



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held on MS Teams on Tuesday 6 October 2020 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

Mr R Barker		Mr C Grover
Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Mrs S Janson
Mrs M Carter		Mr D McMillan
Mrs C Driver		Mr S Martin
Mr A Dubberley		Dr W Thomas
Dr D Egan		Mr M Touman
Mrs S Edmond		

In attendance:

Mrs T Willmott	School Business Manager
Miss S McBurney	Assistant Head
Mrs L Ramsay	Assistant Head
Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

1. Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Rev S Bates, Mr P Debenham, Ms S Goodrich, R Revd M Seeley. Mr Grover and Mrs Willmott joined the meeting during Item 7.
- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 Mr McMillan declared an interest in Items 5 and 10.3.
- 2.2 Mrs Willmott had distributed pecuniary interest forms for return to her.

Action All Governors

3. Election of Chairman for 2020-21

There being no other nominations, Mr Carruthers was elected as Chairman nem con.

4. Election of Vice Chairman for 2020-21

There being no other nominations, Mr Grover was elected as Chairman nem con.

5. Chairman's Action

Mr Carruthers informed the meeting that, in the light of the Covid outbreak, the Diocese had asked Church schools to amend their admissions procedures to reflect the fact that it had not been possible for people

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Headteacher: Mr S Martin BSc

Senior Leadership Team: 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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regularly to attend church. DHS had done so using the wording provided by the Diocese. Correspondence related to the Diocesan request had been included in the meeting papers.

Mr Barker asked if the Chairman had the authority to do this without the approval of the Governing Body. Mr Carruthers said he was permitted to do so by means of Chairman's Action. Mr Barker further asked that, if this was the case, did it apply to any policy? Mr Carruthers said that, technically, it did but this was not a prerogative that he would normally choose to exercise. Mr Barker wondered if this sat comfortably with the principle of a quorum for Governor meetings. Mr Carruthers said that he understood Mr Barker's concerns but there was an urgency about the change to admissions procedures that required response. He agreed to send the relevant section of the Articles of Association that referred to this issue to Mr Barker.

Action Mr Carruthers

Mr Martin made the point that this change is only a slight amendment and that it would only be temporary.

6. Governing Body Membership

- 6.1 There had been no changes to the Governing Body since the last meeting.
- 6.2 It was noted that Mrs Janson was reappointed as a Trustee Co-opted Governor at the Trust meeting on 3 July 2020.
- 6.3 The need for a replacement for Mrs Bosley as Support Staff Governor was noted. Mr Carruthers said that there was also a vacancy for a Co-opted Governor. Mr Barker asked if any specific skills would be preferred to which Mr Carruthers responded that an expertise in infrastructure and building were areas where the Governing Body was lacking and asked, if Governors had any thoughts on a potential replacement, that they let him know

He also noted that Mr Martin was ex-officio now a member of the Governing Body. He also said that the document GO2 had been updated and will be included with the papers for the next Governors' Meeting.

Action Mr Carruthers

7. Minutes

- 7.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2020 were accepted as a true record of the meeting
- 7.2 Matters arising from the minutes.
 - 6.1 Mr Carruthers had sent a letter to Mrs Thomas to mark her retirement after 36 years at DHS.
 - 9.1 Mr Carruthers had checked that all issues of the SEND Information Report had been approved by Governors.
 - 9.6 Mrs Edmond had reviewed the DHS Equalities Policy.
 - 11 The calendar had been updated to include changed dates for Professional Development days.

There were no matters arising from the EGM of Tuesday 8th June 2020

8. Academic Improvement

- 8.1 Appointment of Head and Deputy Head Girl and Boy

Mr Martin said that it had not been possible to appoint to these positions in the Summer Term but that he could now announce that the Head Boy is Nico Valentine with Harry Rogerson as Deputy Head Boy and that the Head Girl is Fliss Long with Tillie Moore as her Deputy.

He noted the strong quality of the field and commented on how well candidates had interview. In light of this, new positions had been created to utilise the evident talents of the interviewees – for example, a Well-Being Ambassador.

8.2 Head's Report

Mr Martin reviewed his report and made the following additional points:

Staffing

Mr Martin noted that it was a difficult time to begin a teaching career or start at a new school but that all new appointments had made a very positive first impression. Daniel Finnegan had joined DHS in the Summer Term and had engaged well with Year 10. Chris Stopher had not yet started and Holly Haward is on maternity leave. Graduate Interns and Teaching Assistants had also started well (in a slightly larger team). The cleaning team is fully staffed.

With respect to the Deputy Head appointment, advertisements had been placed and (face-to-face) interviews are to be held in the middle of October – a week earlier than anticipated in case that Government instituted a two-week half term. Mr Martin thanked staff who had been very supportive of the SLT in the current situation.

Summer Break

Mr Martin said that a great deal of work had been done over the holiday to prepare for the Autumn Term and commended the work of the Site, Finance, and IT teams, together with the SLT

Attainment

Mr Martin said that DHS had been very robust in its approach to awarding the Year 11 Assessed Grades and that he was confident that those awarded were in line with students' ability and their expected performance.

- 88% of students achieved Grade 4 or above in English and Maths
- 70% of students achieved Grade 5 or above in English and Maths
- 42% of grades were at levels 7 – 9
- Some students achieved two grades higher than progress measures indicated.
- Disadvantaged students did well.

[Miss McBurney provided extra analysis of results by reference to the DHS ALPS report. She emphasised that this year's results would generally be disregarded for statistical purposes, but that the ALPS analysis gives some flavour of the levels achieved by DHS students.

- The ALPS Quality Indicator (QI) of 1.17 places DHS in the 90th – 99th percentile and indicates that students are achieving a grade higher than what might be expected.
- The ALPS QI8 (relating to Progress 8) gives DHS a measure of 1.24 which again places DHS very highly – better than any other institution that was part of the survey.
- In the GAP dashboard, disadvantaged students' levels of QI achievement were not far below those of other students (1.18); similarly with QI8 (1.22/1.24). These are the best gradings that DHS has ever achieved.
- Subject performance showed consistent high level of performance (indicated by red figures).
- There is a slight gender gap evident in Physics and Chemistry; this will be monitored.]

National news

DHS had created online lessons quickly and efficiently (thanks in part to the tremendous support provided by the Head of IT. Provision for the children of key workers and vulnerable students began with 4 or 5 a day but had risen to c20 by the end of the Summer Term. Year 10 students had returned on the 14th June with 97% attendance.

September Training Day

Teachers had worked in faculty groups with a plenary held on MS Teams. A significant amount of time had been spent on adjusting Programmes of Study in the light of Covid-19. Mrs Ramsay had updated staff on safeguarding issues. Mr Martin stressed four main points of focus for the coming year:

1. Independent work - building on student's experience during lockdown.
2. Parental engagement - greater levels of this had been evident during lockdown and the hope was this might develop further; potentially starting with literacy.
3. Staff dialogue – individuals learning from other teachers.
4. Community and spirituality – to reinforce and further enhance this special aspect of DHS with a particular focus of communities within the DHS community.

Teaching School Update

Current projects are drawing to a conclusion but it is to be hoped that the work undertaken as a Teaching School will continue in some form.

Summer Activities

These had not taken place and had been missed. – though it was hoped to get Year 7 out later in the year. It had been a sad end to their time at DHS for Year 11 though, with the support of Mr McMillan, students had coped really well.

Mrs Janson thanked Mr Martin for his first report and for the school assembly that had been published on the website. Mr McMillan said that staff had been nervous about the return to school but, with strong SLT support, all had felt really safe. Mrs Edmond said that the welcome returning students had received from teachers had been amazing and she thanked Mr Martin for this. Mr Carruthers said that he had visited the school and the spirit had been very positive. Mr Martin thanked staff for their tremendous efforts.

8.3 Staff Handbook

This had been made available online to Governors for reference purposes.

8.4 Pupil Premium

Impact statement

The statement was received by Governors. It was noted that that the gap between disadvantaged and other students could be exacerbated by the pandemic – this will be monitored.

Analysis

This included RAG rating of 2019-20 performance and planned use of funding for 2020-21. For 2019-20 most desired outcomes had been green rated. Literacy goals were generally being achieved and the approach to revision has been reviewed to encourage equality of provision. Attendance is still slightly lower for PP students than that for the whole school (though better than national measures).

New approaches include the appointment of an Assistant Head of KS3 to support Pupil Premium students. In-class support will be provided in Years 10 and 11. Most other approaches with respect to literacy and quality of revision will be continued as will mentoring by Sue Hargadon. Intervention has started and, whilst there is no KS3 homework club at present, Graduate Interns are providing support to individuals via MS Teams. The KS4 homework club is being manned by the SLT.

Mrs Ramsay said that she would forward details of Pupil Premium funding to Governors in due course.

Action Mrs Ramsay

Governors approved the paperwork relating to the use of Pupil Premium funding.

8.5 Equality Action Plan

The 2019-20 plan had been RAG rated. Generally, DHS had performed well but there was some improvement needed in Maths where there had only been limited success. The workshop for parents of SEND students had not taken place. LGBT group work had taken place through outreach provision. Mrs Ramsay commended the work done by Mr Voller in terms of post-16 placements.

The statement and the action plan were approved by Governors.

8.6 Faculty Review

These had not taken place since the onset of the pandemic. It was hoped that it may be possible to resume these in January 2021.

9. Safeguarding

9.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The link to this document had been shared with Governors. Mr Carruthers said that Governors need to be aware of the contents of this important document. He also noted that Governors had the responsibility to ensure that DHS staff had been given training in relation to Part 1. Mrs Ramsay confirmed that this had been done at the September Training Day. Mr Grover (Safeguarding Governor) asked that Governors would confirm, via e-mail to Mrs Ramsay that they had read KCSIE.

Action All Governors

10. Budget and related matters

10.1 July Budget Position

Income

- Income was £19k ahead of budget despite the lack of income from catering and trips. This successful outcome was partly due to additional Teaching School grants and a higher than expected Teachers' Pay Grant.

Expenditure

Variations due to:

- Saving on teaching staff costs of £45k due two staff leaving at Easter and not being replaced immediately, extended maternity similarly with maternity leave beyond the period budgeted, -Some and staff who had opted out of the pension scheme
- £14k saved from Support Staff budget due to there being no need to employ casual support staff in the Summer Term, - e.g. invigilators.
- Increased indirect staff expenses teaching costs (advertising for new Head and Deputy Head).
- Overspend of £10k on premises relating to exceptional maintenance (tennis and netball courts boiler repairs, paving damage and refurbishment of tennis and netball courts). Some of this cost will be has been covered by insurance.
- Increased cleaning costs due to Covid-19

- Savings on educational supplies of £85k – partly related to the cancellation of trips. Less money had been spent on educational resources because of school closure – though the underspend by educational departments has been rolled forward to the next academic year.
- Catering – loss of income (though also savings on catering supplies).
- Teaching School costs - £28k overspend (offset by income).

Full Year

As a result of the above there is a projected surplus of £100k as opposed to the budgeted figure of £37k – this despite expenditure on new laptops. Mrs Willmott stressed to Governors that this was something of an artificial position as Covid-19 will have a negative impact on finances in the current academic year.

Reserves

These stand at £757k (as opposed to a budget figure of £670k).

10.2 Support staff pay settlement

Governors had previously agreed an interim pay rise of £2.5% pending a national settlement which had finally been agreed at 2.75%. Salaries for DHS support staff will, therefore, need to be adjusted – backdated to 1st April. It is hoped that this will be done in time for the October pay round. Mr McMillan asked about the nature of the pay scales and why some individuals are allowed to advance more than others. Mrs Willmott said that the grading structure is defined according to the role, in the same way as teachers also reach the top of the teaching pay scales. † DHS did not create the pay scales and that DHS was obliged to adopt the National Pay Scales by its Articles of Association.

10.3 School Teachers Pay Review Body

The pay settlement for this year is still under discussion. The current proposal is that is an increase of 5.5% for those on MS1 decreasing to 2.6% for those on MS6 and above. Consultation is due to end on October 12th. DHS has budgeted for a 3.0% increase overall which means that the proposed settlement will be close to the sum allocated for overall DHS provision. Governors agreed to the implementation of the increase subject to there being no changes arising from the national consultation.

10.4 Documents received by Mr Martin as Accounting Officer

Mr Carruthers reported that these letters from the EFSA contained nothing untoward save that, given the pandemic, some deadlines had been relaxed. Mrs Willmott emphasised that the EFSA still required strong financial management despite the impact of Covid-19.

11. DHS Admissions Arrangements

These had been adjusted as follows:

- On P4, Regular Worship once a month *for at least the last six months.*
- On P5, criteria c and d to be reversed to give children of staff priority over those from a designated primary school.

Mr Carruthers asked what levels of changes to admissions arrangements required consultation. Mr Martin said that he felt there had to be significant change to warrant this but that he would check.

Action Point Mr Martin

Mr Carruthers noted that DHS had received a letter from Mickfield Evangelical Church enquiring about the rationale for the inclusion of churches in the DHS Regular Worship criteria for admissions. Mr Carruthers and had consulted the diocese – though he had not received a positive response. Mr Dubberley noted that the faith of those attending Mickfield Church was much in line with the Church of England beliefs. Mr Martin said that, if we wished to include Mickfield in this regard, a strong case would need to be made to the Bishop.

DHS Admissions Arrangements were approved and adopted.

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12. Committees and Working Parties

12.1 Curriculum Working Party

The cancellation of the meeting due to be held on Thursday 15th September 2020 was noted.

13. Policies

13.1 DHS Teachers' Salaries Policy

Pay scales had been updated. Mr Martin said that there was a growing belief that documentation to support the threshold application form was unnecessary given DHS' robust Performance Management and Appraisal procedures. Mr Carruthers agreed, as did Mr McMillan, though there may need to be extra requirements for those joining the school when on the top of the main pay scale. This will be considered when reviewing the policy for 2021-22

Mr McMillan asked about Teaching and Learning Responsibility Allowances (2i) and why there was no allowance for a Deputy Head of Science. Mrs Willmott said that this had been divided between the Heads of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Mr McMillan further asked why some Heads of Department were on higher allowances than others. Mr Martin said that this was decided on contact time, numbers of staff managed. Mr McMillan felt that the criteria on which these are decided should be delineated in the policy. Mr Martin said he would look at this for future years.

Action Mr Martin

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.2 DHS Performance Management and Appraisal Policy

There had been minor adjustments to language and the provision for there to be one mid-year review rather than two. The nature of the threshold application process is to be reviewed (see 13.1 above).

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.3 DHS Safeguarding Policy

This item was led by Mrs Ramsay.

The policy had been adjusted in line with KCSIE requirements. In general, there had been changes in terminology and a greater emphasis on mental as well as physical health. Other points noted were:

- Mrs Keeble would join Mr Martin as an Alternate Designated Lead.
- Details of Safeguarding training undertaken to be recorded on the Single Central Register.
- More detail on potential peer on peer abuse - including upskirting as a specific safeguarding risk.
- Clearer distinction between Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation - it was noted that Norfolk and Suffolk had been recognised nationally as areas susceptible to County Lines activity.
- Greater emphasis of collateral effects of domestic abuse on children and details of Operation Encompass.
- Addition of a definition of terrorism.
- Reference to the Channel Programme in relation to radicalisation.
- Changes to the Induction Safeguarding Pack (because of Covid-19, the update has been recorded for those not able to attend).

Mrs Carter said that the number for non-emergency contact with the police was now 101 for all issues. Mrs Ramsay said that she would check and adjust.

Action Mrs Ramsay

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.4 DHS Worship Policy

There had only been minor updates to the policy including the establishment of half-termly themes.

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.5 Complaints Policy

There had been only minor changes to this – largely to ensure coordination with the DHS Data Protection Policy.

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.6 Staff Grievance Policy

Changes include:

- Clarity in regard to relationship to other procedures.
- Greater clarity regarding appeals process.
- A precise definition of a collective grievance
- Appendix - Notification of Grievance Form

The policy was approved by Governors.

13.7 Updated Covid-19 Risk Assessment

This item was led by Mrs Willmott who emphasised that this was a 'live' document that was regularly updated as advice changes. Dr Egan made the following points:

P1 - need to add specificity of a high temperature being greater than 37.8 degrees.

P6 - with respect to arrangements on busses, Dr Egan suggested stronger language than 'are encouraged' in relation to seating and face masks. It was agreed the wording should change to 'should'. Mr Barker noted that it would be very difficult to police 'bubble-mixing' on busses and asked if bus companies had a policy on face masks; they do not.

P-19 - No need for first aider to wear face mask if treating a non-Covid child. Mr Martin felt that this should remain as it was important as a reassurance for staff.

R2 – Important to wear eye-protection (i.e. a visor) as well as a face mask when treating a child with Covid-related symptoms.

Action Mrs Willmott

Governors raised a number of other points:

- Mr Carruthers noted that the Covid -19 RA was changed regularly in response to the changing situation and that all changes, therefore, did not need Governor approval.
- Mr Martin thanked Mrs Willmott for her hard work on this document; Governors concurred.
- Mrs Driver asked if, should a 'circuit-breaker' lockdown be imposed, Governors should further review the RA. Mrs Willmott did not feel that this would be necessary as DHS was already set up for remote learning should this become necessary.
- Mr Martin said that he would circulate an updated RA to Governors on a regular basis.

Action Mr Martin

14. Any other business

There was no other business

15. Date of next meeting

This was confirmed as Tuesday 8th December 2020

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7.14 pm.