



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

DBE (21)M2

DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 4.00pm via Zoom.

Prayers: The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison led the opening prayers.

Present:

Mrs Jane Addis	The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison (Chair)
The Revd Penny Brinkley	Mr Nicholas Jardine
Mr Tom Brooke	Mr Guy McGregor
The Revd Dr Karen Burton	Mr Pete Mumford
Mr John Dixon	Mr Hugo Parker
Mrs Jane Eccleston	Mrs Frances Parr
Mr Tim Fairbairn	The Revd Toby Tate
The Ven Jeanette Gosney	

Apologies:

Mrs Elaine Burdiss	Mrs Gillian Mitchell
Mrs Mary Lewis	Mr Drew Quayle
The Revd Carl Melville	Mr Paul Ryle

In Attendance:

Mr Daniel Jones	Diocesan Buildings Officer
Miss Gemma Kingston	Diocesan Schools' Adviser
Mr Phil Knowles	Diocesan School Effectiveness Officer (SEO)
Mrs Jane Sheat	Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)
Miss Jacqui Studd	Administrator (Education)
Mrs Sue Todd	Deputy Diocesan Director of Education (DDDE)

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

21.15 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 were approved and signed.

21.16 MATTERS ARISING

None.

21.17 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

21.18 CONSIDERATION OF CO-OPTION

Members unanimously voted to appoint the Revd Dr Karen Burton as a co-opted member. The Chair and DDE welcomed Karen.

21.19 DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION'S REPORT

The DDE referred to Paper A, which provided an update to DBE members on issues arising since the last meeting. The DDE noted that:

- the Church of England has successfully bid to be one of the DfE's nine approved providers of national professional qualifications (NPQs) with effect from September 2021
- a small working group has met to consider the implementation of the new DBE Measure. The DDE expressed her thanks to Tim Fairbairn who is part of the group together with the DDE, Anna Hughes (Diocesan Secretary) and the Ven Dr David Jenkins
- the education team continues to support schools locally, and a wider network of support is developing nationally as demonstrated by all schools in Suffolk being sent collective worship resources developed by Guildford diocese following the recent death of HRH Duke of Edinburgh
- the research project, part of the Diocesan Educational Leadership Programme (DELP) is nearing completion. The DDE will share the outcomes later this year which will help inform the next strategic plan
- work is progressing on the preparations for disposal of the St James School site
- work is scheduled to take place on the school house at Bedfield over the next few months
- the four bids for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) had been unsuccessful, the fund having been heavily oversubscribed. The DDE expressed her thanks to the Buildings Officer for his work
- the School Condition Allocations (SCA) for voluntary aided schools for 2021-22 are consistent with last year and schools' projects are now being prioritised.

The DDE invited questions. The Chair asked if there were lessons to be learnt from the PSDS bids. The Buildings Officer advised that lessons will be learnt from those Dioceses and the Local Authority which had been successful. Pete Mumford confirmed that the LA would be happy to share information on this.

Tim Fairbairn asked whether education officers would be involved in the NPQ training and therefore would further resources be required. The DDE advised that NPQ training would be delivered through local Teaching School Hubs and MATs and that the Diocesan MAT and All Saints Schools Trust would be working with the Teaching School Hub. The DMAT would be able to do this using existing resources. The DfE did not recognise DBEs as providers.

Jane Eccleston asked about reaction to the changes affecting teachers with a move to a two year induction for Early Career Teachers (ECT) replacing the current one year induction for Newly Qualified Teachers. The DDE advised that she thought the changes would be welcomed. The changes included a 10% timetable reduction for ECTs in their first year of induction, and a 5% timetable reduction in the second year of induction.

21.20 ACADEMIES STRATEGY

The DDE introduced Paper B which proposed a revised DBE strategy on academies for discussion and approval. The DDE noted that:

- the current academy strategy dates from May 2016
- DfE policy remains that all schools should become academies

- the context in Suffolk has changed since 2016
- and the experience of the past 10 years has shown the importance of collaboration for small schools.

To aid discussion, the DDE highlighted the appendices which provided further information on local church school-led MATs and their schools and a list of church schools by size. DBE members were then assigned to breakout rooms for further discussion on the proposed academy strategy.

Following discussion, the Chair asked for comments. Jane Addis felt that more time for discussion was required. John Dixon asked what changes had been made to the previous strategy and suggested that advice on this would aid discussion. He highlighted the importance for schools of undertaking proper consultation and discussion when considering academisation.

The DDE replied that the key change was that schools now had the choice of four church school-led MATs to join when considering academisation.

Tom Brooke suggested that there might be a hesitancy to academise if there is a lack of other MAT schools nearby. He recommended adding to the strategy the issue of proximity and the need to address the wide gaps between schools.

Tim Fairbairn asked about the key drivers for schools in joining a MAT as he too believed proximity would be important. The Chair agreed that proximity needs to be added to the strategy.

Tim Fairbairn added that there was nothing in the strategy about the available infrastructure for academies going forward. He asked about the next steps if the Diocesan MAT nears maximum capacity. Jane Eccleston agreed and highlighted that 50% of church schools had not yet academised. The DDE advised that although there are currently no further new MATs, there is currently capacity but that this will need to be kept under review. The Revd Dr Karen Burton suggested that church schools should be advised if the DMAT is nearing capacity in order to manage expectations about joining the DMAT. The DDE advised that although the DMAT will have 21 schools in September, there will be room for growth. John Dixon felt that care should be taken with messaging on academisation and for the need to follow Government advice. The DDE agreed and added that the strategy should promote other church school-led MATs.

Frances Parr highlighted the well balanced approach and advice offered by the DDE to governors at her former school when they were considering academisation. Jane Addis highlighted that the general nature of the draft strategy would provide for all types of academies, particularly the differing attitudes of those which had chosen to academise (converter) and those which had had to academise (sponsored).

The Chair asked that the proposed academy strategy be amended to include the issue of proximity and for the need to be mindful of how this is communicated.

The DDE suggested that she discuss the draft academy strategy with the DMAT and other church school-led MATs and then bring back to the DBE meeting in September for further discussion.

Members approved.

Action: The DDE to amend the draft academy strategy as discussed.

21.21 CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO PROPOSED CHANGE OF STATUS TO ACADEMY WITHIN LOCAL MAT- KERSEY CEVCP

The DDE referred to Paper C, which provided information on Kersey CEVCP School's proposal to become an academy within the Tilian Partnership. The DDE advised that the governing body had been replaced by an Interim Executive Board (IEB) but that the former governing body and IEB both supported the school's proposal to academise. The DDE invited comments.

Tim Fairbairn asked whether Kersey had previously been linked with another school. The DDE advised that the school had been in an informal collaboration for 18 months but this had ended following the last Ofsted inspection.

The DBE consented to Kersey CEVCP School joining the Tilian Partnership.

21.22 LEARNING FROM COVID

The Deputy DDE referred to Paper D, which provided an opportunity to reflect on what has been happening in our schools, celebrate and share good practice and identify actions going forward. The Deputy DDE explained that one priority for schools going forward is to take stock and reflect about the last year, and to support this, the Deputy DDE and the SEO are creating questions, informed by a project by the Diocese of St Alban's MAT. The aim is to contribute to each school's ongoing self-evaluation, particularly in terms of how their school lives the Church of England's Vision for Education. The Deputy DDE also highlighted the Appendix which showcased how schools had lived their Christian vision over the last year.

The Chair asked what would be done with the results from the project. The Deputy DDE advised that the questions will help schools reflect, inform self-evaluation as well as provide evidence for future SIAMS inspections.

Jane Eccleston felt that this would be an excellent exercise and that much could be learnt from what schools have been doing. The Deputy DDE highlighted the resilience of schools over the last year and the need for this positivity to balance against negative press. John Dixon agreed and highlighted the need to look at the broader picture for different types of children and the experiences they have had.

The Chair thanked Sue for her work.

21.23 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

The SEO introduced Paper E, providing a focus on the current issues that have arisen as we emerge from the pandemic and the support for schools that is currently being provided. The SEO noted:

- that graded Ofsted and SIAMS inspections were expected to resume from the start of the autumn term 2021
- a nationally managed SIAMS system will commence in September with the appointment of Dr Margaret James as the National Director of SIAMS and David Tait as Deputy
- Ofsted is publishing a series of subject reviews and reports, taking a 'state of the nation' look at curriculum quality across primary and secondary schools
- SIAMS support visits have commenced this term and most have been in person at the request of the school
- three wellbeing events are planned this term for school administrators and bursars, Governors and Headteachers.

The Chair thanked the SEO for his work.

21.24 RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP UPDATE

The Schools' Adviser introduced Paper F, providing an update on RE and collective worship work since the last meeting.

The Schools' Adviser noted:

- that more delegates are attending RE and Collective Worship training
- further useful resources are being provided to schools via padlets
- 21 schools responded to a recent questionnaire about the usefulness of the collective worship planning provided since autumn 2020
- additional resources on assessment of RE are being developed
- RE network meetings for teachers and subject leaders of RE will be taking place every half-term from the summer term onwards.

The Ven Jeanette Gosney highlighted the results from the questionnaire which showed that churches were not using the collective worship plans, although schools were. The Schools' Adviser agreed to investigate this and would feedback.

Tim Fairbairn asked about the amount of engagement the Schools' Adviser has with church schools. The Schools' Adviser replied that she keeps a record of all interactions with schools and that currently there are only three or four schools which do not engage. The Schools' Adviser will visit these schools once she is able to.

Tim Fairbairn suggested using foundation governors if there was little engagement. The Schools' Adviser highlighted that three foundation governors had recently attended Basics of Collective Worship training and that foundation governors would be included on future communications including RE bulletins.

The Chair added that Bishop Martin writes to all clergy on a weekly basis and that this could be used for any messages which the Schools' Adviser would like to make to clergy.

The Chair thanked the Schools' Adviser for her work.

21.25 ADMISSIONS OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA IN VC SCHOOLS

The Deputy DDE referred to Paper G, which followed on from the report presented at the November meeting. Despite delays to the Admissions Code, which is not due to receive Royal Assent until July, the Deputy DDE advised that it is timely for further discussion on this subject, especially considering the feedback received during the variation process. The Deputy DDE asked members to consider whether or not to ask the LA to consult on removing church attendance from the oversubscription criteria for admissions. DBE members were then assigned to breakout rooms for further discussion.

Following discussion, the Chair asked for comments. Tom Brooke highlighted that the number of families applying for VC schools under the church attendance category was low, that having faith criteria could deter families from applying to the school, that clergy were often placed under pressure to sign Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs), and that in some cases criteria were met by playing the system. Jane Eccleston agreed and highlighted that we needed to consider the feedback received concerning the oversubscription criteria during the variation process. The Ven Jeanette Gosney felt that we could be more missional by allowing more children in.

The Deputy DDE thanked members for their comments and would feed this back to the Local Authority.

DBE members approved going to consultation and working with the Local Authority to withdraw church attendance from the oversubscription criteria for VC schools within the Diocese.

The Chair thanked the Deputy DDE for the detail represented in the report.

Guy McGregor left the meeting

21.26 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Pete Mumford referred to Paper H, which provided an update on local authority issues arising since the last meeting. Pete Mumford noted that:

- support continues to be provided to schools on COVID related issues such as test and trace, wellbeing, bereavement and transport
- there are a number of schools applying to the May RSC's Headteacher Board for approval to convert to academy status, including both Bedfield and Elmsett CEVCP Schools
- 95% of children were offered a place at their first preference school for 2021/22
- a reduction in primary school population is being seen across Suffolk and nationally
- a number of discussions are taking place with schools impacted by housing development in their local areas.

Pete Mumford asked that members advise him of any local housing developments.

The Ven Jeanette Gosney asked how parishes can be encouraged to engage with education about new housing developments. The DDE advised that the Revd Canon Dave Gardner is the Diocesan lead on housing developments and liaises with local clergy.

Tim Fairbairn highlighted that new developments can be emotive and have local opposition. He highlighted concern for smaller schools and their sustainability. Pete Mumford agreed and advised that the LA tries to take the heat off local schools and offers support during developments.

The Chair thanked Pete Mumford for the Local Authority update.

Action: The DDE to speak with the Revd Canon Dave Gardner on mission and education working together on new housing developments.

21.27 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

The DBE ratified the appointment of Foundation Governors listed in Paper I.

21.28 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Strategy Action Plan – September and November

Diocesan Educational Leadership Programme (DELP) Research

DBE Academies Strategy

Learning from COVID

Action: Members to advise the DDE of any future agenda items.

21.29 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair asked members for views on the timing of meetings. Most were in favour of a 4pm start. The DDE expressed apologies to the Heads who had been unable to

attend this meeting due to work commitments and advised that she would discuss the timing of meetings with them.

The DDE suggested that there would be a mix of virtual and face to face meetings in the future.

The DDE will advise of the timing for the September meeting nearer the time.

21.30 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board noted that future meetings would take place on:

Wednesday 15 September 2021 – time to be confirmed

Tuesday 23 November 2021 at 1pm for 1.30pm

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 5.40pm.

Signed: _____
[Chairman]

Date: _____