DEBDEN [C.of E]. PRIMARY ACADEMY	LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MINUTES OF THE MEETING	MEETING HELD ON 18 September 2025

Membership	Type	Office	Term
Sarah Bailey	Headteacher	Head of school	Ex-Officio
Vacancy	Parent		
Rebecca Beach	General Member		06/01/2029
*Holly Caparelli	Staff		20/09/2027
Tom Caster	Foundation	Chair	02/02/2026
Joanne Hart	Parent		08/10/2027
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	General	Vice-Chair	14/07/2029
** Signifies absence*			
Vacancy	General		
Others in attendance			
Clare Eve		Clerk	

Opening prayer

43/25	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	Action
	All governors were present at the meeting, except HC.	
44/25	**Chair**	
	The Chair offered to continue in the role. This was **agreed** by the board.	
45/25	**Vice-Chair**	
	The Vice-Chair offered to continue in the role. This was **agreed** by the board.	
46/25	**Any Other Business**	
	SM noted that she would like to discuss LS joining the Board of Trustees. Replacement clerk in place for next meeting.	
47/25	**Declaration of Business Interests**	
	a) It was **agreed** all governors who had yet to complete and send the annual declaration of pecuniary and private interest forms to the clerk should do so within two weeks of the meeting. b) No governor 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 be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Academy.	
48/25	**Code of Conduct**	
	Sarah Mitchell informed the board that the new Code of Conduct is in line with National Governance Association guidance. It acts as a reminder of the role of the governing body and focuses on governors upholding the '7 principles of Public Life' and working as a collective body.	
49/25	**Governance**	

	All governors are re-appointed. There are currently 2 vacancies on the governing board. TC and SB will liaise with the military community to explore the possibility of recruiting a governor from Carver Barracks. RB will ask her military-connected husband to liaise with the military community and LS will discuss the subject with the interim chaplain at their meeting next week. The Scheme of Delegation and Annual Programme of Business were noted by the board. **Committees and responsibilities** – JH requested training to support her role on the Health and Safety committee. SM offered to send JH more information and to put JH in contact with Gary Benn who is an expert in the field. The Chair offered to continue in his role of 'Teaching and Learning' committee chair. The board **agreed** to this. The board **agreed** that their Terms of Reference should be reviewed in each board meeting, with any recommendations to be explored at the next meeting.	**TC + SB** **RB** **LS**
50/25	**Safeguarding**	
	The board noted the updated *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) document. SM has sent Safeguarding training slides for governors to watch. All governors are reminded to return a signed form confirming they have read the updated KCSIE document and viewed the training slides by the end of September.	**All**
51/25	**Policies**	
	The board noted the updated Trust policies. SB to arrange for these policies to be updated on the school website. Notable changes to the 'Charges and Remissions' policy include introducing a charge for reference requests from private schools and passport reference requests from parents. This is to decrease the time spent by teachers on these matters. A second change is the introduction of a curriculum charge to pay for resources used by children for projects that are taken home. The policy allows the school flexibility to manage the charge e.g. per item or per term.. Changes to school policies have been made using guidance from Essex HR. The complaints procedure has changed in response to the Department for Education identifying a steep increase in parental complaints to schools in recent years. The new policy encourages parents to consult their child's class teacher in the first instance rather than the Headteacher, and will be reviewed if the Department for Education give further guidance. SM informed the board of a new policy – the Donations Policy. This is to ensure larger donations are only accepted after rigorous checks to ensure that accepting the donation would not result in the expectation of favour from the donor. JH asked if 'tracked changes' could be applied to amended policies going forwards to ensure changes made are easily identifiable. SM agreed. JH asked why anonymous complaints are not considered in the 'Complaints Procedure'. SM answered that this is to ensure that complaints are only considered from those within the school community. JH expressed a concern that a person could have a legitimate complaint but want to remain anonymous. SM noted that Safeguarding complaints made anonymously would always be considered.	

	SM confirmed the 'Admissions' policy has to be updated every seven years and must include a consultation. SB asked if an update to the admissions policy would include a change to the Published Admission Number (PAN). SM explained this would not be part of an 'Admissions' policy change and would need to be applied for separately. TC expressed the importance of applying for an increase to the PAN number if it was considered appropriate in future. SM reiterated that numbers on roll are dropping nationally and SB confirmed that numbers fluctuate throughout the year. The Chair noted that numbers on roll seemed to have levelled off in recent years, following an upward trend. SM informed the board that the Local Authority decide if a change to PAN is required, based on several criteria (including building capacity and area demand for school places). The current PAN is 161. TC asked if school has enough capacity in classrooms to meet this PAN. IT confirmed the school has been at full capacity (161) before and could accommodate all pupils. JH outlined several corrections to the policies. In the Behaviour Policy, JH recommended adopting one name for the 'Be Brave, Be Safe, Be Kind' behaviour expectation, as this varied throughout the document. SB noted. JH asked if a child needs to be searched by a member of staff, was it still possible to offer to find a teacher of the same sex to do this, now the only male member of staff has left. SM confirmed this duty would only ever be carried out by a named member of staff but SB agreed this was no longer possible. IT and JH concurred that that the policy should be updated to reflect this change. SB noted. JH noted that the bottom of p. 3 of the 'Business Continuity' Policy should include a full stop, not a colon. SB noted. JH informed the board that the map on the Appendix does not reflect the current configuration of classrooms. SB noted. JH asked SB what the management structure at school is. SB answered that she manages the teachers and LSA's but not the kitchen staff or office staff. JH expressed a concern that the performance management aspect of the Headteacher role was excessively time consuming and could be delegated to another member of staff. Asking teachers to performance manage their own classroom LSA's was discussed as well as asking the Deputy Headteacher to take on this role. SB agreed to consider returning the role to teachers to manage LSAs. The Board **agreed** to approve all policies with the amendments outlined above. SB informed the board that the website is currently being updated. The policies on the website are in the process of being updated with SB's name. New photographs had been taken earlier in the day, ready to be published on the website and around school.	
52/25	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**	
	The minutes of the previous meeting were **agreed** by the board.	
53/25	**Matters Arising**	
	There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.	
54/25	**Head of School**	
	SB gave a verbal report on the start of the new academic year. **Staffing** - the school welcomed new Deputy Headteacher Julia Bacon, who has settled in well. Pen Hopkinson has returned to work. Sarah Douglas is finishing her second year of ECT. She has had a positive start to the year and is enjoying a successful move to a new classroom. There are no new LSA's.	

	Behaviour - there have been school-wide discussions of expectations of behaviour, resulting in a positive change in classrooms and corridors. The changes to classroom order have been successful, with younger children based in the main part of the school and older children based outside the main part of the school. TC asked how successful the 'Behaviour Bootcamp' was, at the end of the summer term. SB confirmed that it had been a success, resulting in calmer movement around school. This resulted in a notable decrease in injuries and children had remembered this expectation on their return in September. **Admissions/Numbers on roll** - there are 150 children on roll, with a decrease in children from military families. JH asked if this is due to fewer children at the barracks or to children opting to go to school in Wimbish. JB responded that her personal observation is there are fewer children at the barracks and more postings out. SB asked if qualifying for the free bus impacted numbers on roll at school. JB explained that there is an inconsistency where some families get a free bus place for one child but not their other child who lives in the same house. SB noted that KS2 classes are much bigger than KS1 classes. **SEND** - the number of children with EHCP's has dropped from seven to three, with an expectation of a fourth being issued later this term. Despite this reduction in EHCPs, the need is still high. All children with EHCP's currently have a 1-1 member of staff with them in class, which was not the case last year; a smaller number had 1-1 learning support. TC asked if there are further children awaiting EHCP's. SB confirmed that there are. IT asked if these children are spread out throughout the school in different year groups. SB confirmed that they are. There are 22 children with One Plans which is largely consistent with last year. **SIAMS** - SB informed the board that 'Courageous Advocacy' had been a focus this term; important as the SIAM's visit is due soon. Becky Aulty is conducting assemblies, linking them to a 'Global Neighbours' award. The Student Council election is approaching. This year pupils must decide which committee they would like to be a member of and write and perform a speech to garner votes, linking to recent work around understanding Democracy and celebrating the International Day of Democracy earlier this week. SB noted an increased depth of thoughtful responses in assembly. SM stressed the importance of capturing this ethos this year. SB detailed a floor book for teachers to contribute to which should help capture this ethos. The Student Council committees have increased with the addition of a 'Courageous Advocates' committee. **Trips**- SB explained more detailed planning has been completed this year but expressed disappointment that high coach costs limit the number of trips available to classes. SB requested approval from the board to add a new point to the School Vision. SB would like to add 'Linking to our Global Neighbours' to the School Vision. This was **approved** by the board. TC asked if it would be beneficial to include a staff development focus to the School Vision. SM responded that this is already included in the Trust Vision. SM noted that the SIAMS visit would include an expectation that children can articulate the School Values and explain them, which SB confirmed should already be the case. JH asked if establishing a pen-pal connection with another school would support the children becoming 'Global Neighbours'. SB informed the board that Catherine Gibson (a local ex-governor) has links with Tang Ting school and may be able to organise regular correspondence between the two schools. TC asked if there is any indication of when the SIAMS visit may take place. SM answered that at their last visit, a notice period of 3-4 days was given. JH noted there	

	had been an expectation for governors to complete training ahead of the visit, but that no training had been offered. SM and SB will investigate this. TC asked what preparations governors can make for the SIAMS visit. SM answered that governors will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the School Vision as well as evidence that a Christian ethos is embedded in school. Governor visits to school will be considered in terms of their impact and value. SM recommended all governors attend a school led worship, which LS agreed with. SB noted the Worship Rota has been reviewed recently, to improve consistency in format and wording. JH informed the board that she supported Spirituality monitoring with Holly Caperelli the last time, asking if it would be appropriate for her to follow-up on this to check how successfully it's been embedded. SM agreed. TC suggested governor visits to school to monitor School Council committee meetings. SM recommended governors' attempt to each monitor a different subject. LS expressed support for this idea and offered help. SM stressed the importance of all governors being able to independently monitor these topics in Lynda's absence. SB agreed to circulate the topics for governors to monitor. JH informed the board she is visiting school to monitor History next week.	**SM + SB** **JH** **SB**
55/25	**School Development Plan/Self Evaluation**	
	Assessments - last year's results were positive, with KS2 attainments above the national average in Reading, Writing and Maths. 50% achieved greater depth in Reading, which is higher than the national average. KS1 results were above the national average. The percentages for Writing were lower, but in line with a national trend for Writing scores to be lower. The Early Years results were also higher than the national average. Phonics was also above the national average. A small number of children not achieving the recommended standard were in line with expectations. The Multiplication check was positive, although the average score was slightly lower than the national average. SB explained that in small classes, one child achieving a low score can impact the average score of the whole class and noted that lots of children did very well. **Key priorities** – there will be a focus on the curriculum to ensure foundational literacy and numeracy skills are embedded. This is supported by the teaching staff, who have agreed that Spelling, Vocabulary and Oracy should be focused on. Targeted interventions continue to be important. **Pedagogy** –SB stressed new teachers must understand the importance of staying informed of the latest pedagogy research, which is constantly being updated. Data and feedback continue to be monitored and responded to, to achieve progress. There will be an Increased focus on subject leaders taking a lead in analysing their subject data and how to progress foundation subjects. **Behaviour** – positive behaviour is continuing to be recognised and reinforced in school, alongside high expectations and monitoring of children's wellbeing and personal development. There will be an emphasis on pupil-led action; some progress has already been made. An increase in conversations about social responsibility and social justice have been seen in assemblies and classrooms. Staff training on this would be useful to empower teachers to answer complex questions from children in an age-appropriate way.	

	Trips & Clubs – the number and diversity of extra-curricular clubs have increased. It's a challenge to obtain affordable coach quotes for trips. IT asked if the CIF bid had been successful. SB confirmed that no response has been received yet. IT will meet with SB to discuss further.	**IT + SB**
56/25	**Finance**	
	The budget was **approved**.. IT informed the board that the year ended with a 20K surplus, in part due to SEN top-up funding. IT noted that Helen Edwards has proposed changing the name of the 'Finance and Premises' committee to 'Finance and Infrastructure' as this would encompass cyber resources, and not be limited to physical buildings and premises.	
57/25	**Chair's Action**	
	TC formally appointed Isobel Tunnecliff to the LGB in the role of 'General' Governor.	
58/25	**Correspondence**	
	TC received one email from the Diocese regarding the school's Admissions policy. SB noted the admissions policy update deadline needs to be checked.	**SB**
59/25	**Church Matters**	
	LS updated the board on church matters. Hilary continues to lead school assemblies. SB noted Hilary's popularity with the children. Lynda requested further dates to offer Hilary for the Spring term, which SB agreed to provide later this term. Church Mice recommenced today with a 'Love and Kindness' theme. LS asked that the noticeboard in church be updated. LS shared the 'Open the Book' manual, which the board agreed looked like a useful resource. The Bible-based storytelling sessions will be led by trained participants, planning to start in January (at DPA, then followed by GCPA). The sessions will take place twice a term initially, with a view to increasing to more sessions if required. SB agreed to this plan. LS noted that this project is funded by the Diocese, at no cost to school. A 'Tea and Tissues' session for new parents dropping their children off for their first day at school was a success, taking place on 3 September. Both LS and SB agreed this session should be repeated next September. A whole school visit to 'Eco church' is planned in 2026 (date TBC).	**SB** **SB**
60/25	**Any Other Business**	
	SM asked LS if she would consider becoming a member of the Board of Trustees. LS said she would consider this and both agreed to discuss further. TC announced that the clerk was chairing her last meeting. The next meeting will be clerked by Alice Balchin, Clerk to the MAT. The clerk confirmed all resources will be handed over to AB ahead of the next meeting.	**SM + LS** **Clerk**
61/25	**Date/Time of Future Meetings**	
	Thursday, 6 November 2025 Thursday, 26 March 2026 Thursday, 25 June 2026	

Minutes Approved 6.11.25