**Full Governing Body**

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 8th December 2015 at 5.00 p.m.

Present: Mr R Barker Mrs F Hotston Moore

Mr D Carruthers Chairman Mrs S Janson

Rev P Cotton Mr D McMillan

Mr P Debenham Dr H Marlow

Mrs C Driver Ms J Newman

Ms S Goodrich Mr R Stevenson

Mr T Green Miss J Upton Headteacher

Mr C Grover Ms E Wnukoski

In attendance: Mr R Boulter Member of the Academy Trust

Mrs J Brown Member of the Academy Trust

Mrs T Darby 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. Apologies for absence had been received from Dr D Egan, Mr R Grimsey, Mr D Ralph and Mr N Serjeant. Ms Goodrich left the meeting at 7.08 pm.
   2. Governors consented to their absence.
2. **Pecuniary and Other Interests**
   1. There were no pecuniary interests raised with respect to items on the agenda.
   2. There were still one or two declarations relating to Pecuniary Interests that were still to be received. Mr Carruthers, in response to a question about relevant interests, advocated that respondents erred on the side of irrelevance.
3. **Chairman’s Action**

The Chairman dealt with four items:

* Mr Carruthers outlined the details of four FTEs (Fixed Term Exclusions) included one that involved a student being educated elsewhere (with LA Agreement) without being permanently excluded.
* With respect to the ongoing tribunal, Mr Carruthers ran through the steps that had been taken since the previous meeting which had involved the preparation of witness statements and responses to the paperwork produced by the plaintiff. He thanked Ms Goodrich for her advice and support in this matter.
* Mr Carruthers, Ms Goodrich and Sean O’Neill (School Improvement Partner) had carried out a successful Performance Management Review of the Headteacher, Miss Upton.
* Mr Carruthers wanted Governors to be aware that the Rev Patrick Cotton would be retiring shortly.

1. **Minutes**
   1. The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th October2015 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.
   2. Matters arising from the minutes.

2.2 Mr Carruthers had contacted Governors with respect to declarations of pecuniary interest.

8.2 Copies of the SEN review had been circulated with the Governor Papers – there were no questions from Governors.

13.1 The revised Medical Needs Policy had been received by Governors – there had been no further comments.

13.2 With respect to the Headteacher pay scale, the range for Miss Upton should end at Point 31 but it was noted that Miss Upton’s contract stated that it should end at Point 32. Given that academies are allowed to vary these ranges this was felt not to be an issue.

1. **Academy Improvement**
   1. Presentation by Young Carers

Daniel, Shannon and Maisy outlined the work of the HEROES (Young Carers at DHS) and the support received from both DHS and from Lucy Farrell of Suffolk Young Carers. The group were looking to create a Cook Book and Governors were asked to contribute any appropriate recipes that they might have – recipes are due to be trialled during the Young Carers Week on 27th January. Reverend Cotton suggested that the Bishop be involved. In response to a question from Dr Marlow it was confirmed that there were 50-60 students designated as Young Carers at DHS – though this involved a wide range of responsibilities. DHS Young Carers are not connected with the Debenham Adult Carers group.

* 1. Presentations by English and Maths Subject Leaders

Nicola Coe (Maths)

The following changes were outlined:

* Biggest change since GCSE.
* A 15% increase in questions based on number and ratio (largely taken from Geometry) – this area is not a traditional DHS strength.
* A greater emphasis on problem-solving.
* Separate papers on Algebra, Statistics and Geometry to be replaced by three 1½ hour mixed papers.
* Questions will have fewer diagrams/pictures and will be require higher level reading skills.
* Content from A Level will be included in higher tier papers and that from higher tier papers will move to the foundation tier. There will be additional content that is not currently tested anywhere with easier content removed.
* Formulae have now to be learned – they are no longer provided.

Challenges

* Difficult to complete the content in the time available.
* Unclear/unknown grade descriptors.
* Incomplete resources.
* There had been no time to prepare current GCSE students when they were lower down the school.
* Pattern of entry (Higher/Foundation) would need to change with attendant issues.
* No past papers.

Julia Farrow - English

Changes:

* No longer any Controlled Assessment (previously 40%).
* No tiers – all students take the same examination.
* Longer and more challenging set/unseen texts.
* Set text examinations are now closed book – quotations to be learned, memory skills vital
* More focus on 19th Century literature.

Spoken Language:

* 0% weighting for examination but compulsory nevertheless.
* Graded by Pass/Merit/Distinction and can be failed – though this does not affect GCSE English Language grade.
* Presentation and Q & A to be recorded and sent to the board – will take time.
* Grade above a Grade 4 (old C Grade) can only be achieved if questioning is by peers.

Challenges

* Similar time pressures as for Maths.
* Anticipated problems balancing breadth and depth of course.
* New resources required (texts) and need to develop school-generated resources to support the course.
* Grading system very vague – currently department is having to devise its own mark schemes.
* Possibly a need to reduce students’ expectations without dampening resilience.
* Formative feedback will become even more important.

Overall

* It was noted that English and Maths will be doubled-weighted under Progress/Attainment 8.
* Current proportion of A grades and above will be replicated at 7+ grades under new grading system (as will C at 4+).
* Other schools in a similar position.
* Issues in English and Maths will be mirrored in other subjects as they come on line in September 2016.
* Parents need to be informed but not alarmed
  1. Teaching Trios

Mr Martin ran through the evaluation paper that had been circulated. He made various points including:

* Challenge is to be found in depth of understanding.
* The use of What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) marking response is valued by all stakeholders.
* Literacy skills improve with a slower pace.
* Students struggle with independent learning – success in this is not necessarily related to ability levels.
* Planning for progress will lead to an extension of skills.

Teaching Staff regarded the Teaching Trios very positively.

* 1. Departmental School Development Plans

Departments had been asked to look at three strands from the six teaching and learning themes contained in the School Improvement Plan. The outcomes of this exercise were available to Governors and could prove useful when undertaking departmental reviews.

* 1. Year 11 Performance Data

The Curriculum Working Party to take place on 12th January will review historic results, Raise-On-Line information, the Ofsted Information Dashboard and (up-to-date) Year 11 performance data presented in the same format as the Inspection Dashboard. There will also be more on Progress 8 measures (these do not look to be as strong as last year).

* 1. School Improvement Summary Document

It was felt to be important for Governors to see this LA document. Mr McMillan asked which schools were in the DHS Cluster. This was not known but Miss McBurney advocated comparison to national standards as Suffolk’s performance is relatively weak.

* 1. DfE (un-validated) summary data for DHS 2014-15

In Attainment 8 only 15 schools in the East of England achieved a B grade or better.

In Progress 8 a measure of 0.62 is seen as very good.

In response to a question from Mr Green, Miss Upton suggested that the RAG rating published in the EADT was relatively crude.

1. **Teaching Schools**

Miss Upton confirmed that an application to be a Teaching School had been made and apologised to Governors for this being done at such short notice. DHS had been approached by the Regional Commissioner on the Friday before half term suggesting such an application – this was followed by a call from the National College indicating the immediacy of the deadline. Miss Upton then gave a presentation outlining the responsibilities of a Teaching School and stressed that such collaboration was expected of a school deemed to be outstanding. She outlined the material that had been included in the application form. Responsibilities regarding ITT (Initial Teacher Training) would not be greatly increased and activity regarding CPD and providing local support would benefit DHS. She ran through the timescale for application and pointed out that the school was not committed to the scheme even if the application was successful.

In response to questions from Governors the following points emerged:

* Teaching Staff reaction was understandably nervous particularly given the speed of the process (which was not the usual way of doing things at DHS). It was, however, seen as recognition of the excellence of DHS, though potential pressures on staff needed to be monitored and, where necessary, support provided.
* More information needed on how the success of a Teaching School is evaluated and implications from any related Terms & Conditions (these were thought to be rather nebulous).
* Though Thomas Mills had applied unsuccessfully for Teaching School status last year it was not known of other schools locally that had applied for this status.
* Funding is not scaled to size of school.
* There could well be long term benefits for DHS – and possibly the development of further income streams.
* Governors would require the capacity to review any document before signing.
* The relationship to Ofsted was discussed – especially if any target was not met. It was felt that this would not be an issue as targets were not easily quantifiable and Oftsed criteria only require collaboration with other schools.
* Teaching School status was probably more appropriate for DHS at this time than the creation of a Multi Academy Trust.
* There would be an associated cost analysis and action plan before any decision is taken.

Governors approved the application in principle.

1. **Budget and Related Items**
   1. The Audited Annual Report and Financial Statements were approved.
   2. Members of the FGP had received the Audit Report which had raised no concerns and had been very flattering about DHS’ financial team.
   3. Members of the FGP had received the Audit Summary Memorandum which had raised no concerns and had been very flattering about DHS’ financial team.
   4. The Chairman and the Headteacher signed the two letters of representation.
2. **Capital Projects**
   1. The Boiler Project is almost complete with driveway and seeding now done, and with staff rapidly coming to terms with the Boiler Management System. Roofing is progressing well despite the weather and the solar panels will be commissioned shortly.
   2. The CIF bid was in preparation.
3. **Committees and Working Parties**
   1. The minutes of the FGP Meeting of 16th October 2015 were received by the meeting.
   2. The minutes of the FGP Meeting of 27th November 2015 were received by the meeting.
   3. Governor Visits

Mr Green had visited the Maths Department and had undertaken a lesson observation as well as attending a Pupil Perception Interview (PPI). He noted that this was not a box-ticking exercise and that there was a genuine focus on challenge and improvement across the ability range. . He had been impressed by the direct links to the SIP and with students’ attitude to learning.

Dr Marlow had observed an outstanding DT lesson exhibiting differentiated tasks and positive group work.

Mr Grover had taken part in the Business Studies Department review. He noted the effective style of teaching, the level of teacher support for students (including response to an e-mail sent on a Sunday), the appropriate use of challenge and praise and the positive response of students to formative marking

* 1. The revised timetable for Faculty Review Meeting was received by the meeting

1. **Policies**
   1. With a date being added to Issue 8, the DHS Admissions Policy 2017-18 was approved by Governors.
   2. With minor changes the DHS Educational Visits Policy and Guidelines for Staff were approved by Governors.
   3. The DHS Recruitment and Selection Policy was received by Governors

* 1. The DHS Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy was received by Governors.
  2. The DHS Redundancy Policy was received by Governors.

1. **Any other business**

Mr Wright made Governors aware of a training opportunity offered by Bedfield School.

1. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 2nd February at 5.00 pm.

It was agreed that the Curriculum Working Party on 12th January should meet at 4.15 pm. rather than 4.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.22 pm.

Signed: …………………………………………………….. Chairman Date: 2nd February 2016