



**Minutes of the meeting of Operations Committee  
GEMS LEARNING TRUST**

**Wednesday 25th February 2020 At 10am**

**GEMS Twickenham Primary Academy/by phone**

<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Role</b>
Jodie Croft	CEO
Danielle West	Director, Chair
Jason Murphy	Director
Rowena Duff	Director

*There are a set of confidential minutes in relation to this meeting, which are available on request*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Comments/questions</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Apologies for absence and consent to absence	None	
2	Declaration of pecuniary interest and updates to business register	DW: conflict of interest over item 11 on the agenda	
3	Minutes of previous meeting, matters arising	JC noted all matters had been addressed and the following are due to be addressed: 1. Asset register needs to match the asset policy 2. Surplus funds to be invested	Asset register needs to match the asset policy - JC  Surplus funds to be invested - JC to meet with Barclays to discuss
3	Management accounts and financial reports - receive	JC: Need to address my salary not sure the projected increase in pension is correct – GLT surplus likely to be £84k  <b>TPA</b> RD: Do the YTD figures represent the revised budget? JC unsure to double check with Edufin. Annual figures are set against revised budget. JM: Why does TPA have Agency high fees? JC – some illness (TPA claim back costs of supply staff), some	JC to investigate pension discrepancies in her salary.  Edufin to clarify TPA YTD is set against revised YTD

		<p>planned CPD absence, some covering teachers paid TOIL to run clubs. JC to investigate further</p> <p>RD: Why is paragon subscription on Capital? JC – ESFA rules permit first year of software licenses to be funded by capital pot</p> <p><b>DPA</b> Annual surplus expected to be £270k RD: Why is £46,251 in unbudgeted income not included on management accounts? JC not sure, but would explain the difference between the working budget and the management accounts .</p>	<p>JC to explore agency cover staff further at TPA</p> <p>JC to ensure unbudgeted income at DPA is included in DPA management accounts</p>
4	Benchmarking sector reports and internal exercises 18/19	<p>RD: self-generated income is lower at TPA and DPA. Should targets should be 10%?</p> <p>JC – schools are both not full and already raise a large amount from parents. DPA operating in a different demographic so school generated income might be lower. JC concerned about how much parents are asked to contribute and that we shouldn't expect too much. JC - wouldn't want to factor in a higher additional income and depend on it. All agreed.</p> <p>JC noted DPA higher staff costs 76% - investigate whether this is accurate and why</p>	JC noted DPA higher staff costs 76% in 18/19- investigate whether this is accurate and why
5	Review and appointment of External and Internal Auditors	<p>UHY – RD: timely accounts</p> <p>JC – timely, accurate, good onsite experience at TPA and DPA, relationship not overly familiar. Happy to continue in 19/20 Tender for 20/21</p>	Continue with UHY for 19/20 and tender for 20/21
6	Review Equality Policy	<p>JC noted that the GLT has equality policies for children but not for staff other than the published equality statement. JC noted that neither school is representative of BAME teachers in the primary sector. JC wants to investigate whether the organisation puts BAME teachers off applying and will monitor the ethnicity of applicants.</p> <p>RD – doesn't believe in positive discrimination– need to have right candidate for the job, don't think we should have teacher ethnic targets. JM – are we advertising in standard places and are applicants assessed on merit?</p> <p>JC, yes both schools document reasons for shortlisting candidates, then score each answer at interview as well as scoring of tasks. Generally the highest scoring applicants are offered the job if finances allow.</p> <p>JC – schools direct and apprenticeships are worth looking into to encourage our BAME teaching assistants to qualify as teachers – GLT could promote this career path more widely.</p>	JC to draft an equality policy for the GLT

		<p>RD: find shining stars in teaching assistants. Are we using recruitment agencies? Are we sure their values are in line with ours? JC – no we don't use recruitment agencies.</p> <p>DW: being aware of equality as an organisation helps – we do need role models from different communities and important to have that knowledge and data and find different routes into teaching and whether we are similar – London is v diverse, always a smaller number of BAME applicants but we should be representative.</p>	
7	Review of EFA/OCC capital funding and procurement	<p>OCC have confirmed the following capital sums for WPA  ICT: £165,000  FFE: £116,500</p> <p>Remaining capital sums  TPA  ICT: £76,210  FFE: £5,092</p> <p>TPA overspent capital £6,000 so far, this may be re-couped by a capital contribution to revenue</p> <p>JM: Are we tied to Joskos for remaining ICT capital budget? JC no, as long as we have drawn down the majority of items on our 5 year ICT cost matrix then we are free to spend the remaining capital funds with other suppliers – as long as we follow standard procurement processes.</p>	
8	DPA Building matters	<p>JC noted that the GLT has written to the SoS about the scale of building works likely to take place at DPA – there has been no response yet.</p> <p>JC will continue to monitor the programme and risks.</p>	
9	WPA Project overview & progress	<p>JC – WPA going very well – building on time, 2 teachers hired, head very helpful, due to start next month, guaranteed funding mitigates risk from potentially low pupil numbers</p> <p>JM: can we do a combined visit to DPA and WPA – thereabouts handover time? JC to organise</p>	JC to organise visit to DPA and WPA in June 2020
10	Health and Safety matters	<p>H&amp;S: DPA audit due</p> <p><b>TPA</b>  FRA – JC to schedule H&amp;s meeting with TPA in 1 month – assess priority order of items raised in FRA and H&amp;S report</p> <p><b>TPA and DPA</b>  Asset management strategies to be sent to Operations committee 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020</p> <p>Coronavirus – latest advice – both schools aware. Don't close in suspected cases and take advice if confirmed cases.</p>	<p>Asset management strategies to be sent to Operations committee 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020</p>

11	Review Trust Risk Registers	Confidential matters were discussed. A dated record is held by JC. DW left the meeting (after reviewing items 12 and 13 on the agenda).	
12	Approval invoices over £10k	DPA invoice 1154 Approved	DPA/TPA All invoices over £10k must receive approval before funds are committed.
13	AOB	<p>Data Breach – whole TPA parents email addresses shared. DPO made aware and school has taken immediate steps to stop using parent email addresses.</p> <p>Trips TPA – both approved. JC noted high take up of PGL despite relatively high cost of £350. JC noted that some parents are offered financial support. Trip take up should be monitored to ensure cost is not a discriminative factor.</p> <p>Both trips have comprehensive risk assessments completed, which are also monitored by the LA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodrow Y3 26-27 March – 47 children £105</li> <li>• PGL Y4 3-5 June – 55 children £350</li> </ul>	

**Table 1 Benchmarking comparisons: 18/19**

KEY Performance Indicators (KPI)	Primary Sector	TPA	DPA
Staff costs % of total expenditure	75%	66%	76%
Staff costs per pupil	£4,022	£3,285	£3,633
% of Income Self Generated	10%	8%	5%

## Standing agenda items

September	November	January	March	May
Appointment of Chair	Review External Auditors management letter and agree management response	Review and appointment of External and Internal Auditors	Review LGPS Discretions policy (every 6 years 2023)	Approval of Academy Budgets
Receive policy review schedule				
Review Reserves Policy (3 years 2019)	Approve annual report & accounts	Equality policy and practice	Review Investment Policy	Report on internal audits
Management Accounts – receive				
Bank signatories review	Review of appraisal process for all staff and approval of staff salaries	Review FOI charging policy	Review catering accounts	Review Appraisal (3 years 2019), Directors Expenses (4 years 2019) and Finance Manual
Review lettings and charging policy	Asset management and capacity review	Review outcomes of benchmarking exercise	Begin draft budgets	Review of EFA capital funding and procurement
Review of EFA capital funding and procurement	Agree schedule for internal audit	Review of EFA capital funding and procurement	GDPR review	
Review of Academies Financial Handbook & Accounts Direction				
Review and approve expenditure over £10k				
Review of Trust Premises				
Health and Safety matters to review				
Review of Trust Risk Registers				

## **Operations Committee Remit**

### **Financial monitoring**

- Keep the GEMS Learning Trust's budget and finance schemes under regular review
- Ensure that the GEMS Learning Trust represents good value for money for the Academies;
- Authorise the award of contracts and payments up to the amount stated in the Scheme of Delegation
- Oversee procurement to ensure that value for money and internal efficiency gains are realised through collective purchasing and contracting and ensure compliance with procurement policies;
- Review financial policies; whistleblowing, lettings, LGPS Discretions, Expenses,
- Monitor and review Trust wide contracts
- Oversee bank and banking procedures
- Scrutinise and approve on behalf of the Board each academy's detailed annual budget, review annually plans to address identified over or underspends to the Board in line with academy priorities;
- Scrutinise and approve on behalf of the Board each GEMS Learning Trust academy's detailed Pupil and Sports Premium spend, review annually in terms of impact and outcomes on intended children
- Agree the scheme of financial delegation to trust academies and review this annually

### **Compliance**

- Ensure financial and procedural compliance with the Academies Handbook and Funding Agreements including reporting to the EFA;
- Prepare on behalf of The Trust Board the Governance Statement and Statement of regularity, propriety and compliance (by 31<sup>st</sup> December).
- Ensure that each Academy has suitably trained staff for the operation of financial systems;
- Ensure that annual accounts are accurate
- Ensure the MAT complies with GDPR

### **Premises**

- Ensure that maintenance, decoration, and equipment/furniture renewal is planned and budgeted for
- Consider and determine the need for capital works at the academy, in line with academy development plans;
- Oversee Asset Management and review the use of academy premises, the equipment and resources and ensure they match the requirements of the academies' priorities;

### **Risk management**

- Ensure that a framework is established and maintained for the identification and management of risk; finance, staffing, standards, reputation etc.
- Intervene quickly and effectively when required

### **Audit**

- Appoint the internal audit officer (Responsible Officer) and respond to their audit findings and recommendations

- Appoint the external auditor and assess independence of the external auditor, ensuring that key audit personnel are rotated at appropriate intervals.
- Approve the audit fees and pre-approve any fees in excess of £10,000 in respect of non-audit services provided by the external auditor and to ensure that the provision of non-audit services does not impair the external auditors' independence or objectivity.
- Discuss with the external auditor the nature and scope of each forthcoming audit and to ensure that the external auditor receives the fullest co-operation.
- Review the external auditor's annual management letter and all other reports and recommendations, together with the appropriateness of management's response.
- Review the performance of the external auditor on an annual basis.
- Review and consider the circumstances surrounding any resignation or dismissal of the external auditor.
- Receive the annual report from the GEMS Learning Trust's auditors and take the appropriate actions to respond positively to any recommendations;
- Monitor compliance with approved financial procedures and consider action required as a result of internal and external audit report;

### **Human Resources**

- Support with the appointment of academy Principals and members of the senior leadership team; to advise on procedures for staff appointments excluding Principals and Vice Principals;
- Support in relation to staff grievance, discipline or dismissal
- Advise on legal requirements and procedures relating to personnel issues;
- Assist in the development of all of the Trust's policies and procedures relating to personnel matters, including:
  - Performance management/Appraisal
  - General terms and conditions of employment
  - Pay and Pension
  - Leave of absence; maternity, paternity, sickness
  - Capability, Discipline and Grievance
  - Safer Recruitment
  - Equality
- Assist with and advise on salary reviews/pay matters related to performance on an annual basis;
- Act as a first appeals body as appropriate in relation to pay decisions.

### **Health and Safety**

- Ensure that the Trust complies with statutory requirements for the management of Health and Safety;
- Approve and monitor Health and Safety and Accessibility policies
- Receive and consider any reports and audits completed by Health and Safety officers and Trustees from annual inspection of each Academy, and monitor recommendations

## Policy Review delegation

Policy Name	Owner	Approver
Governing body - TOR	CEO	Board
Local Academy Board TOR	CEO	Board
Pay	CEO	Board
Whistle Blowing	Principals	Board
Admissions	CEO	Board
Safeguarding	Principals	Board
Car parking/car use	CEO	CEO
ICT continuity and recovery	CEO	CEO
Mini-Bus Management	Principals	CEO
Register of business interests	CEO	CEO
Service Management	Principals	CEO
Anti-bullying	Principals	LAB
Collective worship	Principals	LAB
Home Learning	Principals	LAB
Infection Control	Principals	LAB
Uniform	Principals	LAB
Volunteer	Principals	LAB
Website checklist	CEO	LAB
Behaviour	Principals	LAB
Attendance register	Business/office managers	N/A
Admissions register	Business/office managers	N/A
Capability & Grievance Policy	CEO	Operations
Staff Appraisal	CEO	Operations
Appraisal	CEO	Operations
Assets and Disposals policy	CEO	Operations
Crisis management & business continuity	Principals	Operations
Data Protection	CEO	Operations
Directors Expenses	CEO	Operations
Finance Manual	CEO	Operations
Investment	CEO	Operations
LGPS Discretions	CEO	Operations
Maternity, paternity and adoption leave	CEO	Operations
Performance Management + capability procedure	CEO	Operations
Reserves	CEO	Operations
Risk Assessments	Principals	Operations
Risk Register	CEO	Operations
Travel	Principals	Operations
Sickness and Absence	CEO	Operations
Freedom of Information Charging	CEO	Operations
3 Yr accessibility Plan	Principals	Operations
Charging & Remissions	Principals	Operations
Lone Working	Principals	Operations
Arson Prevention	Principals	Operations
Equality	CEO	Operations
Fire Policy	Principals	operations
Community use/lettings	Principals	Operations
Health & Safety	Principals	Operations
Staff complaints PO1	Principals	Operations
EAL	Principals	Principals
Acceptable use of ICT	Principals	Principals
British Values Policy	Principals	Principals
E-safety	Principals	Principals
EYFS	Principals	Principals
EYFS Computing Policy	Principals	Principals
First Aid	Principals	Principals
Intimate care	Principals	Principals
Lost child & uncollected child	Principals	Principals
Off site visits etc	Principals	Principals
SMSC	Principals	Principals
SRE	Principals	Principals
G & T	Principals	Principals
Induction	Principals	Principals
CCTV	Business/office managers	Principals
Premises management documents	Business/Office managers	Principals
Staff handbook	Principals	Principals
Assessment, marking & reporting	Principals	Standards
Complaints	Principals	Standards
CPD	Principals	Standards
Curriculum	Principals	Standards
Looked after children	Principals	Standards
Persistent or Vexatious Complaints	Principals	Standards
Safer recruitment	Principals	Standards
School development plan	Principals	Standards
SEF	Principals	Standards
SEND	Principals	Standards
Supporting Children with medical needs	Principals	Standards
Teaching & Learning	Principals	Standards
Transition	Principals	Standards