



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 6th December 2016 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|----------------|
| Mr R Barker | Chairman | Mrs S Janson |
| Mr D Carruthers | | Rev M Lamb |
| Mr P Debenham | | Mr D McMillan |
| Mrs C Driver | | Mr R Stevenson |
| Dr D Egan | | Miss J Upton |
| Mr T Green | | Ms E Wnukoski |
| Mr C Grover | | |

In attendance:

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|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Mr R Boulter | Member of the Academy Trust |
| Mrs J Brown | Member of the Academy Trust |
| | |
| Mrs T Darby | School Business Manager |
| Mr S Martin | Deputy Headteacher |
| Miss S McBurney | Assistant Headteacher |
| Mrs L Ramsay | Assistant Headteacher |
| | |
| Mr S Wright | Clerk to the Governors |

1. Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Ms Goodrich, Dr H Marlow, Ms J Newman, Mr D Ralph and Rt. Revd M Seeley.

Mrs Brown arrived during Item 3. Mr Martin left during Item 13.

- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 There were no pecuniary interests raised with respect to items on the agenda. Mrs Upton said that she had an interest in Item 3 and Mr Green in Item 7.6.

- 2.2 There was nothing to update in the Register of Pecuniary Interests. Three Governors or Members had still to complete the annual return.

3. Chairman's Action

The Chairman had updated documents GO1 and GO2.

GO1

The continued adoption by Governors of the Code of Conduct and the Seven Principles of Public Life was affirmed. It was noted that the header should read Issue 6 rather than Issue 4.

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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 **Chair of Governors:** Mr D Carruthers

GO2

Changes have been made to membership and to membership of committees. Mr Boulter pointed out that Trust Members should not be designated as 'co-opted' or parent'. He also drew the meeting's attention to the time when meeting papers should be sent out. Mr Martin pointed out that he was Clerk to the Admissions Committee rather than Mrs Ramsay.

Performance Management for Miss Upton had been undertaken by the Chairman, Ms Goodrich and the School Improvement Partner, Sean O'Neill. This had been a successful exercise.

Mr Carruthers informed Governors that this would be Ms Wnukoski's last meeting as Support Staff Governor as she is leaving DHS. He thanked her both for her contributions to meetings and for her work in the reprographics room in support of Governors' Meetings.

4. Governing Body Membership

There had been no changes in the Governing Body since the last meeting.

5. Minutes

- 5.1 It was noted that Ms Wnukoski had not been at the meeting held on Tuesday 4th October 2016 and had sent her apologies. With this correction, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 5.2 Matters arising from the minutes.

8.7 Mrs Ramsay was investigating the Accelerated Reading Programme.

15 Miss Upton had resolved the access issue for Governors' Meetings.

Other action points were covered in the agenda.

6. Student presentation

Ellie (Head Girl) and Nathan (Deputy Head Boy) spoke about their experiences in Year 11. They commented favourably on the recent Pathways Evening which had enabled them to explore post-16 options at colleges and schools with a Sixth Form (including independent schools). Ellie spoke about the recent trial examinations and input from an organisation called 'Maximise' which had helped with revision techniques. Nathan commended the one-to-one offered by Mr Voller regarding future choices, including universities. He also talked about the PSHE sessions offered by Mrs Ramsay which had been very useful in learning how to lead a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

7. Academic Improvement

7.1 GCSE Case Studies

The meeting heard from Lauren Carr (Head of Art) and Andrew Dubberley (Head of History) about the impact in their subjects of changes in the GCSE curriculum.

Art & Design

Ms Carr gave a summary of the changes in Art & Design but felt that there had not been significant adjustments from what was offered previously; the emphasis on practical work remained:

- Marks on offer had been increased from 80 to 96 – it could be that this related to the award of Grades 8 and 9 (under the new system) but all will not be clear until after the first cohort has taken the examination. The department was confident in its own marking matrix.

- Written annotations are now required on preparatory work (though these are not subject to Spelling and Grammar (SPAG) assessment). The department already expects its students to do this.
- The main change has come in Component 2 of the course (the 10-hour examination). Once the exam has started students are not allowed to continue with preparatory work at home – previously they had been able to do this between parts of the examination. This meant that the examination would now need to take place later in the year so preparatory work could be fully completed.

Generally, Ms Carr felt that the course could be run in much the same way as it had previously. Mr Carruthers asked about moderation. Ms Carr said that, as the only GCSE teacher, she would continue to work with Stour Valley in the process of standardisation.

History

Mr Dubberley said that the department had taught IGCSE Modern World History for four years. This had provided relevance, had promoted interest and had been a good preparation for A Level. The course was linear and there was no Controlled Assessment. It also provided the opportunity for a trip to Berlin. On the negative side there was a lack of variety and only a limited element of British History.

The new course on offer was Edexcel which involved the History of Medicine (Site Focus on the Western Front); Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-39; Superpower Relations and the Cold War 1941-91 and Early Elizabethan England 1558-88 (British Depth Study). The course provided some continuity, and students had found it interesting. It is more rigorous than the old Edexcel course. It is, however, less rigorous than IGCSE and heavy in terms of content.

In preparation Mr Dubberley had attended a course run by the examining board and Year 9 students had been on a Western Front field trip. The new Scheme of Work provides significant opportunities for review and milestone testing.

Overall Mr Dubberley felt that the new course was going well and students were gaining Grades 6-8 in milestone tests. Dr Egan asked if it was as good a preparation for A Level History as IGCSE had been. Mr Dubberley felt that the extended writing exercises helped this. Mrs Darby felt that there would be more revision for students given the increased content; Mr Dubberley agreed but said that a good deal of revision was done as the course progressed. The required historical skills are also being acquired in KS3, and the GCSE skills paper is similar to that at A Level. Rev Lamb asked about the take up of Field Trip places and whether this disadvantaged those who took History at GCSE but who had not been on the Trip. Mr Dubberley felt that it did not.

Relating to the new GCSE generally, Ms Upton reminded the meeting that grades will be norm-referenced and it will be, therefore, hard for Heads of Department to judge grade boundaries until after the first round of examinations.

7.2 October Training Day

Those teaching staff not involved in the Action Research project attended the Festival of Learning held at University College Suffolk (UCS). Each teacher attended five or six sessions offered by practising teachers and educational experts. This had been a very successful day with positive feedback from teachers. Some ideas had been cascaded to other staff. Mr McMillan confirmed that it had been an excellent occasion.

7.3 Year 11 Performance Data

This item was taken by reference to subject details tabled at the meeting. Miss McBurney asked Governors not to be too worried by the negative nature of the figures for English and Maths as the performance comparison is with historical data which is not referenced to the new GCSE (in which there is no historical data set). The import factor is that the figures have improved as the year has progressed. It was understandable that, at this stage, teachers are reluctant to award Grades 8 and 9.

Mr Grover asked about the French outcomes; Miss McBurney agreed that, after the problems with the speaking paper in last year's GCSE, the department were being cautious.

Miss Upton apologised that this information had only arrived at the meeting as it had only just been compiled; it did not include the results of recent trial examinations. Mr Carruthers added that, if Governors felt the need, a further session on understanding data could be arranged.

7.4 DfE unvalidated RAISE Data for DHS

Miss McBurney led the meeting through the new-look RAISE data – exemplars of which had been received with the pack. (The full version and the dashboard will be forwarded to Governors shortly and will be discussed at the Curriculum Working Group meeting on January 10th 2017.) Miss McBurney also made the point that this is unvalidated data and does not include Health and Safety BTec results as there were unresolved issues with these – when included they might improve the overall picture.

The emphasis in the figures is on disadvantaged students. In terms of Progress 8 (P8), DHS had achieved a positive measure of 0.37 (5th in the county). The measure for disadvantaged students is – 0.3 which, though many schools would have a negative measure, is a target for improvement. For Attainment 8 (A8) (based on grades) the DHS score is 58.61 (the highest in the county). The outline red boxes relate once more to disadvantaged students but it should be noted that these are affected by the small numbers of students involved and individual circumstances. Generally, the A8 figures are felt to be good.

For both P8 and A8 it is the open element that is affected when a required subject is missing so it was pertinent that the A8 figure for DHS in this category is above the national average.

Miss McBurney went on to explain the scatter diagrams. Mr Barker asked if those above the line had made real progress or if they simply had poorer KS2 scores. Miss McBurney said it could be either. The Value Added results in Science and Humanities are strong, as is the performance in Attainment Threshold when compared against the national average in English and Maths, and in the English Baccalaureate. It was noted that the P8 figures for Mathematics are stronger than those for English, though different GCSE options which benefit the C/D borderline may well be making this harder at present. In 2017 there will be no such option for any school.

Absence figures relate to the whole school and are better than the national average – it was again noted that the circumstances of individual students can have a significant impact on figures.

Mr Green asked if Year 10 results for early GCSEs were included in their Year 11 figures. Miss McBurney confirmed that this is the case. He also noted that there were 15 students not included in P8 as they did not have KS2 results. Miss Upton said this was because, in this cohort, an unusual number of students had been recruited between Year 8 and 10 (some from independent schools and some from abroad). Mr Boulter asked if the English Baccalaureate had any real meaning to students. This was not thought to be the case.

7.5 Teaching School Alliance (TSA) update

This item was taken with reference to a paper circulated with the Governors' pack. Miss Upton highlighted several points:

- There is a range of school taking the lead in events within the Alliance.
- With teacher training DHS is taking a strategic role through involvement with the SCITT Board.
- Some of the school-to-school support is part funded by the LA.

7.6 Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Working Group

This group had met together with the Bishop and had looked at the creation of a DHS-led MAT in the context of the current work of the TSA. The main thrust of its deliberations had been to understand the

process of implementation and it would continue to work to this end. It was felt, nevertheless, that the main priority for DHS should be the TSA and Mr Carruthers sought Governors' approval for this approach. Mr Stevenson asked if schools in the pyramid were aware of the decision to concentrate on the TSA. Miss Upton said that they were, and that lines of communication will be kept open so that DHS is fully up-to-date with other schools' intentions. Mr Carruthers will endeavour to arrange a meeting for all Chairs of pyramid schools in the new year. Mr Green observed that the Regional Schools Commissioner's thoughts on the optimum size for a MAT seemed to be increasing.

Governors approved this approach to a potential MAT.

Action Mr Carruthers

8. Budget and related items

8.1 Letter from Peter Lauener

It is a requirement that this letter from the EFA is shared with Governors. Governors were confident that DHS is compliant with its requirements.

8.2 Annual Report and Financial Statements

This had been reviewed exhaustively and was felt to be accurate and complete.

The meeting approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

8.3/4 Audit Finalisation and Audit Summary Document

Mrs Darby reviewed the Audit Summary Document and made the following points:

- A minor issue relating to fixed assets depreciation had been resolved.
- Accounting standards are now governed by regulation FRS 102 and this had led to some changes.
- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) had just been subject to its triennial actuarial review in April and the deficit liability pertaining to DHS had risen from £68k to £1.2 million by the time the actuarial valuation had been carried out for the accounts. This amount (underwritten by Government) is, however, notoriously volatile and auditors were not concerned about it.
- Auditors had checked that matters relating to the recent tribunal had been fully concluded, and on the position of DHS regarding any potential MAT.

8.5 Representation Letters

Having checked that these mirrored those in the Audit Summary document, Mr Carruthers (on behalf of the Governing Body) and Miss Upton (as Accounting Officer) signed them.

9. Capital Projects

9.1 Roof refurbishment and extension projects

The roofing project is almost complete. Scaffolding will be removed next week. It is intended to build a free-standing canopy to cover the area from the covered way in front of Maths towards Room 25 Science Laboratory at the rear of the school.

The Extension Project tender package is being prepared and it is intended that this will be sent out before Christmas with the hope that work can begin around Easter time.

9.2 Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) bids

Two bids have been submitted:

1. Health and Safety - Food Technology Room refurbishment (£102k – DHS contribution £20k).
2. Safeguarding and Security – locks and reception (£164k – DHA contribution £33k).

10. Committees and Working Parties

10.1 Minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Friday 14th September 2016

These were received by the meeting. It was noted that Mr Serjeant's attendance had not been recorded

10.2 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Friday 25th November 2016

These were received by the meeting. Mrs Darby reported that the £18k expected from the LA in relation to roof works had now been received.

10.3 Governor Visits

- Mr Barker and Mrs Janson had responded to Miss Upton's invitation to tour the school. Mr Barker commented that it had been useful to see the new boiler room and where the new extension is to be sited. He had very much enjoyed the lesson he had observed. Mrs Janson commented on the respect shown to visitors by the students.
- Various Governors had attended the Commemorative Assembly and had been impressed by the number of students who had returned, the quality of the music and the appreciation of their time at DHS shown by the former students.
- Mr Grover had attended the Business Studies Faculty Review. He commented positively on the lesson he had observed which had included mixed-ability group work and where students had shown both engagement and the ability both to organise themselves and to work independently. Pupil Perception Interviews (PPIs) had been similarly positive.
- Mr Carruthers and Mr Grover had attended the Schools' Service in Bury St. Edmunds Cathedral where DHS students had participated. It had been an excellent occasion.
- Mr Stevenson said he had missed the Science Department Faculty Review because he had not been invited. Miss Upton apologised for this but pointed out by way of mitigation that the Science Department was currently coping manfully with a long term staff absence.

11. Policies

11.1 Staff and Sickness Absence Policy

This was reviewed by Governors. There were no changes and it had been checked and approved by the school's HR consultants.

11.2 Staff Discretionary Leave of Absence Policy

This was reviewed by Governors. There were no changes and it had been checked and approved by the school's HR consultants.

11.3 Drugs Education and Incidents Policy

This was reviewed by Governors. Mr Martin said that any changes represented mainly a tightening up of the language. Apart from minor changes relating to numbering and designation, Mr Green wondered if reference ought to be made to vaping. Though this is covered in the DHS Behaviour Policy it was felt that it should be mentioned at the relevant points. Dr Egan asked if smoking and alcohol were the only issues covered in Year 7; Mrs Ramsay said these were exemplars only from an extensive programme.

11.4 One-to-One Working Policy

This document was received by the meeting. Minor changes only were made.

12. Governor Training

This item was taken with reference to the Governor Skills Matrix compiled by Mr Carruthers. He felt that the only area of relative weakness related to Governors' confidence in their understanding of SEN issues. Mr Stevenson wondered if such depth of knowledge was required but, after discussion, it was agreed that Mrs Ramsay and Mrs Scott (SEN Coordinator) should make a presentation to the Spring Term Meeting.

Action Mr Carruthers/Miss Upton

13. Any Other Business

- Miss Upton reported on the planned trip to Namibia. The partner school had failed to produce any takers and Schools Worldwide (the company running the trip) had gone into administration. World Challenge had, however, taken over the running of the trip at minimal extra cost and would honour all existing commitments to DHS.
- The Curriculum Working Group will meet on January 10th 2017 followed by a meeting of the Admissions Committee.
- Mr Hawkins, together with the Assistant Caretaker and other support staff were to be commended for their endeavours during the long-term absence of the Caretaker.
- Mrs Janson had attended a Safeguarding course held at Helmingham PS.
- Mrs Driver asked for further details regarding the training offered in Lord Nash's letter.
- Mrs Driver commended the Accounts Office and the Accounting Officer for their fortitude in dealing with the end of year accounts and Mr Debenham congratulated and thanked the SLT and the staff of the school as a whole for what had been a highly successful 2016.
- Mr Carruthers reminded Governors that the DHS musical *Grease* will take place on 16/17th December 2016 and that the Carol Service will take place at St Mary's Church on 19th December 2016.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 31st January 2017 at 5.00 pm, preceded by the AGM at 4.30 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.27 pm.

Signed: Chairman Date: 6th December 2016