



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury  
and Ipswich

**DBE (23)M4**

## **DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Minutes** of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Thursday 23 November 2023 at 1.30pm in the Boardroom and via Zoom.

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

### **Present:**

Mrs Jane Addis  
Mrs Joanne Austin  
Mrs Jane Eccleston  
Mr Tim Fairbairn (via Zoom)  
The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison  
The Ven Rich Henderson

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

### **Apologies:**

Mr Daniel Jones  
The Revd Laura Mumford

Mr Paul Ryle  
Mrs Sue Todd

### **In Attendance:**

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 and Headteacher, Nacton CofE Primary School

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. The Chair noted that this would be the Schools' Adviser's last meeting in her current role and extended his thanks for her work over the last four years. The Schools' Adviser agreed to continue as a co-opted member of the DBE until her replacement is appointed.

### **23.53 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023 were approved and signed.

### **23.54 MATTERS ARISING**

#### **23.43 DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION'S REPORT**

The DDE and Chair to discuss circulating to clergy the Church of England publication, our Hope for a Flourishing School System.

### **23.55 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:

- changes to the Buildings Officer's role have been formalised, 0.7fte contract with the MAT and 0.3fte contract with the diocese
- the DDE attended the DfE's regional Advisory Board on 19 October to outline the diocesan academy strategy and the Advisory Board is due to consider a

sponsor for St Edmundsbury CEVAP at its December meeting, which it is hoped will be Elveden CofE Primary Academy

- Cockfield and Wilby CEVCP and Orford CEVAP are all due to convert on 1 December 2023
- the DDE has contacted schools with the biggest forecast drop in roll numbers to offer support
- guidance for schools on tackling racism has been revised and is available on the Diocesan website
- CofE's Considerations for Schools in Supporting Pupils and Staff at times of International Conflict (Appendix 1)
- work continues on RAAC investigations in school buildings
- DfE funding for a decarbonisation project at Ringsfield CofE Primary School is no longer available.

The DDE noted that the local authority is preparing to run a competition to identify a preferred academy trust to run the first of three new primary schools in the Henley Gate Neighbourhood on the Ipswich Garden Suburbs, to the north of Ipswich. This will be followed by two further primary schools and an 11-16 high school and the DDE asked if the DBE would consider the possibility of bidding for a CofE secondary school. The DDE advised that there are two routes to bid: the free school presumption process is the main route, where the local authority launches a competition to invite proposals from Academy Trusts who wish to establish and run the new school; or the Diocese could propose a CofE Voluntary Aided (VA) school.

Hugo Parker asked about the decision-making process, the cost implications, the resources needed and the benefits of bidding. Pete Mumford advised that the plan is for the secondary school to open in September 2026 or September 2027. Pete noted that the competition process usually takes 18 months to two years prior to the school opening, so the competition for the secondary school would start summer 2024. Pete added that funding for the new school will come from developer contributions under s106 and growth funding from the local authority.

The Chair added that there is great enthusiasm and energy for another CofE secondary school in Ipswich from the Bishops and Archdeacon Rich added that this would mean a CofE secondary school in each Archdeaconry.

The DDE noted the advantage for both the local authority and Diocese of not going through a competition process. The DDE highlighted that the governing body of a VA school would be responsible for 10% of the capital costs, which would not be so much of an issue if this was a new school site. Pete Mumford advised that the local authority would develop the school site and would hold the warranty during the building of the school.

Hugo Parker asked if parents were included in consultations on new schools. Pete Mumford advised that the local authority deals with contractors about the buildings. The DDE had previous experience of bidding for a free school at Ixworth, which although unsuccessful, had involved a consultation as part of the competition process. The DDE added that learning was available from other Dioceses about bidding for new schools.

Revd Toby Tate felt that this would be a missional opportunity to work with secondary schools and asked if there was flexibility between the two bidding routes. The DDE advised that this would be decided during discussions with the local authority.

Tim Fairbairn highlighted the importance of having the necessary skills and experience and Jane Eccleston felt that this was a wonderful opportunity and asked

about the capacity to move this forward. Gillian Mitchell suggested a working party to look at this. Gillian Mitchell, Hugo Parker, Revd Toby Tate and Jane Eccleston were appointed to the working party and the DDE advised that the group would report back at future meetings.

The Chair asked about the timescale for bidding. Pete Mumford advised that the competition process for the secondary school would start summer 2024 and that the local authority would need to be advised of the VA bid well in advance.

**Action:** The DDE and Pete Mumford to discuss further.

The DDE referred to the Flourish Network: Worshipping Communities in Schools/ FE Colleges (Appendix 2) which was published in June 2023 by the CofE Education Office. The Flourish proposal seeks to develop and embed vibrant younger and more diverse worshipping communities in education settings, building on what is already happening through chaplaincy, Messy Church, Alpha courses and Open the Book. The Chair added that it will form a way of providing intentional pathways for people to engage with faith and enable specific projects within schools. The Chair added that ideas are already being shared from other Dioceses.

The Chair and DDE will be attending a Flourish development meeting on 9 January 2024 to explore the concept further. The DDE asked for comments.

The Chair noted that Dioceses are encouraged to consider becoming part of this process as part of developing their Diocese SMMIB (Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board) proposals. In answer to a question from Jane Eccleston, the Chair advised that Mission and Ministry would be involved in this project. Mary Lewis felt that this would provide opportunity and value although it would need to be resourced. Archdeacon Rich advised that work is already taking place to develop a new worshipping community at Debenham High School.

Revd Toby Tate asked if this would include community schools and the Chair advised that the project is not limited to church schools. Jane Eccleston asked about age ranges and the Chair advised that it applied to all age ranges.

The Chair advised that he and the DDE would report back on the Flourish development meeting at the next DBE meeting.

The Chair thanked the DDE for her report.

## **23.56 ANALYSIS OF SUMMER 2023 ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS DATA – DIOCESAN SCHOOLS**

The SEO introduced Paper B, providing an analysis of attainment and progress data for 2023. The KS2 data had been provided by Fischer Family Trust Aspire and KS4 data by the Headteacher at Debenham High School.

The SEO noted the key points:

- KS1 and complete KS4 data is hoped to be available in a future report
- KS1 SATs are now non-statutory and will be based on teacher assessments
- the Ofsted focus is on curriculum provision and what is happening in schools rather than on data
- the 2023 data provided is consistent with 2022 data
- lower performing groups include vulnerable and SEND pupils
- the SEO and DDDE work with the local authority to help schools in high level action, of which there are currently two.

Tim Fairbairn asked how the lower performing groups compared nationally. The SEO advised that the groups are comparable and will provide this data in future. In

answer to a question from Hugo Parker, the SEO advised that the national average data is taken from all schools and added that the FFT Aspire data is at Diocesan level so can compare nationally. Hugo Parker asked if any action needed to be taken with this data. The SEO advised that the report is for information and can be used as a starting point for discussion although he noted that there is not much change from last year.

Gillian Mitchell highlighted that Suffolk schools are performing less well than the national average at KS2 and that low aspirations were a long-standing issue. The SEO confirmed that this figure includes all schools, so academies as well as maintained schools.

Discussion followed on funding for schools in Suffolk and the rising number of SEND pupils. Tim Fairbairn felt that provision for SEND pupils was critical as this impacted not just on SEND pupils but also on the education of other pupils and asked whether more needed to be done in terms of lobbying or setting targets. The DDE felt that the DBE was not the responsible body for setting targets. The Suffolk Learning Improvement Network (SLIN) and Suffolk Education Partnership played a role.

The Chair asked the SEO about the impact on schools of Covid and whether he had derived anything from the data on this or if there are any interventions which are helping schools. The SEO advised that there is an increased awareness but more work is needed on the implications of parental anxiety and reduced attendance and co-ordinated approaches to help with this.

Jane Eccleston asked if home schooled pupils had increased. The DDE advised that there had been an increase although it is a small proportion.

The Chair thanked the SEO for his report.

### **23.57 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT**

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

- the Ofsted inspection at Stoke by Nayland CofE Primary which had resulted in a Good judgement following the previous Inadequate judgement, due to the hard work of the school with support from the Diocesan MAT
- a number of SIAMS inspections have taken place under the new 2023 SIAMS framework, and three have been reported
- there is new wording for the two judgments, J1 and J2
- the DDDE and SEO are involved in a number of Heads' performance management reviews this term.

Hugo Parker asked whether lessons learned from Stoke by Nayland could be used for other schools in a similar position. Jane Addis felt that each school's situation would be different but would be willing to share what had helped the school. The DDE highlighted that a number of different factors can affect the judgment and there was a good level of experience and knowledge among the education and MAT teams.

Jo Austin advised that the recent SIAMS inspection at Bentley CEVCP had been a good experience.

The Chair thanked the SEO for his report and work.

### **23.58 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE**

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

- three conversions remain underway for Cockfield CEVCP to join All Saints Schools Trust, Orford CEVAP and Wilby CEVCP to join Tilian Partnership, all due to convert on 1 December 2023
- the local authority is currently consulting on admission arrangements to community and voluntary controlled schools for the 2025/2026 school year
- the local authority is currently consulting for 2025/2026 school term dates
- a redrafted model for engagement with local authority maintained schools has been developed following a consultation, which will replace the existing high level action process with effect from January 2024
- a national consultation on fixed penalty notices has been undertaken and national guidance on this is awaited. Pete extended thanks to Barningham CEVCP and Ringsfield CofE Primary Schools for sharing approaches to improve attendance with the new Head of the School Attendance Service
- almost 100% submission rate from maintained, academy and independent schools to section 175 safeguarding self-assessment
- further surveys have taken place in 30 schools on Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and Pete extended thanks to the Buildings Officer for his work and support with this
- two events have been held in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds to provide an update to academy trusts on new schools (7-8 primaries and 2 secondary) being developed across Suffolk and the timings to apply to the competition process.

The Chair thanked Pete Mumford for his report.

### **23.59 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS**

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

### **23.60 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Flourish network – feedback on development day

Reduction in teacher workload

### **23.61 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

### **23.62 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Board noted that future meetings would take place on:

Thursday 25 January 2024 @ 1.30pm

Wednesday 8 May 2024 @ 4.00pm

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 2.45pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
[Chairman]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_