



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy

Minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Academy Trust

Wednesday 5th July 2017 at 9.30 a.m.

Debenham High School

Present:	Rt Rev Martin Seeley	Chairman
	Mr R Boulter	
	Mr D Carruthers	Chairman of Governors
	Mr R Grimsey	
	Mr N Serjeant	
In attendance:	Miss J Upton	Headteacher
	Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

1. Apologies for absence.

These were received from Mrs J Brown. Mrs Willmott (School Business Manager) joined the meeting for Item 6.

2. Minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 6th July 2016 and Tuesday 31st January 2016.

The minutes of the meeting of Wednesday 6th July 2016 were received and approved as were those of Tuesday 31st January 2016.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes.

There were no matters arising.

4. Report from Chairman of Governors to Members of the Trust.

Staffing

This had been challenging as there had been late retirements and resignations – though the situation had improved in respect of Mathematics as the member of staff concerned was not now leaving. Those departing were doing so for personal reasons and not because of any concerns with DHS as an employer. Advertising costs had been considerable. Mrs Darby (the School Business Manager) had moved to another post and had been replaced by Mrs Tracy Willmott. Various members of the support staff (including Cover Supervisors) had been appointed though, at the time of the meeting, there were still two Graduate Interns (GIs) to be recruited. Mr Carruthers noted that GI appointments were being made together with the other secondary schools in the Teaching School Alliance (Farlingaye and Kesgrave) - Mr Grimsey thought that such collaboration was encouraging. The caretaker had returned to work on limited hours and with limited duties following a period of ill-health. His deputy had filled in well with the support of the School Network/Premises Manager.

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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

Debenham High School is a company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 07467445

Results - 2016

These were good.

Progress 8	+ .39	
Attainment 8	58.9	(LA Average 48.6; England Average 48.5)
C+ (English and Maths)	80%	(60.2%; 59.3%)
English Baccalaureate	33%	(18%; 36.8%)

Mr Carruthers noted that the E-Bacc was not currently favoured by many schools and was not mandatory. He also noted the uncertainty regarding the new GCSEs. Miss Upton said that, whilst data tracking is providing useful information, teachers are understandably cautious in their predictions for these. DHS students are being well-prepared and some members of the teaching staff have taken on examination marking – better to inform their teaching. Early indications suggest that there may be some clustering of grades at or around the mid-range.

Attendance

This stands at 95.6% for the year 2016-17 which represents a continuation of the steady increase of recent years. Mr Carruthers noted that an individual long-term illness can have a significant effect on figures. The definition of 'regular attendance' had been adjusted.

Infrastructure

- The roof renovation was now complete and solar panels had been re-sited.
- The Classroom Extension/Drama Studio should be completed by December 8th 2017. The contractors had been very good.
- Renovation of the Food Technology Room had been self-funded.
- Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) Bids had been unsuccessful this year.

Developing the Whole Child

This item was taken by Miss Upton.

Miss Upton described explicit events in terms of spirituality relating to the pray space and diversity – these embodied a sense of faith at DHS. There had been a pro-active input relating to greater understanding of students with mental health issues. This had taken the form of mental health first aid training (how to recognise) and prevention (training given by Hazel Harrison from Ipswich Hospital). She raised understanding through the acronym PERMA:

Positive Emotion – experiencing flow/challenge/excitement and see these as natural

Relationships – one person to trust

Meaning – sense of belonging/helping others

Achievement – especially in relation to incremental growth.

Miss Upton felt that Mrs Harrison's input had served to validate DHS approach and values.

Mr Boulter asked if there were students with mental health issues at DHS. Miss Upton said that there were, but the individuals concerned were carefully monitored and supported. Mr Grimsey felt that such issues were now more easily recognised and better understood.

Exclusions

Mr Carruthers made reference to exclusions in connection with a recent drug-related incident and said that practice would be reviewed in the light of this. The Fixed Term Exclusion (FTE) had led to comment in the local press. The Permanent Exclusion had been referred to an Independent Review Panel on appeal. Ms Goodrich had been very helpful in resolving this issue.

Mr Grimsey asked about a previous (unrelated) tribunal case; this had been resolved before the Tribunal had sat.

5. Changes in Governors/Directors.

Dr Will Thomas had joined the Governing Body as a Co-opted Governor. He is Deputy Head of Business Studies at the University of Suffolk and replaced Mrs Hotston Moore. Mrs Wnukoski had left DHS but there had been no volunteers as a replacement Support Staff Governor.

Mr Grimsey noted that his term of service as a Member of the Academy Trust expired in December 2017. Mr Serjeant's term had been renewed.

6. Finance.

(Mrs Willmott joined the meeting.)

Mrs Willmott outlined the outturn figures for 2016-17 and noted a transfer of £127k to the capital fund. A small surplus is anticipated for 2017-18 whilst budgets for capitation, ICT and maintenance had been preserved. The 2017-18 budget did not include the expected capital contribution of £260k.

In the medium term, there is uncertainty regarding the National Funding Formula (NFF) whilst current funding remains flat and costs are increasing. In 2019-20 there will be a significant increase in employer contributions to Teachers Pensions (16½% to 19%). A 1% pay rise had been given for the coming year but there was a possibility the cap on public sector pay might be removed.

Mr Carruthers agreed with Mrs Willmott that caution and careful planning was needed to avoid any future deficit.

The Bishop asked when a decision on the NFF was expected. Miss Upton said this was due in the Autumn Term. Mr Boulter asked what happened to unspent CIF monies. Mrs Willmott said that these had to be returned but that DHS always ensures that these are spent. The Bishop noted that DHS is almost certainly in a healthier position than many other schools.

7. Teaching School Alliance (TSA) Report

The TSA has helped school finances though the £60k funding (though this will reduce in subsequent years); it has also allowed access to other CPD-related funding streams (e.g. for the Maths Hub). Much useful activity had been undertaken through CPD and through school-to-school support. Miss Upton is working with other schools through the National Leader of Education programme – this involves time out of school.

Mr Boulter asked if teachers were paid for services provided under the TSA. Miss Upton said this was not usually the case but costs were covered and payment was made to those who ran courses. The Bishop noted that the TSA also served to enhance DHS' reputation.

8. Implications for DHS of the Ipswich Garden Suburb development

DHS was focusing on its work through the TSA as the Government agenda has changed with less emphasis on the creation of MATs.

The Ipswich Garden Suburb will be created on the northern fringe of Ipswich and is due for completion in 2020. There is provision within the plan for three primary schools with one secondary school (potentially with a Sixth Form). The Diocese hoped to be involved in the development of the new secondary school and this may have an adverse effect on DHS out-of-catchment recruitment (25 students were recruited from related areas this year).

Mr Boulter noted housing developments in other areas – e.g. Stowupland.

The Bishop said that he felt that DHS should express an interest. The Diocese is keen on the creation of a Church secondary school as there is not one currently in Ipswich. It would make sense for the new school to be involved with a school with the reputation of DHS. There is also the possibility of a three-way partnership with Northgate School. Jane Sheat (the Diocesan Director of Education) will be bidding for one church primary school and for the secondary school. It was noted that the current preferred site has poor access and there may be the possibility of a land swap with the Diocese – this would only take place if a church school could be, as far as is possible, guaranteed.

Discussion as to DHS involvement raised the following points:

- Mr Carruthers said he had contacted Jane Sheat but the situation had not been clarified – nor was he certain as to the outcome of further discussion
- Mr Boulter felt that DHS should be involved given the potential impact on DHS – though he again noted closer housing developments.
- Miss Upton said that, whilst involvement was possible, it may place undue demands on DHS. It would be useful for DHS to support any new school but such support would need to bring influence – possibly through a MAT.
- The Bishop suggested that the new secondary could be seen as a sister school to DHS – two equal church secondary schools of a similar nature. Any political/strategic relationship with Northgate would need to be negotiated. There is also the possibility of a relationship with a number of primary schools. The Diocese is also looking at the creation of a MAT of 20-24 church schools but not run by the Diocese or, potentially, a Church-led mixed Mat (church and non-church schools).
- Miss Upton pointed out that DHS numbers could not support a Sixth Form (and nor could the new school) – hence the need for a connection to a school with a Sixth Form (Northgate).

In the light of this it was decided to keep in contact with Jane Sheat and to remain engaged with the project. It would be important to get the timetable for development from Ipswich Borough Council. The Trustees would need to be kept up-to-date.

Action Mr Carruthers/Miss Upton

9. Letter from the Deputy Regional Schools' Commissioner following a recent visit.

This was seen as a very positive letter after what had been an intense afternoon.

10. Any other business.

There was no other business.

11. Dates of next meetings.

These were provisionally set as Tuesday 6th February 2018 at 4.30 p.m. (AGM) and Wednesday 4th July 2018 at 9.30 a.m.

Signed: Chairman Date: 4th July 2018

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 11.10 a.m.