



# 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 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 4.30 p.m.

Present:

Mr R Barker		Mr A Dubberley
Rev S Bates		Ms S Goodrich
Mrs C Bosley		Mrs S Janson
Mr D Carruthers	Chairman	Mr D McMillan
Mrs M Carter		Mr M Touman
Mr P Debenham		Miss J Upton
Mrs C Driver		

In attendance:

Mr J Cox	Trustee
Mr S Martin	Deputy 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, Dr D Egan, Mr Grimsey, Mr Grover and Miss McBurney.
- 1.2 Trustees consented to their absence.

### 2. Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 2.1 There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

### 3. Chairman of Governors' Report

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

#### Membership

Mr Carruthers ran through the membership of Governors and Members. He noted that Mr Boulter had now retired from the Academy Trust, and that the Governing Body needed an additional member (Trustees' appointment).

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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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## School Organisation

Teaching staff cohort stood at 71.6 teachers (Full Time Equivalent). There had been only slight changes in personnel.

## Community partners

Mr Carruthers highlighted a number of these:

- A successful year for Teaching School Alliance (TSA)
- Pre-16 vocational links.
- Dioceses of Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds.
- St Mary's Church

## Numbers

In October 2018 numbers had stood at 678 and in October 2019 these fell slightly to 673. The school remains popular. The PAN stands at 125 though the school normally admits 135 students, flexing in some years to 140.

## Academic Performance

Mr Carruthers commended the exceptional academic performance particularly in Progress 8 (+ 0.7 – placing DHS 11<sup>th</sup> nationally for schools without a Sixth Form). In terms of performance relating to the Local Authority DHS was first in both Attainment 8 and Progress 8.

Though the school had done well in terms of the standards achieved by disadvantaged students, the Progress 8 measure for this group stood at + 0.2 – some way behind the whole cohort.

Maths Progress 8 score: + 0.74  
English Progress 8 score: + 0.64

## Attendance and behaviour

This remained at a high level – 94.8%

## School Improvement and Development Plan

- Teaching and Learning – focus remains on assessment, resilience and curriculum development. All departments had developed a five-year Programme of Study.
- Infrastructure – the creation of a catering pod and the erection of a security fence had been completed.
- Partnership – TSA. Links created through the TSA are still working well.
- Exploration of the possibility of creating a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The TSA had been preferred to the creation of a MAT in the short term.

## Finance

Mr Carruthers provided a summary of the current financial situation and noted the in-year surplus of £45,430. The overall school surplus stands at £656,568 (2018 - £611,138) which is felt necessary to protect DHS against and future funding failures. Mr Cox asked if auditors give any guidance on the level of reserves and Mrs Willmott said that they do not. Mr Carruthers observed that the school could be criticised for holding such high levels of reserves, but it was felt to be prudent under current circumstances. He also pointed out that there had been a number of contributions to capital projects in recent year that had been made from reserves; though there may be some reluctance to follow the same route in the near future.

Total cash position had fallen slightly.

The bulk of Revenue Costs are made up of funding for teaching and support staff. Other variations (though some are significant in percentage terms) were on small amounts of money. In Educational Supplies, for example, the variation is related to the cost of educational visits.

Mrs Janson asked about the 61% increase in 'other costs'. Mrs Willmott said that this related to TSA costs which can be rather 'lumpy'.

The figures given in the KPIs remained much as before. It was noted that DHS had been green-rated by the Government in terms of value for money.

The pension fund liability in the balance sheet is covered by Government funding.

#### Risks

- Reduced TSA funding.
- Student numbers (changed demography, travel costs, loss of reputation).
- Further stealth attacks on funding.
- Implementation of the NFF does not cover increased costs – possible that the recent guarantee of £5k per capita student funding might be eroded if other sources of short-term funding are withdrawn.

#### **4. Minutes**

4.1 The minutes of the AGM held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4.2 There were no matters arising.

#### **5. Audited Accounts**

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

5.2 Mr Cox asked how often the performance of the auditors was reviewed. Mrs Willmott said that she and Miss Upton had looked at the costs and qualities of Larking Gowen in January 2019 and that their performance had improved this year. It was agreed that Larking Gowen should be appointed as external auditors for the next financial year.

#### **6. Any Other Business**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.07 p.m.

Signed ..... Chairman February 2021