



# Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



## Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:	Mr R Boulter	Chairman	Mrs S Janson	
	Mr D Carruthers		Mr D McMillan	
	Mr P Debenham		Dr H Marlow	
	Dr D Egan		Mr R Stevenson	
	Mr C Grover		Miss J Upton	Headteacher
	Ms S Goodrich		Mrs L Wilson	
	Mrs F Hotston Moore		Mr D Yaroslaw	

In attendance:	Mr S Martin	Deputy Headteacher
	Miss S McBurney	Assistant 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 Mrs J. Brown, Mr C Gilgan, Mr R. Grimsey, Mr D Ralph and Mr N Serjeant.
- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

### 2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 Mr D McMillan and Mr D Yaroslaw declared a pecuniary interest in item 6.2 of the agenda.
- 2.2 There were no updates to the Register of Pecuniary Interests.

### 3. Chairman's Action

Mr Boulter referred to the decision to refuse admission to a student who had applied to join Year 10. As the student was from a vulnerable group the application was passed to the Fair Access Panel who had again asked DHS to admit the student. A further refusal meant that the matter was referred to the DfE and a letter had been written to them, by DHS, outlining the reasons for refusal – these focused on the long term needs of the individual and the lack of curriculum provision for a student entering the school at this stage and already being 5 over PAN.

### 4. Governing Body Membership

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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 R Boulter

- 4.1 There had been no changes in membership since the last meeting but it was noted that changes were imminent.
- 4.2 There are no current vacancies on the Governing Body.

## **5. Minutes**

- 5.1 The following corrections were made to the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December:
- Page 3 (Item 6 – Headteacher’s Report). Change first sentence under heading Raising the Bar to ‘Miss Upton would be feeding back her findings to SCC the following week’.
  - Page 7 (Item 13 – Governor Training). Mrs Janson pointed out that she had attended a Governors’ Seminar rather than an SEN course.

The minutes were then accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by Mr Boulter.

- 5.2 Matters arising from the minutes not covered by agenda items:
- Page 2 (Item 6.1 – Headteacher’s Report). Miss Upton reported that the Ofsted data dashboard for DHS was now available to Governors. She also confirmed that the vandalised toilets had reopened.
  - Page 7 (Item 15.2 – Any other Business). Mr Marlow complimented the students on their presentations at the Extended Project evening.

## **6. Academic Improvement**

### **6.1 Headteacher’s Report**

The report began with a presentation by members of the successful Young Enterprise team ‘Qwurk’ which outlined the aims of the company, the training undertaken, the nature of their product and how they had learned to run a business. The company had been both profitable and, despite competing largely against Year 12 teams, had reached the regional final in Cambridge. Governors congratulated the team both on their success and their presentation.

Miss Upton then went through her written report highlighting and updating the following items:

#### Staffing

Miss Upton detailed the changes and pointed out that the appointment of an extra Health and Social Care teacher was due to the fact of increased numbers which meant that, given her other responsibilities, Miss McBurney was not able to teach all the required lessons. A replacement PE teacher would be appointed shortly; there had been a strong field of applicants. Mr Stevenson noted that four Heads of Department were departing but it was felt that this was due to coincidence rather than anything more serious.

#### SSAT Awards

The recognition of the school by the SSAT had been recorded (briefly) in the East Anglian Daily Times. Ms Goodrich asked if many schools had been so recognised but this was not known.

#### Admissions

It was noted that there continued to be a good number of mid-term applications.

### Visit to the school by Bishop David

The Bishop would be returning again for the Trust AGM.

### Dr Poulter visit to the school

Mr Boulter noted that Dr Poulter had agreed to write to SCC to ask why £41k of Section 106 money due to the school on the completion of the new housing estate had not been forthcoming.

### Maths Challenge

Miss Upton pointed out the remarkable nature of the students' achievement in this prestigious national competition – particularly that of Aidan Coe.

### Year 11 Data

The latest updates were tabled and reviewed by Governors. Miss Upton pointed out that data was affected by the size of cohort and the fact that some subject areas have more concrete (modular) evidence on which to base their predictions. She also asked governors to note that teaching staff had been asked to err on the cautious side for their March predictions – this was to enable clear identification of those in need of extra support.

Mr Debenham asked for thanks to be passed to those staff who gave up time in the holidays to support the Year 11 students. Mr Boulter asked why History predictions seemed to be a little beneath those of other subjects. Mrs Ramsay said that this was a new IGCSE course with closely grouped and high grade boundaries so teachers were being rightly cautious.

A similar question was asked about PE. Mr Martin said that, historically, PE results had not been strong but the department had worked hard on this and there was greater confidence for the upcoming examinations.

### Healthy Teenager: Healthy Minds

This had been well-attended and very successful.

### LA Advisor

This was a useful association with SCC providing mutually beneficial links to work in other schools.

### Attendance

Miss Upton noted that this remained buoyant.

### Appendix 1 – Exclusions

Miss Upton said that the two Year 11 students currently sitting on two fixed term exclusions (FTEs) will complete their time at DHS. A Year 9 student had been permanently excluded – this had been confirmed by Governors.

Mr Poole observed that there were rather more FTEs than usual but it was not felt that this represented a pattern, or any change in the standards of behaviour expected.

#### Appendix 2 – Safeguarding

Ms Goodrich asked about the six recorded racist incidents. It was noted that this was unusual (there were none reported at the last meeting) but this was not felt to be of any significance. DHS is scrupulous in the recording of such incidents and some students simply did not understand (until reprimanded) the significance of the words they were using.

#### Appendix 3 – Vulnerable groups

The Year 10 student who had attended Kingsfield PRU had returned to DHS and was doing well.

#### Appendix 4 – Attendance

Mr Boulter noted that the attendance of Year 11 students was lower than that of other year groups. It was acknowledged that this was a characteristic of this year group and that it would be likely to have a negative impact on results – particular as some would be taking no (or a reduced number of) GCSEs. Mrs Ramsay added that there were only two obvious school refusers but others had health issues. Mr Poole asked about the Year 9 student with a PSP. Mrs Ramsay said that the family had a poor history of their children attending school and that there was EWO involvement in an effort to improve this situation.

6.2 Mr Boulter said that the Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) had last been looked at when they were first introduced and, given recent changes, it was time to look at them again. Miss Upton circulated a (confidential) paper showing comparison with other schools – though it was noted that some of these schools had more students, a Sixth Form and a different demographic intake that created (possible) difficulties in attracting staff – all of which would make comparison with DHS more difficult. She introduced proposed changes through a power point presentation. Slides covered, inter alia, the following:

- The need to avoid historical inertia and to cover current and future needs in the school with reference to job weighting. It was noted that various sources of specialist funding for TLRs had now ceased (e.g. Sports Partnerships and Extended Schools) and that there had been changes in staffing and hence TLR roles. Some fixed allowances with an indeterminate time span would be reviewed within this process.
- Duties that would qualify a teacher for a TLR – with an emphasis on team leadership and development of staff to give clearly defined accountable outcomes of students beyond own teaching.
- Union guidance – focusing on Teaching and Learning, professional skills, developing others, leading and managing, and impact.
- Recent changes – allowances now could be placed anywhere within a range; to move up from TLRs in the Level 2 range to Level 1 required responsibility for a significant number of staff (not applicable to DHS). TLR 3 is available as a specific sum to be paid for a fixed term project.

The Governors were asked to make three decisions:

1. **The appropriate size of each TLR and which TLR should be paid to each member of staff?** Miss Upton said that DHS intended to retain the existing levels within the TLR 2 range as these worked

for the school. They were to be linked to the number of staff for whom responsibility is taken, the number of students, and the range and complexity of courses offered – as indicated in spreadsheet attached.

She then ran through the current and proposed allowance structures highlighting those where changes had been made – with some being increased to acknowledge depth of responsibility and some being reduced to reflect changed circumstances. These were approved by the meeting though it was recognised that, following consultation with staff, there may be some further readjustment. Mrs Janson asked whether the allowance given to the SENCO was at the correct level given comparative figures in other schools. Miss Upton felt that it was whilst pointing out that SEN numbers (especially as there is no Sixth Form) were probably fewer at DHS and that TLR roles varied in breadth in different schools. Mr Yaroslaw asked whether a Head of Humanities was required; Miss Upton felt that current experience and the success of individual departments with departmental leadership meant that this was unnecessary. There was a general consensus that the Heads of English, Maths and Science should be better rewarded.

**2. Whether PT staff should receive the full TLR allowance or whether it should be paid pro rata?**

There was detailed discussion in relation to this as some governors felt that TLRs should be pro rata in line with the teacher's main salary. In conclusion, however, it was agreed that, as long as PT was at high level (possibly no less than .8), and, as the post-holder would be fulfilling all the responsibilities associated with the full payment, then the TLR could be paid in its entirety. Any such decision would be at the Head's discretion.

**3. How to safeguard the salary for those for whom TLRs were reduced or lost?** Advice was to retain these for three years (but without any incremental increase) – this had been agreed with the unions. There was some discussion by governors as to the need for three-year protection but it was noted that such an agreement avoided the need for redundancy and that staff could take in other responsibilities to justify their continuing allowance. These arrangements were agreed.

It was observed that the total cost of TLRs remained similar to that currently but it was pointed out that figures did not take account of the costs of five Heads of Year and of those on safeguarded salaries. Miss Upton stressed that changes had not been initiated in a desire to save money.

Miss Upton would now consult with staff with respect to the proposed changes and Mrs Darby will prepare next year's budget on the basis of the decisions made post consultation with staff

**7. Budget and related items**

**7.1** Mrs Darby's work on the current year's budget suggests a carry-forward of an amount somewhere between £90k and £120k. This increased sum was due to a decrease in staff costs and to more being received through the Pupil Premium.

With respect to the preliminary draft budget, there would be an increase in budget allocation for 2014-15 of £13k but this was due entirely to buoyant student numbers – there would have been a decrease otherwise. There would also be greater financial pressure because of rises in pension costs, the impact of auto-enrolment and changes to employer's NI contributions. Reserves are in a healthy position (£450k currently). Mrs Darby will provide more detail at the July meeting.

**7.2** Despite three robust bids based on concrete evidence, DHS had not been successful in any of these. An appeal had been lodged but it was thought unlikely that this would be successful. Decisions were made

on a scoring system and DHS had narrowly missed out in each case – the reasons given for failure related very much to the minutiae of the bid.

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

8.1 It was noted that there will be changes in the Autumn Term.

8.2 The Admissions' Committee had ratified changes with respect to the waiting list. In line with the DHS admission policy, late applications had been placed in line the admissions criteria and had not automatically been moved to the end of the waiting list. Of the initial waiting list five late applicants had decided to appeal – following the decline of places by three student only two will reach the appeal stage, the others having been at the top of the waiting list. It was noted that DHS continued to offer places up to five above the PAN.

8.3 There were no school visit reports from Governors. Mr Martin said that he would re-issue the calendar for Departmental Review for link governors.

## **9. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

It was noted that the elections will be conducted at the first meeting of the Autumn Term and would be by a simple proposal. If there were to be more than one candidate, the outcome would be determined by secret ballot.

## **10. School Policies**

10.1 Complaints Procedure.

Various changes were made to ensure consistency in the policy and in the formatting. With these implemented the policy was approved.

10.2 School Attendance and Long Term Absence Policy.

Mrs Ramsay outlined the changes to the policy and procedures all of which related to long term absence. One or two minor changes to wording were agreed and the policy was approved.

10.3 Local Government Pension Scheme Discretion Policy.

Mrs Darby explained that DHS was required to have one of these and highlighted the changes contained in the second draft (tabled at the meeting). The policy was approved.

## **11. Local Authority Papers and Information Sheet**

11.1 Information Sheet – the contents were noted, not all of which applied to DHS.

11.2 Families of Schools – this related to primary schools

11.3 Changes to School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document – Mr Carruthers and Miss Upton had attended a briefing on this. The document was still at a draft stage and main changes relate to SLT salaries.

**12. DfE Information**

The updates were noted

**13. Governor Training**

13.1 Governor Training - this was noted.

13.2 Mrs Janson had attended a Governors' Seminar – report attached. This had covered effective committee structures and statutory requirements as well as monitoring and evaluation. She felt that DHS was well-served in these areas. She also felt that the seminar took better account of the needs of Academies.

Mrs Darby warned that revised EFA documentation is likely to require changes with regards to governance.

13.3 Governors' Summer Newsletter – the contents were noted.

**14. Any Other Business**

14.1 There was no other business.

14.2 There was no news reported.

**15. Dates of Future Meetings.**

This was confirmed as Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 5 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.06 p.m.

Signed .....

Date .....