

Minutes of the virtual Academy Committee Meeting of
Benedict, Gonville and Heathfield Academies
16 March 2022 at 1700

Name	Position	Attendance
Allison Allen (CofG)	Co-opted Governor, Chair	Present
Sam Daly (SD)	Head, GVA	Present
Simon Davies (SiD)	Parent Governor, BDA	Present
Liz Deonarain (LD)	Co-opted Governor	Absent
Sharon Ferns (SF)	Co-opted Governor	Present
Felicity Gilmore (FG)	Head, BDA	Present
Hafiza Ismail (HI)	Staff Governor, GVA	Present
Laura MacInnes (LM)	Parent Governor, HA, Vice Chair	Present
Sarah MacKay (SM)	Head, HA	Present
Claire Marshall-Hedges (CM)	Staff Governor, BDA	Present
Jennifer Taylor (JT)	Co-opted Governor	Present
Kadene Yussuph (KY)	Parent Governor, GVA	Present
Rachael Atkinson (RA)	Executive Head Teacher, HA	Apologies
Alun Evans (AE)	Executive Head Teacher, BDA	Present
John Halliwell (JH)	Executive Head of Primary	Apologies
Dawn Parish (C2G)	Notetaker	Present
Laura Pym (LP)	Observer	Apologies
Deandra Smith (DS)	Observer	Present from 1708

Item	Minute	Action
STEP First – We are all one team		
1.	<p>Welcome and Update (people)</p> <p>The Chair of Governors (CofG) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone especially SiD (Parent Governor, BDA), JT (SEND and Mental Health), CM (staff Governor, BDA). It was noted that DS was observing, and LP had been invited to observe (but had a prior engagement) as they will be joining the AC after approval on 30 March 2022.</p> <p>Governors consented to the virtual meeting being electronically recorded. This recording will be used by the Governance Team and deleted once the draft minutes are completed.</p> <p>CofG confirmed virtual meeting protocol e.g., mute microphones, wear headphones and ensure a confidential, quiet area.</p> <p>One notification was received by the CofG of any other business to be discussed later in the agenda – the template for the Headteacher’s report.</p>	
2.	Apologies and Quorum (people)	

	<p>Governors confirmed they had added their attendance to this meeting via The Trust Governor (TTG).</p> <p>Apologies had been received and accepted from RA, JH and LP. Lynn Bruce has written to LD to establish how she is and whether she is able to continue.</p> <p>DS joined the meeting at this point and was welcomed. She has agreed to become the lead governor for Anti-Racism and Diversity.</p> <p>The CofG confirmed the meeting to be quorate.</p>	
3.	<p>Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and/or Conflict of Interests <i>(people/accountability/compliance)</i></p> <p>Governors were asked to declare any pecuniary or personal interests in any agenda item for this meeting. None were declared.</p>	
4.	<p>Board of Trustees' Update</p> <p>Governors noted the Board of Trustees update from Autumn Term 2021.</p> <p>AE reported that after feedback regarding having three academies in an AC has meant monitoring is not as deep as governors would wish, the Trust have decided this AC and one other, will reduce to two schools rather than three. BDA will be paired with Park from September 2022 which is helpful as they are geographically close, and Gonville will remain paired with Heathfield. Several schools are also moving to two form entry rather than three due to lower numbers and this is happening across London. Governors were thanked for their continued time, effort, and support.</p>	
5.	<p>Member Meeting Minutes</p> <p>Governors noted the Members meeting minutes.</p>	
STEP Way – <i>We all agree to do things like this</i>		
6.	<p>Governors Membership</p> <p>Governors noted the membership changes since the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SiD, CM and JT have joined • DS and LP will join shortly after approval by the Board. <p>Governors noted the creation of two new Academy Committees. Benedict and Park Academies (BDA PKA) and the new schools from East Sussex that joined the Trust; Peacehaven Heights and Telscombe Cliffs Academies (PHA TCA). The total number of schools in the Trust is now 20.</p>	
7.	<p>Minutes</p> <p>Governors agreed and approved the minutes of the 24 November 2021 as an accurate account of the meeting.</p>	

	<p>Governors noted the PDF version of the minutes uploaded to TTG will now replace the signed version and will be available to auditors for inspection should the need arise.</p> <p>Governors noted the action points from the previous meeting had all been completed.</p>	
8.	<p>Report from Head</p> <p>Governors noted the written reports from Heads and confirmed they had read them. CofG suggested that answers to governor’s questions received prior to the meeting, could be answered during the reports. Further strategic questions were encouraged.</p> <p>BDA</p> <p>The Head was invited to give updates since the report was circulated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is 90.5%, in line with this time last year, some cases are very complex which require additional support from the EWO and SLT. • There are many traveller families which affect attendance, plus families have gone to see family abroad after Covid restrictions which have impacted on attendance. • There is a robust structure to positively impact on attendance including telephone calls, visits, and meetings. Pastoral support also has an impact on improving attendance. Exceptional cases have been referred to the Children Missing in Education Panel; at present this is two families. • A walking bus has been discussed – no STEP schools have one, but lots of schools in Merton do. AE is investigating the risk assessment for this. • Remote learning is still in place – this is posted or online so pupils can access work as best fits their context. • With regards to the quality of education, the CPD schedule is robust with a 3-pronged approach. • SEND – all STEP schools are trialling a provision map tool based on assessments and interventions. It has been very positive as teachers have ownership and is working well. • Personal Development – a bronze Rights Respecting award has been achieved. • In terms of Safeguarding, all essential medication including Epi-pens are in clipped boxes in each classroom and can be taken out for fire drills or on trips. • The team are very hard working and staffing has been tight due to Covid. There was no cover when two graduate teachers had to go to other schools for experience. We don’t want to rely on supply teachers, so SLT covered classes. • AE said that BDA has been affected by staff absence with SLT in class frequently, so they are leading plus teaching. The graduate teachers were very well prepared which means the CPD at BDA was of a high standard. It has been tough for the leadership team. 	

	<p>The CofG reported that Governors have noticed how hard the leadership teamwork. For clarity, she reminded to AC that questions come from reading the HT reports and governors submit questions ahead of the meeting to enable Heads to give detailed answers. Further strategic questions were welcome.</p> <p>HA</p> <p>The Head was invited to give updates since the report was circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘reflect and reset’ area is part of our mindfulness strategy – it is a small area which develops emotional literacy such as colouring, note writing and reflecting. Pupils can reset themselves ready to start learning again. • Enrichment activities took a back seat due to Covid, but they have started up again. There will be a “Silly Science” workshop coming up and there had been various other workshops this year e.g., chocolate making workshop. • HA’s curriculum teaches skills such as enquiry, observation, comparison, researching, reflecting, and applying which gives the children opportunities to expand and explore. • Answering a question about the AIP, there are dedicated teachers at HA who know pupils are at the heart of everything. Curriculum leads are in place who champion subject areas. • For safeguarding, 17.8% of pupils have under 90% attendance. Nine pupils have left and are in a transition period with 19 just on the cusp of 90%. (Making PA at 11%). Letters are effective and improve attendance. The EWO provides support and often drafts in the wider family or the community. • Four pupils are a cause for concern and are open to SS (CP/CiN). They are being closely monitored and regular meetings with all agencies take place. • There is now a sensory room – a teacher in Year 4 is very passionate about SEN and we have quite a few pupils with additional needs especially in KS1. The room has been well used by children who need sensory breaks and introduces the zones of regulation. • Covid catch up funding has been used for additional staff for Year 6 in the build-up to SATs and in Year 1 for phonics screening. • The EpiPen is stored in a safe place but not locked away. <p>GVA</p> <p>The Head was invited to give updates since the report was circulated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact statement comes from the self-evaluation form so the school can highlight its positive impact to date. From the AIP, next steps have been addressed. • With regards to attendance, we know that every school is different and the communities we serve are different. Our parents and children are competitive, so certificates and badges really work. • Some families are going overseas to see family which is impacting on attendance. SLT and the EWO work closely – SLT are on the gate daily and give reminders where necessary. • The AIP is accessible for all Governors and is on the website. The priorities could be circulated for Governors in Autumn 1 meeting. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Thrive room is linked to our pastoral care; it is a big room with a table and a messy play area. All children have Thrive targets which are woven into PSHE and P4C lessons. The newsletter on 4 February 2022 discussed the Thrive room. • Science week has focused on a scientist with an inclusion theme. For example, Monday’s focus was on Temple Grandin. • World Book Day was on 28 February 2022 at GVA and we celebrated throughout the month of March looking at different books with an inclusion theme. • For Comic Relief pupils are running round the field - currently they have run the distance to Brighton, the next target is the distance to Paris. • Governors will be sent the dates for the Great Gonville History Museum so they can attend if they wish. <p>The CofG thanked Heads for their reports.</p>	
9.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>CofG explained that she acting as BDA Safeguarding Governor due to changes in AC membership. She gave a verbal report at the November 2021 AC and explained that the Merton Safeguarding Audit (not the STEP proforma) had been discussed in detail with the DSL, and specific questions can be seen in the document in red.</p> <p>All questions have been answered and the document agreed – it is now available along with the other meeting documents online in the March 2022 AC Meeting space. The report, “Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks” was brought to the attention of governors; it has been recently published and schools should be aware of it as recommendations within the report are likely to be mandatory by the end of the year. CofG warned that it is challenging reading.</p> <p>LM:</p> <p>HA – It is lovely to see children back at school and engaged and happy. Reception pupils were proud of what they had achieved. The safeguarding report is published termly. All children have been given opportunities to discuss worries or concerns and the mindfulness room allows children the opportunity to talk. Children feel safe around the school, as do parents.</p> <p>GVA – A visit is planned onsite. All children are doing well, they do early morning work discussing current events and children can raise any worries or concerns. Good practice has continued across the school and topics are age appropriate. There has been an Equality Week which helps children feel confident to deal with difficult conversations. The Pupil Parliament has led several initiatives around the school.</p>	
10.	<p>Standards, Inclusion and Anti-Racism</p> <p>At BDA there are catch up strategies that have been well considered. Maths is strong and assessment confident. Retrieval practice is consistent and effective. Mental wellbeing is at the forefront of what the school does. The anti-racism</p>	

	<p>priority is progressing well, with good breadth and depth to activities Support for parents is timely and the pupil context is well understood; the school is proactive in managing pupil and staff needs.</p> <p>Possible future developments include; Supporting children to ‘stand up and be counted’ regarding anti-racism, while keeping themselves safe. Monitoring the impact of London pupil mobility, continued focus and support for mental health and wellbeing (staff and pupils), and continue to develop high expectations and innovative tools.</p> <p>GVA has agile, knowledgeable, and innovative responses to pupil needs with a clear, evaluative process in place. There is effective catch-up strategies with exceptionally high pupil progress including SEND. Every child can excel and there are no ‘glass ceilings’ here; strategies include pre-teaching. Activities to support mental health and wellbeing continue to be a strength while the anti-racism priority is well-planned and sensitive.</p> <p>Potential future developments include: The monitoring of EAL pupils is strong but rightly remains a focus due to the school’s community context. Continued focus and support for mental health and wellbeing (Staff and pupils) and continue to develop and be proud of the strong culture of high expectations for and by all.</p> <p>HA ensures that teachers are all aware of the groups of children within their classes and their need and ability; they focus their questioning to challenge and deepen the knowledge of children in their classes. SEND children have 1:1 support and work tailored to their need.</p> <p>Relevant to lockdown, Heathfield’s broad and balanced curriculum is vital. PE, Art, music, PSHE, P4C are all mindful sessions which allow the children to discuss their mental health and practice mindfulness to support their mental health.</p> <p>Attainment, and Quality First teaching continue to be strong, benefitting Heathfield’s diverse range of ability and pupil context. Support for parents is wide ranging and timely, pupil contexts are well understood. The school has a sense of calm but is agile and proactive in managing pupil and staff needs. Leaders are confident and resourceful in the face of challenges. Delivery of the anti-racism priority is considered, and very well structured.</p> <p>Potential future developments include; Continue to focus and support mental health and wellbeing (Staff and pupils). Continue to develop and be proud of the strong culture of high expectations for and by all, including children transitioning to the next phase of school life and to support parental engagement</p> <p>Q: There has been a lack of support from outside agencies, and staff have filled the gap. Is this sustainable? A: It is hard to get CAHMS and mental health support, so we have drawn on internal support for mental health and made allowances in the timetable. We are doing the</p>	
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	<p>best with the resources we have. We have a different outlook to inclusion. It is about setting out what we can do to support each other – we cannot control waiting lists etc., so STEP is looking at how we can do this within the Trust.</p> <p>Q: What impact is racism having on mental health? How is it impacting the curriculum and mental health? How can we support schools? FG said: The roadmap is open but can be vague, but we are from different contexts, and it must be tailored depending on needs. Schools are looking at action plans and you cannot move on to the next step until all areas are worked on. Language is looked at and some areas need to have a change of narrative. It is about tolerance and respect. SD feels very proud that STEP have acted the way they have, and we know there is more to do but we are on the right trajectory to making that change.</p> <p>Curriculum and Well Being SF stated that P4C is well embedded in the schools. The general feeling is that pupils have opportunities to discuss feelings and life in the wider world. At GVA, early morning work discusses issues in the news. SLT have frequent discussions to ensure staff have a good work/life balance. At BDA there is a focus on providing high quality plans with less emphasis on marking with lots of CPD.</p> <p>SEND and Mental Health JT said it was great to meet with the schools and asked if anyone was directly affected by Ukraine – it was thought no one was. Year 6 transition is coming up and all information will be passed on. Provision maps have been interesting. The support for sensory rooms has been great and JT said that the reports about each school will be circulated soon.</p>	
11.	<p>Stakeholder Engagement Governor noted verbal stakeholder engagement reports</p> <p>HI stated that GVA has a strong community and supports the local food bank. Staff can access counselling services and are encouraged to leave by 5:45pm each day to protect well-being. It would be great if more parents got involved in the school community.</p> <p>CM reported on BDA and said the reading morning was a great success with over 100 parents attending. Staff wellbeing is prioritised.</p> <p>LM and SM said at HA the Friends of Heathfield contribute through fundraising so without them it would be a different situation. A core group of parents normally help but we are trying to get more involved. More events for different faiths need to be explored.</p>	
12.	<p>RACE Charter Mark Governors discussed next steps. Governors agreed that having sight of school anti-racism action plans would be very helpful. These would be made available.</p>	

13.	<p>Governors in School</p> <p>Governors were reminded to book the focus visit / governor day with the school during the half term before the next Academy Committee meeting and to submit a written report up to ten days before the next meeting for information or discussion.</p> <p>It was suggested, going forward, for governors to meet in person for governor day / visits / socials in school where possible and virtually for an Academy Committee to feedback and discuss areas observed.</p> <p>Head teachers will get dates in the diary – GVA will host. SD will send out dates for the summer term.</p> <p>Action: SD to circulate dates.</p>	1
STEP Up – We all succeed together		
14.	<p>Chair’s Actions / Correspondences / Updates</p> <p>The CofG reported no action had been taken on behalf of Governors and there were no documents to circulate since the last meeting.</p>	
STEP Ahead – We invest in our future		
15.	<p>Governor Training</p> <p>Governors noted the virtual STEP in-house training took place on 26 January 2022. It was felt to be helpful.</p> <p>The CofG and VCofG had attended Croydon’s online Chairs of Governors Briefing on 20th January 2022, which gave a detailed and useful information about Safeguarding.</p> <p>Most governors had attended the online Anti-Racism Charter Training on 3rd March 2022 and commented how thought-provoking it was. A further date would be booked for those unable to attend.</p> <p>The next virtual STEP Governor Training is scheduled for 15 June 2022 6pm. Governors were invited to suggest future training focus areas.</p>	
16.	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <p>The next virtual Academy Committee meeting will be on 6 July 2022 at 5pm.</p>	
17.	<p>Any Other Business (people)</p> <p>Headteacher Reports</p> <p>HT reports provide a great deal of information and are interesting, but lengthy reading – there is duplication across all the reports presented to the AC, so the Heads and Governors sometimes have the same things in reports, however they are well-written papers. Governors are contributing a lot of their time freely, the need to read such lengthy documents is challenging. It was suggested that</p>	

	<p>headlines might be used. It would be interesting to know how other ACs report – do all ACs provide similar reports or have they a different model?</p> <p>If anyone has any suggestions, please email CofG.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note, the Heads report is a template used across all AC which originated from the Executive Team.</i></p>	
18.	<p>Closure There being no further business to discuss, the CofG closed the meeting at 18:45.</p>	

Item	Action Points including questions for Governance / Executive Teams and Trustees	Owner
1.	Dates to be circulated for Governors Day at GVA	SD

These minutes are a true and accurate account of the meeting.	
Name	Allison Allen
Senior Governance Clerk	Lynn Bruce
Date	05/04/2022