



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 4th December 2018 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|---------------|
| Rev S Bates | | Mrs S Janson |
| Mr D Carruthers | Chairman | Mr D McMillan |
| Mrs M Carter | | Dr H Marlow |
| Mr P Debenham | | Dr W Thomas |
| Mr C Grover | | Miss J Upton |

In attendance:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Mr R Grimsey | Trustee |
| Mr S Martin | Deputy Headteacher |
| Miss S McBurney | Assistant Headteacher |
| Mrs T Willmott | School Business Manager |
| Mr S Wright | Clerk to the Governors |
| Mrs S Edmond | Governor Elect |
| Mr M Touman | Governor Elect |

1. Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Bishop Martin, Mr Barker, Mrs Driver, Ms Goodrich, Mr Green, Mrs Newman, Mr Ralph and Mrs Ramsay. Mrs Edmond arrived during Item 7.4; Ms McBurney and Dr Thomas left after Item 7.34 and Mr Grimsey left during Item 7.5.
- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.
- 2.2 Mrs Willmott distributed a copy of the updated DHS Pecuniary Interest Policy and asked all Governors to complete the attached declaration.

Action All Governors

3. Chairman's Action

- 3.1 School Nursing Service

Miss Upton had written to Ms Farrant at Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services (copy to Dr Poulter) and had received a positive response indicating that the issue was one of recruitment, retention and training rather than a desire to end the service. There remained, however, a fear that, in the longer term, the LA might feel the easiest option was to cease provision. Ms Farrant had also said that the

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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

School Nursing Service was trying other means of communication with clients (online, drop-in centres) – this again may be seen as providing an eventual replacement for the service.

3.2 Letter from Lord Agnew

The letter, suggesting independent schools and state schools work together, was noted by Governors.

Mr Carruthers informed Governors that he, Mr Grover and Mrs Haragdon had completed the Performance Review for Miss Upton.

Mr Carruthers welcomed the three new Governors/Governors Elect

4. **Governing Body Membership**

4.1 Changes in membership since the last meeting.

These are noted in the documents below.

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

GO1

Mr Carruthers had made some minor changes to this document to reflect observations made at the previous Full Governors' meeting.

Governors approved document GO1.

GO2

Mr Carruthers said that he had adjusted this to reflect changes to membership. It was noted that Mr Grover, as Vice Chair no longer served on the FGP Committee. Mr McMillan sought clarification as to the terms of office of teaching staff Governors.

Governors approved document GO2.

5. **Minutes**

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd October were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

5.2 Matters arising from the minutes.

6.2 The changes suggested had been made to documents GO1 and GO2. It was noted that responsibility for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and individual pay award decisions had been devolved to the FGP Committee. Mr Carruthers said also that he had clarified Governors' responsibility where Governors were not in a majority on a Committee. Changes to where Governor information is included on the DHS website were noted by Governors.

8.1 Miss Upton had sent the efficiency matrix to Governors.

8.1 Sue Haragdon had felt she was not sufficiently current in her knowledge of OFSTED to help in DHS' preparation for inspection and Miss Upton will be seeking an alternative.

Action Miss Upton

Mr Carruthers noted a recent letter to the Head of OFSTED from Nick Gibb (Junior Education Minister) relating to schools that had not been visited for a long period – specifically in reference to the criteria for this and the sampling size.

- 9 Mr Wright would continue to ask Governors to confirm that they had read *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*.
- 13.5 Miss Upton had adjusted the Staff Code of Conduct as requested.
- 15 Both Action Points in Item 15 would be dealt with later in the agenda.

6. Student Presentation.

This was given, not by the Head Boy and Deputy Head Girl as billed, but by three of the DHS Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (Albie, Bea and Scarlet) who gave a slide-show illustrating their role. This covered the training that they had received, anti-bullying questionnaires, the use of a confidential letterbox and the 'Choose Respect' event that had been staged. The latter had defined respect, indicated types of bullying (including cyber-bullying) and given advice as to what to do if a student felt they were being bullied.

Mr Grover asked about cyber-bullying and whether it was more prevalent than physical bullying. The students felt that it was and said that training had gone into this in some depth. Mr Carruthers asked about the questionnaires; students felt that responses had generally been positive about DHS.

Mr Touman asked if messages about bullying were getting through to students; the ambassadors felt they were. It was ascertained that the letterbox was checked weekly. Students said that they had learned a great deal from acting as ambassadors. They met weekly to discuss issues that might have arisen. Miss Upton informed Governors that there was to be an assembly related to cyber-bullying on the following Friday.

7. Academic Improvement

7.1 LA School Improvement Summary

Miss McBurney went through the summary that had been provided by Suffolk LA and noted that it contained information not seen before by Governors. The excellent performance overall mirrored that in the measures related to English and Maths (reference P4). The performance for those with low prior attainment showed a progress measure of 0.23 compared with -0.5 in 2017; Miss McBurney said that this was really pleasing but was a reflection of the nature of the students and variation caused by the small cohort size; such results, therefore, may not be repeated next year.

7.2 Suffolk Secondary School Information

The Suffolk 'on a page' information was to be used for peer-review in a group of four schools (DHS, King Edward's, Bury, Holbrook and Ipswich Academy) when Heads visit each other's schools. The Performance Challenge Figures for 2019 (LA states these are not targets) are not based on the prior attainment of the relevant cohort (which, for DHS is weaker). DHS had topped the Suffolk performance tables in most measures and the school's progress score was third best in the Eastern Region.

7.2 Year 11 Performance Data

Miss McBurney pointed out that there were not as many exceptional students in this cohort; fewer grade nines are expected. It is, however, a solid year though lower ability and SEND students possibly show less potential than the 2018 cohort. It was noted that Design Technology (Resistant Materials), Business and Film are subjects being examined under the new specifications for the first time. Cautious targets for 2019 are:

77% - 4+ Maths and English
60% - 5+ Maths and English

Though these are c10% down on 2018 final outcomes they would still represent a strong performance. More will be known after the trial examinations which are reported in January.

Dr Thomas asked if such a fall in performance would encourage investigation from outside the school. Miss McBurney said that the key would be the Progress 8 measure. Mr Carruthers concurred saying Governors focus on this as it indicates the benefits to students from attending DHS. It was noted that anticipated results would still be well above the national average. Mr Touman sought clarification on Attainment 8 and Progress 8; Mr Carruthers said that he would forward DfE guidance on this to new Governors.

Action Mr Carruthers

Mr Carruthers commended Miss McBurney on the quality and clarity of the information she communicates to Governors.

7.4 School Development Plan 2017-20

Miss Upton asked Governors to note the first page which represents a record of targets over the years and for 2018-19 in particular. Page 2 gives more detail on the final outcomes for 2018.

Actions to achieve targets for 2019 are covered in subsequent pages. Miss Upton gave particular attention to the work being done by Sue Haragdon with a mixed gender focus group of students who have low aspirations. She noted that SEND provision had been reviewed.

The SDP overview for 2019 had been created on one sheet for easy reference to help develop and maintain focus. Mrs Carter asked about the inclusion of a focus on financial constraints and Miss Upton explained the issues relating to pension contributions (£170k year on year) and pay awards. She felt that DHS was in a better position than most, with solid reserves. She noted the problem of providing the DfE with a three-year budget plan without knowledge of the income stream over the same period. Mr Carruthers stated that DHS is exploring (in advance) all possibilities for mitigation of the funding shortfall. Despite this, more funding is certainly needed.

The remaining pages covered the milestones for the SDP for 2018-19.

7.5 September 2019 Admissions

This item was taken by reference to a paper of background information provided by Miss Upton. It was noted that a recent Net Capacity survey had increased this for DHS from 654 to 720. The number of first choices for Year 7 in 2019 has increased significantly from 150 to 173 and the impact of external factors (house building opposite DHS and the Ipswich Garden Suburb – now delayed) remain uncertain – though in 2-4 years' time this might mean more in-catchment applicants. Miss Upton informed Governors that Section 106 funding (for education) has been replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for which all local stakeholders compete.

Miss Upton noted that the DHS Articles of Association – due for a seven-year review – state a Published Admissions Number (PAN) of 125. This would perforce be increased to 135 (the number that DHS has admitted for the last five years)

Miss Upton asked Governors to consider raising the admissions number from 135 to 140 for 2019 Year 7 admissions given the high number of first choices and because the larger (140) year group was in Year 10 and would be leaving in 2020. This would lead to teaching sets of 27/28. She said that the SLT had discussed a longer-term solution of increasing the number of teaching groups to six but logistical problems with this, particularly in relation to time-tabling, led to them favouring the shorter-term solution.

Discussion followed. The financial implications of such a move were outlined by Miss Upton. Mr Carruthers read a submission from Mrs Newman which made three points:

- Such a change would mean larger set sizes leading to less one-to-one time and an increased overall workload.
- In Design Technology it could raise set sizes to 24 (20 recommended) making classroom management more difficult.
- Form tutors would not know individual students as well.

Mr McMillan added that increased numbers in a year group could lead to larger lower-ability sets and room size might be an issue.

In the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- Rev Bates asked what the pressure would be for further increase to 140 in future admissions years. Miss Upton felt that this could only be accommodated if the larger year groups were in separate Key Stages.
- Mr Grover asked about the consequences should there be a decline in the number of children in the local demographic; Miss Upton felt that this was generally static.
- Mrs Janson asked how many of the increased number of first choices are out of catchment. Miss Upton said that most are but that there had been an increase in those who are in catchment as well.
- Mrs Edmond asked if the increase demand for DHS places had led to a decrease in applications to other schools. Miss Upton said she did not know but noted that there were fewer schools that were not full.
- Mr Grover asked if the new Net Capacity number which implies a PAN of 144 would have any effect on recruitment; Miss Upton felt that it might make it difficult to defend appeals.
- There was general concern over the pressure on staff. Mr Debenham felt that the admissions number should stay at 135.
- Miss Upton stressed the loss of income when the current Year 10 leave in 2020. She also noted that, whilst a sixth teaching group might be more appealing to teachers in terms of workload, it would be very difficult for subjects to cover this without extra staff.
- Mr Grover observed that this would also bring the need for a seventh teaching group in English and Maths. He suggested that a review is undertaken to see if a sixth group is possible and if the school could afford it.
- Mr Carruthers acknowledged that the financial pressures would play a part in any decision to go to 140 in Year 7 but that it was not as pressing as when the last decision was taken to do this.
- Miss Upton said that the decision to make this move (rather than next year when the current Year 10 leave) was timely, due to the increased number of first choice applicants.
- Dr Marlow asked about the 'real' capacity of the school. It was noted that the Net Capacity Review had taken account of specialist rooms and the like.

The issue was put to the vote and, with abstentions, the decision was taken (by 4 votes to 3) to admit 140 students into Year 7 in 2019.

7.6 Student survey on behaviour

The point was made that this was separate from the work of the anti-bullying ambassadors. The school had formulated the questions and the raw statistics were in the attached paper. The conclusion was captured in the idea that students want to 'treat others as they wish to be treated'. There was general recognition that it was good to listen to teachers and to be kind to others. The main concern was with online behaviour – particularly rumour-mongering. It was confirmed that the questionnaire had been anonymous.

Mr Grover commended the survey and thanks were expressed, in absentia, to Mrs Ramsay.

8. Budget and related items

8.1 Annual Report and Financial Statements

Mr Carruthers informed the meeting that the report and statements had been considered by the FGP Committee and at the Audit Finalisation Meeting so there was no need to go through it page by page at this stage. No observations were forthcoming.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements were approved by Governors.

8.2/3 Mrs Willmott reported on the Audit findings and on the Audit Finalisation Meeting. She said that it had been a very 'clean' audit with one minor administrative recommendation. Mr Carruthers thanked Mrs Willmott and the finance team for an excellent audit and commented that the whole process had gone very smoothly.

8.4 The two Representation Letters would be signed at a later time.

9. Capital projects

9.1 Fence and catering pod

Mrs Willmott said that the contract for the new fence was in the process of being finalised and that the quotation had come within the CIF grant sum.

Details of the nature and site for the Catering Pod will be decided next week. The delay in this part of the project means that a time extension for the funding will be needed.

10. Committees and Working parties

10.1 Governors received a copy of the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Friday 19th October 2018. No comments were made.

10.2 Governors received a copy of the draft minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Friday 23rd November 2018. No comments were made.

10.3 Governors received a copy of the minutes of the Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on 6th November 2018. No comments were made.

10.4 Two reports were received - both from Mr Debenham relating to the Music Department Review and the Open Evening.

Miss Upton reminded Governors about the DHS school production that would take place at the end of the week. As this was too late notice for some Governors, it was suggested that Governors be notified more directly in future.

Action Miss Upton

11. Policies

11.1 Positive Management of Behaviour Policy – including Anti-Bullying Policy

Mr Martin said that this had been tightened and it was noted that problems with numbering within the policy had been resolved. Mr Carruthers said, that, although it was not a statutory requirement, it had made sense to append the Anti-Bullying Policy to the Behaviour Policy. (Mrs Janson noted that the former needed a new revision date). There was some discussion about the relationship of the policy to the School Log Book and whether this covered the statutory requirement to inform parents and

students of any changes to the policy. Mr Carruthers asked about the 'right to search' – there is a DfE document that deals with this. In this light it was felt that prohibited items should be more clearly specified. Dr Marlow asked about drugs that were not illegal but that were being abused. In response Mr Martin felt that it was almost impossible to list every eventuality. Mr Touman noted that if all parents read this carefully they may well be even fewer behaviour issues at DHS.

The policy was approved by Governors.

11.2 DHS Scheme of Delegation

This had been adjusted in line with decisions taken at recent Governors' Meetings. As a result, a column had been added for Members (responsible for the appointment of auditors). Other adjustments related to recent changes to the Academies Financial Handbook.

The Scheme of Delegation was approved by Governors.

12. Governor Training

12.1 Opportunities for Governor Training

Mr Carruthers said that he had asked new Governors to undertake the NGA online training.

12.2 Governor E-mail

Mr Carruthers said that the log in for Governors would be available from Wednesday 5th December.

13. Any other business

The Admissions Meeting to confirm ranking was arranged for Tuesday 10th January at 4.30 pm.

Mr Carruthers and Mr Debenham noted that this was Dr Marlow's last GB meeting after prolonged service to DHS as medical adviser, on the Health and Safety Committee and as Chair of the Disciplinary Committee. Governors thanked him for his tremendous contribution.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 5th February 2019 at 5.00 pm. (preceded by the AGM at 4.30 pm.)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.27 pm.

Signed: Chairman Date: 5th February 2018