



# Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



## Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

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

In attendance:

Mr R Boulter	Member of the Academy Trust
Mr S Martin	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs L Ramsay	Assistant Headteacher
Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

### 1. Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Revd P Cotton, Mrs T Darby, Dr D Egan, Ms S Goodrich, Mr R Grimsey, Mr C Grover, Miss S McBurney, Mr D Ralph and Mr N Serjeant. Mrs Driver, Mr Martin and Mrs Ramsay left the meeting for a short period at 5.55 p.m. Mr Boulter left the meeting at 7.09 p.m.
- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

### 2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 Mrs Janson said that interests relating to her husband no longer applied.

### 3. Chairman's Action

The Chairman had taken no action since the last meeting.

### 4. Governing Body Membership

- 4.1 The only change was the appointment of the Right Reverend Martin Seeley as Bishop of Bury St. Edmunds and Ipswich and hence, ex-officio, to the Academy Trust. This change was approved by the meeting.
- 4.2 It was suggested that the School Development Working Party (SDWP) be discontinued as issues that it might discuss were felt rather to be within the remit of the whole Governing Body. Ms Wnukoski wonder if this might lead to pressure of time in meetings but Mr Carruthers felt that, were this to be the

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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

case, then matters could be dealt with at an EGM. With this proviso, the discontinuation of the SDWP was agreed.

- 4.3 It was suggested that F&GP meetings should start at 2.30 p.m. on a Friday rather than 5.00 p.m. Mr Stevenson said that he would not be able to attend at this time but that he was happy to relinquish his place on the F&GP given his commitments to the H&S Committee. This change in time was agreed.
- 4.4 The meeting schedule for 2015-16 was received. Mr Stevenson asked if the Spring Term H&S Committee meeting be moved to earlier in the term to reduce the time between meetings. Miss Upton will look into this.

#### **Action Miss Upton**

### **5. Minutes**

- 5.1 With one typographical correction, and with an adjustment of terminology in Item 6.1 (Appendix 1), the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015.
- 5.2 Matters arising from the minutes:

6.1 Miss Upton confirmed that Sean O’Neill (recently retired Head of Bungay High School) had been appointed as School Improvement Partner to succeed Kevin Haddock. He will also advise with respect to Miss Upton’s Performance Management Review. He is currently working with another academy trust and has a strong track record in School Improvement with good contacts. He has been appointed initially for the summer term only but it is anticipated that this will be renewed on an annual basis in line with the school year.

11 Issues with respect to the SEND offer on the website had been resolved.

### **6. Academic Improvement**

- 6.1 Introduction of the new Head Boy and Girl and their Deputies.

Poppy, William, Annie and Philip addressed the meeting regarding the successes of Sports Day, the interview process for the appointment of the Head Boy and Girl and their deputies, the enjoyable Summer Soirée and the mock election (which, it was felt, had been an effective way of increasing political awareness). Mr Carruthers thanked the students for their input and congratulated them on their appointment.

- 6.2 School Development Plan 2015-17 (SDP)

Ms Upton provided an overview of the SDP stressing that the outcomes related largely to academic attainment but also to progress and attendance, with principle focus being on the needs of the whole child. The plan contains three main themes with several priorities under each theme:

#### Teaching and Learning

Priorities:

Given that DHS is already an outstanding school any planning was focused on fine-tuning to build upon current success and to develop teaching expertise.

#### 1. Resilience

Students will be shown how to overcome difficulties and staff will be encouraged to allow students to struggle. Such an approach will link to the pastoral work being undertaken on positive mental health.

Staff would also be looking at interventions with individual students and, in particular, why these were necessary.

## 2. Literacy

Work is to be done to assist students in the decoding of questions thereby building a sense of word power. The need for this is most evident in those students who come from disadvantaged homes. The aim would be explicitly to fill any gaps in the natural development of literacy.

## 3. Planning for progress

The intention is to build on what has already been achieved by challenging able students and providing scaffolding for those of lower ability.

## 4. Assessment

The main focus here would be on the skills ladder and individual student feedback in relation to this. These represent the schools' implementation of 'life after levels' and will be worked on by HODs.

## 5. Curriculum Change

The implementation of the new GCSEs would be a priority as would the implications of this for the KS3 curriculum given the increased content and tighter assessment. Mr McMillan asked if this had been budgeted for; Miss Upton said that there was no specific cash for this but the CPD budget had been protected and there was the potential to use the Headteacher's discretionary fund.

## 6. Rewards

It was proposed to introduce a new rewards system for Years 10 and 11 – The Debenham Award – to replace the commendations and credits currently used. The system would also recognise extra-curricular achievement.

## Strategic Planning

The English Baccalaureate has re-emerged and will come into effect in three years thereby affecting the current Year 7 as they enter Year 10. More details are awaited. It should be noted that this will necessitate a review of the curriculum as it could have implications for staffing.

In financial terms the Regional Commissioner had indicated that 'schools will have to do things differently'. The implication was that funding could well be reduced still further in real terms. Ms Wnukoski asked about the proposed review of support staff structure; Miss Upton indicated that such a review did not mean that there would subsequently be any staffing changes.

## Partnership

Formal collaboration was now expected from successful schools such as DHS – Tim Coulson (the Regional Commissioner) had said that, though not compulsory, this was strongly encouraged and failure to collaborate could impact negatively on Ofsted judgements. The LA also expects this. DHS currently enjoys good links but not at a formal level. Given that it was felt best for DHS to take the initiative in this there would further exploration of potential partners. Dr Marlow asked what the purpose of such partnerships was; Miss Upton said that it was generally felt that collaboration was an important feature of high-performing schools.

Miss Upton then invited questions. Mrs Driver asked that, as the E-Safety Policy referred to its importance in the SDP, whether it should be referenced therein. Mr Carruthers felt that this was too specific an item for what was a wider strategic plan and asked Mr Martin to revise the policy to remove the reference.

Mr Green asked if 'emotional well-being' equated to 'mindfulness'. Miss Upton replied that, although these terms are not unrelated, they were not the same thing.

Mr McMillan asked if whole school targets for DHS were linked to KS2 performance – Miss Upton confirmed this to be the case.

Mr Carruthers enquired about targets for attendance after 2015; Miss Upton said that these would remain at 96%. He also asked how DHS would know when the milestones identified under each priority had been achieved. Miss Upton said that RAISEonline data would be important in this; this data was to be shared with Governors after the next Curriculum Working Group.

After the conclusion of this discussion, the 2015-17 SDP was approved by the meeting,

### **Action Miss Upton**

#### 6.3 Feedback from the recent HMI Visit

DHS had been identified as one of eleven schools where disadvantaged students have achieved an excellent level of performance. HMI Mary Rayner visited DHS to explore why this was, with the possibility of DHS becoming a case study to highlight good practice. Mrs Rayner met with Governors, parents and students and the upshot was that DHS will be used as an exemplar. She identified three areas of good practice:

- High expectations (she had seen evidence of this throughout the day)
- Good use of tracking and monitoring
- Bespoke programmes of individual intervention.

Mrs Janson had been interviewed by Mrs Rayner who had asked what the DHS' secret of success was. Mrs Janson had said that she felt it was the atmosphere of the school – 'a combination of respect and commitment'. Mrs Rayner said that she had found DHS to be 'very different' to other schools she had visited. Mr Carruthers thanked all those involved. Mrs Driver asked if the exercise would lead to more useful contacts for the school; Miss Upton felt that it would.

#### 6.4 Staffing update

- The vacant English post had not been filled because of paucity in the quality in the field. Existing part-time staff (who are trained English teachers) will take classes for the year ahead.
- Julie Mitchell had been replaced as Exams and Assessment Coordinator by Nadine Parent.
- Three new Graduate Interns had been appointed from nineteen applicants.
- The Pastoral Support assistant, Jules Gridley, is moving to a promoted post at Suffolk New College. Her post has been advertised.
- Emma Wnukoski (Reprographics) is reducing the days that she works which has led to Vanessa Woodley taking on a FT appointment.
- Ms Wnukoski advocated the use of exit interviews.
- It was confirmed that Miss McBurney would be returning to DHS from maternity leave before the end of term

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

#### 7.1 Budget Outturn 2014-15

The budget position was as expected with £45k of savings due to staffing changes together with some small savings on pension commitments.

#### 7.2 Budget medium-term plan

In Mrs Darby's absence Miss Upton ran through the presentation that had been given to the F&GP Committee. Points raised were:

- There had been top-slicing by the LA.
- The Education Support Grant (ESG) had been cut significantly.
- Pressures arose from pension contributions and NI increases.
- Pupil number assumptions in the plan are in line with projections. The drop in Year 7 intake in years 2017/18 related to expected changes in demographics.
- The gap between funding and costs increases steadily over time and (if there were to be no increase in funding, or decrease in costs) would lead to erosion of reserves within five years. Given this it might prove necessary to review the ring-fencing of part of DHS reserves as indicated in the Reserves Policy.
- The projected deficit for 2015-16 had been reduced from £117k to £47,858 through a cost cutting exercise including changes to:
  - Computer hardware cycle of replacement
  - Reduction in number of GCSE options
  - Reduction of the Otley offer
  - Midday supervisors paid for 40 minutes duty only
  - Premises budget reduction
  - Education other than at School budget (EOTAS) had been cut.
  - Headteacher's reserve reduced.
  - One fewer Graduate Interns
  - Savings on the English appointment (see above)
- The departmental capitation budget will, however, remain the same and DHS was looking for sponsorship for the production of *Aspire*.
- The KPI relating to staff costs as a percentage of GAG income was 80-85%. Next year this will stand at 90% - such a level of commitment to staffing cannot be sustained indefinitely.
- There could be some savings through collaboration with other schools but gains here would almost certainly be minimal. Mr McMillan asked if the geography of DHS was a factor. Miss Upton felt that this was possibly the case but that there were models that could work.
- Mr Debenham asked if there were any signs from Government that they were prepared to bring in a more equitable distribution of funding between local authorities. Miss Upton said that the case was being pressed by the F40 group of backbench MPs and by the Suffolk Heads. DHS will also write to the Secretary of State independently.

#### **Action Miss Upton**

- Mrs Hotston Moore pointed out that DHS was probably in a better position than other schools and Miss Upton confirmed that most schools were setting deficit budgets. Mr Stevenson asked what would happen if a school set a deficit budget without the adequate reserves to cover it. Miss Upton said that it would initially receive a Financial Notice to Improve.

### 7.3 Budget Plan 2015-16

After discussion and a recommendation from the F&GP Committee, the budget for 2015-16 was approved.

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

### 8.1 Minutes of Committee Meetings

The minutes of the Health and Safety Committee Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 were received by the meeting without comment as were those of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 22<sup>nd</sup> May and 19<sup>th</sup> June.

## 8.2 Governor Visits

Mrs Janson reported on the SEN faculty review. This had taken place over four days and had involved six Pupil Perception Interviews (PPIs) with students from Years 7 and 8. These provided very positive feedback – it was felt that Mrs Scott listens to students and is very fair. Miss Upton, Mrs Ramsay and Mrs Janson had undertaken a work scrutiny exercise. A strength of the department was the continuity of TA support and the presence of subject specialist TAs. Targets established were to:

- Provide support for those with social issues
- Maximize TA impact
- Work more closely with parents
- Tighten tracking procedures

Mr Barker had taken part in the ICT Department review. He had observed a Year 10 lesson where questioning (and responses) had been impressive with students being appropriately challenged. The lesson had been admirably timed. He also attended the wrap-up meeting which discussed the introduction of coding in Year 7 - Mr Barker had offered to help with this.

Mr Debenham had visited the Drama Department where the new Head of Department had settled in well despite joining half way through the academic year.

## 9. Policies

### 9.1 SEND Information Report

This was introduced by Mrs Ramsay. She pointed out that this was different from the SEND offer as it contained items such as contact details for the SEN Coordinator. It had been kept in the Q & A style as this was felt to be more user-friendly. It was to be revised annually (or sooner if there were changes in legislation). The whole was underpinned by the SEN Policy Document which is not one that needs to be approved by Governors. Dr Marlow commented on how quickly matters relating to SEN seemed to change and Mrs Janson noted that all schools seem to present their policies differently but also that the SEN Inspector had liked the way DHS did this. Mr McMillan suggested that there needed to be more explanation of the acronyms used. Mr Green was concerned that there was an implication that SEN was confined to those of below average ability – the wording was adjusted to correct this perception.

The report was approved by the meeting.

### 9.2 DHS Safeguarding Policy

Mrs Ramsay identified some adjustments in acronyms used but apart from this, there were few changes – the main one being the insertion of details relating to the duty that DHS has to prevent radicalisation. Mrs Ramsay has undertaken training on this issue and a quick guide for Governors is being prepared.

A few typographical changes were noted as was some inconsistency in the terminology and titling used. Contact numbers were also in need of checking. The URL in Item 5 was removed. Details of the requirement for Governor Training were to be clarified and the appendix labelling was to be adjusted.

With these changes the policy was approved.

### 9.3 DHS E-Safety Policy

Mr Martin introduced this item and indicated that the document had been rationalised and updated to reflect technological and procedural developments. Discussion as to the details of the policy ensued with the salient points raised being:

- Mr Carruthers is the E-Safety Governor

- Post holders should be named
- The Network Manager had approved the revised policy
- The need for coordination with the wider Safeguarding Policy

Various other minor or typographical changes were made, after which the policy was approved by the meeting.

**10. Any Other Business**

- Miss Upton informed the meeting that the appeal in relation to the capital bid for the renewal of roofing on the Hall and on all old areas of the school had been successful. The work will be coordinated with that on the relocation of PV panels and this meant that the DHS contribution to the cost will be only £32k rather than the projected £50k.

**11. Date of next meeting**

This was confirmed as Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 5.00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.22 p.m.

Signed: ..... (Chairman)

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015