



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 2nd July 2019 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

Rev S Bates		Dr D Egan
Mrs C Bosley		Mr T Green
Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Mrs S Janson
Mr P Debenham		Mr D McMillan
Mrs C Driver		Mrs J Newman
Mrs S Edmond		Miss J Upton

In attendance:

Mr J Cox	Trustee
Mr S Martin	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs L Ramsay	Assistant Head
Mrs T Willmott	School Business Manager
Mr S Wright	Clerk to the Governors

The meeting was preceded by a prayer.

1. Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Mr R Barker, Mrs M Carter, Ms S Goodrich, Mr R Grimsey, Mr C Grover, Miss S McBurney, Dr W Thomas, and Mr M Touman.
- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.
- 2.2 There were no updates to the Register of Pecuniary Interests.

3. Chairman's Action

Mr Carruthers welcomed Mr Cox (Trustee) to his first meeting.

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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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4. Governing Body Membership

- 4.1 There had been no changes to Governing Body membership since the last meeting.
- 4.2 The meeting schedule for 2019-20 was received by Governors. Miss Upton explained the dates had been organised to fit in with pay rounds and the audit process. Mr McMillan asked about the Faculty Review schedule. Mr Martin said that this would be organised by the school and communicated to Governors. He also asked if it was possible, as had been suggested, that the Health and Safety Meeting could take place before the Full Governors' Meeting. It was felt that this would be sensible. Mr Wright will reorganise the schedule.

Action Mr Wright

5. Minutes

- 5.1 The minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 4th May 2019 were approved by Governors and signed by the Chairman.
- 5.2 Matters arising from the minutes.
 - 5.4 Governors had shown no preference for which item from the Governors Key Questions Document should be looked at first.
 - 6 Mrs Ramsay said that she had looked for Safeguarding training opportunities for new Governors but there were none readily available. She will check again in September but will also brief new Governors as to DHS practice. – possibly prior to the Curriculum Working Party meeting. She also noted that she had updated her own PREVENT training and that there had been no changes.
 - 7.2 Fencing had been inspected and was felt to be OK – the greater problem coming from the brambles.
 - 9.2 Mr Martin had adjusted the Drugs Policy to remove the compulsion of a re-integration meeting.
 - 10 Mrs Willmott confirmed that nearly all new Governors had received a DHS badge.

6. Academic Improvement

6.1 Head Boy and Girl and Deputies

[Maisy Ward-Jackson was absent ill.]

Frazer talked about Sports Day which had been the usual 'big hit' with particular tension for those approaching the end of their time at DHS. There had been a number of records broken together with some notable performances.

Alfred talked about the trips undertaken by Years 7 and 8. Year 7 had enjoyed visits to the River Orwell (which included a river cruise) to further their geographical knowledge of rivers. They had also been to Sizewell where they had learnt about other religions. Year 8 had undertaken a Geography trip – this time to Southwold – and to Coventry with RE which had involved a visit to a Gurdwara and to the Cathedral.

Millie Introduced the Governors to *Student Life* – a Suffolk-wide lifestyle publication written by students for students. The Suffolk *Student Life* charity team had given an assembly at DHS which had focused on student mental health – as well as on film and media. Over 50 DHS students had expressed an interest being involved in the publication. Miss Upton will report further on this.

Action Miss Upton

6.2 Year 10 Performance Data

This was reviewed in comparison with the final set of Year 11 data. Miss Upton said that Year 10 seemed to be on track in their performance with all cohorts (including Disadvantaged and SEND students) doing well for this stage. In discussion the following points were raised:

- Mrs Edmond asked about Post-16 destinations. Miss Upton said that destinations were geographically diverse (often related to where students lived) with Suffolk One becoming increasingly popular – particularly for those students looking for a college-style provision rather than a school sixth form. All Post-16 providers visit DHS. In terms of Sixth Forms, Northgate, Thomas Mills, Farlingaye and Hartismere are popular choices. Some go to private education and some to apprenticeships – ably supported by Mr Voller.
- Dr Egan sought clarity about those subjects which had a negative Progress 8 measure. Miss Upton explained that the results were referenced to the previous year's GCSE results (and, therefore, potentially less reliable). Those subjects with a negative reference are showing less progress than might be expected but Miss Upton pointed out that such figures can be distorted when student numbers are small – as in the Disadvantaged and SEND cohorts.
- Mrs Driver asked about the fall in outcomes in the Year 11 data at the final session. Miss Upton said that in these figures (which are not sent home) teachers are asked to be somewhat pessimistic so that support for students can be best targeted.
- Mr Green asked when the DfE are going to raise the putative 'pass' grade to 5 from 4. Miss Upton said that there had been no indications as to this but felt that it would eventually happen.

6.3 Key Questions for Governors – Pupil Premium (PP)

Miss Upton said that the purpose of this exercise was for Governors to know where the relevant information could be found rather than have complete knowledge of the information itself.

Mrs Driver asked what qualified a student for PP. Mrs Wilmott said that it includes all students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in the last six years as well as those adopted from care and the children of service families. Numbers are based on the annual census.

Strategy

1. Mrs Janson said that information regarding money-allocation could be found in the annex to the PP Strategy Document on the DHS Website. It is also in the PP Review Document (and in the budget).
2. The strategies for raising student attainment were not clear to all Governors. Mrs Ramsay said that they could be found in the PP Review Document indicating that desired outcomes are reached through high-quality teaching across the board together with targeted intervention. A statement relating to impact is to be found on the DHS website.
3. Mr Carruthers noted that the relationship of PP to the School Improvement Plan is evident in the PP Strategy Statement. Mrs Janson said that it is also to be found in the document 'PP – Closing the Gap'. Miss Upton said that it was also referenced in the recent Curriculum Review as well as in attendance data and holistic review. Mrs Ramsay said that data is utilised in identifying issues which is used to put detailed plans (case studies – not available to Governors).
4. All sub-sections relating to resources, actions taken, outcomes, monitoring and evaluation are referenced in the PP Strategy Document and in performance data distributed to Governors. Questions relating to PP are discussed annually at the October Full Governors meeting – a statutory requirement. Case studies also cover these areas at the individual level.

Awareness of students

1. Awareness of Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility. Mr Green said that he had seen notification in parental letters; Miss Upton confirmed that these were sent three times a year. Mr Carruthers said that it was also to be found on the DHS website (parental tab). Mrs Driver asked for clarification regarding the process of application for FSM. This is made to the LA who will then inform the school. Funding is not available immediately, but lagged on census information, and in the interim the cost is covered by the school.

2. Mrs Janson said that staff are made aware of PP students by the SENCo. Mrs Ramsay said that staff are told at the start of the year when she goes through each student by name, clarifying that PP students are not necessarily SEND students. PP students are the responsibility of all staff and not under the responsibility of the SENCo. Mr McMillan confirmed that teachers are well aware of PP students. Any updates are covered in staff briefings (3 times a week). Miss Upton said that resources are available to help PP students with Year 11 revision.
3. Use of best staff. It was felt that this question did not apply to DHS – best teachers are not dedicated to any particular area of the school.
4. Evaluation of strategies is evident in the PP Strategy Statement.
5. Tracking. Mrs Janson said that this was evident in the 'PP – Closing the Gap' document. It is also evident in performance data submitted to Governors.
6. On the school website an account of PP spending is to be found in the PP Strategy Statement.

Outcomes

1. The documentation referenced above confirmed that attainment of PP students is closely monitored, and efforts are made continuously to close any gaps in performance.
2. Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are reviewed in case studies (these are occasionally anonymised and shared with Governors).

Mrs Driver asked if there were ever any feedback from the DfE regarding the impact of PP funding. Miss Upton said that there was not, though Ofsted had visited DHS to discover why the gap here is so small. Documentation of evidence-based impact is provided by organisations such as the EEF and Research Hubs. Mrs Ramsay said that the DfE was finding it difficult to assess the impact of PP funding nationally.

This gave rise to a discussion of the new Ofsted Framework to be implemented in September. This marked a shift away from outcomes to the nature of the curriculum and the breadth and quality of experience, together with the development of skills. Mrs Edmond asked if DHS was likely to be inspected in September; Miss Upton felt that, despite the greater focus on outstanding schools, this was unlikely to be immediate unless something went awry. Rev Bates said that she had attended a Governors' update on Ofsted through her role at Robert Hitcham PS. Mr McMillan asked if the reduction in subject options for GCSE following the Curriculum Review would be frowned upon by Ofsted. Miss Upton felt that it would not.

7. Budget and related items

This item was taken by reference to Mrs Willmott's commentary, Key Budget Assumptions and the Budget Plan 2019-20.

7.1 Budget Estimated Outturn

Income

- Income is £128k above budget. This comprises £40k from the Teachers' Pay Grant and £21k from other grants (mainly that related to High Tariff Needs), £12k from other income (offset by related expenditure) and £50k of TS income (timing-related).

Expenditure

- Note offsets covered above – Teaching School and Teachers' Pay Award.
- Support staff costs above budget because of absence, maternity and invigilation.
- Additional teacher costs increased because of recruitment (advertising costs).
- Educational supplies expenditure has increased because of trips (Incoming revenue will offset this)..
- £38k of expenditure on TS was from last year.

Mrs Driver asked about the increase in invigilation costs. This was due to the fact there was an increased number of students for whom special arrangements needed to be made. New invigilators have to be trained and monitored and the whole system is supervised by a member of SLT. There also has to be a roving invigilator who is contactable by those invigilating alone.

Summary

- There will be an in-year surplus of £66k with £44k going to pay for loans and extensions.

Reserves

- These stand at £633k.

7.2 Budget Medium-term plan

This item was taken by way of a presentation given by Mrs Willmott and through reference to a set of Key Financial Assumptions (already circulated).

Income

- DfE has guaranteed AWPU of £4,800 per pupil – DHS gains from this.
- The outcomes of the Government Spending Review are awaited.
- Teaching School Funding will end with the establishment of new Teaching School Hubs.

Expenditure

- Increased pension costs will be funded discretely by government in 2019-20 – thereafter it is expected costs will have to be met from the wider school budget.
- Teacher pay increase is assumed at 2% (with 1% funded by the DfE for a further year). It is unlikely that any increase will be discretely funded thereafter.
- Support staff salaries increase to comply with National Living Wage requirements.

Pupil Numbers

There are two year groups with 140 students or more - next year's Year 7 stands at 141 after one successful appeal. It was noted that students are taken from the waiting list only if numbers fall below 140.

Five-year summary

(It was noted that the summary should be taken in the context of the Key Financial Assumptions.)

- Income for 2019-20 will increase to £3,936k – the increase being largely due to the rise in per pupil funding.
- Expenditure on staffing costs is up due in part to increased pension contributions.
- There is an issue of rising costs in relation to an income stream that remains flat.
- A surplus of £37k is forecast for 2019-20 but thereafter there will be a deficit increasing year by year.
- It remains unclear what changes to funding in future years that there may be until the findings of the Government Spending Review are published.

Miss Upton made the point that Suffolk remains a comparatively poorly-funded LA .

KPIs

- These had been maintained as previously
- Total staff costs as a percentage of EFSA (GAG) funding stand at 90% (slightly below average when compared to Norfolk and Suffolk schools).
- Income per pupil remains flat.
- Average teacher cost is rising

Benchmarking

This compares DHS with other single academies in Norfolk and Suffolk. isks and challenges

- Funding uncertainty.
- Multi-Academy Trusts.
- Ever increasing costs (Teachers' Pension, National Living Wage, Unfunded Teachers' Pay Award).
- Managing cost base to ensure sustainability of reserves.

Summary

- TS Hubs replacing TS leading to cessation of TS income for DHS.
- IT expenditure in line with plan.
- Budget is realistic but attainable.

Points raised by Governors

- Mrs Driver asked about the DHS policy of having sufficient reserves to pay salaries for a month and whether this was adequate. Miss Upton felt that the policy set reserves appropriately – it is reviewed annually.
- Mr Carruthers reminded the meeting that it is important for DHS to be aware of any potential funding shortfall (in relation to reserves) two years in advance so as to plan for it. He felt that there was no cause for real concern as yet; he also noted that DHS was better placed than many schools.
- Dr Egan asked about the impact of BREXIT on DHS and specifically on funding. Mrs Willmott said there had been no indication on this from either the DfE or auditors (except in relation to the appointment of foreign nationals).
- He also asked about the setting of deficit budgets in future years and whether it was in the interests of DHS to pursue the worst-case scenario in order to get a reaction from the DfE. Mrs Willmott said it was important to achieve a balance between showing need whilst indicating that the school can manage. Miss Upton felt that such an approach would almost certainly bring greater scrutiny.

Governors approved the DHS budget for 2019-20.

8. Committees and Working Parties

8.1 Governors received and the draft minutes of the Health and Safety Committee Meeting of Tuesday 21st May 2019 and of the Financial and General Purposes Meeting of Friday 21st June 2019.

8.2 Mid-term admissions and Year 7 appeals.

Governors asked about procedures for dealing with those parents who elected to home educate their children. Mrs Ramsay made the point that the school has no statutory role in this but it was felt there were more DHS students taking this route than was desirable. The Headteacher always speaks personally to parents who express their desire to home school, with the purpose of persuading them otherwise. Returns are made to the LA, as expected when a parent makes this decision.

There had been one successful appeal for Year 7 entry in September 2019.

8.3 Governor visits

Mrs Janson (SEND Governor) noted that the fact that Mrs Scott (SENCo) was now part time had not had any adverse effects on SEND provision.

It was pointed out that Rev Bates report on her visit to Sports Day had not been included in the Governor papers.

Action Miss Upton

9 Policies

9.1 SEND Information Report

This was received by Governors – changes had been highlighted. Mr Green noted that Key Workers are no longer available to students; Mrs Ramsay said that this was not because they had not been utilised. There were two other minor changes made.

9.2 E-Safety Policy

This was received by Governors. Mr Martin made the point that DHS now uses the County Broadband Service for its firewall as it offers greater security.

Mr Carruthers asked, given their access to the DHS e-mail system, whether Governors should be asked to sign the Acceptable Use Policy. Mrs Bosley asked about student use of mobile phones on school trips. They are supposed to be for emergency use only but, on a recent trip that she joined, they were being widely used (sometimes inappropriately). Mrs Ramsay made the point that it could create difficulties for Looked After Children if their images appeared on social media. Mr Martin said that use of phones is difficult to police – and not just on trips. Mr Martin will examine the issue and report to the next meeting.

Action Mr Martin

9.3 Equalities Policy

Mrs Ramsay highlighted some minor revisions:

P4 – specific mention is made of discrimination through perception/association and of Pupil Premium students and Young Carers.

P6 – there are updates in the role of the Equality Lead. There is also a specific mention of gender designation

P8/9 – there is a change in the way incidents are reported. Terminology has been changed to ‘with (or without) a disability’

Appendices – these contain exemplars.

Mr Carruthers asked that the reference to the DHS Mission Statement be removed as it no longer exists. Mrs Driver asked that, on p4, there is specific reference to the 2018 Data Protection Act.

9.4 Discretionary Leave of Absence Policy

This remains unchanged.

9.5 Accessibility Policy

There had been some slight amendments to this including the revision of some acronyms and reference made to staff trained in mental first aid. There is a greater emphasis on face-to-face communication. Mr Green indicated the need for two minor corrections.

10. Safeguarding

- Mrs Willmott and Miss Upton had completed safer recruitment training.
- Mrs Ramsay, Mr Martin and Mr Carruthers will shortly be completing the same through the NSPCC.

Unapproved

11. Any other business

- Mrs Edmond asked about students who continue to wear the old uniform (and white socks). Miss Upton said that all students should be in the 'new logo' uniform (and in the correct footwear). A letter would be sent to parents to remind them of this.
- Mrs Janson noted that the 2018 GCSE results were not evidently available on the website.
- Mrs Driver thanked the school for the leavers' prom.
- Mr Martin let the meeting know about the residential visits that will be taking place in the coming academic year.
- Mr Carruthers bade farewell to Mrs Newman and thanked her for her service to the Governing Body.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 1st October 2019 at 5.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.17 pm.

Signed: Chairman Date: 1st October 2019