



Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



Full Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held at the school on Tuesday 1st October 2019 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:

Mr R Barker		Ms S Goodrich
Rev S Bates		Mr T Green
Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Mr D McMillan
Mrs M Carter		Dr W Thomas
Mr P Debenham		Miss J Upton
Mrs S Edmond		

In attendance:

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 Mrs C Bosley, Mr J Cox, Mrs C Driver, Dr D Egan, Mr R Grimsey, Mr C Grover, Mrs S Janson, Miss S McBurney, Mr S Martin, R Revd M Seeley, and Mr M Touman.
- 1.2 Governors consented to their absence.

2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 Members of the teaching staff had an interest in Item 14.1 – Teachers' Salaries Policy
- 2.2 Mrs Willmott asked Governors to complete the annual pecuniary interest forms so that the register of pecuniary interests can be updated.

3. Election of Chairman for 2019-20

Mr Carruthers was elected nem con. Mr Debenham thanked Mr Carruthers for his continued service to DHS.

4. Election of Vice-Chairman for 2019-20

In his absence, Mr Grover (who had expressed his willingness to serve) was elected nem con.

5. Chairman's Business

Mr Carruthers noted, with some disappointment, the poor Governor attendance at the recent Safeguarding Training. He stressed the importance of this – especially with an OFSTED visit on the horizon. A new date will be arranged. Mrs Edmond asked about the regularity of training; Mr Carruthers said that, whilst regulations are vague on this, DHS adopted an approach of every three years. Mr Barker asked about on-line training. Mr Carruthers felt that both the NSPCC and NGA might

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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

provide this. Miss Upton felt, however, that face-to-face training was preferable as it enabled matters to be dealt with in a DHS context.

Mr Carruthers also noted poor attendance at the Curriculum Working Party. He emphasised the importance of this forum in enabling Governors to understand the statistics relating to results.

Mr Carruthers also referred to the Skills Audit which will be distributed shortly. With regards to the letter from Lord Agnew regarding Brexit, Mr Carruthers said that DHS had completed the survey as requested (this focused on food and medicines) and parents had been reminded about keeping prescription medicine in date. The general shortage of EpiPens was noted.

The letter from Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) related to new guidance documents and reporting requirements to promote sound governance arrangements and good financial systems, including for example, the new School Resource Management Self Assessment Tool (SRMSAT). Mrs Willmott confirmed that DHS is compliant in relation to the requirement to include Governors' contact details on the Get Information About Schools website.

6. Governing Body Membership

Andrew Dubberley had agreed to be the new Teaching Staff Governor to replace Ms Newman.

Mr Boulter had offered to retire as a Member of the Trust. Mr Debenham noted his long-standing and substantial contribution to the success of DHS.

7. Minutes

7.1 The minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 2nd July 2019 were approved by Governors and signed by the Chairman.

7.2 Matters arising from the minutes.

4 The Health and Safety Committee would now precede the FGP meeting.

6.1 Though numbers had dropped from initial take up, students from DHS are still involved in the publication 'Student Life' supported by Emily Stebbings of the English Department. Three articles by DHS students have been published.

8.3 Rev Bates' Sports Day visit report had been added to the current Governor papers.

9.2 Miss Upton noted that it had been decided to allow mobile phones on school trips as long as they were used only for practical and purposeful activities.

8. Academic Improvement

8.1 Deputy Head Boy and Girl

Frazer described the process of Year 10 Work Experience. He himself had applied to Bickers Action (providing stunt services for films) but had been too late to gain a placement, instead he had worked at a café in Debenham which had helped to develop his communication skills. Many had been placed locally but others had been as far away as London. He felt that DHS students were, for the most part, great ambassadors for the school. Mrs Carter asked if students were interviewed before being given a placement; this was generally not the case, but some organisations required a pre-visit. Mr Voller also provides valuable support to students in finding placements. Miss Upton noted that some students gained apprenticeships, or paid summer employment, as a result of successful work experience.

Maisy reported on the new Year 7 students. Miss Samuels (Head of Year 7) has said that the majority had settled in really well and had been successful in making new friends. They exhibited great enthusiasm and a positive attitude to the increased level of self-organisation needed at secondary school. The bonding trip to Colchester Zoo had gone well and zoo staff had been impressed by the behaviour of the students.

8.2 Headteachers' Report

Miss Upton made the following additional comments to her report:

Staffing

DHS remains fully staffed and there had been a very positive start to the year.

Attainment

As indicated at the Curriculum Working Party meeting results had been very good with the progress 8 measure looking to be at an (excellent) 0.7. There were two areas of relative weakness for disadvantaged students and those in receipt of Pupil Premium.

National news

The promise of a minimum funding of £5000 per pupil should help DHS as the school's funding is not yet at that level. The increase in teachers' salaries will impact on costs and it may be that teachers' pension increases are not fully funded.

The removal of the OFSTED exception for Outstanding Schools means that there will be an inspection of DHS before too long. The availability of revised training for governors on the new Ofsted Framework will be investigated.

Action Mr Carruthers

Curriculum Programmes of Study

The new programmes of study continue to be embedded.

Training Day

There had been a focus on literacy and Miss Upton commended the contribution of Emily Stebbings from the English Department.

Teaching School

The commitment to research remains.

Summer Activities

Miss Upton thanked Governors who had attended these.

Appendices

Attendance figures remain positive. It was noted that the fall off in Year 11 attendance is due to study leave.

Ms Goodrich asked if there were more or fewer exclusions and if the pattern of behaviour that they reflect remains the same. Miss Upton said that both these were broadly similar. Mrs Ramsay noted that some sanctions noted separately relate to the same student. There had been no permanent exclusions.

Mr Green asked about the admissions' appeals process. Only one (from 16) had been successful. As one student later dropped out the number in Year 7 stands at 140 with more than 20 on the waiting list.

Mr Barker asked if there was a need to change the PAN (Published Admissions Number); Miss Upton said that this was only necessary when the Funding Agreement is re-negotiated.

Mr Carruthers asked Governors to approve proposed school visits. Mr Barker noted that some visits had already taken place. Miss Goodrich observed that such approval was broad and did not relate to specific Health and Safety matters. It was, however, agreed that those visits early in the Autumn Term would be flagged at the July Governors' Meeting.

Action Miss Upton

8.3 Literary Action Plan (LAP)

This item was dealt with by Mrs Ramsay who noted that Emily Stebbings had provided input on this based on the EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) findings. Literacy is a standing item on the Academic-Pastoral Board. She pointed out that departmental LAPs accompanied the plan.

There are three main strands to the LAP – for students to be Fluent, Independent and Strategic readers in each of their subjects. Students are also expected to Read for Pleasure and to Read for Progress. This is in addition to the intervention (for less able students) that already takes place – particularly in relation to the acquisition of Tier 1 vocabulary.

In discussion Mrs Carter asked if the qualification of Higher performing Dyslexics was subjective or objective. It was clarified that it is 'Objective - it reflects those with SENCO support'. Ms Goodrich asked if staff were on board with the LAP. Mr McMillan confirmed that this was very much the case. Mr Green said that he liked the 'concrete' approach to the development of literacy skills. Mrs Carter asked about the 'detective skills' referred to; Mrs Ramsay said that these relate to matters such as decoding unknown words using both context and previous knowledge. Miss Upton said that the LAP links closely to the new GCSE demands.

8.4 Results Review Meeting

Miss Upton said that the notes from these meetings should be used by Governors to inform the departmental review. As they had only recently been received, she asked Governors to contact her if they had any specific points they wished to raise.

In relation to the Creative I-Media Continuous Assessment, Mr Green asked about plagiarism software. Miss Upton felt this might be a partial answer to the need to guarantee unaided work. Dr Thomas offered to show software that is used by Suffolk University. Mr Green also asked why there was nothing in the English report about the gender gap evident in results. Miss Upton said that this had been covered in the meeting and matters such as setting and literature choices had been discussed.

8.5 Pupil Premium (PP)

Impact

RAG rating had been applied to the 2018 - 19 plan. Most actions had been completed successfully though there was a gap in performance in relation to other DHS students (though not to those nationally).

Plan

Mrs Ramsay noted that there were further detailed figures to be added to the report once these were known. The plan for the coming years focuses on Universal Provision, Intervention and Personalised Support. Some changes are being introduced e.g. 'tea and toast' at the KS3 homework club to encourage attendance and greater exposure to cultural capital. Adjustments had been made to align with the LAP. Costs need to be updated – including that of Year 7 catch-up.

8.6 The plan was approved by Governors.
Equality Action Plan

Review

Mrs Ramsay noted the following:

- Set 6 in both Maths and English had not done as well as possibly could have been expected.
- Student reading remains an issue.
- Student attendance at the SEND surgery tends to tail off as the year progresses (surgeries are termly).

Dr Thomas asked why it was sometimes difficult to engage parents. Miss Upton said that some parents can face the same barriers to learning as their children and, therefore, every effort is made to ensure that school-based support is as accessible as possible. Getting parents to encourage students in their learning is often a stumbling-block.

Plan

- Some items remain the same as the previous year (as with accessing Tier 2 vocabulary and mental health issues).
- Items relating to the LAP had been added.
- PP/SEND students are to be a focus as is boys' progress.
- In relation to gender re-designation, *Outreach Youth* will be organising a drop-in lunch.

Mrs Edmond asked if inequalities were at all related to home dynamics. Mrs Ramsay said that this was often the case.

The plan was approved by Governors.

8.7 Faculty Review Schedule

This was received and approved by Governors.

9. Key Questions for Governors - Staffing

Mr Carruthers said that he would share his own responses to the questions with Governors and invited them to respond if they felt the need. Mr Green asked how the questions were formulated. Miss Upton said that they were derived from NGA sources and material from *The Key* – a resource base for Headteachers.

10. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

Mr Carruthers said that Governors' need to be fully aware of the content and concepts contained in the updated KCSIE document. It was noted that there is a summary of this year's amendments at the end of the document.

- Mrs Edmond asked about overseas exchange visits. Miss Upton said that these now have to be undertaken through an organisation that will undertake all the necessary checks on host families.
- Mr Carruthers said that he had completed the required 'Safer Recruitment' training.
- The Single Central Register has been fully reviewed and is now up-to-date with best practice – it had always been compliant. Mr Carruthers thanked Mrs Willmott for her work on this.

11. Budget and related items

This item was taken by reference to Mrs Willmott's budget papers. She made the following points:

11.1 July budget position report

- Income is £150k over budget (though this is largely offset by related additional costs).
- It is anticipated that there will be a surplus of £9 (rather than £3k as budgeted).
- Reserves are forecast to stand at £621k

11.2 School Business Management Self-Assessment Tool

This is now a requirement of the DfE. Governors reviewed the checklist (which shows that DHS is almost fully compliant) and approved the return for submission to the ESFA. Governors also reviewed the dashboard. The only element that is lower than recommended is the teacher contact ratio. This is because of the deliberate policy of DHS to give teachers more Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA). Such an approach is justified by the excellent outcomes for DHS students.

11.3 Funding implications 2019-21

This item was taken by reference to a summary document provided by Miss Upton. Governors' noted the contents – particularly the recommended 2.75% pay increase (0.75% Government funded) for teaching staff.

12. DHS Admissions Arrangements 2021-22

12.1 Miss Upton said that the over-subscription criteria had been revised after the Admissions Appeals Panel had questioned the clarity of some definitions. These had now been sited at the beginning of the document and had been made briefer and more succinct.

Some discussion ensued. Dr Thomas asked where the cut off was for the current Year 7. Miss Upton said that this was in categories 2C (pyramid Primary School but living out of catchment). Though this had been the situation for 2018 admissions as well, before that the cut-off had usually been in category 2E (other beyond catchment applicants). There was further discussion about the order of the sub-categories – particularly in relation to children of DHS staff - but the arrangements were approved without change.

13. Committees and Working Parties

13.1 Curriculum Working Party

Notes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th September were received by Governors. Ms Goodrich noted the excellent GCSE results and their consistency amongst the different cohorts.

13.2 Governor Visits

Reports were received in relation to a review of the SCR and to Sports day at the end of last term.

14. Policies

14.1 Teachers' Salaries Policy

Changes made to this related to the updating of figures only. The policy was approved by Governors.

[Miss Upton informed the meeting that a review of the Support Staff Salaries Policy had been postponed to a later meeting, better to fit in with the timing of pay awards.]

14.2 Performance Management and Appraisal Policy.

The only change here was the adjustment of terminology (Advanced Skills Teacher removed, and Specialist Leader in Education inserted).

Mrs Edmond asked if teachers receive any training on applying for threshold advancement. Miss Upton said that there was no formal training but guidance was given – and that the whole process is linked to Performance Management target(s). Mr McMillan said that unions provide advice, and Mrs Ramsay said that the application form provides a structured framework – reflecting Teachers’ Standards.

The policy was approved by Governors.

14.3 Safeguarding Policy

Mrs Ramsay highlighted some of the amendments (in red):

- Adjustments to terminology.
- E-mail changes.
- Reference to Children and Young People’s Portals.
- Adding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage and Up-skirting.
- Updating of the Prevent Risk Assessment.
- Changes to names and dates

Mr Barker noted that the e-mail addresses needed to be changed to DHS designations for Mr Carruthers and Mr Grover. Mr Green said that Annex A of Appendix A needs to be updated.

Action Mrs Ramsay

Mrs Edmond asked if DHS has a lockdown policy; Miss Upton said that it did not.

The policy was approved by Governors.

14.4 Literacy Policy

Mrs Ramsay said that this had been adjusted in line with EEF recommendations.

The policy was approved by Governors.

14.5 One-to-One Policy

There were minor changes only.

The policy was approved by Governors.

15. Any other business

- Governors appreciated the e-mail to their home address relating to distribution to their DHS address. They also found Mr Carruthers’ ‘homework list’ to be very helpful.
- Mr Barker asked about the number of DHS parents seeking to home-school their children. Miss Upton agreed that numbers had spiked but assured that DHS did all it could to dissuade parents and

to explain what such a step entails; there were particular problems for those students with SEN. She also assured Governors that there was no 'off-rolling' at DHS.

- Mr Carruthers encouraged Governors to attend the Open Evening on Thursday 3rd October and the NGA Regional Conference on Saturday 12th October.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 10th December 2019 at 5.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.26 pm.

Signed: Chairman Date: 10th December 2019