



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 3rd October 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

Mr R Barker		Mrs S Janson
Rev S Bates		Mr D McMillan
Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Dr H Marlow
Mr P Debenham		Mrs J Newman
Mrs C Driver		Mr R Stevenson
Mr T Green		Miss J Upton
Mr C Grover		

In attendance:

Mr R Boulter	Trustee
Miss S McBurney	Assistant Headteacher
Mr S Martin	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs L Ramsay	Assistant Headteacher
Mrs T Willmott	School Business Manager
Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

1. Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs J Brown, Ms S Goodrich, Dr D Egan, Rev M Lamb, Mr D Ralph, Rt. Revd. M Seeley and Dr W Thomas.

Mr McMillan arrived during Item 3; Mrs Ramsay during Item 8.

1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

2.1 Mr McMillan and Mrs Newman indicated a pecuniary interest in Item 9.3 (STRB Proposals).

2.2 There was nothing to update in the Register of Pecuniary Interests.

3. Chairman's Action

Governors' Disciplinary Committee

Mr Carruthers made reference to the recent permanent exclusion of a Year 10 student. This had been referred to an Independent Appeal Panel and DHS had chosen to use the Local Authority for this service. This had proved a challenging experience, the upshot of which was that Governors were invited to reconsidered their decision to uphold the exclusion. A further meeting of the Governing Body Disciplinary Committee (using different personnel) was convened and, after considering the Appeal

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Headteacher: Miss J Upton BSc

Senior Leadership Team: Mr S Martin, Miss S McBurney, Mrs L Ramsay, Mrs T Willmott

Chairman of the Academy Trust: Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Chairman of Governors: Mr David Carruthers

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Panel's findings, again decided again to uphold the exclusion. A comprehensive letter stating the reasons for this decision had been sent to both parents, the Headteacher and to the LA.

Sue Haragdon

As the new School Improvement Partner, Mrs Haragdon had been working with groups of students and had completed Miss Upton's Performance Review. Mr Carruthers thanked Miss Upton for all her hard work over the previous year.

GO1/GO2

These had been received with minor corrections.

GO1

- In Section 4 (Committees and Working Parties) Mrs Driver pointed out the incongruity that the FGP does make recommendations to the Governing Body.
- 5.3 Faculty Link Governors (BP3). It was suggested that 'with the Headteacher' be inserted after meetings.
- Code of Conduct – Mr Green pointed out that the section on Breach of the Code of Conduct was duplicated.
- Mr Debenham asked what the policy was in respect of 'consenting to absence' when governors regularly miss meetings.
- Mr Boulter asked if references to Governors should include Members.

GO2

Mr Carruthers noted that the term of office of a significant number of Governors expires in December 2018 and that he would appreciate if Governors would indicate their intention to continue as a Governor (or otherwise) as early as possible.

Action All

Approach from DfE

Mr Carruthers reported on an ½ hour conversation with Andrew Bell from DfE who asked why, as an outstanding school, DHS was not part of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Mr Carruthers noted that DHS was concentrating on its role as a Teaching School and noted that the pressure for pyramid primaries to convert to academy status had eased somewhat. Mr Bell asked where Mr Carruthers thought DHS would be in 5 years' time and the expectation is clearly that the school will, by then, be part of a MAT. Mr Carruthers asked for a route map to aid the creation of a MAT but, despite promises, none had been forthcoming. Discussion followed:

- Mr Boulter asked what other schools were already part of a MAT. Miss Upton noted several including those involving, variously, Stowupland, Stowmarket and Hartismere.
- Dr Marlow asked what the potential advantages of a MAT were – these were mainly related to collaboration and the sharing of good practice. They will also assume greater importance as the role of the LA declines.
- Miss McBurney pointed out that certain funding streams were only available to MATs.
- Mr Green noted the potential for economies of scale.
- Dr Marlow noted that some schools have issues because they were too far from one another; Miss Upton said that it was clear that Government recognised best practice was a MAT to be in the same locality.
- Mr Boulter said that if DHS were to lead a MAT he would not want there to be a highly paid CEO in charge.

Ipswich Garden Suburb

There was no further information on this.

4. Election of Chairman

Mr Debenham thanked Mr Carruthers for his hard work over the previous year. Mr Carruthers was nominated as Chairman by Mr Stevenson and seconded by Mr Barker. He was elected nem con.

5. Election of Vice-Chairman

Following the resignation of Ms Goodrich a replacement was needed. No nominations were forthcoming. Mr Carruthers asked any Governor who might be interested in taking up this post to contact him after the meeting.

6. Governing Body Membership

Mr Carruthers welcomed the Rev Bates to her first meeting. There was still no member of the support staff willing to take on the role of Support Staff Governor.

7. Minutes

7.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th July 2017 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

7.2 Matters arising from the minutes.

3 Mr Carruthers had written to Sean O’Neill.

5.2 Mr Carruthers had completed the Governor Skills’ Matrix and adjusted GO1 and GO2.

6.4 Mr Grover and Miss Upton had been in contact with the East Anglian Daily Times.

9.1 SEND Information Report – this issue is addressed elsewhere in the agenda.

9.4 DHS Disciplinary Procedures – a meeting was planned to discuss this issue.

8. Academic Improvement

Head Boy and Girl

Miss Upton welcomed the Head Boy and Girl.

Bradley (Head Boy) talked about Year 7 who had settled in well and had received positive comments from members of the public whilst on a visit to Colchester Zoo. Friendship groups were developing and there was good involvement in the activities on offer. All had enjoyed the Puzzle Day solving Maths problems around the school. Inevitably a few individuals had had some teething problems.

Emily discussed the new buildings – especially the refurbished Food Technology Room, which, though not available in the first week of term, provided up-to-date ovens and hobs. She also commented on the new covered way and the tidying up of the area around the Science Block.

8.1 Head’s Report

This item was taken by reference to Miss Upton’s Report.

Staffing Update

The new part time Maths teacher, Cheryl McBlane had unfortunately decided to leave, with affect from 29th September. A replacement has been made in the short-term.

GCSE Results

National data had become available and was distributed at the meeting. DHS had gained a Progress 8 measure of 0.51 which placed the school in the top 5% of schools nationally.

Mr Green asked about the measure for students with low prior attainment (-0.48) and whether this was an average against all students or simply those in that cohort. Miss McBurney felt that it was measured against all students but will check this. Miss Upton noted that there were only six students in this group – a small sample (as was the case with those students in the disadvantaged group). The strong progress in English and Maths was noted.

Action Miss McBurney

Mr Carruthers asked what the threshold was that had to be reached to avoid an Ofsted Inspection – this stands at >1.

Mr Grover asked about results at other local schools. Miss Upton said that, now there were fewer ways of attaining higher GCSE grades, some had performed less well than might have been expected.

Good progress measures in English and Maths were noted. Mr Debenham asked Governors to recall the presentation relating to concerns about the new GCSEs that had been given by the Heads of English and Maths at a previous Governors' Meeting and felt that congratulations should be proffered for the excellent outcomes in these two departments. Two members of the English Department had marked scripts this year and this had provided useful insights.

Miss Upton noted that half of results submitted for review had been upgraded and the Additional Science Controlled Assessment (CA) had similarly been improved. The outcome of a review of CA in Biology and Chemistry was awaited. Mr Carruthers asked who funded the cost of appeals. Miss Upton said that school funded where it was felt that there was a case to be made but parents could choose to fund an appeal themselves. Mrs Driver noted that AQA were the subject of most of the appeals and wondered whether this was a factor – Miss Upton felt not, just that AQA was used for some of the core subjects.

Mr Boulter asked about outcomes in Science which appeared to be worse than those in other subjects. Miss Upton suggested that there was a need to await the outcome of the Biology and Chemistry CA reviews before making judgements (see above) but agreed that there were questions to be answered here. The outcome of the Curriculum Review (giving more time to Science) should help as will the imminent appointment of a new 2i/c in the department.

Teaching School

TS consortia in Suffolk are being encouraged to apply for funding to the Strategic School Improvement Fund. 70% of students in a school have to be eligible (under various criteria). Sir Robert Hitcham, Wetheringsett and Bedfield (all church schools) qualify and an application has been made to support Maths teaching in these schools.

International Education Research

This exercise is to be repeated with disadvantaged students.

Parliamentary Review

Copies of the report are available for Governors.

ASCL Council

Sally Collier, Chief Executive of OFQUAL is visiting DHS on Friday 6th October and will be talking to members of the English Department who undertook examination marking over the summer.

Year 7 Charity Week

Miss Upton stressed the importance of the Charity Week as DHS is a church school.

Appendix 1 – Exclusions

Mr Boulter asked if there had been an increase in the number of exclusions: Miss Upton felt that there had not been any significant uplift. Mrs Janson noted a Year 11 predominance in those excluded. Mr Carruthers asked about the disparity apparent in 4 days exclusion for damaging property as opposed to 1 day for physical assault. Miss Upton said that in the first case it was a second exclusion and therefore sanctions were more severe.

Appendix 3 – Trips & Visits

Those for the coming year need to be approved by Governors.

A number of Governors raised concerns about the cost of the Geography trip to the USA. Miss Upton explained that the usual Iceland Trip had proved uneconomic given exchange rate issues and the USA alternative, whilst pricey, represented better value for money. Mr Green felt that the cost was excessive if the visit was integral to the curriculum. Mr Martin said that, as the Geography Department offered numerous other, UK based, visits this visit was not essential to success at GCSE. Rev Bates asked if there were bursaries to enable students to go on this visit. Mr Martin said that only essential field trips are financially supported. Mrs Driver said that longer notice of the trips would be appreciated so that parents can budget for them. Miss Upton said that the communications regarding trips will be reviewed.

Action Miss Upton

Mr Carruthers asked if the Namibia trip was still on track – it is.

Governors approved the school visit programme for 2017-18.

8.2 4Matrix

Miss McBurney gave a presentation on the uses of this new assessment tool. Its advantages are that it allows data to be uploaded from SIMS with much greater facility. As well as providing an overview of Progress 8 and Attainment 8 it enables staff at all levels to drill down to individual students and groups of students; HODs, for example, can have clear analysis of the performance of cohorts and of classes. It has been launched for teachers with specific training sessions for HODs.

8.3 Staff Handbook

This had been received by Governors.

8.4 Review of results by subjects

These had been received by Governors and had been discussed under Item 8.1

8.5 Pupil Premium (PP) – impact and use

Mrs Ramsay made the following points in relation to the above:

- Extra groups in English and Maths had had a positive impact
- Each school leaver had a post-16 pathway mapped out.
- Successful strategies in 2016-17 are to be retained for 2017-18.
- Other strategies added – e.g. Dutch exchange trip.
- Whilst strategies do not work for all students, the advantages for many can be clearly seen.
- DHS cannot control what happens at home which sometimes militates against school support strategies.
- Some strategies might work even better if used at primary level

Mr Carruthers asked if there were any strategies that Mrs Ramsay would like to introduce but could not do so because of cost. Mrs Ramsay felt that there were not as DHS spends over and above PP funding in any case. Mrs Driver asked if DHS compares its use of PP monies with other schools. Mrs Ramsay said we do compare with Northgate. Miss McBurney noted that research suggests that, nationally, PP funding is not having the impact that had been hoped.

The Pupil Premium Statement was approved by Governors.

8.6 Equality Action Plan Review (2016-17) and Plan (2017-18)

The Plan for 2016-17 had been RAG rated and the majority of objectives had been achieved. The Plan for 2017-18 was reviewed and approved.

8.7 Accessibility Plan (2017-18)

This was received by Governors and Mrs Ramsay highlighted the following areas:

- Additional literacy teaching that had become available following the Curriculum Review.
- The new Key Worker system
- Hosting Mental Health First Aid Training through the TS.
- Hearing loop in the hall.
- Revision guides being reviewed to ensure appropriateness for SEN students.

Mrs Janson conveyed Governors' thanks to Mrs Ramsay and Mrs Scott for their work supporting students with Special Needs. The Plan was approved by Governors.

9. Budget and related items

9.1 Food Technology Room and SALTO entry system.

The refurbishment of the Food Technology Room had been completed a week after the start of term because of the need for additional electrical work.

The SALTO entry system had been partially implemented at school entry points and in ICT, Food Technology and Science with plans to expand throughout the school (and in extension) at a cost of £250 per door. Permissions can be adjusted to each door and personnel using doors can be audited (together with time of entry).

9.2 Extension Project

The project is still on schedule with block work, roofing and windows almost complete. The building is expected to be watertight in two weeks. Completion is due on 12th December with the knock-through to existing buildings to take place in half term after which there will be more disruption to the life of the school.

9.3 School Teachers' Pay Review Body

This item was taken by way of a paper summarising the proposals of the STRB and a series of options in relation to this.

The main discussion related to the STRB recommendation of the application of a 2% pay rise to the maxima and minima of the Main Pay Range (MPR). Unions have indicated that it will initiate union action if this were not to be applied to the whole of the MPR (Option 3). Miss Upton reviewed the four options on the paper and expressed a preference for Option 3 – as seems to be the case in other schools.

Mrs Driver asked if the cost of Option 3 (£1701) included NI and Pension Contributions; Miss Upton confirmed that it did. Mr Stevenson asked if this would make any difference to recruitment. Miss Upton said that it would not as the starting point for each appointment was individually negotiated. Mr McMillan expressed the opinion that staff at the school contributed to its success and that this should be recognised. Mrs Driver made the point that, though it was within their remit, the FGP had not had the opportunity to discuss this matter.

There followed some discussion as to the viability of Option 4 (2% increase across the board). Mr Barker asked about the impact of increased salaries elsewhere in DHS activities – Miss Upton felt that there was not much more that could be trimmed. Mrs Willmott reminded Governors of the future funding implications of any substantial pay rise this year. Mr Carruthers asked if being divergent from what other schools are doing would be wise; in contrast Mr Boulter felt that this would be showing DHS as distinct from other schools. Mr Marlow felt that setting different pay levels for separate groups within the teaching staff would undermine the sense of team. Mr McMillan asked if money was available for new buildings, why should it not be for staff? Miss Upton pointed out that the new buildings enabled greater student numbers and hence the ability to keep teaching staff employed and that most building development had been secured from external grant funding. Miss Upton noted that TS funding had also helped school finances.

There was further discussion relating to the National Funding Formula (NFF) and its possible impact on DHS' ability to increase salaries. Mr Martin made the point that, whilst teachers clearly deserved a pay rise, this had to be sustainable over time and that it would be wise to delay any decision for a year by which time the NFF review would be complete. Mr MacMillan asked what Mrs Willmott's view was on this – she responded that she was concerned over funding uncertainty and hence future sustainability.

Mr Carruthers put the issue to the vote, the outcome of which was:

Option 3	8
Option 4	1
Abstentions	2

Mr Carruthers concluded by saying that, though Option 4 would ideally be the Governors' preferred choice if there were more funds available, in reality their hands were tied.

10. DHS Admissions arrangements

There had been no changes to this but a recent notification from the LA indicates that they will no longer hold a waiting list and that this should now be held by DHS (Item 4.3). After some minor typographical corrections, the Admissions Arrangements were approved by Governors.

11. Committees and Working Parties

11.1 Curriculum Working Party Minutes

These were received by Governors and their contents noted.

11.2 Governor Visits

The Reverend Bates had taken a recent assembly.

12. Policies

12.1 Teaching Staff Salaries Policy

It was noted that the figures in 7.1 would need to be adjusted in the light of decisions taken earlier in the meeting (9.3). A scale for Unqualified Teachers had been added (9). Mr Green suggested that Appendix D be removed. Mrs Driver noted that the role of the FGP should be reviewed so as accurately to reflect the status of that committee. The policy was approved.

12.2 Support Staff Salaries Policy

The only change related to movement of a paragraph of text from Item 7 to Item 4. The policy was approved.

12.3 Performance Management and Appraisal Policy

There had been no changes. It was noted that the Leading Practitioner Role was not referenced elsewhere in DHS documentation. The policy was approved.

12.4 Keeping children safe in education (Part 1)

This was received by Governors. Mrs Ramsay noted that there were important elements within Parts 2 and 3 of this documentation of which Governors needed to be aware. Mr Carruthers asked when Governor Safeguarding Training was due – Governors were last trained in 2016. Mr Boulter ascertained that any reference to Governors applied equally to Members.

12.5 Safeguarding Policy

Mrs Ramsay made the following points relating to change and change of emphasis within the document:

- Language had been tightened.
- There were fewer LADOs and contact details had changed.
- There was a new link for staff referrals.
- County Inclusion Support Service (CISS) was now referenced.
- Greater awareness of Peer to Peer abuse (7.8).
- Online abuse now includes radicalisation and extremism (7.13).
- Radicalisation/Extremism (7.14) – different wording employed.
- Safeguarding Children in Care (7.19) – changes in online monitoring.
- The Prevent Risk Assessment had been updated to cover ID Badges (Appendix F)

Mrs Ramsay said that the Single Central Record was nearing completion with some identity checks needing completion. Mrs Driver asked if any staff had not been identified. Mrs Ramsay said that this was not the case – there simply a few outstanding additional items. Mr Carruthers will review shortly.

13. Governor Training

- 13.1 The Governor Skills Audit was almost complete. It was noted that Governors' knowledge of matters relating to SEN had improved.
- 13.2 NGA Training. This will be in place soon.

14. Any other business

14.1 Several items were raised:

- Miss Upton drew Governors' attention to the Church Schools Carol Service in Bury St Edmunds cathedral on 15th December 2017. DHS will be giving a musical performance.
- DHS will be having a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Inspection on Tuesday 10th October led by Jill Hipwell.
- The Open Evening will be held on Thursday evening (5th October).
- Governors had been receiving e-mails about a survey relating to home-to-school transport. Miss Upton will consult and respond.

Action Miss Upton

- Dr Marlow asked about the amount of paper consumed in the distribution of Governor Papers and suggested that these were distributed electronically for those who chose to receive them in this manner. Mr Wright will e-mail Governors to ascertain their preferences.

Action Mr Wright

15. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 28th November 2017 at 5.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.42 pm.

Signed: Chairman Date: 28th November 2017