



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 31st January 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:	Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Mrs S Janson
	Mr P Debenham		Dr H Marlow
	Dr D Egan		Mr D McMillan
	Mr T Green		Ms J Newman
	Ms S Goodrich		Mr R Stevenson
	Mr C Grover		

In attendance:	Mr R Boulter	Member of the Academy Trust
	Mrs J Brown	Member of the Academy Trust
	Mrs T Darby	School Business Manager
	Mr S Martin	Deputy Headteacher
	Miss S McBurney	Assistant Headteacher
	Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

1. Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Mr R Barker, Mrs C Driver, Mr R Grimsey, Rev M Lamb, Mr D Ralph Mrs L Ramsay, Rt. Revd. M Seeley and Miss J Upton.

Mrs Brown arrived during Item 3. Mr Martin left during Item 13.

1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

2.1 There were no pecuniary interests raised with respect to items on the agenda.

2.2 There was nothing to update in the Register of Pecuniary Interests.

Before the next item on the agenda the meeting was addressed by the Head Boy and Girl and their Deputies. Emily talked about the current experiences of a Year 11 student. She referred to Controlled Assessments (now complete) and the admirable support provided by teachers to aid the students' revision. Ellie talked about Charity Week in support of HOPS and the Disasters Emergency Committee. Activities included busking teachers, a (colourful) non-uniform day and a teachers v students basketball match (won by the students). £1000 had been raised. Matthew reviewed the progress of the Year 11 football team which had enjoyed success in the national competition and had reached the third round of the County Cup. He also mentioned the Debenham to Aleppo Challenge – activities intended to correspond to the number of miles between Debenham and Aleppo. Finally Nathan described the Carol Concert and the student-run Debenham's Got Talent Competition.

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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 Chair of Governors: Mr D Carruthers

3. Chairman's Action

Governance Handbook and Competency Framework

Mr Carruthers referred to the e-mail that he had circulated previously. The framework covers six areas (further sub-divided) which outline the 145 skills needed for Governance (plus a further 62 for the Chairman). Many of these are possessed by the Governing Body but there may be further work required in some areas. It may also be the case that, at some future date, it will be necessary to demonstrate compliance in relation to these skills. The DfE Governor Handbook makes reference to the National Governors' Association (NGA) - a charitable body providing support for school governors. Mr Carruthers had signed up DHS in order to access support for Governors and to keep them informed. He sought permission from Governors for their contact details to be passed to the NGA. Mr Debenham felt that this was a positive move.

In relation to Mr Carruthers' observations, Mr Boulter asked who it was who determines whether Governors are competent. Mr Carruthers responded that currently this is dependent on self-evaluation but could in future be based on external judgements. Ms Goodrich agreed but felt that the current focus would be on schools with particular issues/problems – especially as, at the moment, there were not many providers for such a service.

Support Staff Governor

There, as yet, had been no interest in taking on this role.

SEN Presentation

This had been postponed until a later meeting.

Action Mr Carruthers

4. Minutes

4.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4.2 Matters arising from the minutes.

Action Points

7.6 Mr Carruthers had not yet arranged a meeting with Chairs of Governing Bodies in pyramid schools.

12 The SEN presentation is to take place later in the year.

Other matters arising

9.2 Mr McMillan asked if the CIF bids had been submitted. Mrs Darby confirmed that they had with a response expected around April.

5. Academic Improvement

5.1 Head's Report

Mr Martin reviewed Miss Upton's report. He highlighted a number of issues:

- In Appendix 1 there had been two more exclusions
- Admissions numbers are currently looking positive though preferences are not yet known

- In relation to attendance figures (Appendix 2) Mr Carruthers asked if the criteria for authorised absence remained the same. Mr Martin confirmed that they did. It was noted that overall attendance was exceptionally good.
- Appendix 4 (Housing Developments) – it was felt that some new housing proposals were not yet accounted for in the LA analysis

5.2 DHS Self Evaluation Form (SEF)

This item was taken by reference to the summary document already circulated. Mr Carruthers pointed out that, though a SEF is no longer required, it is useful to keep Governors informed as to how judgements are made and areas where improvement is being made or is needed. Mr Boulter asked that acronyms be explained in future versions

Action Miss Upton

6. Budget and related items

6.1 Current budgetary position

Mrs Darby reported that the current financial situation was very much as it should be. She made the following observations:

- Higher Tariff Needs receipts had been higher than expected.
- She reminded the meeting that figures are inflated because of the Teaching School (TS) grant.
- Increased support staff costs are caused by long term absence.
- As requested by Governors, the current bank position (as of 30th December 2016) had been included at the end of the report.
- The rent for use of the Leisure Centre will increase by £500 fixed for three years.

6.2 Letter from Peter Lauener

This refers to the fact that for Academy Trust Accounts will now be required to align with the financial year rather than the academic year.

7. Committees and Working Parties

7.1 Curriculum Working Party (CWP) meeting of 10th January

Mr Carruthers complimented Miss McBurney on the presentation which was made to the CWP meeting and which was tabled at this meeting. He thanked her for this as he felt that it made the job of the Governors that much easier. All questions had been asked at the CWP meeting

7.2 Admissions Committee Meeting held on 10th January 2017

Mrs Janson confirmed that 2017 admissions had been reviewed in line with the Admissions Policy. 203 applications had been received. She asked that the Admissions Policy on the website was checked to ensure that it was up-to-date and that it had been approved by Governors.

Action Miss Upton

7.3 Governors' Disciplinary Committee held on 10th January 2017

The Committee had met with a Year 11 student who had assaulted another student. Strategies to avoid conflict had been discussed.

7.4 Governor Visits

Mr Grover had visited in his capacity as Safeguarding Governor and had met with Mr Martin and Mrs Ramsay to complete the LA compliance form. They also discussed strategies for ensuring compliance. To this end Mrs Ramsay and Mr Grover will conduct a 'safeguarding audit walk' and there will be a twilight session for staff to check their understanding of safeguarding issues. Mr Grover said that he had asked the SLT a number of questions arising from his training. He would provide an annual report for Governors. In response to a question, Mr Martin explained what private fostering entailed.

Mr Marlow had observed an Art Lesson as part of the departmental review. He had been impressed by student involvement in a well-organised lesson.

8. Committees and Working Parties

8.1 Training opportunities will be forwarded at a later date.

8.2 Training details were yet to be received.

9. Any Other Business

- Mrs Janson asked if the SEND Information Report (December 2016) on the website had been approved by Governors. It was confirmed that it had.
- Mr Wright checked with Governors that all e-mail addresses were current.
- Mr Marlow noted that the appointment of a new vicar for the Debenham Parish had been delayed and wondered if this had any negative impact on the school. It was felt that it had not given the interim appointment of Rev Mary Lamb as Governor.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 9th May 2017 at 5.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.17 pm.

Signed: Chairman Date: 9th May 2017