



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

DBE (22)M3

DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Thursday 15 September 2022 at 4.00pm in the Boardroom.

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

Present:

Mrs Jane Addis	The Ven Jeanette Gosney
Mrs Elaine Burdiss	The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison (Chair)
The Revd Dr Karen Burton	Mr Hugo Parker
Mr John Dixon	Mr Paul Ryle
Mr Tim Fairbairn	The Revd Toby Tate

Apologies:

The Revd Penny Brinkley	Mr Guy McGregor
Mr Tom Brooke	The Revd Carl Melville (Vice Chair)
Mrs Jane Eccleston	Mr Pete Mumford
Mrs Mary Lewis	Mr Drew Quayle

In Attendance:

Ms Nymone Da Costa Jones	Regional Lead for Education (North Suffolk), SCC
Mr Daniel Jones	Diocesan Buildings Officer
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)
Mrs Gemma Taylor	Diocesan Schools' Adviser

In attendance for items 22.27:

Mr Andrew Berry CEO, Tilian Partnership

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, Nymone Da Costa Jones who was attending in place of Pete Mumford and Andrew Berry for the first item.

The Chair advised that this was John Dixon's last meeting and thanked John for his service over the last four years. The Chair noted that Revd Penny Brinkley had also resigned and had sent apologies as she had Covid. The DDE confirmed that Nicholas Jardine and Gillian Mitchell had also resigned since the last meeting. The Chair expressed his thanks for their service.

Tim Fairbairn and Paul Ryle arrived at 4.05pm

22.27 TILIAN ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

Andrew Berry referred to Paper A, a letter from the Tilian Partnership asking for the Board's approval to change the Articles of Association to allow Voluntary Aided (VA) schools to join the Trust. Andrew Berry advised that the Trust currently has eight

former Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools and intends to remain a small MAT, with capacity to grow to 13-15 schools but that the focus is the relationship with schools. Andrew advised that although the Trust may not have experience of VA schools, it works closely with the Diocesan education team for support and expertise.

Ven Jeanette Gosney asked why the Trust decided to take VC schools initially. Andrew Berry advised that the first four schools to join the Trust had been VC schools, and the Articles of Association reflected that. The DDE advised that there were two model articles, one for VA and one for VC schools.

John Dixon had read that local governing bodies within the Trust have autonomy and support rather than being managed, and asked whether this would change as the Trust grew. Andrew Berry advised that the Trust wants schools to continue to enjoy autonomy.

The Revd Toby Tate asked if non-church schools will be allowed to join the Trust. Andrew Berry advised that the Trust would be open to this in due course.

The Chair noted the challenge for the DBE of appointing trustees if the Articles of Association did change to allow VA schools. Andrew Berry noted that VA focused Articles of Association would require more diocesan representation and appreciated this could be difficult as currently there is only one representative, which had been noted in the Paper. Ven Jeanette Gosney highlighted there were currently five Diocesan trustees at the All Saints Schools Trust. The DDE confirmed that the majority of trustees would need to be appointed by the Diocese and this would need to be discussed.

Hugo Parker asked what action was required and the timeframe for this. Andrew Berry advised that the Trust would need to approach Lee Bolton Monier-Williams with a letter of consent from the Diocese to change the Articles of Association. The Board of Members currently has Jane representing the Diocesan Umbrella Trust together with the Revd Dr Alan Harding and Tom Brooke.

The DDE asked if the DBE would approve, in principle, the change to Tilian's Articles of Association to allow Voluntary Aided schools to join the Trust. Discussion on trustees would take place in due course. The DBE approved the change.

22.28 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2022 were approved and signed.

22.29 MATTERS ARISING

None.

22.30 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

22.31 RE AGREED SYLLABUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHURCH SCHOOLS

The Schools' Adviser referred to Paper F, providing a summary of the new Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education due for implementation in September 2023. The new Syllabus is available on the SACRE website <https://suffolklearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Suffolk-Agreed-Syllabus-Where-do-I-stand-2023-28.pdf>

The Schools' Adviser noted:

- no substantial change for RE subject leaders who are well engaged
- the old attainment targets of 'Learning about religion and belief' and 'Learning from religion and belief' have been replaced with the academic disciplines of

theology, human and social science, and philosophy to explore religious and non-religious belief

- there are new updated assessment expectations
- non-statutory guidance is available for teachers on the SACRE website <https://suffolklearning.com/sacre/>
- greater expectations for Key Stage 3, which the Schools' Adviser will be writing
- more opportunities to learn about Humanism with the swapping of units at Key Stage 1 and 2
- additional guidance on access to RE for SEND pupils.

The Chair asked what was governing this change. The Schools' Adviser highlighted two recent reports: Religion and Worldviews - the way forward (2018) from the Commission on RE (CORE); and Worldviews in Religious Education (2020) from the Theos Think Tank. Both reports recommended that the focus of religious education should be reframed around the concept of worldviews to become more inclusive.

Ven Jeanette Gosney asked if those behind the policy had a vision of the expected outcomes. The Schools' Adviser responded that the recommendations in both reports were predominantly about content and knowledge of different faiths but also how this should be taught in the classroom to allow for diversity and offer educational challenge.

Tim Fairbairn asked whether the new syllabus was mandatory for schools and how this would be rolled out to schools in Suffolk. The Schools' Adviser confirmed that the new syllabus was mandatory for all maintained schools but academies could decide if they wanted to follow the syllabus.

The Schools' Adviser referred to Paper G, providing a statement from the DBE with recommendations for church schools and their governing bodies to use the new Agreed Syllabus for RE.

Jane Addis asked if the use of 'religious education' was a challenge, if there was an understanding of what was meant by RE and whether this put children off the subject. The Schools' Adviser highlighted that different titles were now used, such as beliefs and values and worldviews and faith.

The Revd Toby Tate referred to the recommendation that regular contact should be maintained with the Diocesan Schools' Adviser, local churches and the Cathedral, and asked whether the wording should be firmer to ensure clergy were doing this. Discussion followed on the meaning of regular and the role of clergy. The Schools' Adviser agreed to reword this recommendation by removing regular and to have separate recommendations for contact with the Schools' Adviser and with clergy.

John Dixon felt that the key issue was for our churches to engage more widely with schools and felt this should be part of the discussion.

The Schools' Adviser noted the Church of England's RE Statement of Entitlement for church schools which advises that Christianity should be the majority religion. In the statement, the recommendation is for all Church of England academies to follow this, not just VA schools, and asked if the DBE were content with this.

Revd Dr Karen Burton asked if all VC schools should make this change and not just former VC academies. The Schools' Adviser highlighted that all VC maintained schools have to follow the Syllabus so are not able to teach more Christianity but suggested that VC schools can enrich the experience through theme days with a RE focus.

The Chair felt that the values of Christianity being embedded in schools could only be beneficial and the DDE suggested that the recommendations be communicated to schools and clergy.

Tim Fairbairn asked if the team were equipped with resources to do this. The Schools' Adviser confirmed that schools were already aware of the changes.

The Chair thanked the Schools' Adviser for the report and her work.

Action: The Schools' Adviser to communicate the recommendations to schools and clergy.

22.32 DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION'S REPORT

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

- schools are facing huge cost pressures due to unfunded pay awards and the steep rise in fuel costs and she has written to all six Suffolk MPs to lobby for additional funding for schools
- the term of office for current DBE members ends on 31 December 2022 and the DDE expressed her gratitude to members for serving for four years instead of the usual three, and encouraged members to seek re-election
- the Diocesan MAT will be seeking to recruit a full-time CEO from 1 January 2023, advertising and holding interviews in September, which had been communicated to DBE members via email on 30 June
- the third reading of the Schools Bill in the House of Lords has been postponed as the Government reviews current legislation
- the DDDE submitted a response on behalf of the DBE to the consultation on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) by the due deadline
- progress continues on the sale of the former St James site and the DDE expressed her gratitude to the Buildings Officer for his continuing work
- former VC schools within the Diocesan MAT will consult in November and December on removing the oversubscription criteria relating to church attendance. The purpose of this change in admission arrangements is to ensure that VC admissions procedures do not disadvantage local children, it is not about removing, changing or diluting the Christian ethos of voluntary controlled schools
- following the success of Inspiring Angels last year in Ipswich, the Diocese is looking forward to rolling out Inspiring Angels in schools and churches this Advent
- an Open the Book event will take place on Saturday 8 October for anyone interested in renewing, updating, starting or exploring an Open the Book team. Hilary Wordsworth-Sewell, Diocesan Children's and Families' Officer and the Schools' Adviser will be involved with the event.

Jane Addis asked about the process for DBE elections. The DDE advised that details about the process would be sent to DBE members.

Action: The DDE to ensure that details about the election process would be sent to DBE members.

The Ven Jeanette Gosney supported the Open the Book event and asked how this was going to be communicated. E-news would be used.

Tim Fairbairn highlighted that schools may need to set negative budgets and asked how the local authority would feel about this. Paul Ryle advised that strategic decisions are having to be made now in school due to budget restrictions. The DDE encouraged members to lobby MPs.

Action: Nymone Da Costa Jones to respond to the issue of schools setting negative budgets.

The DDE noted the DBE Strategy Action Plan for 2022-25 (Paper B Appendix) which is reviewed by the DBE twice a year. Tim Fairbairn suggested including support for schools with academisation despite the political uncertainty. The DDE highlighted the Trust Capacity Fund (TCaF), which helps new trusts to form and existing trusts to develop capacity and take on underperforming schools, particularly in education investment areas, which is due to be offered over a longer period, to 31 March 2025, rather than one year.

The Ven Jeanette Gosney asked about the success criteria for encouraging links between churches and schools. The DDE advised that this could be based on Ofsted and SIAMS outcomes. The Ven Jeanette Gosney asked about projects to broker Open the Book, Prayer Spaces. The DDE advised that this is hard to measure but would look at this.

Action: The DDE to include academisation in the DBE Strategy Action Plan 2022-2025 and to look at success criteria for encouraging links between churches and schools.

The Chair thanked the DDE for the report.

22.33 SIAMS UPDATE

The SEO introduced Paper C, the Annual Report of the National Director of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). The SEO noted:

- schools with strong links with the local church and Diocese have better Christian foundations and highlighted that this could be used as a measure for the DBE Strategy Action Plan
- the new integration framework appears to be working well with administration provided by the central SIAMS team and school support provided by Dioceses
- ongoing work is needed on the Christian vision in schools
- church schools responded well to families and communities through the pandemic
- RE and collective worship are strengths in church schools
- the concept of courageous advocacy is to be developed in schools
- data suggests that VA schools do better than VC in overall judgements
- a formal system for complaints is in place although currently numbers are low
- there is a culture of forgiveness and restoration in church schools
- there were 236 inspections in 2021 of which 54 were judged excellent, 176 good, 6 requires improvement and none ineffective
- our diocese had three inspections which were all good.

The Chair asked if there was anything surprising in the report. The SEO found the report reassuring but expressed concern at the rate of inspections.

The Ven Jeanette Gosney highlighted that chaplaincy, although relatively rare, appeared to be playing an important role in the Church schools in which it played an active part and asked who was responsible for this in the Diocesan office.

The SEO advised that Bury Christian Youth (BCY) are currently looking at chaplaincy and the DDE advised that chaplaincy sits within the Diocesan Mission and Ministry team, which the Education team works closely with. The DDE had also met with Dean Joe to discuss this. The DDE suggested prioritising chaplaincy in secondary schools initially and that the Diocese work with Children, Youth and Mission (CYM) and BCY. The DDE highlighted work by the Diocese of Manchester on this.

Discussion followed on what was meant by chaplaincy and the need to move this forward together.

22.34 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

The SEO referred to Paper D, providing Ofsted and SIAMS outcomes for church schools published since the previous meeting. The SEO noted that the Education team participates in regular information-sharing meetings with the Local Authority, taking part in Rapid Recovery Group (RRG) meetings where schools are subject to Local Authority High Level Action (HLA). This process provides a period of intensive support and challenge to school leaders to support them to address the cause of concern, which could be with leadership, standards, teaching, data, finance or a combination of these. There are currently five church schools which are subject to HLA. Nymone Da Costa Jones advised that the Local Authority fulfils the statutory role and expectations as described in the Department for Education's Schools Causing Concern guidance. John Dixon highlighted the possibility that due to financial difficulty more schools may be subject to High Level Action.

The SEO highlighted case studies which provide examples of how church and community primary schools within the Diocese are engaging with their local churches in innovative and effective ways. The case studies represent a cross-section of urban and rural communities. Two further case studies have recently been added to the Diocesan website, one of which will be presented by Revd Dr Karen Burton at the meeting: <https://www.cofesuffolk.org/schools/schools-and-parish-churches-together/>

The SEO is liaising with Hilary Wordsworth-Sewell to explore how the case studies may be used effectively to support the diocesan vision for growth.

22.35 WORKING WITH CHURCH SCHOOLS- BLACKBOURNE TEAM MINISTRY

The Revd Dr Karen Burton introduced Paper E, a case study showing her engagement with church Schools and the engagement of her teams with their local communities. Revd Dr Karen Burton advised that she is a foundation governor in four schools, bringing Anglican distinctiveness to each school through collective worship and working with children, and as a governor, helping to develop the Christian vision in school and supporting the Headteacher and staff. The SEO highlighted Karen's support of school leaders. The Chair asked if Karen visited all four schools each week and Karen responded that she did.

Elaine Burdiss commended Karen for her work and highlighted the importance of the relationship between clergy and the Headteacher and staff. Ven Jeanette Gosney suggested that this good practice should be included in Initial Ministerial Education training. Revd Toby Tate felt that any advice from the Diocese on this should be aimed at churches rather than just clergy, to include Open the Book teams and those with the experience to work in schools.

The Chair thanked Revd Dr Karen Burton for her inspiring work.

22.36 HEAT DECARBONISATION PLAN

The Buildings Officer referred to Paper H, a report on Voluntary Aided School Heat Decarbonisation Plans. The Buildings Officer noted the Church of England's target to reach CO² net zero emissions by 2030 and the substantial work which will be required to the nine VA and 21 Diocesan MAT schools to achieve this. In order to support schools and help with the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), information on what is required and how much this will cost is needed. Despite two unsuccessful bids for funding for Heat Decarbonisation Plans (HDPs) to help with this, the DBE was awarded £23,500 in the third round which will fund HDPs at the nine VA schools, together with an estate-wide summary report. HDPs have already been

commissioned for the 21 Diocesan MAT schools using DfE capacity funding for academy trusts, and the reports will be ready shortly. This funding has a strict deadline for expenditure of 31 March 2023 and the Buildings Officer has invited consultants to tender for this professional work, with a deadline for submission of 13 September 2022. The DBE was asked to approve the arrangements for awarding the contract and proposed programme; and delegate authority to the DDE to approve the final HDPs. The DBE approved.

The Chair thanked the Buildings Officer for his report and work, particularly with his successful bid for funding.

22.37 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Nymone Da Costa Jones referred to Paper I, the Local Authority report and noted:

- the Local Authority is changing its website platform and will be working to migrate the relevant information on admissions seamlessly, though it may look slightly different
- three new schools have opened in Suffolk this academic year
- Thorndon CEVCP School is due to convert on 1 November 2022 to join the All Saints Schools Trust although due to current building works this may change.

The Chair thanked Nymone Da Costa Jones for the report.

22.38 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

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

22.39 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chaplaincy (Revd Toby Tate)

22.40 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

22.41 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board noted that future meetings would take place on:

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

Thursday 9 February 2023 @ 1.30pm

Tuesday 2 May 2023 @ 4pm

Tuesday 12 September 2023 @ 4pm

Thursday 23 November 2023 @ 1.30pm

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 5.40pm with the Grace.

Signed: _____
[Chairman]

Date: _____