



# Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



## Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:	Mr R Barker		Ms S Goodrich
	Rev S Bates		Mrs S Janson
	Mrs C Bosley		Mr D McMillan
	Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Dr W Thomas
	Mrs M Carter		Mr M Touman
	Mr P Debenham		Miss J Upton
	Mrs C Driver		
	Mr A Dubberley		

In attendance:	Mr J Cox	Trustee
	Mr S Martin	Deputy Head
	Mrs L Ramsay	Assistant Head
	Mrs T Willmott	School Business Manager
	Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

The meeting was preceded by a prayer.

### 1. Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs S Edmond, Dr D Egan, Mr C Grover, Miss S McBurney, Mr R Grimsey and R Revd M Seeley.
- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

### 2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 No pecuniary (or other) interests were declared.
- 2.2 Mrs Willmott said the Register of Pecuniary Interests was up to date.

### 3. Chairman's Action

- 3.1 Appointment of new Headteacher

Mr Carruthers said that the application pack had been put together three weeks ago and had been reviewed by Ms Hargadon (SIP). An advert had been placed in the Times Educational Supplement and the East Anglian Daily Times a week later. Various Governors and Trustees had been approached to be part of the interviewing panel including Ms Goodrich, Mrs Janson and Mr Cox, but there was also the need for a parent governor; Mr Barker offered his services. The time frame is:

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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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24 <sup>th</sup> February (10.00 am)	Application deadline
	Shortlisting
8 <sup>th</sup> March	Informal supper with Governors (all Governors welcome)
9 <sup>th</sup> /10 <sup>th</sup> March	Interviews (programme being finalised)

The following points were raised:

- Mr Cox asked that applications be forwarded to Governors in batches rather than all arriving on 24<sup>th</sup> February.
- Mrs Driver asked about the nature of the two interview days. Miss Upton said that there were likely to be panel interviews, student interviews, an in-tray exercise, a presentation etc. There would also be an opportunity for school staff to meet the candidates.
- It was noted that there were already three potential candidates booked in to tour the school.
- Mr Touman wished to confirm that Miss Upton would not be involved in the interview process. Miss Upton said that she would not but she would be there to facilitate the process,
- Miss Janson asked if Ms Hargadon would be involved; it was confirmed that she would be.
- Ms Goodrich said that she had looked at the application pack and had been very impressed.
- Mrs Carter asked if the appointee would have to serve a probationary period. Miss Upton said that in theory this was the case but would involve a review of performance as measured against the job description.

#### **4. Minutes**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2019 (with one minor typographical correction) were approved by Governors and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Matters arising from the minutes.

5.2 Governors were reminded that the Ofsted Briefing will take place on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 3.45 pm – not as stated in the minutes. Miss Upton said that most Governors had confirmed their attendance.

14 It was confirmed that, in the future, meeting papers would be lodged on the secure Governors; area on the DHS website. It was noted that Mr Cox did not yet have a school e-mail address.

#### **5. Academic Improvement**

5.1 Head's Report

Miss Upton made the following additional points:

##### Staffing

There had been a new internal appointment for an Assistant Head of Year. In the first instance this is a fixed-term, developmental post but is subject to structure review

There was some discussion in relation to the Teach First student from Pakefield Academy. Miss Upton said that such students were very much thrown in at the deep end and that the experience had been useful for both parties. It was noted that there were often issues nationally regarding the retention of Teach First students.

The long-term absence of two members of staff was noted. Miss Upton noted that it was rare for this to happen at DHS.

##### External verification

See report from Julia Farrow below.

## Church of England

Miss Upton thanked Rev Bates for her involvement in the Christingle Service.

## Parental engagement

The new policy of non-communication with parents outside (slightly extended - 8.00 am to 6.00 pm) working hours was discussed. This was intended to take pressure off teachers and to allow time for reflection and consultation – often parents send blanket e-mails to a number of teachers – before responding. Dr Thomas asked how it had been received. Miss Upton said that it was appreciated by teachers and had brought more consultation. Mr McMillan concurred saying that teachers had found the clarification very helpful.

## Appendices

Governors had a number of questions relating to these:

### Exclusions

Mrs Driver asked about the exclusion for damage of school property and whether parents are asked to pay for such damage. Miss Upton said that, aware that some parents may find it difficult to pay, DHS seeks a contribution towards the cost of repair.

She also asked about the Year 10 assaults. As a result of discussion, it was noted that:

- In one case a student had been hospitalised
- That there had not been a greater number of incidents than normal.
- That Year 10 was a more challenging year group.
- No child has been afraid to come to school.
- The term 'physical assault' covers a range of severity in incidents.

### Safeguarding

Mr Barker noted that there were eight children in care rather than three as stated.

Mr Carruthers asked about the Talk Therapist (Stella Hanson) and the hours she works. Miss Upton said that she attends for one day a week. This works well as students attending are carefully triaged.

Mrs Bosley asked about children with parents in prison. Mrs Ramsay said that the course that she had attended had helped raise her understanding of this and related issues and how to support such students. Teaching staff will be given some training on this.

## Other points raised

### Internal isolation

Ms Goodrich asked about the rise in the number of internal isolations (53-80) and wondered why this was. Miss Upton said that it related partly to the firm line being taken with Year 10 where there is a small number of repeat offenders with whom DHS is trying to engage. Miss Upton explained how isolation works. Mrs Bosley asked about recent media coverage of internal isolation and its impact on student mental health. Miss Upton felt that the issues covered in the press represented a more austere form of sanction than practised at DHS. At DHS there is no learning loss and a lot of support. Mrs Ramsay noted that some students like the structure they find when isolated. For most students it has a positive impact.

## Carers' Group

The Young Carers Ambassadors have made a film about their situation which had received a very positive reaction especially in the support given to Years 7 and 8 carers. Mr Dubberley noted that there was no stigma at DHS for students who are young carers.

### 5.2 Inspection Dashboard

This is now not due until the 6<sup>th</sup> February. Miss Upton will forward once received.

### **Action Miss Upton**

### 5.3 Year 11 Data

This was received and reviewed. It was noted that outcomes are better at this stage than for last year's cohort – especially for disadvantaged students. Thanks were given to Mr McMillan (Head of Year 11).

### 5.4 Framework for Exceptional Education

This item was taken by way of a presentation from Julia Farrow. It related to a successful application to the SSAT (Schools, Students and Teachers Network) for accreditation for 'transforming' education through Principled Curriculum Design. This area had been chosen because of the recent work at DHS at creating a 5 year curriculum for KS3/4 aimed at developing successful, curious and resilient workers – outcomes that go well beyond examination results.

Mrs Farrow described the lengthy (three stage) process of achieving accreditation:

#### Application

It was emphasised that the breadth and depth of the curriculum was underpinned by research, and that it is regularly reviewed. The curriculum was shown to go beyond the purely academic to cover the 'holistic growth of each child' with a stress on the importance of PSHE. Evidence was also given of enrichment, outside links and student leadership.

#### Peer Review

DHS was paired with Impington Village College (a school with a very different demographic) and mutual visits were undertaken. Impington is much bigger than DHS, has a Sixth Form and has more overseas students. DHS staff were impressed with the sense of moral purpose at Impington and by the quality of SEN provision (which includes some out-of-county students) centred on the 'Pavilion'.

The return visit was held in January and Impington staff talked to teachers and students to check that what DHS leadership had said about curriculum provision was reflected in practice. The report was very positive highlighting the quality of PSHE, the desire of middle leaders to improve, the positivity of students and the nature of the personalised curriculum provided for those students who needed it.

#### Moderator Review

This had mirrored the triangulation of the Peer Review. It was found that thought and extensive planning were evident in curriculum design. It also looked at pastoral support, extra-curricular provision and leadership.

Mrs Farrow felt that this had been a very useful exercise in learning from different practice, getting feedback from stakeholders and reflecting on what is being done at DHS.

Miss Upton thanked Mrs Farrow for her presentation and noted that it was good preparation for any Ofsted inspection.

## Questions

- Mr Touman asked if there was anything being done at Impington that could be adopted at DHS. Miss Upton (and Mrs Farrow) noted that as it was a bigger school there was more capacity for innovation. There were some things that were worthy of consideration namely:
  - The development of non-teaching staff roles;
  - How students access learning from home.
  - The potential of introducing the International Baccalaureate to capture wider development of young people lower down the school.
- Mrs Driver asked about the nature of accreditation and whether it could be shared with parents. Miss Upton said that you have to be part of the SSAT to gain such recognition and that it was more something for internal use. The fact that Mrs Hargadon had been the moderator had added to the robustness of the report making it less superficial. Quality Assurance by the SSAT had been clear.
- Mr Carruthers asked how long the process had taken. It had started in September with the application being made in October with the final submission being made in February.
- Mrs Janson asked if the level of performance at Impington was similar to that at DHS. Miss Upton confirmed that it was with a Progress 8 measure of 0.6, which, given the nature of the school, is very strong.
- Mr Cox asked if the exercise fitted well with the new Ofsted framework. Miss Upton felt that it did.
- Mrs Janson echoed the feelings of the Governors when she said that the conclusions were very positive, and she thanked Mrs Farrow for her hard work.

### 5.5 Curriculum questions for Subject Leaders

These questions had been circulated to raise Governor awareness of the changed nature of demands being made of Subject Leaders, teachers and students. The questions had been formulated to suit the context of DHS but also to reflect the new Ofsted Framework. They were intended to lead to consistency of approach across departments. They did not require written responses but were meant as prompts to discussion.

Mr Touman asked how stakeholders know what 'good' looks like. Miss Upton responded that whilst results are part of this there are many other aspects of student learning and development.

Mr McMillan asked if the new Ofsted emphasis on the curriculum was compatible with the fact that all students had to do a GCSE in RE. Mr Martin felt that this would be seen simply as another GCSE. Miss Upton stressed that this was not a 'game-playing' qualification and its impact should be seen as a positive rather than a negative.

## **6. Safeguarding**

Matters relating to Safeguarding had been dealt with in the Headteacher's Report.

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

### 7.1 Current budget position

Mrs Willmott highlighted the following points:

#### Income

- £125k of income is still to be secured
- Teachers' Pay/Pension grant had now been paid.
- Income for Higher Tariff Needs, Children in Care and Pupil Premium now all known.
- Teaching School income ahead of budget
- Positive variance in forecast income (£4,012k rather than budget figure of £3,936k)

## Expenditure

- There are no major variances.
- Both teaching and support staff costs are slightly higher than budgeted.
- There is anticipated overspend of £52k.

## Summary

- There is forecast to be a surplus of £62k - a variation of £25k from the budget figure of £37k.
- This positive outcome is unlikely to be replicated in subsequent years.

## Capital Reserves

- DHS had only received £15k of capital funding from the Government.
- There had been some expenditure from reserves on IT.
- At the end of the financial year there should be £64k of free capital reserves.
- DHS is now eligible to apply for a grant from the Wolfson Foundation.

Mr Carruthers had noticed that the new tarmac on the front drive was beginning to crack. Mrs Willmott said she would inspect this. Mrs Janson asked if the tennis courts were still out of use. Miss Upton said that this was indeed the case as there was a tendency for them to flood. She added that the surface will be rejuvenated next week (and some root encroachment will be dealt with) at a total cost of £5.5k. Mr Touman asked if there had been any further progress with the wider development of sporting facilities. Miss Upton said that longer term plans were still being formulated.

## **8. Key Questions for Governors (Curriculum).**

These were reviewed by Governors. Mr Touman asked about links with post-16 providers. Miss Upton outlined these and Mr McMillan commented on the broad range of potential provision. Mrs Janson felt that a breakdown on the DHS website might be useful.

## **9 Committees and Working Parties**

### 9.1 Admissions Committee

Governors reviewed the minutes from the Admissions Committee Meeting held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Mr Carruthers drew Governors attention to the proposed adjustments to the Admissions Policy to be discussed when the policy next comes up for review (October 2020). It was confirmed that applicants would be informed of the outcome of their application on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020. It was noted that the status of the children of staff had recently been discussed by Governors and, at that stage, any change had been rejected.

### 9.2 Health & Safety Committee

The minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December were received by Governors.

### 9.3 Governor visit reports

Governors received a report from Rev Bates concerning the use of the Prayer Space.

## **10. Policies**

### 10.1 Supporting Students at school with Medical Conditions

This was reviewed by Governors. There had been minor changes only. It was noted that Ms Newman was no longer at the school. Dr Thomas asked what happens if the school does not have the medication mentioned in an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP). Mrs Ramsay said that it is the parents' responsibility to make sure that

the school has the required medication and that it is in date. Reminders of the current status of a student's medication are sent to parents at the beginning of the year. The policy was approved by Governors.

#### 10.2 Staff Harassment and Bullying Policy

There had been one change (P3) to note that, when an allegation is made, it was a stressful time for both parties. Ms Goodrich suggested that phrase 'in good faith' (Para 2, P3) held implications and was not needed. It was agreed that it should be removed.

#### **Action Miss Upton**

#### **11. Governor Training**

Governors were reminded of Ofsted Training to take place on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March.

#### **12. Any other business**

It was noted that planning permission for proposed new houses in Debenham was not yet in place.

#### **13. Date of next meeting**

This was confirmed as Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7.18 pm.