Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy

Annual General Meeting of the Academy

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 9th February 2021 at 4.30 p.m.

Present:	Mr J Cox	Trustee		
	Rev S Bates		Mr C Grover	
	Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Mrs S Janson	
	Mrs M Carter		Mr D McMillan	
	Mr P Debenham		Mr S Martin	Headteacher
	Dr D Egan		Ms E Wnukoski	
	Mrs S Edmond			
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In attendance	Miss McBurney	Assistant Head		
	Mrs L Ramsay	Assistant Head		
	Mrs T Willmott	School Business Manager		
	Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors		

In the absence of Bishop Martin, it was agreed that Mr Carruthers (Chair of Governors) should chair the meeting.

1. Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Bishop Martin, Mrs Driver and Mr Grimsey.
1.2 Trustees consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

2.1 There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

3. Membership of the Academy Trust

Mr Carruthers reported that Mr Grimsey's term as a Trustee had expired on 31st December 2020 but that he was willing to continue in the role. This was yet to be agreed by Bishop Martin.

4. Chairman of Governors' Report

Mr Carruthers made his report by reference to a power point presentation.

<u>Membership</u>

Mr Carruthers ran through the membership of Governors and Members. He noted the situation with respect to Mr Grimsey (see above) and that there is a vacancy for a Co-opted Governor.

School Organisation

Mr Carruthers noted the continued absence of a Deputy Head with an appointment due for September 2021. Interviews had taken place but had to be postponed because of the Covid-19 crisis. Mrs Edmond asked whether DHS had considered virtual recruitment. Mr Carruthers said this had been used for some posts but that it was felt that the importance (and usual process of appointment) of the Deputy Head role merited face-to-face contact. Mrs Edmond also expressed concern for the well-being of those members of the SLT who consequently were taking on extra responsibilities. Mrs Carter said that she had been recruited and onboarded virtually and had not found it an easy experience.

Community partners

Mr Carruthers listed DHS community partners.

Numbers

Student numbers remain strong with 668 students on role in October 2020.

Academic Performance

Mr Carruthers highlighted the unusual awarding of grades for the 2020 cohort of GCSE students. There was no Progress 8 measure as statistical comparison with prior performance would have been misleading. Mr Martin said that he felt that the Centre Addressed Grades (CAGs) would have been replicated if students had taken the actual examinations. He also said that the only useful comparison that could be made was with other schools on the ALPS database. This placed DHS in the top 10% of schools with a Progress 8 measure equal to the best in the country.

Performance of disadvantaged students was not significantly lower than other students in the cohort.

The Average Points Scores were good for both Maths and English.

Student discipline

Attendance had improved on the previous year at 95.2% (94.8%). There were similar figures to previous years for exclusions and isolations.

School Improvement and Development Plan

The SIP continued with the four main themes and yearly foci.

- Building the whole child
- Curriculum and Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Environment & Personnel

It was noted that it had been difficult to achieve some targets as students had been absent from school.

Finance

DHS remains in a strong financial position with no immediate concerns.

Total cash position had increased to £871k. Mr Carruthers felt that, whilst it was important to have strong reserves in these uncertain times, the question remained as to whether more of these funds should be directed towards student education. Whilst a balance needed to be struck, he remained confident that students at DHS were receiving a good quality education.

The bulk of Revenue Costs are made up of funding for teaching and support staff and are largely in line with similar schools. There had been a 32% increase in other teaching costs which related to advertising costs for the Deputy Head post. Mrs Edmonds asked where DHS advertised its vacancies. Mr Martin said that usually this was done through the East Anglian Daily Times or Suffolk Jobs Direct. For senior posts, however, the (expensive) Times Educational Supplement was used. Mrs Edmond suggested using Linked-in. She and Mr Martin agreed that they would discuss this at a later date.

Action Mrs Edmond/Mr Martin

Educational costs were down by 53.5% due to the temporary absence of students.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had not changed from the previous year.

The balance sheet was presented to Governors.

Main risks

- Future funding uncertainty due to the economic situation
- Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on:
    - Student learning and attainment.
    - Staff well-being.
    - School income and expenditure.
    - Student well-being.
- Impact of loss of Teaching School income and profile.

5. Minutes

5.1 The minutes of the AGM held on 4th February 2020 were accepted as a true record of the meeting. The minutes were not signed.

5.2 There were no matters arising.

6. Audited Accounts

6.1 These had been reviewed by the Full Governor Meeting and were now approved by Members.

6.2 It was agreed that Larking Gowen should be appointed as external auditors for the next financial year. Mr Cox suggested that there should be a review of audit provision every 3-4 years; Mrs Wilmott agreed that this was good practice. Mr Carruthers said he would look into this.

Action Mr Carruthers

7. Any Other Business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.01 p.m.

Signed …… Chairman February 2022