



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

DBE (24)M2

DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Wednesday 8 May 2024 at 4.00pm in the Boardroom and via Zoom.

Prayers: The Revd Toby Tate led the opening prayer.

Present:

Mrs Jane Addis
Mrs Joanne Austin
Mrs Jane Eccleston

Mr Tim Fairbairn (via Zoom)
The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison (Chair)
The Ven Rich Henderson

Mrs Mary Lewis
Mrs Gillian Mitchell (via Zoom)
Mr Pete Mumford
Mr Hugo Parker
The Revd Toby Tate

Apologies:

Mr Daniel Jones
The Revd Laura Mumford

Mr Paul Ryle
Mrs Gemma Taylor

In Attendance:

Mr Phil Knowles
Mrs Jane Sheat
Miss Jacqui Studd
Mrs Sue Todd

Diocesan School Effectiveness Officer (SEO)
Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)
Administrator (Education)
Deputy Diocesan Director of Education (DDDE)

In Attendance for item 24.14:

Mrs Katie Butler Headteacher, Bawdsey CEVCP School
Mr Tony Gibson Governor, Bawdsey CEVCP School

In Attendance for item 24.15:

Mrs Vicki Gascoyne-Cecil Headteacher, Worlingworth CEVCP School
Mr Michael Southgate Governor, Worlingworth CEVCP School

In Attendance for item 24.16:

Mrs Christine Friar Headteacher, Creeting St Mary CEVAP School
Mrs Marianne Brame Chair of Governors, Creeting St Mary CEVAP School

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

24.13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

24.14 BAWDSEY CEVCP- CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO PROPOSED CHANGE TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN TILIAN PARTNERSHIP

The Chair welcomed the Headteacher and Governor from Bawdsey CEVCP School to the meeting. Katie Butler and Tony Gibson provided background to the proposal for the school to become an academy within the Tilian Partnership. The school had considered a number of options for the long-term viability of the school, felt the best option was to be part of a MAT and that Tilian offered the best fit, and would provide consistent support for the school and staff within a Trust of similar schools.

The Chair invited questions and began by asking how the school's Christian ethos could be enhanced by joining Tilian. Katie highlighted that Bawdsey shares the same Christian vision with the Tilian Partnership, the Good Samaritan, and that many of the core drivers of the MAT are closely aligned with Bawdsey.

Jane Eccleston asked about school roll and Katie advised that numbers have increased from 45 in 2017 to 74 in the current year, due to housing developments and the wider offer which the school provides. Hugo Parker asked about the recruitment and retention of staff. Katie responded that this can be difficult due to the geographical location of the school but that recent teaching vacancies have attracted applications and that staff retention is good. Mary Lewis asked about special needs pupils and Katie advised that 48% of pupils have special needs. Tim Fairbairn asked about the school's discussions with Tilian over the level of autonomy. Tony Gibson highlighted that Tilian provides centralised, consistent support for subject leads of schools within the Trust and for some aspects of governance such as finance. Tim Fairbairn asked about the finances and Tony advised that the figures provided (Paper A) would be corrected and updated figures sent and that a reserve was maintained for contingency. Mary Lewis asked whether parents had been consulted on academisation and Katie advised that they were in support.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher and Governor for their presentation, and they then left. Tim asked about the geographical location of the school within Tilian. The DDE advised that Orford CofE Primary recently joined the Trust and is located close to the school and had also been in a federation with Bawdsey.

The Chair asked if members consented to Bawdsey CEVCP School joining the Tilian Partnership. Members consented and the DDE will advise the school.

24.15 WORLINGWORTH CEVCP-CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO PROPOSED CHANGE TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN DEBENHAM HIGH (HEART OF SUFFOLK) MAT

The Chair welcomed the Headteacher and Governor from Worlingworth CEVCP School to the meeting. Vicki Gascoyne-Cecil and Michael Southgate provided background to the proposal for the school to become an academy within the Heart of Suffolk MAT. The school already works collaboratively with Debenham High School and other local church schools, shares the same Christian vision and ethos and wishes to develop a MAT to formalise this arrangement.

The Chair invited questions and began by asking how the recruitment of a chaplain at Debenham High School would work in the continuity of education from 3-16. Vicki advised that this would form part of the discussions going forward but that it would build on what is already in place to help with pupil transition from primary to secondary. The Ven Rich Henderson asked about the consultation with parents and Vicki advised that this was taking place the next day and that consultations with staff and governors had been positive.

Jane Eccleston asked if other schools would be joining the Heart of Suffolk MAT. Vicki responded that other schools within the pyramid had consulted with governors and are interested. Jane Addis asked about the timescale for the MAT and Vicki advised that the MAT should be set up by Easter 2025. Hugo Parker asked about future financial plans from 2025 and Vicki advised that there would be a small surplus but that the school roll continues to grow and funding is also received for Vicki's role as a National Leader of Education.

Tim Fairbairn noted that Worlingworth is not a feeder primary school to Debenham High School and asked if this would have a bearing on the success of the MAT going forward. Vicki responded that the school is a feeder primary in the Stradbroke High School pyramid but that Stradbroke is not a church school and that a number of pupils from out of catchment go to Debenham High School. The Deputy DDE advised that the list of feeder primary schools in Debenham High School's admission policy could be amended following consultation.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher and Governor for their presentation, and they then left. Jane Eccleston felt that it would be beneficial to have another church school-led MAT. Tim Fairbairn asked about the formation of the Heart of Suffolk MAT and about a mix of primary and secondary schools within a MAT. The DDE noted that the DBE had approved the creation of the Heart of Suffolk MAT in September 2023 when approving the updated DBE Academy Strategy, and that the inclusion of primary and secondary schools would benefit the whole child's journey through education.

The Chair asked if members consented to Worlingworth CEVCP School joining the Heart of Suffolk MAT. Members consented and the DDE will advise the school.

24.16 CREETING ST MARY CEVAP-CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO PROPOSED CHANGE TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN DEBENHAM HIGH (HEART OF SUFFOLK) MAT

The Chair welcomed the Headteacher and Chair of Governors from Creeting St Mary CEVAP School to the meeting. Christine Friar and Marianne Brame provided background to the proposal for the school to become an academy within the Heart of Suffolk MAT. The school has developed a strong working relationship with Debenham High School over many years and is a feeder primary school. Staff from schools within the pyramid regularly meet and support one another and by formalising this arrangement and creating a new MAT, this will capitalise on the good work already being done.

The Chair invited questions and Tim Fairbairn noted that consultations were currently taking place and asked if there was any initial feedback. Christine responded that staff were positive especially as pastoral care would be supported within the MAT. However, the school had wanted to obtain DBE approval before consulting parents. Tim Fairbairn asked about the synergy between primary and secondary schools. Christine highlighted that the schools already work collaboratively and the added benefits of staff development across primary and secondary education.

Mary Lewis asked about the school's Christian vision and Christine advised that pupils had chosen the vision that "Anything is possible for those who believe."

The Chair thanked the Headteacher and Governor for their presentation, and they then left. Jane Addis commented that presentations from both Worlingworth and Creeting St Mary had provided background on how the schools already work well and that due consideration had been given to academisation. Tim Fairbairn noted that the PCC had not yet been consulted. The Chair asked if members consented to

Creeping St Mary CEVAP School joining the Heart of Suffolk MAT. Members consented and the DDE will advise the school.

24.17 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2024 were approved and signed.

24.18 MATTERS ARISING

None.

24.19 DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION'S REPORT

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

- interviews for the Schools' Adviser post take place on 17 May and DBE members are warmly invited to hear presentations as part of the process
- the DfE's Regional Advisory Board approved Elveden CofE Primary as a sponsor for St Edmundsbury CEVAP
- the DfE recently announced that the start-up conversion grant of £25k will only be payable to groups of three schools joining the same academy trust with effect from September 2024
- the Diocesan MAT has appointed Tracey Caffull as the new full-time MAT CEO from 1 September 2024; Ryan Lamb, the MAT's Chief Finance Officer (CFO) has recently resigned; and Heather Hann, Head of School Improvement is reducing her hours to 0.6fte from September and will be Head of Professional Development; the MAT are currently recruiting for a part-time Head of Inclusion and SEND
- with the publication of Hartest's recent Ofsted report, all of the Diocesan MAT schools which have been inspected are currently judged Good
- five bids were submitted to the Church of England for the Flourish Network, Worshipping Communities in Schools/ FE Colleges pilot project, but unfortunately the bids were unsuccessful
- the Big Sing event with Christian Aid took place on Tuesday 26 March at the Cathedral and was attended by almost 600 people. This pilot project will be rolled out nationally next year and schools have been encouraged to fund raise for Christian Aid this term
- an update on School Condition Allocations 2024-25.

Tim Fairbairn asked if the change in policy for the start-up conversion grant will affect the academisation of St Edmundsbury CEVAP. The DDE advised that the change comes into effect from September 2024 and will not impact on St Edmundsbury as a sponsored academy. Hugo Parker noted the changes in Diocesan MAT staff and the DDE advised that the recruitment for the MAT's CFO is currently underway.

The Chair thanked the DDE for her report.

24.20 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

The SEO referred to Paper E, providing Ofsted and SIAMS outcomes for church schools published since the previous meeting. The SEO noted:

- the SIAMS inspections at Elveden CofE Primary and All Saints' CEVCP, Lawshall which had both retained Outstanding judgements
- four positive SIAMS inspections.

The DDE noted that 93% of schools have been judged by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding. Tim Fairbairn asked about the monitoring of academies in other MATs and the SEO advised that all church schools are monitored and supported. The DDE

highlighted that the SEO's report provides Ofsted and SIAMS inspections for all church schools and that the SEO reports to the DBE on KS2 data for all schools annually. Mary Lewis asked how schools have responded to the new SIAMS framework and the SEO felt that the response had been positive. The Chair asked for the reasons for the two recent Outstanding judgments and the SEO advised that this is due to leadership.

The Chair thanked the SEO for his report and work.

24.21 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

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

- St Edmundsbury is due to convert and join the Elveden CofE MAT on 1 September 2024
- 99% of Suffolk children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred primary schools
- all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements every seven years, and the next opportunity will be in the 2026/2027 school year
- pupil numbers and increased building costs are impacting on new housing developments
- development of a new secondary school in the Ipswich Garden Suburb is likely to be in 2027-2028
- secondary forecasts have been completed and sent to all high schools, and the new primary forecasts will be available in June and sent to schools as soon as completed.

The Chair thanked Pete Mumford for his report.

24.22 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

Revd Toby Tate asked whether curates could be foundation governors and the DDE advised that this is considered on a case by case basis due to a curacy only being three years. The Chair noted that there is no missive on this in Canon Law.

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

Jacqui Studd noted that information on how long foundation governor positions have been vacant had been included in the Appendix, further to a request from Tim Fairbairn at the last meeting. The Chair suggested promoting the role of school governors in the weekly Diocesan e-news. The DDE highlighted a number of vacancies were due to the local incumbent not becoming a foundation governor. Hugo Parker asked about the process of filling foundation governor vacancies, particularly where there was more than one vacancy. The Administrator advised that usually the local incumbent was approached or if there was a clergy vacancy, the Chair of Governors or churchwarden, followed by the Rural Dean. In the past, Archdeacons had promoted the role during Visitations. The Deputy DDE had also worked with the Mission and Ministry team to include school governors as a vocation:

<https://www.cofesuffolk.org/deepening-faith/training-for-ministry/school-foundation-governors/>

The Ven Rich Henderson suggested liaising with the Archdeacons about vacancies. Mary Lewis noted the number of foundation governors required for Voluntary Aided schools and the DDE advised that this was to uphold the Christian ethos of the school. The SEO noted that for inspection purposes the school does not change when it joins a MAT but maintains VA like status.

The Chair thanked the Administrator for her report.

Action: The Administrator to send the list of vacancies to the Archdeacons.

Pete Mumford left at 5.30pm

24.23 NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL IN IPSWICH GARDEN SUBURB

See confidential minute.

24.24 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

24.25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

24.26 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board noted that future meetings would take place on:

Tuesday 24 September 2024 @ 4.00pm

Wednesday 20 November 2024 @ 4.00pm

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 17.45pm.

Signed: _____
[Chairman]

Date: _____