



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

DBE (20)M4

DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 1.30pm via Zoom.

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

Present:

Mrs Jane Addis	Mr Nicholas Jardine
The Revd Penny Brinkley	Mrs Mary Lewis
Mr Tom Brooke	Mr Guy McGregor
Mrs Elaine Burdiss	The Revd Carl Melville
Mr John Dixon	Mrs Gillian Mitchell
Mrs Jane Eccleston	Mr Hugo Parker
Mr Tim Fairbairn	Mr Paul Ryle
The Ven Jeanette Gosney	The Revd Toby Tate
The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison (Chair)	

Apologies:

Mr Pete Mumford	The Revd Canon Sharon Potter
Mrs Frances Parr	Mr Drew Quayle

In Attendance:

Mrs Karen Harman	Deputy Diocesan Director of Education (DDDE)
Mr Daniel Jones	Diocesan Buildings Officer
Miss Gemma Kingston	Diocesan Schools' Adviser
Mr Phil Knowles	Diocesan School Effectiveness Officer
Ms Gill Larkin	Head of School Leadership Development, Suffolk County Council
Mrs Jane Sheat	Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)
Miss Jacqui Studd	Administrator (Education)

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting including Gill Larkin who was representing the local authority in place of Pete Mumford. The Chair also paid a warm tribute to the DDDE who would be retiring in December and thanked her for her contribution to the work of the DBE.

20.49 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 were approved and signed.

20.50 MATTERS ARISING

None.

20.51 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Elaine Burdiss, Headteacher at Elmsett CEVCP School.

20.52 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 paid warm tribute to church school Headteachers and their staff for their resilience in coping with a range of COVID-19 issues whilst trying to concentrate on teaching and learning. Gillian Mitchell shared her recent experience of dealing with a case of COVID at East Bergholt CEVCP School. Elaine Burdiss, Elmsett CEVCP School advised that the school had not experienced any COVID cases although staff shielding had impacted on the school. Paul Ryle, Mellis CofE Primary School added that one member of staff had been affected and that the school is trying to minimise risk and manage expectations.

The Chair asked about the issues affecting the wellbeing of Heads and whether there were any trends. The DDE advised that Heads are good at looking after staff but are also under pressure to deal with the day to day running of the school, as well as COVID queries and trying to catch up on pupil learning. The wellbeing of Heads remains a concern and to support Heads, a session on wellbeing was arranged and delivered by Suffolk Mind in early November. A session on wellbeing was also delivered by Suffolk Mind at the recent annual church school leaders' conference.

The Chair highlighted the Diocesan Educational Leadership Programme research project. The DDE explained that the research project is looking at the contribution which DBEs and their education teams make to the mission of their diocese, and the impact.

The DDE noted:

- the Department for Education briefing on COVID-19, children and education settings (Appendix 1)
- the Ofsted report on recent visits made to schools with a focus on curriculum and quality of education (Appendix 2).

The Chair expressed her thanks to DBE members who had attended the recent annual church school leaders' conference.

Action: The DDE to send a message of thanks to church school Heads on behalf of the DBE.

20.53 DBE MEASURE

The DDE introduced Paper B, which provided details of proposed changes to the DBE Measure 1991. The DDE advised that the draft Measure (Appendix 1) is going to General Synod for final approval on 25 November 2020 and is expected to receive Royal Assent in April 2021, with an implementation date of either January 2022 or January 2023. The draft Measure proposes three options for the legal structure of a DBE and the Church of England has summarised the key benefits and drawbacks of each option (Appendix 2). The DDE noted that the option for the DBE to be a statutory committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) is the closest to the current unincorporated structure of the DBE. No formal decision can yet be made, however the DDE invited comments and discussion.

Tim Fairbairn favoured the option for the DBE to be a statutory committee of the DBF although he noted the need to ring-fence financial risk between the DBE and DBF. The DDE advised that the Barchester Fund can only be spent on education and that national templates from the Church of England will provide safeguards for funds and resources.

Tim Fairbairn asked about managing capital projects for voluntary aided (VA) schools. The DDE advised that this might be more of an issue in some Dioceses but that there are only nine voluntary aided church schools in the Diocese. The Buildings Officer

added that although we manage VA projects on behalf of VA schools, professional consultants such as architects and surveyors are used.

Tim Fairbairn asked if capital projects could be shared with the Diocesan MAT. The DDE advised that as the Diocesan MAT is a separate entity, capital projects would need to be kept separate but good practice could be shared.

Hugo Parker asked about the process for making a decision on which legal structure to adopt. The DDE advised that initial discussion would be helpful now with fuller discussion at the next meeting in February. A decision will need to be approved at Bishop's Council and adopted by Diocesan Synod, which is likely to be at the June 2021 meeting.

Hugo Parker asked which option was financially efficient. The Chair suggested a Task and Finish Group to look at the details of each option and asked members to advise if they would like to join, following this meeting.

Members agreed that the preferred option would be for the DBE to be a statutory committee of the DBF in the first instance.

20.54 SIAMS

The DDE referred to Paper C, a proposal from the Church of England for a nationally integrated system for SIAMS to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness and deliver a more consistent approach to quality assurance. The system aims to come into effect in April 2021, will cost £5.5k and will also give the SEO more time to focus on offering support and training to schools on SIAMS rather than administration.

Hugo Parker asked if the cost of the new system is higher than is currently paid. The DDE confirmed that the new system would cost more but was satisfied that it had been well thought through. The DDE highlighted that Bishop Martin is currently leading the Church of England's Transforming Effectiveness project which is looking at, among other things, what is best done at Diocesan, regional and national levels. SIAMS fits into what is best done at a national level.

Jane Eccleston agreed with the proposal and felt that having a nationally co-ordinated system for SIAMS would improve consistency across the country and make SIAMS recognised and respected. Although there is a higher cost, this would provide the SEO with more time to focus on support for schools.

Tim Fairbairn asked if Ofsted and SIAMS might combine inspection systems, and also queried the cost and workload of critical readers and whether this could impact on quality. The DDE advised that it was unlikely that the two inspections regimes would merge as each regime is different. However, Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer at the Church of England has been working with Ofsted on the new national system for SIAMS. The DDE agreed that rates of pay for inspectors and critical readers is low.

The SEO supported the national co-ordination of SIAMS which would ensure consistency and quality assurance, although noted that there might be one or two teething issues.

Mary Lewis agreed with the proposal believing that a national system would reassure governing bodies of a consistent approach to inspections.

Gillian Mitchell felt that the current two inspection regimes might deter future church school Headteachers.

The DDE asked for approval for the proposal for a nationally co-ordinated SIAMS system which was agreed by members.

20.55 ADMISSIONS

The DDDE referred to Paper D, an overview of voluntary controlled (VC) schools and church attendance-based oversubscription criteria. The DDDE referred to information from Suffolk County Council (Appendix 1) which showed the number of applications to VC schools which rely on the church attendance criteria by school for the last four years 2017 - 2020. The DDDE asked that the DBE consider whether oversubscription criteria be removed from all VC schools admission policies.

Tom Brooke felt that this issue should be considered as the figures showed that there were only a few cases where faith criteria affected the outcome. While it was positive for schools to have more children with a faith background, having faith criteria could deter parents from sending their children to church schools which are under-subscribed.

Jane Eccleston agreed that this should be considered for primary schools but that the faith criteria should be kept for secondary schools.

The Revd Toby Tate highlighted that families attending church in order for their children to be admitted to church schools, was positive, although he noted that clergy can be put under stress by parents who need them to sign admission forms.

Paul Ryle felt that removing the faith criteria would take away the essence of a church school.

The Revd Carl Melville suggested that a wider review of admissions was needed because the nature of village schools had changed as well as catchment areas.

Tim Fairbairn asked whether the Diocesan MAT is considering changing over-subscription criteria in its schools' admission policies. The DDE advised that the Diocesan MAT is not considering a change at this stage as those academies which were formerly VC schools are generally undersubscribed.

The Chair and DDDE thanked members for the discussion and it was agreed for further discussion and consideration to take place in 2021 after changes to the Admissions Code.

20.56 GROWING FAITH CASE STUDIES

The SEO introduced Paper E, a case study representing the good practice taking place between the church and local schools in the Bacton Benefice with Wyverstone, Cotton and Old Newton, Wickham Skeith and Gipping. The Revd Carl Melville spoke about the work currently taking place between the six churches in the benefice and Old Newton CofE Primary School and Bacton Primary School. He spoke about the impact of COVID, building online relationships with schools and the importance of conveying the message of what the church has to offer.

Revd Carl recommended family@church, a resource to help rural churches grow. The resource is made up of once a month service plans based on the Church of England calendar and aimed at engaging families. This resource could also be used for collective worship in schools. Revd Carl would share the resource with anyone interested and John Dixon suggested that anyone wishing to see the resource should contact the Education Administrator.

The Chair thanked the Revd Carl Melville and the SEO for the ideas captured in the case study. He commended the family@church book. The Ven Jeanette Gosney felt the case study would be inspirational for ministry teams and PCC's as well as clergy in forging relationships with local schools. She asked how the case study would be disseminated.

The Chair advised that there are plans for a new platform for clergy to share online skills and ideas and to network, and that the case studies will be made available here.

Action: Case studies to be made available on the new platform when available.

Action: Revd Carl Melville to send the family@church resource to the Education Administrator.

20.57 SCHOOL CONDITION ALLOCATIONS (SCA) AND ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR VA SCHOOLS

The Buildings Officer referred to Paper F and appendices, providing details of the new SCA system for funding capital projects in VA schools and the requirement on Dioceses to complete an Asset Management Plan. The plan will set out how the Diocese will maintain oversight of the estate and make decisions about the allocation of capital grant. The Buildings Officer noted that the plan will also help Dioceses ensure that VA governing bodies are managing their schools strategically, sourcing appropriate professional advice and securing value for money.

Guy McGregor noted the timescale of the process. The Buildings Officer advised that the system is more efficient and faster although the difficulty is not being able to allocate funds until the final allocation has been confirmed.

Tim Fairbairn asked about the cost of appointing professionals to manage capital projects. The Buildings Officer advised that although this will generate higher costs, it will also help ensure value for money on capital projects within schools.

20.58 PUBLIC SECTOR DECARBONISATION SCHEME

The Buildings Officer referred to Paper G, outlining the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), which provides grants for public sector bodies to fund energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation measures. The Buildings Officer noted that the Church of England has set targets for all parts of the church to become carbon net zero by 2030 and that schools will be a key area of focus. In addition to the PSDS there is also the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF), a second grant fund which covers professional project development support and Heat Decarbonisation Plan development for schools.

The Buildings Officer advised that he would be working to develop a DBE environmental strategy, including carbon net zero.

The Chair thanked the Buildings Officer for his work on this important subject. The Chair noted that the Revd Richard Stainer will be doing some scoping work over the next few months on how the Diocese moves to a net zero target. The Chair asked what the DBE needed to do.

The Buildings Officer asked for the DBE to endorse the steps already taken as outlined in his report and that support be given towards a DBE Environmental strategy.

The Ven Jeanette Gosney commended this important area and suggested that it needed to be linked with the work taking place in the Diocese and particularly with the Revd Richard Stainer's work. She noted the deadline of 4 December for the LCSF and asked if there would be enough applications given the timeframe.

The Buildings Officer advised that he is currently preparing bids for submission next week as well as analysing data to understand consumption in order to prioritise.

Members agreed for the need to move forward with this and to meet the deadline.

20.59 CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO PROPOSED CHANGE OF STATUS TO ACADEMY WITHIN DIOCESAN MAT-ELMSETT CEVCP SCHOOL

The DDE referred to Paper H, which provided information on Elmsett CEVCP School's proposal to become an academy within the Diocesan MAT. The DDE advised that the MAT was currently undertaking due diligence on the school and that information supplied did not include 2020 pupil attainment and progress data due to COVID.

Elaine Burdiss left the meeting

The DBE consented to Elmsett CEVCP School joining the Diocesan MAT.

Elaine Burdiss re-joined the meeting

20.60 RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP UPDATE

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

- the second collective worship planning for the autumn term had been well received and that she will be writing further resources for the spring term
- the collective worship webpage had received 351 hits in October 2020
- knowledge organisers for the Emmanuel Project world faiths are now available on the Diocesan website
- work is underway on a 'one stop RE shop,' an online platform where teachers will be able to access guidance, advice and examples of pupil RE learning which supports the Emmanuel Project 2020 units.

The Chair asked whether the Schools' Adviser was receiving any digital training help. The Schools' Adviser answered that she will be attending online training in the new year.

The Chair thanked the Schools' Adviser for her work.

Action: The Schools' Adviser to present on the Emmanuel Project online platform at a future meeting.

Paul Ryle left the meeting at 3.00pm

20.61 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

The SEO introduced Paper J, providing an update on school effectiveness work since the last meeting. The SEO advised that there are no Ofsted or SIAMS inspections to report on due to the suspension of school inspections as a result of COVID. An announcement is still forthcoming on when SIAMS and Ofsted inspections will resume.

The SEO advised that SIAMS support visits for schools had begun but since lockdown schools have opted for a conversation remotely instead, requesting that their full visit be deferred.

The Chair asked whether the number of Headteacher Performance Management reviews was usual. The SEO advised that both he and the DDDE had received more requests this year.

20.62 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Gill Larkin referred to Paper K, which provided an update on local authority issues arising since the last meeting.

Tim Fairbairn asked whether schools across Suffolk were involved with the PSDS. Gill noted the question and advised that she would need to take this question to

colleagues at the local authority. The Buildings Officer advised that he has been working with the local authority on PSDS concerning VC schools.

Mary Lewis asked about the monitoring of children being home educated. Gill advised that the Elective Home Education team, led by Francesca Alexander, works closely with parents who are home educating. Further information on this will be supplied at the next meeting.

Guy McGregor noted the impact of funding cuts on the LA and services offered to schools.

The Chair thanked Gill Larkin for the local authority update.

20.63 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

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

20.64 APPROVAL OF VEN JEANETTE GOSNEY AS MEMBER OF ALL SAINTS SCHOOLS TRUST

The DBE approved the appointment of the Ven Jeanette Gosney as a member of the All Saints Schools Trust.

20.65 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Church attendance as part of oversubscription criteria in admissions policies for voluntary controlled schools.

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)

DBE Strategy Action plan

Emmanuel Project online platform

Action: Members to contact the DDE if they would like to add an item.

20.66 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

20.67 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board noted that future meetings would take place on:

Tuesday 9 February 2021 at 1pm for 1.30pm

Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 5.30pm for 6pm

Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 5.30pm for 6pm

Tuesday 23 November 2021 at 1pm for 1.30pm

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.20pm.

Signed: _____
[Chairman]

Date: _____