



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

DBE (22)M2

DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Tuesday 3 May 2022 at 4.00pm in the Boardroom.

Prayers: The Revd Carl Melville led the opening prayers.

Present:

Mrs Jane Addis

Mr John Dixon

Mrs Jane Eccleston

The Ven Jeanette Gosney

Mr Nicholas Jardine

Mrs Mary Lewis

Mr Guy McGregor

The Revd Carl Melville (Vice Chair)

Mrs Gillian Mitchell

Mr Pete Mumford

Mr Hugo Parker

Mr Paul Ryle

Apologies:

The Revd Penny Brinkley

Mr Tom Brooke

Mrs Elaine Burdiss

The Revd Dr Karen Burton

Mr Tim Fairbairn

The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison (Chair)

Mr Drew Quayle

The Revd Toby Tate

In Attendance:

Mr Daniel Jones

Mr Phil Knowles

Mrs Jane Sheat

Miss Jacqui Studd

Mrs Sue Todd

Mrs Gemma Taylor

Diocesan Buildings Officer

Diocesan School Effectiveness Officer (SEO)

Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)

Administrator (Education)

Deputy Diocesan Director of Education (DDDE)

Diocesan Schools' Adviser

WELCOME

The Vice Chair welcomed members to the meeting and advised that he would be chairing the meeting as the Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison was currently on sabbatical.

22.14 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022 were approved and signed.

22.15 MATTERS ARISING

None.

22.16 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

22.17 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 the publication of the White Paper - Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child - a summary of which had been provided (Appendix 1). The DDE highlighted Chapter Four, which sets out plans for academisation and a timescale for all schools to academise by 2030. The DDE advised that the DBE had approved its revised Academies strategy relatively recently in May 2021, and would need to look at the options available for the 43 schools which still needed to academise.

The Ven Jeanette Gosney arrived at 16.10

The DDE noted the capacity for growth in other church school-led MATs. She had arranged a meeting with Headteachers and the CEOs of church school-led MATs for 17 May to discuss the White Paper and academisation.

The DDE noted that the White Paper refers to 7,500 pupils in a single MAT and highlighted the challenges for a rural context. The current roll for the 87 church schools is 14,500.

The DDE referred to the list of 87 church schools with recent roll figures for information (Appendix 2). The DDE also highlighted data compiled on all Dioceses (Appendix 3) which showed that 51% of church schools in our Diocese had academised. Only 8 dioceses have a higher proportion of academies.

The DDE outlined the approach from the MAT CEO at ASSET Education Trust, which has 14 schools including Stutton CofE Primary School. This is the only exception to the usual rule that church schools belong to a church school-led or Diocesan MAT. ASSET is interested in taking on more church schools and the DDE highlighted the wish to uphold the principle of church schools only joining church MATs. The DDE welcomed the DBE's support on this and asked for comments.

John Dixon agreed that a measured approach to academisation should be adopted and that discussions should take place with schools. John Dixon felt that the principle that church schools join church school-led MATs should be upheld to preserve the Christian ethos of schools and to support our own MATs.

Hugo Parker asked if there would be a point at which another MAT would be needed. The DDE advised that she is working closely with Heads on this and is exploring options, such as church schools establishing their own MATs.

Guy McGregor felt that the rural issues faced by schools needed to be highlighted in any response.

Gillian Mitchell highlighted that East Bergholt CEVCP School had considered academisation but due to the successful model of working with local pyramid schools had decided not to academise. Gillian added that going forward the school needs to ensure this model continues to work but would be interested in attending the Headteachers' meeting on 17 May.

Paul Ryle highlighted the experience at Mellis CofE Primary School. Paul had held the same view because of close links to pyramid schools but this had changed as schools had academised.

Jane Addis asked about the Diocesan MAT's capacity and the DDE advised that the MAT currently has 21 schools but there could be scope for some growth in future. John Dixon reiterated that it was important to have discussions at this stage but not to rush and make quick decisions. Mary Lewis highlighted her own experience in a

school within the All Saints Schools Trust and felt it would be wise to keep schools informed to ensure schools were well prepared.

The Chair thanked the DDE for summarising the issue of academisation and members for the discussion. The Chair asked for an update on academisation at future meetings.

The DDE noted the publication of the Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and had provided a summary (Appendix 4). The DDE advised that Ros Somerville, Assistant Director (Inclusion), Suffolk County Council would be meeting with church school Headteachers on 5 May to discuss some of the issues affecting schools. The DDE will be responding to the Green Paper and will contact members for their input.

John Dixon highlighted that a number of services provided by the Local Authority had been cut which has impacted on schools and suggested that the lack of core services be included in any response. Mary Lewis felt that parents should be considered and that any views should be communicated to them.

The DDE provided an update on the DBE Measure and that Diocesan Synod had approved the legal scheme whereby the DBE will become a statutory committee of the DBF from 1 January 2023. The DBE Measure will next go to Bishop's Council. The DDE referred to the draft terms of reference (Appendix 5) and outlined the minor changes made since the last meeting and asked for DBE approval of the changes, which members approved.

The DDE expressed gratitude to Hugo Parker, Tim Fairbairn and the Buildings Officer for their continued work on the former St James site. The executive trustees have identified a preferred bidder and it is hoped that the sale will progress in the coming weeks/ months.

The DDE referred to a piece of work focussing on the church visions of church schools (Appendix 7) by the Schools' Adviser and DDE. This had been provided for information. Discussion followed on the importance of the school vision and underpinning theology and how this should be embedded throughout the school. Gillian Mitchell advised that the SEO will be attending a staff meeting at East Bergholt CEVCP School to help with the re-examining of the school's Christian vision.

The Chair thanked the DDE for the ongoing work on school visions and for the work represented in the DDE report.

22.18 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

The SEO introduced Paper B, providing Ofsted and SIAMS outcomes for church schools published since the previous meeting. The SEO noted the Ofsted inspection at Creting St Mary CEVAP and the SIAMS inspection at Hopton CEVCP School: both schools had been judged good. The Ofsted inspection had included a focus on protected characteristics and on the personal wellbeing of pupils. The SIAMS inspection had focused on the school's Christian vision and on the knowledge, understanding and impact of this within the school.

The SEO noted the key points from the White Paper on school effectiveness.

Hugo Parker asked about the role of the DBE in relation to the Ofsted and SIAMS data provided in the report. The SEO advised that the data are provided for information and discussion purposes and are included as success criteria in the DBE Strategy Action Plan.

JS highlighted that the DBE has advisory rights on the appointment of Headteachers and can influence, for example through the appointment of foundation governors.

The DBE officers also provide training for governors on topics including Ofsted and assessment which help to ensure that foundation governors are able to support schools effectively. The DBE acknowledged the work of the SEO and the data provided in the report and that changes to the inspection frameworks will make it harder to excel.

John Dixon felt that the change to criteria for SIAMS judgements will make it harder to compare data. The DDDE advised that education officers hold regular meetings to identify schools in need of support.

Paul Ryle referred to the number of Ofsted judgments per year since 2006 and asked whether there were some schools which had still not been inspected for a number of years. The SEO will report back on this. The Chair asked if the SEO could send information on this to all members.

Action: SEO to provide data on Ofsted judgments since 2006 and schools not inspected.

Mary Lewis noted the work of the Schools' Adviser and the use of the Emmanuel Project within church and community schools.

The Chair thanked the SEO for his report.

22.19 ADMISSIONS

The DDDE introduced Paper C, providing an update on admissions since the last meeting. The DDDE noted:

- the removal of Church attendance-based oversubscription criteria for Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools, which is to ensure that VC admissions procedures do not disadvantage local children but does not remove, change or dilute the Christian ethos of VC schools
- comments from the Local Authority's consultation on this have been provided for information (Appendix 1)
- five Voluntary Aided schools need to complete a full consultation from September 2022, for the 2024-2025 admissions round, as part of the statutory seven year cycle and the DDDE will be contacting the schools to advise and support
- support to church schools on admission related matters and other sources of support on refugees and evacuees from Ukraine.

The Chair thanked the DDDE for her work.

22.20 RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP UPDATE

The Schools' Adviser referred to Paper D, providing an update on RE and Collective Worship work since the last meeting. The Schools' Adviser noted:

- completion of 11 days' work for SACRE on rewriting materials for the Agreed Syllabus on RE
- development of a range of monitoring materials to enable RE Subject Leaders to review the effectiveness of RE provision
- development of seven padlets on world faiths providing links to resources on background reading, sensitivities to be aware of in representing that religion or worldview in class, places to visit
- completion of RE training for Suffolk and Norfolk SCITT and the good response to the provision of padlets

- outreach of the Emmanuel Project Facebook page is reaching 115 people.

The Chair highlighted the usefulness of the padlets. Paul Ryle agreed and added that the Schools' Adviser had included padlet links within her email signature which he had sent to colleagues which had been helpful.

The Ven Jeanette Gosney felt that the inclusion of resources on sensitivities in representing religions or worldviews was useful as this was not always covered by books. Gillian Mitchell added that East Bergholt CEVCP is still finding the collective worship planning on values useful.

The Chair thanked the Schools' Adviser for her work.

22.21 SCHOOL CONDITION ALLOCATION

The Buildings Officer referred to Paper E and advised that the DBE had approved the Diocesan Asset Management Plan (AMP) in November 2020. The plan sets out how the Diocese will maintain oversight of the estate and make decisions about the allocation of capital grant. Following the DBE's adoption of an Environment Policy in November 2021, the Diocesan AMP has been updated to include energy efficiency/ decarbonisation as an additional factor to prioritise bids.

The Buildings Officer asked if the DBE would authorise the DDE and Buildings Officer to allocate the SCA funding on a priority basis, subject to competitive quotes/tenders being obtained by schools, and reserving a contingency for unforeseen items arising during the grant year. DBE Members approved, noting that the bids exceeded the grant by a factor of five.

The Chair asked if preparations were being made for price increases. The Buildings Officer advised that contingencies will be added to projects.

Guy McGregor asked about comparisons in funding with other Dioceses. The Buildings Officer advised that the formula is published by the Government and does include regional cost variations. There is also a factor applied based on the condition of the schools.

The Chair thanked the Buildings Officer.

22.22 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Pete Mumford referred to Paper F, the Local Authority report and noted:

- the Local Authority is currently looking at the implications of the White Paper and academisation
- admissions
 - the primary admissions round for September 2022 has been successful, with 95.6% of applicants receiving an offer of a school place at their first preference school, and 99.22% receiving an offer at one of their three preferred schools
 - the Local Authority is currently following the normal in-year admission procedures to support Ukrainian refugees and the DfE is holding an information session for Local Authorities on 3 May which may lead to further changes being made
 - the Local Authority is not currently proposing to make any changes to Admission Arrangements for the 2024/2025 school year.
- Primary admission statistics
 - compared to previous offer days, Suffolk offered 468 fewer places between the 2020 and 2022 academic years

- School Infrastructure
 - increase costs for schools not just on building costs and petrol, the Local Authority is trying to work around decarbonisation and the increase in costs on this
 - nine schools being considered for the schools rebuilding programme.

The Ven Jeanette Gosney asked if school places were available for Ukrainian refugee children due to falling admission numbers, and asked if schools were set up to support with traumatised children and language barriers. Peter Mumford advised that school spaces are available although these might not be in the right area. Schools do have experience of dealing with children where English is not the first language.

The DDDE highlighted that the Department for Education is in contact with schools about this and that funding is available to help schools. The DDDE felt that schools wanted to support. Paul Ryle agreed that schools would be willing to help but that some schools might be better set up to support than others. Discussion followed on the level of support needed to support refugee children, the infrastructure and services required, and the pressure which this could place on schools.

The Chair thanked Pete Mumford for his report and members for their comments.

22.23 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

The DDE advised that a revised list of foundation governors had been circulated before the meeting. The DBE ratified the appointment of Foundation Governors listed in the revised Paper G.

22.24 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Academisation

22.25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS-

None

22.26 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board noted that future meetings would take place on:

Tuesday 13 September 2022 @ 4.00pm in person

Tuesday 22 November 2022 @ 1.30pm in person (to be confirmed nearer the time)

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 5.30pm with the Grace.

Signed: _____
[Chairman]

Date: _____