



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 25th February 2014 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:	Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Mr D McMillan
	Revd P Cotton		Dr H Marlow
	Mr P Debenham		Mr D Ralph
	Mr C Grover		Mr R Stevenson
	Ms S Goodrich		Miss J Upton Headteacher
	Mrs F Hotston Moore		Mrs L Wilson
	Mrs S Janson		Mr D Yaroslaw

In attendance:	Mrs J Brown	Member of Academy Trust
	Mr R Grimsey	Member of Academy Trust
	Mr S Martin	Deputy Headteacher
	Miss S McBurney	Assistant Headteacher
	Mrs L Ramsay	Assistant Headteacher
	Mrs T Darby	Business Manager
	Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

1. Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Mr R Boulter (Mr Carruthers to act as Chairman) , Mr C Gilgan and Mr N Serjeant
- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 No pecuniary interest was declared with regard to items on the agenda.
- 2.2 There was no need to update the Register of Pecuniary Interests.

3. Chairman's Action – no action had been taken by the Chairman.

4. Governing Body Membership

- 4.1 There had been no changes in membership since the last meeting. Mr Carruthers noted that the term of office for a number of Governors (Mr Gilgan, Dr Marlow, Mr McMillan, Mrs Wilson and Mr Yaroslaw) expires on December 31st 2014. These governors were asked to notify Mr Boulter if they wished to continue in office.
- 4.2 There are no current vacancies on the Governing Body.

Gracechurch Street, Debenham, Suffolk IP14 6BL

Tel 01728 860213 Fax 01728 860998 Email office@debenhamhigh.co.uk Website www.debenhamhigh.co.uk

Headteacher: Miss J Upton

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

5. Minutes

5.1 The following corrections were made to the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd December:

Page 2 (Item 5 – Chairman’s Action). Remove ‘the’ from before ‘Mr Boulter’ in the first line.

Page 2 (Item 5 – Head’s Review). Add ‘review’ after performance in first section.

Page 3 (Item 7.5). Change heading to ‘Value for Money Statement’.

Page 4 (Item 10.1 – Positive management of behaviour policy). Change ‘protest’ to ‘protect’.

Page 5 (Item 13 – Governor Training). Change CP33 to CP34.

The minutes were then accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by Mr Carruthers.

5.2 There were no matters arising from the minutes not covered by agenda items.

6. Academic Improvement

6.1 Headteacher’s Report

(The Deputy Head Boy and Girl joined the meeting for this Item.)

Miss Upton went through her written report highlighting and updating the following items:

Staffing

Claire Harrison (Reprographics Assistant) has resigned and will be replaced shortly. Adverts have been placed this week for Heads of English and Geography. Interviews will take place next week for the Network Manager. Julia Rose (Head of ICT) had tendered her resignation for September.

Performance Tables

Miss Upton spoke with reference to the tables that had been part of the Chairman’s presentation in the AGM, and to the individual subject data. These referenced the county league tables and performance for current Year 11 students. Miss Upton reminded governors that they had received a full presentation on DHS RAISEonline data at the Curriculum Working Party. A school summary of data and the full RAISEonline report were made available to Governors. Miss Upton observed that, though these results were excellent, the school was always looking to improve. Predictions for the current Year 11 were 81% 5 A*-C (including English and Maths) and 85% 5 A*-C. Individual subject data (which mirrors that of RAISEonline) was used as a ‘tin-opener’ for light discussion with subject departments. This is produced termly and that for Year 11 will be shared with Governors. It was noted that figures are less accurate where there is a smaller cohort of students.

[Cameron, Deputy Head Girl, spoke about the Year 11 Revision Afternoon which had included sessions on revision methods, planning time and dealing with stress.]

Admissions

Numbers are buoyant. An applicant for Year 9 had appealed against the refusal of a place.

Councillor Gordon Jones

The Councillor had been impressed with what he saw – especially with the SEN provision. Thanks were due to Mrs Scott.

Charity work

Henry (Deputy Head Boy) spoke about the charity work with CLIC Sargent which included events such as busking, dancing, a FIFA football challenge and an eating competition.

[At this point Cameron (Deputy Head Girl) spoke about revision – see above under Performance Tables.]

Sex and Relationships Education

See below under Item 10.

Raising the Bar

Miss Upton was feeding back on her findings to SCC next week. Schools felt that those at the highest level in SCC had not been especially engaged with Raising the Bar and there was uncertainty as to who was leading on this. Nominations had been invited for associated awards and Miss Upton was intending to put forward Mr Boulter's name.

Attendance

Governors were struck by the correlation between attendance and levels of GCSE success; Miss Upton said that this was why the school works so hard at attendance (currently at 96.1% - above the 95% target). There was some discussion as to the causes of absence and whether lower ability students were more prone to absence – it was felt not. It was agreed that there are many factors which influence those with low attendance and these needed more detailed attention.

Teaching and Learning

See below in Item 6.2

Parental Feedback

This was very positive. Ms Goodrich noted the excellence and the upward trend in positive responses and asked if the reasons for this were known. It was felt that good communication with parents was the key. In the case of Year 7, the transition to senior school was now very well managed. The high number of returns was also noted and commended.

Vandalism in the school toilets

Those responsible had not been identified.

Appendix 1 – Exclusions

These were noted.

Appendix 2 – Safeguarding

Mr Carruthers asked Mrs Ramsay to outline the various levels (tiers) of child protection intervention:

Tier 1 – universal entitlement.

Tier 2 – early (usually single agency) intervention. Parental consent needed.

Tier 3 – Child in Need warranting social services involvement. Parental consent not required.

Tier 4 – Full Child Protection proceedings.

- 6.2 A presentation was made by Middle Leaders – Mrs J Da Costa (Music), Mrs J Farrow (English) and Mr K Tapscott (Maths) on Whole School Teaching and Learning foci.

Mrs Farrow and Mr Tapscott spoke on independent learning

It was potentially a weakness of DHS students that they relied too much on their teachers and this could make the transition to the Sixth Form more difficult. The aim was, therefore to encourage reflection and independence with the skills of learning being made more explicit. Students were encouraged to be aware of how they learn. The current area of focus was Years 7 and 8. Various initiatives had been taken. These included:

- Posters – encouraging self-reflection before, during and after learning
- Learning Journals – used in different ways in different subjects and by individuals
- INSET – sharing good practice
- Pupil perception interviews – later revisited to see if views had changed
- A Learning Walk to look at independent learning – this had shown a varied experience for students and a great deal of good practice with students taking part in shared learning, and taking greater ownership of their own learning.

Future plans include the creation of an independent learning toolkit.

Mrs Da Costa spoke about challenging the most able students

Challenging the most able would help to raise attainment across the board and there was always the potential for more A*s and As. Initially departments were asked to identify high performers in their subject areas and a KS4 work scrutiny had taken place, looking for evidence of challenge. Strategies were shared at an INSET session. Pupil perception interviews had been undertaken and there had been a particular focus on Year 11 boys and the way they approached learning.

Next steps will include:

- A review of data
- Subject group meetings to share good practice
- Year 7 pupil perception interviews
- Further Learning Walks

The presentations led to a discussion on revision methods, the effectiveness of Learning Journals (currently being evaluated) and the impact of these initiatives.

Mr Carruthers thanked Mrs Da Costa, Mrs Farrow and Mr Tapscott for their presentation.

7. Budget and related items

- 7.1 Budget Plan 2013/14 – Mrs Darby provided a verbal report and commentary on the current budgetary position. This had been discussed at the FGP Committee Meeting.

Financial situation

This was broadly on target, though there are uncertainties relating to work-place pensions (auto-enrolment), support staff salary increases, maternity costs and the potential for other unforeseen costs.

There was some discussion as to the employer contribution to the NEST pension scheme for casual employees (planned at 1%) – though it was unlikely that there would be much (if any) take up. It was noted that employer NI contributions would increase in 2016.

Capital Bids

The bid for the two storey extension (£1.1 million as previously advised) had been submitted with response expected in April. The ACMF (Academies Capital Maintenance Fund) had not permitted the proposed joint bid for roof and boiler replacement – these had to be submitted separately. A roof bid had been submitted (£650k). Boiler replacement had to be pursued through the means of a grant (£930k) and a SALIX loan (£160k – repayable from savings made through use of renewable energy). Miss Upton and Mrs Darby had visited Benjamin Britten HS to look at their new boilers. The total of all bids was £2.7m.

There was discussion about the potential cost increases in respect of renewables (biomass was the only route to take if a bid was to be successful), the practicalities of the operation and maintenance of a biomass boiler, and the previous experience with SCC's provision of PV panels.

Devolved Capital Funding

Work on electrical distribution boards had become urgent and this was to be completed over two years rather than six. This had been started in the Spring half term with further phases planned for the Easter holiday; there had also been work on the potholes in the drive and the upgrade and repair of the accessible toilet.

8. Committees and Working Parties

- 8.1 A report had been received from the Curriculum Working Party which had met on January 15th – there were no matters arising from this. The minutes of the FGP Committee (7th February) were tabled – Mr Carruthers asked for any comments to be passed to him.
- 8.2 Mrs Janson had visited the SEN department and pointed out that the Year 7 entry of September 2014 would include seven statemented students (all in catchment) and that it was therefore important to maintain the school's SEN provision. Miss Upton affirmed that support would be continued.

9. School Admission Arrangements

- 9.1 The School Admissions policy was distributed with no changes from the previous version. This policy was approved for admission for 2015/16. The Admissions Committee had met and approved admissions for 2014. There were 128 first choice applicants (PAN 125).

10. School Policies

- 10.1 The school's Sex and Relationships Policy was reviewed.

Mrs Ramsay explained that the Government had not changed its guidance on SRE since 2000. Changes implemented at DHS resulted from a meeting with parents and discussions with students. These related largely to the updating of the curriculum. The main changes were:

- Insertion of a quotation in the introduction
- Recognition of potential difficulties created by adherence to seating plans in lessons
- Confirmation of the right of parents to withdraw their children – names of those withdrawn now to be recorded
- More on puberty in Year 7 curriculum
- More on the impact of new technologies and social media from Year 8 onwards

After discussion and one or two questions from Governors relating to coverage of alcohol misuse, the revised policy was approved.

Governors thanked Mrs Ramsay for her work on this.

10.2 Anti-Bullying Policy.

This had been revised – again with student involvement (Peer Mentors). Mrs Ramsay had highlighted the changes in the document. The changes were minor but attention was drawn to the use of the word target rather than victim and the good job done by peer mentors in running a lunch time activity club for those with social difficulties. Bullying Incident Sheets were to be made available in tutor rooms as this was less obvious than in public areas. Mr Stevenson suggested they be available on line and this was felt to be a good idea.

The revised policy was approved.

Governors commended and encouraged the involvement of students in the revision of policies.

10.3 Mission and Aims Policy

The word achieve was added to bullet point 2 and this policy was approved.

10.4 Staff Harassment and Bullying Policy

In 7.1, to remove the word ‘customers’ and replace with ‘any other person’. This policy was approved.

10.5 Procedures for dealing with Grievance, Harassment and Bullying

Various typographical errors were corrected and mistakes in referencing to Schedules 1 and 2 would be adjusted. Wording in Item 11 b (vii) to be adjusted to read ‘(will be informed of) the possible outcome of the meeting where this may be that the person is dismissed’. In terms of Item 22 Ms Goodrich felt that that the standards by which any evidence is judged should be made explicit. She will forward a suggested text to Mrs Darby. These were approved with the alterations suggested.

10.6 Whistle Blowing Procedure

The FGP Committee had already reviewed this. The policy was approved.

11. **An all-through School**

Miss Upton noted that local primary schools were looking at formalising collaboration. A number of models had been discussed in initial meetings, including vertical federation involving DHS. The local need for federation was felt primarily to be driven by financial considerations (in other areas less so), yet all schools recognise there is much more to gain with regard to teaching and learning. The imminent Headteacher vacancy at Sir Robert Hitcham PS meant that it was important for Governors to consider their views on the possibility of federation. Though DHS would continue to support and collaborate with the seven pyramid schools Miss Upton felt that a more formal arrangement would require a level of commitment that could dilute the good work done at DHS itself. Ms Goodrich thought that horizontal collaboration would be best for primary schools as it would spread the administrative load and allow a focus on teaching and learning (along the lines of the DHS SLT model). She hoped that DHS would support any move in this direction. Miss Upton said that it would.

12. Local Authority Papers and Information Sheet

12.1 The Information Sheet was noted

12.2 The importance of Data and Using RAISEonline Effectively – it was felt that the Governors had received good input on this.

12.3 Attendance at School – had been reviewed earlier in the meeting (Item 6).

12.4 Revised Model Policies for School-Based Staff – had been reviewed and amended earlier in the meeting (Item 10).

13. Governor Training

13.1 Mrs Janson had attended an SEN course booked through the Governors' training handbook. There needed to be caution in relation to SCC courses as these may not be suitable for academies.

13.2 Governors to inform the Clerk of courses they may wish to attend.

14. Suffolk Governors' Forum

The need to make a nomination to the Suffolk Governors' Forum by Friday 13th June 2014 was noted.

15. Any Other Business

15.1 There was no other business.

15.2 Governors were invited to form a table for the quiz night on Friday and to attend the students' Extended Project presentation evening.

16. Dates of Future Meetings

This was confirmed as Tuesday 13 May 2014 at 5 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 7.03 p.m.