



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 3rd February 2015 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

Mr R Barker		Mrs S Janson
Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Dr H Marlow
Mr P Debenham		Mrs J Newman
Mrs C Driver		Mr R Stevenson
Ms S Goodrich		Miss J Upton Headteacher
Mr T Green		Mrs E Wnukoski
Mrs F Hotston Moore		

In attendance:

Mr R Boulter	Member of the Academy Trust
Mrs J Brown	Member of the Academy Trust
Rt Revd D Thomson	Member of the Academy Trust
Mr N Serjeant	Member of the Academy Trust
Mr S Martin	Deputy 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 Revd P Cotton, Dr D Egan, Mr C Grover, Mr D McMillan, Mr R Grimsey, Miss S McBurney and Mr D Ralph. Mrs J Brown left the meeting at 6.30 p.m., Mr N Serjeant at 6.25 p.m. and the Rt Revd D Thomson at 6.34 p.m.

1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

2.1 No pecuniary interests were registered. It was noted that the item relating to staff appraisal would be relevant to all employees of DHS.

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.

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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 D Carruthers

4. Governing Body Membership

- 4.1 Mr Carruthers highlighted changes to membership of the Governing Body. He welcomed Mr Barker and Mrs Driver as new Parent Governors and Mrs Newman and Mrs Wnukoski as Staff Governors. Mr Green has joined the Governing Body as a Co-opted Governor and Dr Marlow is now a Diocesan Board Foundation Governor. Ms Goodrich has become Vice-Chairman of Governors. It was noted that Mr Ralph had decided to stay on as a Governor despite reaching the end of his term of office.

These changes were approved by the meeting.

- 4.2 Mr Carruthers spoke to the policy document GO1, noting that the adjustments in detail and format reflected changes that had taken place within the Governing Body and its organisation; the major adjustment being the addition of a Code of Conduct for Governors. Mrs Driver asked what the quorum was for the Full Governing Body. Whilst noting that sub-committees of the Governing Body were quorate when three members were in attendance, Mr Carruthers referred Mrs Driver to the Articles of Association and the Governors' Handbook where such details could be found.

In response to a question from Mrs Driver it was noted that it was only the selection of the external auditor that needed approval from Governors.

The need to coordinated terminology (Site manager/Caretaker) was acknowledged.

Mr Boulter pointed out a discrepancy between documents GO1 and GO2 in the person clerking of the Admissions Committee - it was confirmed that it should be the Deputy Head and that Page 3 of GO2 should be altered accordingly.

It was decided that there was no longer a need for a target-setting Governor.

Mr Carruthers then dealt with changes to policy document GO2. Various adjustments were advised relating to personnel involved in the various committees and in the titles given. Mr Carruthers asked for Governors to volunteer to join the Appeals Committee and the F & GP Committee. Mr Barker and Mr Driver expressed an interest in joining the latter. Volunteers were also sought to fill the two vacancies on the Health and Safety Committee.

Mr Barker agreed to swap with Mr Green in the Faculty Review programme. It was noted that Miss Upton rather than Mrs Ramsay was the lead teacher in the review of the ICT & Computing department.

With the above changes to be implemented, Governors approved both policy documents GO1 and GO2.

5. Minutes

- 5.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 9th December 2014.

- 5.2 Matters arising from the minutes:

5.2 Mr Barker noted that the information regarding Creting St. Mary was contradicted by the current Head's report. Miss Upton confirmed that this was because the situation had now changed.

6.3 Mrs Driver asked how the Parents' View (Ofsted) website was promulgated to parents. Miss Upton said that it was e-mailed to parents once a year but noted that the school preferred to use its own questionnaire.

7.2 The decision as to whether to register for VAT would be taken at the next F & GP Meeting.

7.5 The Value for Money Statement was now published on the school's website.

7.8 The need for a Responsible Officer would be discussed at the next F & GP Meeting.

8.2 The School would hear about the outcome of its bid to the Academies Capital and Maintenance Fund by the end of March.

- 9.4 It was noted that, in the end, Mr Grover did not join the review of the PE Department.
- 10.1 The action points in the two salaries policies had been completed.
- 12 Mrs Wnukoski asked about the RE Quality Mark and whether this type of qualification was available to other subjects. It was but it was a departmental decision; Mr Yaroslaw (RE) had actively sought to do this – particularly as DHS is a Church school.

6. Academic Improvement

6.1 Head's Report

Staffing – there had been a good response to the advertisement for Food Technology and Geography teachers.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – a letter had been received from the LA saying that schools have to use the designated days for CPD. DHS disaggregated one of these days to twilight sessions which they found to be more productive – particularly for Teaching Trios. There had been two rounds of the latter and they were reported to Mr Martin with the main outcomes being recorded on a side of A. Mr Martin detailed the main points raised:

- Staff are positive about them – especially given the designated time to work together.
- Student engagement was high.
- It had been recognised that it was OK for students to struggle with the tasks sets and that this could be a productive experience.
- All students (of whatever ability) were able to work independently.
- Teacher-led lessons were justifiably part of the learning experience for students.
- Staff enjoyed seeing the levels of independence shown by students – especially in a different departmental context.

Miss Upton confirmed that Teaching Trio activities could inform the performance management process. Ms Goodrich asked if the peer observation was altered in any way from what took place normally. Ms Upton said that it was in that it was non-judgemental and focused solely on the impact on students. Ms Goodrich asked if teachers were comfortable with this and was assured that they were – particularly the opportunity to work with other departments.

Visitors – the Farlingaye visit had been a success.

Assessment Reform – the ideas involved in 'Life after levels' would be discussed at the February Training Day; changes were to be implemented in two years' time.

Maths Hub – it would be hard for DHS to set up one of these as a smaller school. Nothing had emerged from the established hub as yet. It was noted that recent figures indicate that 68% of schools in East of England struggled to recruit Maths teachers (worst nationally). Miss Upton had written to Mr Poulter and Mr Coulson about this issue.

Diocesan Links – Bishop David expressed his thanks to DHS for sending students to the Diocesan Schools' Service.

Friends of DHS – Miss Upton thanked the parents for the successful Auction of Promises.

ACMF – matters were clearer after the January meeting. Decisions had to be taken as to how best to use the funds due to the school in recompense for the initial mistakes.

Admissions – though the parental preferences were not yet available to the school there was the potential for a bumper year which might lead to the creation of an extra form in Year 7. Mrs Wnukoski asked whether there was space for this. Miss Upton said that it would be tight but it was feasible; there would also be a need to look at staffing implications. Mr Carruthers asked when this would be discussed by Governors and it was felt this would either be at the next meeting or at one called specially for this purpose. Mrs Darby said that this would be an important decision given recent government announcements regarding future funding.

Catchment Area – LA had now agreed that area to the west of the A14 in the Creeting St Mary PS catchment area would qualify for free home to school transport.

S106 monies – Mrs Driver asked how much this was and how had been spent. Miss Upton responded that £51k had been received after a delay and that between £30/35 had been committed to the Changing Rooms project.

Appendices

Exclusions – two Year 11 students have met with Dr Marlow

CAFs – Mrs Ramsay outlined the four tiers of concern. Most interventions at DHS were at the ‘Team around the Child’ level.

Prejudice Related Incidents – the biannual Diversity Week would be held shortly. Mrs Ramsay assured the meeting that any incidents recorded were at a very low level.

EOTAS – Miss Upton pointed out that Mrs Bentley is a direct employee of DHS>

Talk Therapist – Miss Upton outlined the work of Mrs Hanson.

Attendance – Mrs Driver asked about the current position. Ms Goodrich noted that the attendance of FSM students had dropped but Mrs Ramsay said that this was largely down to the non-attendance of one student.

6.2 Academic Progress - Year 11 performance data

Miss Upton gave a short presentation showing DHS’ performance in relation to other schools in Suffolk. Points made were:

- DHS was placed 9th in terms of performance as managed by average points score though it was noted that this was in part determined by the number of entries for each individual student, and that, for DHS, this is lower than at some schools.
- DHS was placed 1st= with two other schools in terms of 5 A*-C (including English and Maths) at 70%. It was noted that these figures were not as reported in the press in August. This is because the government figures now exclude retakes.
- Outcomes in the three ability ranges were variable but it was noted that percentage differences in these measures were very small.
- DHS was placed 4th out of those schools who take the English Baccalaureate (45%).
- DHS was placed 9th in Value Added Measure which, although pleasing, would have been much better (1024) if the student who failed to attend examinations due to illness had gained the results that were anticipated for her.
- VA Results by subject were varied but were generally high. These were being reviewed.

- Outcomes for disadvantaged students were good.

Miss Upton will circulate the tables after the meeting.

Year 11 Performance Data

The headline figure was that students were performing at a level of 68% of students gaining 5 A*s –C. In response to a question from Mrs Driver, Miss Upton confirmed that this was lower than outcomes achieved last year. Students' performance in Drama are likely to improve given the arrival of a new Head of Department.

Bishop David said he was pleased to see Governors drilling down into data and engaging so well with it.

7. Budget and related items

7.1 Mrs Darby confirmed that spending was where it should be (33%) and that any variations were minor.

7.2 Mrs Darby reported that there would be a meeting with Cofely next week regarding the Boiler Project and the contract would be signed shortly; the planning application is progressing. Plans now involved two smaller biomass boilers rather than one large one. The start meeting will take place on 11th February and work will begin in Art in half term. Given the delays the EFA (Educational Funding Agency) had agreed an extension of funding until November 2015. Mr Debenham asked about the visual impact of the new pipe work and was assured that this would be as discreet as possible – particularly in public areas.

Mrs Darby was thanked for her efforts in the face of much frustration.

8. Committees and Working Parties

8.1 Curriculum Working Party

A summary of the meeting of 13th January was tabled – relating mainly to a discussion of RAISE Online. Governors who had any questions about this were asked to direct them to Miss Upton or to Mr Carruthers.

8.2 Admissions Committee

Mr Carruthers said that all applicants had been reviewed (under Governor scrutiny) and ranked in line with the DHS Admissions Policy. Miss Upton observed that this was the first time we had reached PAN (Planned Admission Number) in the second of the four admission categories (out of catchment applicants who qualify under worship criteria). This could mean that some applicants attending catchment schools but living out of catchment may not gain a place at DHS.

8.3 Governor Visits.

Dr Marlow informed the meeting that the Disciplinary Committees met termly or, if there was insufficient business for a formal meeting, matters were dealt with through correspondence. There had been a third FTE (Fixed Term Exclusion) for a student so this would now move towards permanent exclusion.

Mr Stevenson had attended the PE Department review and had been impressed by both the lesson observed and the PPIs (Pupil Perception Interviews).

9. Local Authority Papers

9.1 Mr Carruthers had reviewed the LA Paper 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and confirmed that DHS was compliant. . The audit had been submitted in January after being reviewed by Mr Carruthers who had also checked the Single Central Register.

10. Policies

10.1 Performance Management Policy

Changes were highlighted. It was noted that wording related to applications to the Upper Pay Spine should read 'once a year' rather than 'at least once a year' (p 10)

Mrs Newman said that she believed that appraisal meetings should take place within normal working hours and not in PPA (Planning Preparation & Assessment time). Miss Upton pointed out that DHS gives 16% PPA rather than the 10% required.

In response to a question from Mrs Newman, Miss Upton confirmed that there was no discreet funding for the Leading Practitioner Role.

Mrs Driver sought (and received) clarification as the External Advisor role in the appraisal of the Headteacher and it was noted that there was a separate form for support staff appraisal.

Mr Stevenson suggested that Teacher Standards should be referenced rather than replicated in the policy. Mr Martin felt that it was necessary to include these as judgements were made against them but care would need to be taken to ensure that these were updated in all documents in which they appear should any changes be made to them.

The policy was approved by the meeting.

11. DfE Information

Mr Carruthers had reviewed this and confirmed that DHS had responded appropriately to all items, or was aware of any changes that might be pending.

12. Governor Training

12.1 Governor Skills Audit

Mr Carruthers reported that the audit had raised three areas that Governors felt were relative weakness:

- Understanding current education policy
- Financial Planning and Management
- SEN – specifically knowledge of what DHS do - though the point was made that Mrs Janson (the link governor) was well informed and knowledgeable in this area. This might be a subject for some governor training.

12.2 A good number of Governors have signed up for training.

12.3 The record of training has been received from the LA. Mr Carruthers asked that Governors complete the 360 degrees diagnostic when they receive it. It relates to a course that he is undertaking.

13. Any Other Business

- A new Governor Handbook was distributed.
- The Register of business interests had been completed. Though Mr Gilgan was no longer a Governor he needed to be included in this as he had been in post in this academic year. Similarly with Mr Boulter who was also a trustee of the Sir Robert Hitcham Trust.
- The updated list of Governors had been published on the DHS website.
- It was noted that the review officer in the case of a DHS pupil with specific needs had singled out DHS for praise in the way it dealt with such matters. Thanks were due to Mrs Ramsay who added that this had led to increased funding for the school to the tune of £9k. Dr Marlow added that the way school handles disciplinary issues is equally impressive,
- Mrs Driver asked about the catch-up premium for pupils joining Year 7 who were below Level 4. Mrs Darby said that this had been received but that it was the last year that these funds would be available.
- Mrs Driver thanked the school and the governors for the warm reception that she had been given as a new member of the Governing Body.

14. Date of next meeting

This was confirmed as Tuesday 5th May 2015 at 5.00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Signed

Date