

DEBDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY

MEETING OF LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of the video-conference meeting held at 16:00 hrs
on 19 November 2020

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	01/01/2021
Liam Tobin	General Member		27/03/2022
Matt Hawley	Staff	HoS	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

58/20 Apologies for absence

The meeting noted Tomas McCallion had advised the Chair that he was standing down as a Parent Governor due to work commitments but was interested in becoming a governor again in the future. It was **agreed** to hold an election among parents to fill the vacancy.

No apologies for absence had been received.

59/20 Any Other Business

- MAT Expansion

60/20 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 or be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Academy.

61/20 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 September 2020 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

62/20 Matters arising

All matters arising from the previous minutes had either been completed or were covered on the agenda.

63/20 Policies

The meeting received, considered, and approved the Health and Safety Policy 2020 that had been reviewed and updated by the HoS and Sarah Belchambers, the governor with the responsibility for Health and Safety at the Academy.

The HoS thanked Sarah for her help in updating the policy.

Action

MH/SM

64/20 Head of School's Report

The meeting received the HoS's termly report providing updates on:

- The appointment and departure of staff and confirmation that appropriate HR policies are in operation.
- The number of children on roll and in each class and pupil movement during the term.
- Profile of identified Groups including number of SEND pupils
- Pupil Premium funding, expenditure, and activities in progress
- Achievement and Standards
- PE and Sports Grant, expenditure, and activities
- Safeguarding, Behaviour and Safety
- Staff Training and CPD

The Chair asked why the current attainment results for Year 5 were lower than the year 6 group.

The HoS reported that both the Year 6 and Year 5 cohorts were stronger than in previous years and that the Year 6 group included several pupils with high predicted grades. The Year 5 Group was strong but included two students who may find it difficult to meet the standards. The school now had better processes for tracking the small changes in progress that helped target interventions and support.

The HoS reported that the pupil profile at the school had changed with more children at the school coming from Service families at Carver Barracks.

John Saxon asked how the school measured the outcomes and the effectiveness of the range of activities funded by Pupil Premium and the PE and Sports Grant.

The HoS reported that baseline assessment of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium and all pupils doing PE and Sports had been carried out at the beginning of the Autumn Term and further assessments would be carried before the next LGB meeting to identify those actions that were most effective in improving progress.

It was **agreed** to include a further column on the reports for Pupil Premium and PE and Sports activities to evidence the outcome of each activity

The Chair asked a question on the provision of training to Learning Support Assistants [LSAs]

The HoS reported he was looking at more ways of providing training to LSAs and involving them more in teaching and learning.

Sarah Belchambers asked how the new LSA had been deployed and was fitting in with the rest of the staff.

Sarah Bailey reported all the teachers had welcomed the additional support in providing cover and in carrying out interventions that had resulted in a more planned and structured intervention programme being delivered for each class and subject. A lot of work had been carried out in implementing an improved assessment, intervention and recording programme at pupil level.

MH

The HoS reported the acquisition of the new Insight software program had been very helpful in providing data and identifying trends in pupil progress, especially SEND Children, that allowed more targeted interventions.

The Chair felt a lot had been achieved to-date and the school should consider taking time to embed and consolidate the new processes.

The HoS reported that being unable to carry out themed pupils activities due to COVID-19 and the closure of the school had provided the time and opportunity to focus on teaching and learning and improving the implementation of the curriculum. The School had been able to focus on the areas requiring specific improvement, highlighted at the last Ofsted Inspection, that had benefited the school academically.

The Chair congratulated the school on the production of the video on the school's website marketing it to prospective parents.

65/20 School Development Plan [SDP]/ Self Evaluation Form [SEF]

SDP

The meeting received and noted the SDP and the tasks that had been completed so far during the Autumn term to deliver each of the five development priorities.

No questions were asked.

SEF

The meeting received the SEF and noted the progress being made in addressing the areas requiring improvement identified by Ofsted. The SLT's current assessment of the school was borderline between Requires Improvement and Good.

The HoS shared a statement he had prepared for staff highlighting the areas that he felt the school had not yet made sufficient progress and detailed the actions that were currently be taken or were planned to raise the standards in those areas.

The Academy's School Improvement Partner was due to visit the school to assess the actions taken and evaluate whether progress was being made in those areas.

66/20 Assessment and Interventions

The HoS provided a presentation on the Academy's work on assessment and interventions. He reported that overall pupils' progress had not fallen back as much as had been predicted when the school was required to close in March and pupils were home-learning.

He felt this was down to the quality of the home-learning provided together with the support of parents.

Progress had been down in reading and writing and there had been a noticeable reduction in pupil's general resilience in their work.

Weekly targeted interventions had been programmed to address these areas.

67/20 Minutes/reports of committees

a) Finance and Premises

John Saxon, the Chair of the Finance and Premises Committee, reported the Committee had met on the 5th November.

The Committee had reviewed the financial position set out in the management accounts for the year ended 31 August 2020 that showed the Academy had made an unexpected surplus for the year of £41,634, against a budgeted surplus of £6,991. The surplus would need to fund the current year's budgeted loss of £9,787 together with

	<p>the cost of works for a new oil tank and groundworks [£16,500] not covered by any funding from the ESFA.</p> <p>The Committee had discussed spending up to £10,000 on refurbishing the school hall, classroom and library and the front of the school to enhance the school's appearance to pupils, staff, and parents.</p> <p>The Committee had reviewed its terms of reference [TORs] and had not made any recommendations to change them.</p> <p>It was agreed to include a provision in the TORs to allow the Committee to meet using video-conferencing technology.</p>	Clerk
	<p style="padding-left: 40px;">b) Teaching and Learning Committee [LS]</p> <p>The Teaching and Learning Committee had met on 8th October 2020 and had focused on the areas that needed improving.</p> <p>The Committee had reviewed its terms of reference [TORs] and had not made any recommendations to change them.</p> <p>As with the F&P Committee, it was agreed to include a provision in the TORs to allow the Committee to meet using video-conferencing technology.</p> <p>It was agreed to invite subject leaders to provide a presentation at future Committee meetings.</p>	Clerk MH
68/20	<p>Chair's action [LS]</p> <p>The Chair reported she had not taken any urgent action since the last meeting.</p>	
69/20	<p>Correspondence [LS]</p> <p>No correspondence, relevant to the Governing Body, had been received since the last meeting.</p>	
70/20	<p>Safeguarding children [LS/MH]</p> <p>The HoS reported there was on open safeguarding case and no other safeguarding issues had arisen since the last meeting.</p>	
71/20	<p>Church Matters [JS]</p> <p>John Saxon commended the work of the teachers and pupils in putting together a Harvest Festival celebration for parents.</p> <p>John reported he would be leading four weeks worship during Advent.</p> <p>He planned to provide a report to the Church Group to discuss other ways how the group could support the school.</p> <p>The Chair asked whether the schools was doing anything for the annual nativity play.</p> <p>The HoS reported that pupils and staff were working together with John to provide a production to celebrate the nativity of Jesus and a carol service for parents in a similar format as the Harvest Festival celebration.</p>	
72/20	<p>Governor visits [LS]</p> <p>Catherine Gibson reported she had carried out a virtual monitoring visit with Sarah Bailey and three pupils on Science and had sent her report to all governors.</p>	

The Chair reported she had carried out a safeguarding visit and was planning to visit to monitor PHSE during the week following the meeting.

Liam Tobin reported he had carried out a virtual monitoring visit with Gary Brown, the Subject Leader of Maths, Computing and DT and would circulate a report soon.

73/20 Governor training [SM/All]

It was **agreed** all governors should aim to complete at least one learning module per term from the list of topics circulated by Sarah Mitchell, the Governor Training Link.

All

The all-governor training session on Ofsted Inspections provided by the School Improvement Partner had been very clear and informative and had underlined the need for governors to ask probing questions and hold the SLT to account.

The Chair suggested and it was **agreed** to set up a small working party of governors to review and monitor the areas requiring improvement and report to the Board. Governors interested being on the working party should email the Chair.

All

74/20 Any other business

MAT Expansion

Liam Tobin reported the MAT Board of Directors had met on 16 November 2020 to consider a request from a federation of two schools to join the MAT.

The Board had agreed it was important to involve and canvass the views of the current schools within the Trust and had already advised the Chairs of each Local Governing Body [LGB] of the current proposal to expand the Trust.

The Chair of the GCPA and DPA LGB had responded and raised concerns on the MAT's capacity to support more than the two current Academies within the Trust and the financial position of the Federation.

The Directors had agreed to draw up a detailed plan setting out how the roles of the EHT, Business Manager and "back office" staff that would be needed in an enlarged Trust. They had also agreed to carry out detailed due diligence on the Federation's finances and the effectiveness of the plans being implemented to reduce costs to confirm that it could, as with all academies within the Trust, operate independently financially. Due diligence would include a review of the Federation's buildings and facilities to identify any unforeseen costs.

The Trust had always planned to expand the number of primary schools to maximise the financial and other benefits. The Board felt this would be achieved when there were five to seven schools within the MAT.

The Chair felt the proposal of other schools joining the Trust was "brilliant" but expressed concerns on impact on the EHT's time due to the geographical location of Federation's two schools whether there were other suitable schools closer.

IT was noted the MAT had been in discussion with several local primary schools on them joining the Trust that had come of no avail due to it not be the right time following changes in governors and headteachers and some wishing to follow a different route including joining secondary school MATs.

The MAT had also carried out a survey and had identified there were few primary schools in the local area that had not already joined another MAT or had plans to convert to an Academy. It was felt that expanding to four schools would make it attractive to other schools to join a MAT in the future

The Directors had agreed it was important that each school should be the “right” school when joining the MAT. Both schools within the Federation had been rated as good by Ofsted

A larger MAT provided scope for increased purchasing power for goods and services, the ability to employ a full-time specialists such as ICT Technicians, Sports Coaches across the MAT that larger primary schools already enjoyed.

The HoS felt a larger trust would increase the ability to collaborate, draw on and share the different expertise, experience, and ideas from each school within the Trust.

Sarah Bailey reported that being a teacher in a small school could be very isolating and having the ability to discuss and share ideas with the same class teachers in other schools was a good thing.

Expanding the MAT provided career opportunities allowing staff to take on more leadership and management roles and responsibilities resulting in better staff recruitment and retention.

If it was decided to go ahead and subject to due diligence, the earliest that the Federation would join the MAT would be September 2021.

It was felt that dealing with the pandemic should not be a reason for delaying the enlargement of the Trust.

75/20 Date/time of future meetings [LS]

- Thursday 25 March 2021
- Thursday 1 July 2021

Approved by the Governing Board on 09.12.20