



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 7th October 2014 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

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

In attendance:

Mr R Grimsey	Member of the Academy Trust
Mr N Serjeant	Member of the Academy Trust
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 Mr C Gilgan, Mrs S Janson and Mr D Ralph. Dr Marlow left the meeting at 6.00 p.m.
- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 No pecuniary interests were registered
- 2.2 There were no updates to the Register of Pecuniary Interests.

3. Chairman's Action

The Chairman had taken no action since the last meeting.

4. Election of Chairman for 2014-15

Mr Carruthers was proposed as Chairman by Mr Boulter and seconded by Ms Goodrich. He 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 Darby

Chairman of the Academy Trust Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Chairman of Governors Mr R Boulter

Mr Debenham paid tribute to the tremendous contribution that Mr Boulter had made to DHS, having served 22 years as a Governor and 18 years as Chairman. This tribute was echoed by Mr Carruthers.

5. Election of Vice Chairman for 2014-15

Ms Goodrich was nominated by Mr Boulter and seconded by Mr Debenham. She was elected nem. con.

6. Governing Body Membership

6.1 There had been no changes in membership since the last meeting but it was noted that changes were imminent as a good number of Governors will reach the end of their term of office in December.

7. Minutes

7.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by Mr Carruthers

7.2 There were no matters arising that were not covered by other agenda items.

8. Academic Improvement

8.1 Headteacher's Report

The report began with a presentation by the Head Boy (Alex Warnes) and the Deputy Head Girl (Kate Gilbert). Alex spoke about the successful and well-attended Open Evening where the Year 7s had proved to be excellent and confident tour guides. He also reviewed the Year 7 Induction Evening where parents had met tutors and received information about matters such as peer mentoring and the changes to the examination system.

Kate spoken about the recent Whole School assembly on the theme of 'hope', and on Work Experience that had been undertaken by students in Year 10 at the end of the Summer Term. The WEX had confirmed some students in their potential career choice whilst others had been given cause to think again. Mr Carruthers asked if it was hard to find WEX placements – both Kate and Alex had not had too much difficulty.

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

Welcome to new staff

Miss Upton commented on the significant number of new staff. Trainee teachers – joining established and stable teams – had all started well. She explained the creation of internships where highly qualified applicants were assisting both inside and outside the classroom in what could be seen as a form of apprenticeship. Internships are important as it is now the case that individuals applying for Teacher Training need to have significant school experience to gain a place on a course. The interns were also taking part in some of the activities undertaken by Trainee Teachers. All the interns had so far made a strongly positive impression.

All staff professional development

Miss Upton congratulated Mrs Darby on her achievement of gaining a Diploma in Charity Accounting awarded by the ICAEW.

GCSE Results

These were good, especially if looked at in terms of levels of progress. The comparisons in Miss Upton's report used the National 2013 figures but the 2014 figures were now available. Those for English were largely comparable with 2013 but Mathematics 3+ Levels had dropped to 61% (70% in 2013) – making the DHS students achievement (76%) all that more commendable. Even more striking was the differential between National and DHS Mathematics 4+ Levels.

She also highlighted the fact that of 53 papers submitted for remarking 18 had been upgraded – this was felt to be a worrying number. Mr Carruthers asked if remarks focused on the C/D borderline. Miss McBurney said that many did but a number also targeted the higher grade boundaries.

Ms Goodrich thanked Miss Upton for the exam review meeting and the useful analytical documentation included in the Governors' papers which she had found to be very informative. Mr Carruthers commented favourably on the quality of results and the accuracy of predictions.

Academy Capital Maintenance Fund

Miss Upton said that the school was delighted with the successful appeal for a grant for boiler replacement and thanked Mrs Darby for all her efforts on this. Mrs Darby also commented on the help received from the consultants Concertus at the appeal stage. Mr Carruthers took this opportunity to inform the meeting that DHS had engaged James Archer Associates to help with future bids on a no win/no fee basis - given the limited funds available to an increasing number of academies this was felt to be essential. The consultants will complete the groundwork for any bid and have a proven track record in this respect. It is hoped that this will increase the school's chances in planned bids for flat roof replacement and the extension (though the latter was thought to be less likely to succeed given that only 15% of the total government spending pot was allocated to expansion projects last year).

Admissions and primary links

There had been two recent successful applications for places in Year 7 taking the cohort up to 130.

Visit from Dr Tim Coulson

Dr Coulson was one of nine Regional Commissioners and the creation of this post was thought to be an indication of the Government's wish for greater devolution in school management. Miss Upton felt that, although Dr Coulson's remit applied only to academies at the moment, it was likely to be extended to all schools (and to involve control of funding). Ms Goodrich noted the extent of the geographical region that Dr Coulson had to manage.

Diocesan news

Miss Upton confirmed that DHS would be advising the Diocese on their creation of a multi-academy trust.

Local Authority changes

Miss Upton said the appointment of Nikki Edwards as Director of Education is suggestive of increased scrutiny for Suffolk schools which will now be categorised under a red/amber/green rating system.

Primary schools had already received their rating but that for secondary schools had been delayed. A poor rating could lead to a visit from Ofsted.

No-notice Ofsted inspections had taken place in Suffolk recently and, as a legacy of events in Birmingham, there had been an emphasis on schools actively countering the spread of radicalism and extremism together with a greater emphasis on students' SMSC development.

S106 money

Negotiations are continuing and a positive outcome is anticipated.

Attendance

These were really pleasing and reflected the focus on those individuals whose attendance gives cause for concern.

Appendix 4 - Safeguarding Training

Mrs Ramsay informed the meeting that the three year period between safeguarding training will elapse in the Autumn Term 2015; training from an external provider will take place in the Summer Term 2014 and will be of two hours duration.

Appendix 9 - Trips and Visits

Governors were asked to approve residential trips listed in Miss Upton's report with the addition of a Geography trip to Iceland. It was noted that the Berlin trip now included the Art Department. Mr Carruthers asked why the French Exchange was not happening this year. This was because of difficulties with the partner school and the Head of MFL was now looking for an alternative institution with which to work for the following year.

8.2 The SEF (Ofsted pre-inspection self evaluation)

This was tabled and Governors were asked to make themselves aware of its content as this would provide detail that would inform any contact with inspectors. The parts highlighted in yellow were those that would need updating as parental/student surveys are undertaken. Governors were asked to note that DHS had judged itself to be outstanding in all categories but also that the SEF identified areas where performance could be improved still further. Miss Upton asked that Governors contact her if they had any questions/comments about the content.

8.3 Governors were made aware of the revised Curriculum Statement to be placed on the website, the main thrust of which was the adaptability of the curriculum to the needs of each year group and the provision of a bespoke curriculum for individuals who could not access the standard offer. Mr Carruthers asked what 'wave teaching' meant and thought it might need an explanatory note. Miss Upton said that, essentially, it referred to the key role played by the teacher in the classroom.

8.4 Governors reviewed the two papers relating to the Pupil Premium (PP). Miss Upton pointed out that the costs of supporting students eligible for the PP effectively was considerably more than the funding provided. The costings given in the impact statement would, therefore, add up to more than the total PP funding but demonstrated the areas that the school had targeted to support those students. Mrs Ramsay said that, whilst the impact analysis had been anonymised for submission to Governors, it was

closely linked to pupil tracking, to case studies and to progress. The plan had been updated for 2014-15 (Further Action) and the Government expects plans to be monitored, reviewed and evaluated. Mr Carruthers noted the positive effect of the support given to students and Mrs Ramsay agreed, pointing out that students who did not attract PP funding also gained. Ms Goodrich was impressed by the range of interventions offered and asked for clarification as to the funding of the EWO – as an academy the cost of this fell to DHS. Mr Carruthers recommended that all Governors read this paper – particularly with Ofsted in mind.

8.5 The Equalities Policy Action Plans for last year and for the current year were reviewed. A RAG evaluation of the 2013-14 plan informed the creation of that for 2014-15.

8.6 The letter from Sue Cook (Suffolk Corporate Director Children and Young People) was received.

9. Budget and related items

9.1 Governors received the new Academies Financial Handbook. Mr Carruthers felt that this was useful as a reference document. Mrs Darby agreed and made the point that the revised handbook contained a lot that was relevant to governance – hence changes to the Pecuniary Interest Policy – and especially so in relation to any practices (not just financial) that might be considered doubtful.

9.2 The revised Pecuniary Interest Policy was designed to encourage openness and transparency – particularly in relation to links/connections that might be considered to be potentially prejudicial. Mr Serjeant suggested that where reference was made to Governors this should include Trust Members as well – this was agreed. It was also felt that certain staff (those with seniority and influence) should come under the ambit of the policy. Mrs Darby highlighted other changes: the introduction had changed wholesale and 3.1.4 represented greater precision, including the point that (extreme) views held by Governors might affect their judgement. It was noted (3.4) that the Register of Interests now had to be published on the school's website.

Governors approved the policy and were asked to complete and sign Appendices A and B of the policy after the meeting.

10. DHS Admissions Arrangements

10.1 The (unchanged) Admissions Arrangements for 2016-17 were adopted and approved.

At this point Miss Upton referred to the item in the Headteacher's report relating to the catchment area for Creting St. Mary Primary School, a school that for two years had been in the DHS pyramid in anticipation of the move to a two tier system (the first pupils had been admitted to DHS in September 2014). The issue was that, whilst Creting St Mary's catchment area conformed to the parish boundary, the LA catchment did not and excluded a small area on the other side of the A14. At the moment the DHS catchment mirrors that of the LA and therefore excludes this area and Miss Upton asked Governors approval to mirror the catchment of Creting St Mary Primary in the DHS catchment – this was agreed. She went on to say that this move might cause issues with the LA as it could bring with it an entitlement to free home-to-school transport. She would be writing to the LA to try to resolve this.

11. Committees and Working Parties

- 11.1 It was noted that the Committee Structure and Terms of Reference (including membership and delegation of function) will be reviewed at the Full Governors' Meeting to take place on Tuesday 3rd February 2015.
- 11.2 The minutes of Curriculum Working Party of 17th September 2014 and associated papers were received by the meeting.

Miss McBurney then gave a presentation on KS4 accountability measures (a copy of which has been placed with meeting papers). The five measures are:

- Progress across 8 subjects
- Attainment across 8 subjects
- The percentage of pupils achieving a C grade or better in English and Maths
- The percentage of pupils that achieve the Ebacc
- (A destination measure – as yet undecided)

All schools will be judged against a 'floor standards' (- 0.5 for Progress 8).

Other points made were:

- Number grades will replace letter grades and the staggered start for the new GCSEs means that students will receive a mixture of grades and numbers in Summer 2017.
 - Accountability measures will start in 2015-16 but schools can opt to be judged by these at the end of the current year.
 - The DHS curriculum conforms to the courses recognised in the new measures and that of Otley College is being changed so that it does so too.
 - If students do not take the right combination of subjects they may be measured against seven 'best' subjects rather than eight (though it would still be possible to achieve a positive outcome). DHS does not intend to compel students to choose subjects that conform to the combination anticipated by the measure.
 - Though KS3 measures have gone DHS intends to retain them internally to measure progress. The need potentially to have a different measure for KS3 will be discussed at Staff Inset in February.
- 11.3 The minutes of the Health and Safety Committee of 23rd September were received without comment.
- 11.4 Mr Grover commented favourably on the Open Evening which had been very well attended and an entirely positive experience.

12. Educational Visits

These had been approved under the Headteacher's Report (Item 8.1).

13. Policies

- 13.1 Safeguarding Policy. Mrs Ramsay pointed out that changes were highlighted in red. Changes were in response to revised guidance, of which a summary had been given to all staff. Various typographical errors were noted, as was the fact that the Becta link no longer worked. Mrs Ramsay pointed out that

next year it will be necessary to add wording to cover the dangers of radicalism and extremism. The policy was approved.

- 13.2 See above (13.1)
- 13.3 SEND Offer. Unusually this was presented in FAQ form and it was felt this made it more effective and put DHS ahead of the game. Staff had been informed of changes at a recent INSET session. Ms Goodrich asked if the change to the use of an Education and Healthcare plan based on progress had led to more students becoming involved - Mrs Ramsay confirmed that it had. The offer was approved and will be placed on the school website.
- 13.4 Staff Code of Conduct. Under Point 9 (Personal Living Space) there was discussion in relation to members of staff (or Governors) with children who might have friends who attended the school. Wording needed to be included to make this an exception. It was noted that Teaching Standards are included in the Code of Conduct Policy. Mr Martin was asked to review the policy to adjust formatting errors. The policy was approved.
- 13.5 Drugs Education and Incidents Policy. Specific changes noted were, in Item 7, Paragraph 2, 'may lead' has been changed to 'will lead'. In Item 8 it was noted that parental permission need no longer be sought should a student be asked to empty his/her pockets/bag. The presence of another adult was all that was required. Under Item 9 'should' to replace 'might be well advised to'. The PSHCE policy had been adjusted to reflect the changes made to the Drugs Education and Incidents Policy. Various typographical errors were noted. The policy was then approved.
- 13.6 Discretionary Leave of Absence Policy. Personnel support to DHS was now being provided by Educational Personnel Management (EPM) and they had asked that this policy be clarified and made more precise so that all parties knew where they stood (and to reflect current practice). Once Governors had approved it, the policy would be circulated to staff. The policy was approved.
- 13.7 Policy and Procedure for the Management of Sickness Absence. This was an adapted EPM model policy for dealing with repetitive/long term illness/absence. Mr Serjeant asked if it needed to be reviewed annually; Mr Carruthers said that he wished to look at the frequency with which policies in general are reviewed though he recognised that there was a legal requirement so to do in some cases.
- 13.8 Policy for Supporting Children at School with Medical Conditions. Mrs Ramsay said that the main aim of this policy was to ensure that students with medical conditions were able to gain as full access as possible to education - to this end all will need to have an Individual Healthcare Plan. For DHS this largely represents the continuation of current practice under a different name. Mr Carruthers asked about the recording and storing of medicine for student self-administration - this was felt to in hand. It was noted that the school can now keep asthma inhalers for general use.
- (It was pointed out the next two papers were to be received rather than reviewed and approved.)
- 13.9 Staff Handbook. This was received.
- 13.10 Health and Safety Policy. Having been approved by the Health and Safety Committee, this was received by the meeting.

14. Local Authority Papers

- 14.1 Reforming Assessment and Accountability. This had been covered by Miss McBurney's presentation (Item 11.2).
- 14.2 Submitting Data to the Virtual School. This had largely been dealt with under Item 8.4. and involved the submission of a Personal Education Plan (termly) for those LAC (Looked After Children) students attracting the Pupil Premium. The payment for these students is higher and has to be spent on the child - which it is. Mr Carruthers asked if Mrs Janson has these students as part of her remit as SEN Governor. Mrs Ramsay confirmed that she does and that she would be welcome to attend a PEP meeting if she so wished (and if parents and child consented to this).

15. DfE Information

- 15.1 Mr Wright had reviewed this and confirmed that all important matters were covered in other agenda items.

16. Governor Training.

- 16.1 Details of Governor Training course were believed no longer to be available in hard copy and Mr Wright was asked to investigate and, if possible, to circulate the appropriate link to Governors.
- 16.2 It was noted that the Chairman had received the termly report on the uptake of training.

17. Any Other Business

- Mr Boulter informed Governors that Miss Upton's Performance Management Review was to be undertaken by himself and Mr Carruthers. This was noted. Mr Carruthers said that he had some concerns about transparency if the review were to be undertaken by the Chairman and Vice Chairman but the use of an external adviser to assist was felt to ensure such transparency.
- Mr Carruthers said that given the imminent changes in the composition of the Governing Body it would be necessary to conduct a skills audit.
- There was to be an Auction of Promises at the school on Friday 17th October – attendance was encouraged.
- Mr Grimsey informed the meeting that there would be tree planting undertaken to mark the fiftieth anniversary of DHS.
- Mr Debenham passed on congratulations from the parents of an immediate past student who were delighted with the education he had received, especially the support forthcoming from the SEN Department.

18. Date of next meeting

This was confirmed as Tuesday 9th December 2014 at 5 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.12 p.m.

Signed

Date