



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 2nd October 2018 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

Mr R Barker		Mr C Grover
Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Mrs S Janson
Mr P Debenham		Dr H Marlow
Mrs C Driver		Mrs J Newman
Mr T Green		Miss J Upton

In attendance:

Mr R Grimsey	Trustee
Mr S Martin	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs L Ramsay	Assistant Headteacher
Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

1. Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Bishop Martin, Mr Boulter, Mrs Brown, Dr Egan, Miss Goodrich, Miss McBurney, Mr McMillan, Mr Ralph, Mr Serjeant and Mrs Willmot. Mr Martin and Mrs Ramsay left the meeting during Item 13.4; Mr Grimsey left during Item 8.2.

1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

2.1 School teaching staff noted that they had an interest in Item 13.1.

2.2 There were no updates to the register of pecuniary interests.

3. Election of Chairman

The only candidate was Mr Carruthers who was elected nem con. Mr Debenham thanked Mr Carruthers for all his hard work as Chairman over the previous year, describing him as a 'huge support to the school'.

4. Election of Vice Chairman

The only candidate was Mr Grover who was elected nem con.

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Headteacher: Miss J Upton BSc

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

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

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5. Chairman's Action

Mr Carruthers, informed that there had been two students who had been excluded and that this might become permanent, entailing the convening of a Governor Disciplinary panel.

He also commented positively on his visit to the NGA regional conference which had been very useful. He would distribute the slides from the various presentations.

6. Governing Body Membership

6.1 This item was taken by reference to the paper *DHS Governor Terms of Office* previously circulated by Mr Carruthers. Governors noted the changes that were either complete and pending.

Mr Carruthers said that Mr Barker, Mrs Driver (Parent Governors) and Dr Egan (Co-opted Governor) had agreed to continue in office and Governors approved this; similarly, Mr McMillan and Mrs Newman agreed to continue pending approval of the teaching staff (though one of these two would serve for a shorter period (two years) to avoid the current issues of concurrent turnover. Mr Barker confirmed with Mr Carruthers that Parent Governors only had to be eligible to stand at the time of appointment, and that they could serve for the full term even if their child had left the school.

6.2 Revised versions of GO1 and GO2 were received by Governors.

GO1

Mr Carruthers made reference to the Governor Code of Conduct contained in Annex A which Governors need to agree. Mr Green asked whether Governors should be required to sign this to say that they endorsed it. It was felt that this would not be necessary as Governors had signed an acceptance as new appointees. The Code could be approved corporately after each revision.

Mr Green pointed out that the guidance referred to on Page 11, Note 1 had been updated. Mr Grover pointed out that the Vice Chair does not now sit on the Finance and General Purposes Committee (Page 7).

Mr Carruthers said that he would make these changes and send the revised copy to Governors. GO1 and the Code of Conduct were approved by Governors.

Action Mr Carruthers

GO2

Mr Carruthers said he would re-circulate GO2 when the changes anticipated were made. Mrs Driver noted that Governor attendance should be included on the website – Mr Carruthers said that it was included in the Annual Report which itself was on the website.

Action Mr Carruthers

7. Minutes

7.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd July were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

7.2 Matters arising from the minutes.

5.1 Mrs Willmott had forwarded the updated GDPR plan to Governors. The Data Protection Officer was happy with the current compliance arrangements at DHS.

Mrs Willmott reported that the decision as to which committee dealt with GDPR matters was a decision for Governors. Governors decided to devolve responsibility for this to the FGP.

7.2/3 In light of the timings of meetings and the importance of this financial decision for the school budget, Mr Carruthers said that decisions regarding the Teachers' Pay Award (which had previously been devolved to the FGP from the Governing Body) were now to be approved by the full Governing Body.

10 With respect to changes to documents being recorded using the 'track changes' option. Miss Upton indicated that this could be used if changes not too complex; otherwise changes would be recorded in a different colour.

Mrs Driver noted that the minutes on the DHS website are not up to date.

8. Academic Improvement

8.1 Head's Report (preceded by a report from the Head Girl)

Head Girl

Elise told the meeting that the Year 7 students had settled in well becoming involved in DHS life and making new friendships. Year 7 drop-in sessions had helped those who were finding life more difficult and also provided support with homework. She mentioned the successful Geography trip to California which, inter alia, had visited the Hoover Dam, the Golden Gate bridge and the Grand Canyon. A similarly successful History trip had visited Berlin and Munich (including a visit to the concentration camp in Dachau). Lots of D of E activity had taken place over the holidays.

With respect to the Head's report, Miss Upton made the following additional points:

September Staffing

The new teaching staff had proved to be excellent appointments. Four Graduate Interns had also started in September, but one had not lasted beyond the Training Day. A Teaching Assistant (TA) had been appointed to fulfil that role – she will start at the end of October.

Attainment

Early figures relating to DHS performance nationally had recently become available:

Progress 8	0.74 (2017 – 0.51; 2016 – 0.36)
Progress 8 (Disadvantaged students)	0.72

These results, particularly for disadvantaged students, were very pleasing. Other 'bucket' measures were comparable or better (E-Bacc 0.95) and all are over 0.5. It was noted that these figures did not include the outcomes following appeals (both for DHS and other schools).

Efficiency Matrix

The DfE had recently published a Schools financial efficiency tool. This measure of financial management had been excellent with DHS achieving the top grade. Miss Upton will send the relevant link to Governors.

Action Mrs Upton

September Training Day

This had revisited the four strands of school improvement. Miss Upton pointed out that the one related to behaviour was not included because there were any concerns with this, but rather with the aim of maintaining the current high standards.

Teaching School (TS) Update

A number of funding bids had been made for TS activities – though care had been taken to make sure that DHS resources were not spread too thin. With the Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) Mathematics project, for example, delivery was by other than DHS staff. The DHS role is simply to facilitate so that all schools in the alliance (and DHS) can benefit.

National Leader in Education (NLE)

Miss Upton continues to work within the NLE framework. She is also now co-chairing the ASCL Funding Committee.

Transport

Because of the recent changes there are a number of parents and carers within the DHS catchment who will not receive free home-to-school transport when their children join in September 2019. Depending on numbers DHS may organise transport for them but it will be important to be fair to other students – particularly those who might be just out of catchment.

Discussion followed and the following points were made.

- Mr Barker asked about the content of the curriculum in relation to the changes to the Ofsted Framework that came into force in September. Miss Upton said that there were a number of changes in the framework – including the frequency of inspection for successful schools – but the main one was a move away from an outcome-led process to one that focused on curriculum content and delivery. In the light of this Mrs Driver felt that the Ofsted pre-planning process ought to be initiated. There was agreement on this and it was decided to approach Sue Haragdon (School Improvement Partner) to see if she could lead on this.

Action Miss Upton

- Governors looked at the school trips and visits schedule and clarified some points on the nature of individual trips. The school trips and visit proposals for 2018-19 were approved.
- Mr Barker clarified an apparent inconsistency in the record of exclusions; the current record is the correct one.

8.2 Curriculum Vision

Miss Upton dealt with this item by reference to the paper previously circulated. She made the following additional points:

The Curriculum Vision had been a focus for staff training.

Departments are expected to develop a five-year programme – this would be their team-focus for the year.

Governors asked a number of questions:

- Mr Green asked about setting at KS4. Though this clearly took place in English and Maths it was not clear what happens in Science and MFL. Miss Upton said there was streaming in Science related to a student's GCSE pathway, which starts at Year 9, but it was not as rigid as the setting in English and

Maths. In Science it is related to ensuring that students are entered at the correct GCSE tier. In MFL there is a double language offer for those students who are in the top three sets for English in Year 7-9.

- Mrs Driver asked about commendations which are popular with KS3 students (though there may be some inconsistency in their use between departments). Year 10/11 rewards are different with a focus on the *Debenham Award*. Miss Upton was clear that such rewards should be 'part of what we do'.
- Mr Grover asked if the reduced number of GCSE options after the Curriculum Review had marginalised any subjects; Miss Upton did not feel that it had.
- Mr Barker asked about the reduced number of English periods in Year 11. This had been part of the arrangements related to the Curriculum Review.
- He also asked if the structure of the school day (6 x 50-minute periods) was due for review. Miss Upton agreed that this had not been looked at for some time but felt that it worked well – particularly giving the opportunity for those subjects that wished to have double periods. She also felt that there had been enough changes recently and that staff would appreciate a period of stability.

8.3 Staff Handbook

This had been received by Governors.

8.4 Results Review Meetings

Copies of all these had been received by Governors. Miss Upton encouraged Governors to pay particular attention to that for the department with which they are linked.

Mr Green asked why there was no review for Health and Social Care; Miss Upton agreed that there should be. He also felt that the content of the reviews was 'forensic and honest'. He asked about tiers of entry as there had been issues with this in some subjects. Miss Upton that this had been difficult for teachers given the newness of the specifications; the situation was complicated as it was now not possible to vary tiers of entry between modules. Compared to the national picture the DHS entry at Higher Level in Maths was higher than the norm. Mr Green concluded by asking about text choices in English which had appeared not to suit some students. This was noted as was the need for greater 'reading stamina'.

8.5 Pupil Premium (PP)

Mrs Ramsay led this item by reference to the Pupil Premium Impact Statement (2017-18) and Pupil Premium Strategy Statement (2018-19). The fact of a Progress 8 measure of 0.72 for disadvantaged students (compared with 0.74 for all DHS students) was an indication that the Pupil Premium funding and its application were having an impact. Mrs Ramsay made the following points:

- Personal Education Plans (PEP) are filled in for individual students.
- The Sutton Report recommends that monies are spent on whole cohort activities rather than individual students and, where appropriate, DHS follows this policy.
- High Tariff Needs funding can only be applied for when PP funding is spent.

Mrs Driver asked if Barriers A-D (page 1 of report) are in priority order. Mrs Ramsay said not but there are different number of students in each category – 10 students overall. She also asked if Barrier D (social and emotional issues) covered Young Carers. Mrs Ramsay said that it did but only if they were eligible for PP.

The 2018-19 Plan was approved.

8.6 Equality Action Plan

Mrs Ramsay led this item by reference to the Equality Action Plan Review (2017-18) and Equality Action Plan (2018-19).

Review

Most areas had been RAG rated as green but there are still some activities where further improvement is necessary. Mrs Ramsay made the following points:

- Use of class readers needs to be better.
- Engaging parents is not always easy.
- Progress of SEN students is slower than expected at GCSE (attendance an issue here).
- Measuring the impact of mentoring is not always easy – it is, anyway, only part of the answer.

These items are incorporated in the Equality Action Plan 2018-19 together with:

- Ensuring equality of access to GCSE.
- Targeted intervention.
- Support for students in tackling synoptic assessment.
- Literacy lessons.

The following additional points were made:

- All leavers had accessed post-16 pathways.
- There will be a mixed-gender group for mentoring this year.
- Mental health is a key issue in accessing the curriculum.
- Club/activity attendance is being encouraged.
- DHS is a Stonewall Champion – promoting acceptance of sexual identity, gender and homosexuality. Related issues are being raised at DHS (Diversity Week) and staff are being trained – especially in the language they use. Support is being offered to those who are considering gender transition.

Mrs Driver asked if reading with a parent/carer could be set as a homework. Mrs Ramsay said that the English Department was trying a variety of approaches to develop reading and that the Literacy Initiative will be relaunched in January. Mr Carruthers asked if Fisher Family Trust data is being used this year; Miss Upton said that ALPS figures are being used instead (together with government data).

The 2018-19 Plan was approved.

8.7 Accessibility Plan

There had been a small number of changes to the plan. It was noted that the School Nurse drop-in service had been ended (temporarily for one year because of the difficulty in recruiting nurses). Prior to the meeting Mr McMillan had voiced teaching staff concerns about this and had asked Governors to register their disapproval. Mrs Ramsay said that, whilst the service will not resume this year, the fear is that this situation would remain permanent. Mr Martin felt that it could be a good idea for the Chairman to write to the LA (copy to Dan Poulter). This was agreed.

Action Mr Carruthers

The Accessibility Plan 2018-19 was approved by Governors.

8.8 Faculty Review Schedule

This was received by Governors.

9. Safeguarding

The updated (full) version of Keeping Children Safe in Education had been received by Governors and most had signed to say that they had read it. Mr Wright will ask those who were not able to do so at this stage to confirm that they had at a later date.

Action Mr Wright

10. Budget and Related Matters

10.1 CIF Projects

The Extension Project is now fully complete and the final payment from the DfE is expected. The project had come in at £82k below budget.

The Fencing and Catering Pod projects had been put out to tender as a joint bid, but this had not been successful. They are now being tendered separately and initial returns suggest that this will bring better value for money.

10.2 STRB proposals

Miss Upton took this item by reference to a summary paper circulated prior to the meeting. She said that the Teacher's Salary Policy was now to be reviewed at the Full Governing Body rather than the FGP as it could prove vital to the school's financial position.

DHS had budgeted for a 1% increase and the additional costs to DHS of the improved pay offer will be £23,269. The Government will fund this but only on the basis of an average national cost. Calculations suggest that DHS will receive only £17,000. Mr Green asked why, as DHS had a significant number of teachers high on the pay scales, the shortfall was not being met in full; Miss Upton agreed that this should be the case. Mr Barker confirmed with Miss Upton that the pay rise had been included in the revised Teachers' Salaries Policy.

11. DHS Admissions Arrangements (2020-21)

11.1 These had not changed significantly from the previous year. Mr Barker asked for greater consistency in the use of Parent/Carer nomenclature; clarification of 'ordinarily resident' when referring to traveller children was sought and received.

The DHS Admissions Policy 2020-21 was approved by Governors

12. Committees and Working Parties

12.1 Curriculum Working Party

These were received by Governors. A number of Governors had been present at the meeting and GCSE results had been reviewed elsewhere in the meeting.

12.2 Governor visit reports had been received from Mr Barker (Computing Review), Mr Carruthers (Dan Poulter) and Mrs Janson (x2). Mrs Janson noted the poor parental response to the SEN parental questionnaire.

13. Policies

13.1 Teachers' Salaries Policy

This was reviewed by Governors. It was noted that the figures in the policy had been adjusted to include the STRB decisions. Miss Upton pointed out that Item 2.6 (Additional Payments) related to Teaching School commitments where, for example, there was weekend working. Most Teaching School activity was covered in the normal duties of the relevant member of staff.

Miss Upton informed Governors that the Government had announced that it was going to raise employer pension contributions from 16.48% to 23.6% - this would cost DHS c£170k per year.

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.2 Support Staff Salaries Policy

Only the figures had been changed. Mr Green pointed out that in Item 7.2 (Para 4) it should read FGP rather than Governing Body.

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.3 Performance Management/Appraisal Policy

It was noted that there had been a change in the role and title for those involved in outreach work; from Leading Practitioner to Specialist Leader in Education. This needs to be cross-referred to Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.4 Safeguarding Policy

This had been rewritten to reflect the new version (September 2018) of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). It was noted that Governors needed to be confident in their knowledge of the whole document (not just Part 1 as for teachers). Part 2 specifically outlines the role of Governors.

Mr Barker asked if, given the extent of the changes, it would be possible to delay Governor ratification until the next meeting. Miss Upton felt, however, that it needed approval sooner rather than later and, being based on the national framework, it contained nothing contentious. Minor changes were suggested (as well as the insertion of page numbers). Mr Carruthers asked that any comments on the recirculated document should be with him in two weeks' time. He would then amend and the finalised policy would be sent out for approval.

Mr Green checked that induction packs had been adjusted to reflect to the changes in KCSIE.

Action All/Mr Carruthers

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.5 Staff Code of Conduct

This had been updated:

Point 10 – now referred to school leavers up to the age of 18.

Point 24 – teachers not now required to have lesson plans for all lessons.

Point 29 – reflecting the stipulations of GDPR.

Mr Barker pointed out that this needed to be reviewed every three years – it was last done four years ago. Mr Green asked if DHS was in a position to to define ‘illegal behaviour’ as it appears to do in Point 1b. Miss Upton said the she would find a different form of words.

Action Miss Upton

It was felt that Point 10 should make reference to Further Education as well as Higher Education. It was felt that reference to sarcasm in Point 16 should be removed.

Various other corrections and minor adjustments were made.

With these changes the Code of Conduct was approved by Governors.

14. Governor Training

14.1 Skills’ Audit

Mr Carruthers will update when changes to membership are finalised.

15. Any other business

There was discussion as to whether Governors should have DHS e-mail addresses (this had been discussed at the last meeting). It was decided that this would be useful in terms of security, efficiency and GDPR. Miss Upton will look into this.

Action Miss Upton

Mrs Janson asked whether the Positive Management of Behaviour Policy was due for review. It was confirmed that a review was required and that this would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Action Mr Wright/Miss Upton

16. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 4th December 2018 at 5.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.26 pm.

Signed: Chairman Date: 4th December 2018