In Year Action Plan - Interventions and Learning Support programme, circulated before the meeting. It would provide a clear plan to ensure all children were given appropriate and effective support, helping them to develop their basic skills, achieve the best possible outcomes and become involved in all areas of the curriculum.

The new approach helped teachers identify those children with the highest needs in accessing the curriculum due and to target maximum resources on supporting them. The new approach was to provide and focus higher intensive interventions and support to help children with limited skills to make progress in achieving smaller goals and targets and building on these.

The teaching and support staff were very supportive of the new approach.

### **b) 2020-21 Self Evaluation Form [SEF]**

The meeting received and noted the SEF that had been updated by the HoS and leadership team to reflect the progress made in the areas assessed by Ofsted and the areas identified for improvement.

Four of the five key Ofsted areas had been assessed by the leadership team at level 2 (good) and one area, Overall Effectiveness, at level 2 to 3 (good/requires Improvement).

The HoS reported this was due to the lack of assessment data to evidence the improvements due to school closures and the cancellation of SATs in 2020. Assessment data in the Summer term and the new two-week intervention and support data will allow the school to evidence and showcase the progress being made on the quality of education and overall effectiveness of the school.

### **9/21 Risk Register**

The meeting received and noted the updated risk register. Governors were reminded to monitor those areas on the risk register that had been designated to them and were responsible for.

### **10/21 Minutes/reports of committees**

**All**

a) **Finance and Premises Committee**

John Saxon, the Chair of the Finance and Premises Committee, summarised the main areas of discussion at the Committee's last meeting.

- The Committee was now receiving financial reports on a more timely basis.
- The school had set a very tight budget and was finding it challenging to keep within it in a few areas including curriculum resources.
- The costs arising from the oil spill would be met from the school's opening year reserves.
- The Committee was struggling to finance planned building maintenance projects from the annual budget.

Sarah Mitchel, the EHT, reported the last year had been a financially difficult year for a lot of schools. This had not been helped with the annual lag used when calculating and paying over GAG funding to provide education to the current year number of pupils and those with SEND needs. DPA had done very well in setting a budget without having to make redundancies to meet the shortfall in current year GAG and SEND funding. The EHT appreciated the hard work of the HoS and staff in managing the tight budget, while also putting in place new plans and systems to improve teaching and learning at the school.

b) **Teaching and Learning Committee**

The meeting received and noted the minutes and of the last meeting of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

The Committee had discussed the arrangements for staff and staff-welfare during lock down, working and providing learning to pupils remotely. The Committee had asked, and it was **agreed** that the HoS and governors should monitor and ensure teaching staff and LSA's wellbeing was being addressed.

The HoS reported staff preferred being back at school.

**11/21 Membership**

The Chair reported she had sent out a note to all parents asking for nominations to fill the current parent governor vacancy.

No returns had been received yet. The deadline for receipt of nominations had been set as 1 April 2021.

It was **agreed** to:

- a) Encourage parents of service families at Carver Barracks to nominate themselves.
- b) Send a further note to all parents extending the date of the dealing if no returns are received by the 1 April 2021.

**12/21 Chair's action**

The Chair reported she had written a letter to the Chair of Governors at Wimbish Primary School about them holding an Open Day for parents of potential pupils.

**13/21 Correspondence**

None.

All

Chair /  
HoS

<b>14/21</b>	<b>Safeguarding children</b> Covered in the HoS' Spring Term report.	
<b>15/21</b>	<b>Church Matters</b> John Saxon provided a brief verbal report on joint school/ church activities that had been curtailed during the recent lockdown. He reported that Zoom video services and events were going well and work was being done for the Easter celebration.	
<b>16/21</b>	<b>Governor visits</b> The meeting noted the Governor Monitoring Report of the visit carried out by Sarah Belchambers on the re-opening of the school and on the Covid-19 Pandemic and Health and Safety that had been put in place. The meeting discussed whether the current Covid-19 guidelines for governor visits could be relaxed to allow governors to be assigned to school "bubbles" and to monitor a range of areas. A recent Essex CC webinar intimated that it was likely schools would need to restrict contact and maintain staff and pupil bubbles when the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. In the meantime, it was important for governors to continue and arrange remote monitoring visits with the HoS and teachers.	<b>All</b>
<b>17/21</b>	<b>Governor training</b> It was <b>agreed</b> governors should attempt to complete at least one course on the list of on-line training courses recently circulated and all governors should have completed the safeguarding course. Certificates of all courses completed should be forwarded to the HoS.	<b>All</b>
<b>18/21</b>	<b>Any other business</b> The Chair reported she and Catherine Gibson had had a meeting with the HoS and Sarah Bailey to review and update the information that governors should have to respond to any questions raised by an inspector during an Ofsted Inspection. The information would be sent to all governors once all the questions and answers had been collated.	
<b>19/21</b>	<b>Date/time of future meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 1 July 2021</li> </ul> <p><b><i>All LGB meetings start at 16:00 hrs</i></b></p>	

**Approved by the Local Governing Body on 1 July 2021**