



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

DBE (23)M2

DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Draft minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Tuesday 2 May 2023 at 4.00pm in the Boardroom and via Zoom.

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

Present:

Mrs Jane Addis (via Zoom)	The Revd Carl Melville
Mrs Jane Eccleston	The Revd Laura Mumford
Mr Tim Fairbairn	Mr Pete Mumford
The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison (Chair)	Mr Phil Papps
The Ven Rich Henderson	Mr Hugo Parker
Mrs Mary Lewis	Mr Paul Ryle
Miss Chloe Mayes	The Revd Toby Tate

Apologies:

The Revd Dr Karen Burton

In Attendance:

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 Gemma Taylor	Diocesan Schools' Adviser
Mrs Sue Todd	Deputy Diocesan Director of Education (DDDE)

In Attendance for item 23.25:

Mrs Roisin Wiseman	Headteacher, Wilby CEVCP School
Mrs Sophy Croskell	Chair of Governors, Wilby CEVCP School

In Attendance for item 23.27:

Dr Norman Kelly	Chair of Governors, Cockfield CEVCP School
Mrs Melanie Barrow	CEO, All Saints Schools Trust

In Attendance for item 23.29:

Mr Pete Bloomfield	CEO, Diocesan MAT
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In Attendance for item 23.30:

Mr Gary Peverley	Diocesan Finance Director
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The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, particularly Revd Laura Mumford who was attending her first meeting.

23.21 DBE MEMBERSHIP

The Chair welcomed the Ven Rich Henderson who had been appointed as the Archdeacon of Suffolk.

23.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

23.23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023 were approved and signed.

23.24 MATTERS ARISING

None.

23.25 WILBY CEVCP SCHOOL- CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO PROPOSED CHANGE TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN TILIAN PARTNERSHIP

The Chair welcomed the Headteacher and Chair of Governors from Wilby CEVCP School to the meeting. Roisin Wiseman and Sophy Croskell provided background to the proposal for the school to become an academy within the Tilian Partnership. The school had looked at other MATs with particular consideration for how the MAT would link with the school's Christian ethos and preserve the school's autonomy. Roisin Wiseman explained that she had worked with the Tilian Partnership, supporting and mentoring Heads and RE subject leaders within the Trust. She felt that Tilian would offer opportunities to support staff in their development.

The Chair invited questions and began by asking how the school's Christian ethos could be enhanced by joining Tilian. Roisin Wiseman advised that having already worked with schools within the Trust, links had been established and Tilian were keen to support schools working together on the vision. Phil Papps referred to the minutes of the academisation meeting with governors on 13 January 2023 and noted that some governors had voted against academisation. Roisin Wiseman advised that governors had questioned why the school needed to academise as the school was doing well. She added that the school is going back to a four class structure and setting up a pre-school and reception class and will need additional support to do this. Louise Clark is the Chief Improvement Officer for Tilian and has offered to help with this.

Tim Fairbairn asked which other MATs the school had spoken to and Sophy Croskell advised they had spoken with the Thedwastre Education Trust, All Saints Schools Trust and the Diocesan MAT. Tim Fairbairn asked about the geography of the school to other schools within the Tilian Partnership. Sophy Croskell advised that Palgrave CofE Primary is the nearest school and Roisin Wiseman highlighted that the school had considered the geography of other schools but felt Tilian was the best fit for the school. Sophy Croskell added that Tilian has a central hub to help with geography.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher and Chair of Governors for their presentation, and they then left.

Tim Fairbairn asked about the capacity of Tilian. Revd Carl Melville, who is a trustee, advised that the Trust is increasing its capacity and that there are no concerns over capacity. Mary Lewis asked whether this was a reciprocal relationship. Revd Carl Melville advised that Wilby CEVCP has already offered a lot of support to Tilian schools. Jane Eccleston felt that the Headteacher had provided background to the concerns of the governors. Tim Fairbairn highlighted that the finances and results of the school are good and the reason for academisation was due to isolation and the challenges for small schools. He also highlighted the issue of the loss of networks for

standalone schools because of MAT networks. Paul Ryle agreed that schools were now part of networks within MATs.

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

23.26 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

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

- St Mary's CEVCP School, Benhall is scheduled to join All Saints Schools Trust on 1 September 2023
- the Household Support Fund is being extended until March 2024 and the Local Authority will continue to provide supermarket vouchers to families in receipt of Free School Meals during school holidays until Easter 2024
- the next round of consultations for school admission policies will be for the 2025/26 school year
- an additional £32m of capital funding for infrastructure projects across the Children and Young People's Directorate was approved by SCC's Cabinet in March. This includes funding for 11 new schools planned for delivery in the next 3-5 years
- new primary forecasts will be available late next month and sent to schools as soon as completed.

The Chair thanked Pete Mumford for his report.

23.27 COCKFIELD CEVCP- CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO PROPOSED CHANGE TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN THE ALL SAINTS SCHOOLS TRUST

The Chair welcomed Norman Kelly, Chair of Governors from Cockfield CEVCP School and Melanie Barrow, CEO of the All Saints Schools Trust to the meeting. Norman Kelly provided background to the proposal for the school to become an academy within the All Saints Schools Trust (ASST). The school is a small, rural school and has considered a number of options and Trusts. A nearby school, Great Whelnetham CofE Primary is within ASST which is an advantage and joining the Trust will help the school to grow and support the school's long-term sustainability. Melanie Barrow added that the school will benefit from being in the Trust.

Paul Ryle asked about the roll, the school's capacity and the ideal number of pupils needed. Norman Kelly replied that the school's capacity is 120 and the ideal number is between 70-80 pupils. There are planned housing developments which could provide the opportunity for the school to grow.

Paul Ryle asked if pupils will come from the local area rather than from other schools. Melanie Barrow advised of housing developments underway around Great Whelnetham. Pete Mumford highlighted that larger housing developments will have provisions about the local infrastructure which could include building schools.

Chloe Mayes referred to staff concerns about the loss of the school's identity. Norman Kelly advised that the school is also losing the Headteacher so there is some trepidation at the change plus some teachers have experiences of larger Trusts which are not favourable. Melanie Barrow advised that since the survey was completed, staff have visited Great Whelnetham CofE Primary to see how the school works within the MAT and staff have been reassured.

Mary Lewis asked about the relationship with the village hall committee. Norman Kelly advised that the village hall is shared by the school and village and the only difficulty has been the sharing of costs. Melanie Barrow advised that the Buildings Officer had provided information to help with this in the conversion process. Melanie

added that the pre-meeting with the village hall committee and consultation process had gone well.

Tim Fairbairn asked about the capacity of ASST. Melanie Barrow advised that the Trust does have capacity and is currently providing leadership support to St Mary's CEVCP, Benhall. She highlighted that she has more capacity as CEO due to Trust Capacity Funding for Thorndon CofE Primary School and therefore more capacity to support Cockfield. Melanie added that two Directors have been appointed to support schools in the East and West of Suffolk. The latter would support the new Head at Cockfield. Melanie advised that ASST now has an estate manager and therefore more capacity with due diligence.

The Chair thanked the Chair of Governors and CEO for their presentation, and they then left.

In answer to a question from Revd Carl Melville, the DDE advised that the Head and Chair of Governors are usually invited to the DBE meeting but as the Head is retiring and today is a strike day in schools, the CEO had attended.

Hugo Parker asked if ASST would provide a new Headteacher. The SEO advised that interviews for a new Head had taken place and an appointment had been made from September. The Trust would support the new Head.

Tim Fairbairn referred to the performance of the school and the low roll and felt that academisation would be beneficial for the school. Paul Ryle asked about the perception of MATs and to what degree, choices are made. Jane Eccleston felt that the Trust seemed to relate to the school. Hugo Parker asked how the performance of each Trust is measured. The DDE advised that metrics are provided by Ofsted results and that there is a good spread of underperforming schools across the Trusts.

The Chair asked if members consented to Cockfield CEVCP School joining the All Saints Schools Trust. Members consented and the DDE will advise the school.

23.28 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:

- 22 Ofsted inspections have taken place already this academic year
 - Sir Robert Hitcham CEVAP, Debenham recently moved from Requires Improvement to a Good judgement
 - Bures CEVCP and Risby CEVCP Schools received good judgements after previous inspections in 2007 and 2009 respectively
- Feedback from recent Church of England SIAMS training
 - move from a grading system to two judgements, J1 and J2
 - the Diocesan Education Team provides a support role
 - the new SIAMS framework increases accountability for MATs
 - Diocesan SIAMS training provides guidance to schools on what an exemplary school looks like.

Pete Mumford left at 5.00pm

Tim Fairbairn advised that Bures CEVCP had 48 hours' notice of the inspection and highlighted the pressure which Ofsted inspections create in schools and that culturally this needs to change. Tim also highlighted the need for consistency of inspections. Mary Lewis asked how much detail was required for J1 and J2 judgements. The SEO advised that Dr Margaret James, National SIAMS Director, has stressed that the text of the report is what is most important, that the new framework seeks to move away from judgements that are based on the fulfilment of criteria and that the individual

context of the school will be taken into consideration throughout the inspection process, especially when inspectors consider the school's Christian vision. Jane Eccleston felt that a J1 or J2 judgement would be seen as a pass or fail, and it was counter-intuitive to look at the text behind the judgement. The SEO advised that it is not about labelling schools and diocesan education officers will need to help schools with this.

Revd Toby Tate asked whether all schools take Christian vision setting seriously. The SEO replied that all church schools are doing this work but there can be differences in depth and understanding.

The Chair thanked the SEO for his report.

23.29 DIOCESAN MAT UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Pete Bloomfield, CEO of the Diocesan MAT to the meeting. Pete Bloomfield provided an update for the Diocesan MAT since his appointment in January 2023 and noted:

- the MAT's focus is currently on efficiencies as resources are tight within schools and the central MAT supports Heads with logistics, HR, finances to allow the Heads to focus on pupils and learning
- the MAT's vision is the best for every school, every classroom, every day
- the MAT's strategy is to identify which children are struggling across the 21 schools in the MAT and how they can be supported. This is due to research which shows that the chances of children from disadvantaged backgrounds succeeding in school are getting worse
- the MAT has a range of schools from 35 – 400 pupils on roll and therefore no one size fits all schools.

Hugo Parker asked about the MAT's strategy and targets. Pete advised that the MAT has an eight-year plan to achieve 90% Phonics and 90% Reading/ Writing/ Maths at KS2 SATs, which is in line with Government expectations. This aim is challenging and to support this, the MAT is investing in leadership at hub level with a focus on early years and reception class as gains made here would be felt by pupils throughout their education. Hugo Parker asked about accountability and Pete replied that the MAT Directors would monitor and hold the CEO to account. Tim Fairbairn asked if the target of 90% included all children, regardless of background and whether this was a rolling average. Pete replied that the MAT target of 90% did include all children and should be achieved by the final year in 8 years' time.

The Chair thanked Pete for his update.

23.30 BUDGET

The Chair welcomed Gary Peverley, Finance Director to the meeting. Gary Peverley referred to Paper C and noted:

- better results than budgeted in 2022 due to a better yield on investment income and lower costs due to budgeted security costs for the St James schools site now being accounted for in the balance sheet, and not the income and expenditure account
- deficit for 2022 is £17k
- 2023 budget income was due to increase, based on the sale of the St James school site, but as sale monies will not be received this year, the budget is adverse because only 10% income received as deposit
- outturn for 2023 is £75k rather than £25k due to the St James school site.

The Chair thanked Gary Peverley for his report.

23.31 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:

- information on the length of service of current Headteachers in church schools had been provided following the last meeting, together with the number of Headteachers leaving in each academic year since 2010
- the latest annual report from the National Foundation for Educational Research on the teacher labour market
- two Stand Alone Trusts (SATs) - Debenham High and Elveden CofE Primary Academy - are planning to create MATs
- Department for Education documents on the Academies Regulatory and Commissioning Review, Trust Quality Descriptions, Trust Capacity Funding (TCaF) and Trust Establishment and Growth Fund
- contracts have been exchanged on the St James site in Bury St Edmunds which will complete by 31 December 2023
- further teacher strikes have taken place and if negotiations are not successful a further three day strike in late June/early July is due to be confirmed by the NEU Executive on 18 May
- the pressure placed on Heads and staff by Ofsted inspections
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities continues to be an area which is seriously underfunded nationally and where there is a shortage of alternative provision. Senior colleagues from Suffolk County Council will meet with church school heads at the termly Zoom forum this week
- pupil attendance continues to be at below pandemic levels and is a major priority nationally
- the need for more SIAMS inspectors within the Diocese and that one of the barriers is the initial cost of training of £1250.00. The DDE outlined options to support prospective inspectors for discussion.

Revd Carl Melville felt that the new SIAMS framework with its emphasis on judgements rather than grading might set a precedent for Ofsted, especially with the pressure Ofsted inspections place on Heads and staff. Paul Ryle highlighted that while safeguarding is critical in order to keep children safe within school, the one word Ofsted grade causes pressure because of the impact it can have.

The Revd Carl Melville advised that the cost of initial SIAMS training had deterred him from training to be an inspector and that any option to support with the costs would be helpful. Jane Eccleston and Tim Fairbairn felt that support should be given with costs. Phil Papps suggested a pilot to see how this would work. Hugo Parker asked how many inspectors would be funded. The DDE estimated between 4 – 6 each year.

Action: The DDE to set up a pilot to pay costs of £1250 for prospective SIAMS inspectors.

The Chair thanked the DDE for her report.

23.32 RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP REPORT

The Schools' Adviser introduced Paper F and noted that:

- new RE Syllabus training is underway with 55 delegates from church schools attending in February and further courses planned for community schools in May and church schools in June
- termly RE networks via Zoom continue to be well attended (30+ subject leaders) and these have become a valuable means to communicate with leaders about subject developments and discuss RE action points

- new RE Syllabus training has resulted in enquiries and requests for additional support with implementing the required changes
- training has also highlighted that subject leaders have not confidently grasped the basics of RE and the law and further training will be provided on this.

Mary Lewis advised that as the DBE member responsible for monitoring RE within the DBE Strategy Action Plan, she was able to visit Sir Robert Hitcham CEVAP School, Debenham with the Schools' Adviser recently. Mary advised that she was able to see the impact of the Schools' Adviser's work and support, as well as the progress of the RE Subject Leader. Mary will be joining the new RE Syllabus training in June.

The Chair thanked the Schools' Adviser for her report.

23.33 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

Mary Lewis asked about the appointment of the temporary ex officio foundation governor at Wilby CEVCP School. The DDE advised that the Benefice includes a number of church schools and that due to capacity, the Rector was happy for this appointment to continue.

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

23.34 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Pupil forecasts

MAT landscape and strategy plan

23.35 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

23.36 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board noted that future meetings would take place on:

Tuesday 12 September 2023 @ 4pm (Ven Rich Henderson to chair)

Thursday 23 November 2023 @ 1.30pm

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 5.50pm.

Signed: _____

[Chairman]

Date: _____