



# Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



## Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:	Mr R Barker		Mr C Grover
	Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Mrs S Janson
	Revd P Cotton		Dr H Marlow
	Mr P Debenham		Ms J Newman
	Mrs C Driver		Mr R Stevenson
	Mr T Green		Miss J Upton Headteacher

In attendance:	Mr R Boulter	Member of the Academy Trust
	Mr S Martin	Deputy Headteacher
	Mrs L Ramsay	Assistant Headteacher
	Mrs T Darby	Business Manager
	Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

### 1. Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Dr D Egan, Ms S Goodrich, Mrs F Hotston Moore, Mr D McMillan, Miss S McBurney, Mr D Ralph, Mrs E Wnukoski and Mr N Serjeant. Mrs Ramsay joined the meeting at 5.14 p.m.

1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

### 2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

2.1 No pecuniary interests were registered.

2.2 There were no updates to the Register of Pecuniary Interests.

### 3. Chairman's Action

The Chairman had taken no action since the last meeting.

### 4. Governing Body Membership

There had been no changes to the membership of the Governing Body.

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Headteacher Miss J Upton BSc

Senior Leadership Team: Mr S Martin, Miss S McBurney, Mrs L Ramsay, Mrs T Darby

Chairman of the Academy Trust Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Chairman of Governors Mr D Carruthers

## **5. Minutes**

- 5.1 With one typographical correction both sets of minutes were accepted as a true record of the meetings held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 and Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015.
- 5.2 There were no matters arising from the minutes:

## **6. Academic Improvement**

### 6.1 Head's Report

#### Staffing

- Miss Upton commended the service given to the school by Mrs Thomas.
- With respect to staffing in the catering department, Miss Upton said that the loss of the new Assistant Catering Manager had led to consideration of the development of existing staff to fulfil this role. In the meantime the current staff are coping with the situation.
- Stuart Hawkins, the new network manager, will not join until half term. Technicians are holding the fort until then.
- A new MFL teacher had been appointed – she offers French, Spanish and Mandarin.
- The appointment of a new English teacher will take place shortly.
- Mr Carruthers asked about recruitment of more graduate interns for September. This was necessary as current group had all gained places on Teacher Training courses. New positions would be advertised at half term (earlier than last year). Mr Carruthers said that he had talked to the incumbents at a recent school event and had been impressed.

#### Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF)

Mrs Ramsay had been in contact with EEF regarding the academic progress made by those DHS students in receipt of the Pupil Premium.

#### SSAT

This was the second year in succession that DHS had received recognition for being one of the best performing academies in the country.

#### Kevin Haddock

Mr Haddock's untimely death had been a sad loss but a replacement was required. Miss Upton said that she was in conversation with Sean O'Neill (recently retired Head of Bungay High School) and Eileen Jenkins from West Sussex. Both had the capacity to serve DHS needs in terms of school improvement and in providing support to Middle and Senior Leadership.

#### KS4 Curriculum

Miss Upton felt it was important for Governors to know about relative set sizes given discussion of these at the recent EGM where there had been discussion of the financial constraints under which the school was operating. A minimum set size requirement of 10 at GCSE had led to the demise of Spanish, Drama

and Graphics courses for next September. The Animal Care and Environmental Science course at Otley College was no longer on offer as there were courses which led to the same pathway available at DHS itself. On the other hand the Construction course at Otley is still in place as there is no DHS equivalence and because the course gives access to further qualifications at a higher level. Mr Green asked whether, as discussed at the EGM, there was likely to be a reduction in the number of sets in English and Maths at GCSE. Miss Upton said that this had not proved necessary as yet and she would hope to avoid this eventuality as the increased number of sets was felt to contribute significantly to examination success in these subjects.

#### Primary School Support

Miss Upton commended the work of Nicola Coe and Gaye Wilkinson in aiding Year 6 to Year 7 transition and in supporting Year 6 teaching in DHS feeder schools. Budget constraints had, nevertheless, forced the cancellation of this programme. Miss Upton had asked the primary schools if they were prepared to fund this activity; two had already replied in the negative and responses were awaited from the others. Mrs Janson commented on the importance of this programme and asked if there would be a significant impact on levels of literacy of those students joining DHS in Year 7. Miss Upton hoped that, as a lot of the work had been undertaken with the PS teachers themselves, good practice would continue in feeder schools.

#### Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

There had, as yet, been no details of any pay rise from the STRB but 1% was anticipated.

#### Election Awareness

Dr Dan Poulter (Conservative) and Mr James Abbott (Labour and former student of DHS) had visited the school. Their input had been well-received and searching questions had been asked by the students. Students (chosen by SLT but themselves selecting the party which they wished to represent) had spoken well on the hustings in perpetration for a mock election on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

#### Diversity Week

Miss Upton thanked Mrs Ramsay for her work on this biennial event.

#### PE Uniform Supplier

Issues encountered with Marks & Spencer's related to the small levels of stock held.

#### Admissions

Year 9 (into Year 10) numbers now stand at 132 for September 2015.

#### Appendix 1: Pupil Information

- A Year 11 student, who had been re-admitted by Governors after a permanent exclusion, had been caught smoking. She is now being closely supervised for the remainder of her time at DHS – mainly the examination period.
- Mr Carruthers asked about the discrepancy in respect of the figures for the number of students at Team Around the Child (TAC) level under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Mrs Ramsay confirmed that the breakdown figure (8) was correct and that TAC numbers were reducing.

- Miss Upton pointed out the Diversity Week showed a pro-active approach to the incidence (albeit small) of prejudiced-related incidents.

#### Appendix 2: Attendance

- The whole school figure had fallen by 0.4% since last reported but investigation revealed that this was due entirely to student illness.
- It was noted that the categories of Education Health Care Plan and Statement were essentially the same (new nomenclature). Though attendance figures in these categories were low this can be explained by two students who had now left and one with long term health issues. If these were removed the attendance in these areas would be at 95.3%.

#### 6.2 Year 11 Performance Data

- Predicted GCSE percentages have dropped since last reported but this is to be expected at this stage of the year when staff are asked for worst-case scenario expectations in order to target support.
- Though the outlook is possibly not as good as in previous years, progress measures had held up well. Marginal students in Maths and/or English are being supported with additional input under consideration.
- An apparent discrepancy in figures relating to the Pupil Premium was explained.
- In response to a question from Mrs Driver, it was made clear where completed GCSEs had been included in the table. 18 students had taken Maths GCSE early and all students had taken one Science paper (50 had taken the core paper with 80 taking one of the single sciences).
- Mrs Ramsay and Miss Upton commended the positive approach taken by Year 11 students – as evidenced by attendance at revision classes.

#### 6.3 Students' Destinations

Miss Upton referred both to figures provided by the LA and those generated by DHS itself. Of the former those for the KS4 destination measure were too out of date to be of any real use; the Annual Year 11 Activity Survey was more relevant - the 100% return for 2014 is a reflection of the work put in by the careers staff at DHS.

In the additional school data (representing the current Year 11) there was now only one student yet to be placed – the Integrated Youth Service Team is now involved. In response to a question from Mrs Driver, Miss Upton said that it was difficult to acquire data to determine which of former DHS students gained their preferred option for post-16 education/employment. It was also noted that Suffolk One was now offering fewer courses, but also that there was greater coordination between it and Suffolk New College as to what was offered. The school was made aware of those who were affected by courses removed from their curriculum and were supporting alternative choices as necessary.

#### 6.4 SMSC Audit

This was received and noted – a few minor corrections were suggested.

#### 6.5 Governors' Key Questions

An updated copy was distributed. Mr Carruthers commended this to the meeting as a useful document that covered most bases.

## **7. Budget and related items**

### **7.1 Budget Summary**

Mrs Darby said that the financial situation was very much as it should be at this time of year. She was about to make a return to the DfE giving predicted end-of-year outcomes.

### **7.2 ACMF funded Boiler Project**

Mrs Darby reported that planning permission had now been received and that Cofely's sub-contractors had been approved – necessary because of the scope of sub-contractor role and changed CDM regulations. There had been a great deal of pipe work completed during the Easter Holidays and the programme for May half term and for the Summer Holidays was being planned.

### **7.3 CIF Bid**

Governors had been informed that this bid (for the roof and extra classrooms) had been unsuccessful. The roof element had missed by 1 pt (though the scoring system was not entirely transparent) and that for the classrooms by 7 pts. Mrs Darby and Miss Upton will be meeting with the consultants to consider an appeal. Mr Boulter asked whether any future bid would be prejudiced by the demise of GCSE Drama but Mrs Darby indicated that the bid had been couched in more general terms rather than specifically for a Drama Studio.

[Mrs Darby also noted that the costs for the refurbishment of the PE changing rooms had remained at a higher than expected figure of around £60k.]

## **8. Committees and Working Parties**

### **8.1 Minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March**

These were received by the meeting without comment.

### **8.2 Minutes of the Health & Safety Committee of Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March**

These were received by the meeting. Mr Carruthers asked if members of the Committee other than Mr Stevenson were booked in for online training – this would be ascertained from Mr Voller before the next meeting.

### **8.3 Governor Visits**

In the light of concerns raised by Governors about potential congestion and overcrowding, Mr Carruthers had visited DHS to observe a fire drill. Stationed in the covered way he felt that the whole drill ran very smoothly with the school evacuated within 4 minutes. He was of the opinion that any increase in numbers would have no adverse effect in this regard.

Mr Debenham had taken part in the review of the Music Department and had gained a very positive impression. He particularly noted the quality of departmental organisation and the balance achieved between inclusivity and excellence; Miss Upton concurred.

## 9. School Policies

### 9.1 Accessibility Plan

Mrs Ramsay reviewed this. She pointed out that Governors approved the Equalities Action Plan each year and that a number of items on the Accessibility Plan arose directly from this. The Equalities Policy is due for its three year review next year when issues of accessibility will be included within it. She pointed out that:

- Premises suitability was reviewed on the admission of each student with particular needs.
- Parents' accessibility issues were being acknowledged.
- Questions relating to accessibility (physical and literacy) were to be included in next parental survey.

In response to questions from Mr Barker and Mr Carruthers, Mrs Ramsay indicated that the Plan was published on the website and that those items where the completion date had passed had indeed been completed.

### 9.2 Examinations Policy (including Controlled Assessment Policy)

9.3

This was received by the meeting. Though not a statutory policy it would be reviewed by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) when they visit DHS to check examination arrangements. Much of the content related to procedure rather than policy.

### 9.4 Freedom of Information Act (FOI) Policy and Procedure

Mrs Darby took the meeting through the substantial changes to this policy that had been occasioned by changes in legislation. The new document followed a model provided by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The policy for publications, together with that for the FOI itself, had been combined; the procedures were represented separately. The following points arose:

- There were few if any FOI requests and usually these were generic in nature or commercially inspired – it was noted that there are exemptions for requests that might be considered vexatious.
- The asterisks in the FOI Policy related to items that represented procedures rather than policies.
- Mrs Driver asked about costs incurred – these related to administrative time spent in complying with any request.

The policy was approved by the meeting. In addition it was agreed that the policy should be reviewed only when legislation changes.

### 9.5 Data Protection Policy

This was reviewed and minor matters of accuracy and detail were noted and adjusted as required. Mr Carruthers pointed out that the ICO was showing more interest in schools and how they dealt with data protection issues. Mrs Driver said that there were further potential legislative changes in the offing and that she would let Mrs Darby know about these once she has attended related training. It was agreed that the policy should explicitly mention Governors within its scope.

The policy was approved by the meeting.

**10. Governor Training**

- The record had been received from the LA though this may not be accurate.
- Mr Wright informed the meeting of a training opportunity at Creting St Mary Primary School.

**11. Any Other Business**

- Mrs Ramsay had included the latest version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* in the Governors' pack and highlighted the key changes to this document.
- Mr Carruthers noted some ambiguities in DHS SEND offer which he, Mrs Janson and the SLT will resolve shortly.
- Mr Boulter asked about the situation regarding the roof. Mrs Darby confirmed that the LA had undertaken a structural survey to determine the required work but had yet to communicate this to DHS. The school had commissioned its own survey so as better to decide the scope and costs of the project.
- Mr Carruthers ran through relevant dates for the remainder of the year.

**12. Date of next meeting**

This was confirmed as Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at 5.00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.49 p.m.

Signed: ..... (Chairman)

Date: 7/715