



**DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Draft Minutes** of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Wednesday 20 November 2024 at 4.00pm in the Boardroom and via Zoom.

**Prayers:** Archdeacon Rich led the opening prayer.

**Present:**

Mrs Jane Eccleston (via Zoom)  
Mr Tim Fairbairn (via Zoom)  
The Ven Rich Henderson (Chair)  
The Revd Laura Mumford

Mrs Mary Lewis  
Mrs Gillian Mitchell  
The Revd Toby Tate

**Apologies:**

Mrs Jane Addis  
Mrs Joanne Austin  
Mr Hugo Parker

Mr Paul Ryle  
Mrs Sue Todd

**In Attendance:**

Mr Mark Bennett  
Miss Rachel Cutts  
Mr Daniel Jones  
Mr Phil Knowles  
Mrs Jane Sheat  
Miss Jacqui Studd

Head of Performance, Partnership and Development, SCC  
Diocesan Schools' Adviser  
Diocesan Buildings Officer  
Diocesan School Effectiveness Officer (SEO)  
Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)  
Administrator (Education)

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting which he advised was the last meeting of the current term and noted that this would be the final meeting for Jane Eccleston, Mary Lewis and Gillian Mitchell and thanked them for their service. The Chair welcomed Mark Bennett who was attending in place of Pete Mumford and advised that Tracey Caffull, CEO of the Diocesan MAT was unable to attend as she was at Mellis' Ofsted feedback.

**24.42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**24.43 DBE MEMBERSHIP**

The Chair noted that DBE elections by Diocesan Synod were taking place and that the deadline for completed nomination forms was noon on 29 November 2024. Co-options will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

**24.44 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2024 were approved and signed.

#### **24.45 MATTERS ARISING**

None.

#### **24.46 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 that:

- the DfE's Regional Advisory Board has approved Cavendish CEVCP and Bawdsey CEVCP Schools joining the Tilian Partnership, and also approved Debenham High forming the Heart of Suffolk MAT
- Debenham High is preparing majority articles of association for the Heart of Suffolk MAT as Creeting St Mary CEVAP will be joining the MAT
- the national budget on 30 October outlined additional investment of £2.3 billion for the core schools budget, including £1 billion earmarked specifically to support special educational needs, and a further commitment towards capital expenditure
- the Government has confirmed that academy conversion grants of £25k will cease on 1 January 2025
- the annual church school leaders' conference went well on 6 November 2024 with two main speakers, Cathy Priest from the Faraday institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge and Revd Dr Tom Wilson, Director of the St Philip's Centre in Leicester. Tom sparked an interesting conversation about sabbaticals and how time off in term time might be achieved
- following a bid for an increase in funding from 1 April 2025, Keswick Hall Trustees have recently approved an increase to £100k for the next five years
- there have been eight Ofsted inspections this term
- issues affecting schools include an increase in parental complaints and the potential use of AI to reduce teacher workload.

Mary Lewis asked about the increase in parental complaints. The DDE highlighted the impact of COVID, the cost of living crisis and the increase in pressure on school budgets impacting on services such as SEN.

The DDE advised that Thedwastre Education Trust is updating its articles of association, using the latest version of the model articles agreed by the DfE and the Church of England. The Trust is retaining its minority articles and the reason for the change is that the existing articles refer to four trustees being appointed following nomination by local governing bodies. Thedwastre has four schools, three former VC and one former community school and the DDE is content with the changes and recommends the articles for approval.

The DBE approved the proposed changes to Thedwastre's articles of association.

The DDE noted that a short film has been created about becoming a governor which will be made available to schools and churches as part of efforts to encourage more people to serve as foundation governors. The video was shown and is also available on the Diocesan website: <https://www.cofesuffolk.org/schools/foundation-governors/>.

Revd Toby Tate asked about the criteria for being a governor. The DDE advised that anyone over 18 can be a governor provided that they are not disqualified from doing so, by being bankrupt. Mark Bennett commended the film and asked about the opportunities to show the video. The Chair advised that the film had already been shown at the conference and at a recent Rural Deans' meeting and that the link to the film will be shared with clergy and schools, as well as via social media. Mary Lewis asked who the film was aimed at and the DDE advised it was for prospective

foundation governors. Further information for governors was available on the Diocesan website <https://www.cofesuffolk.org/schools/foundation-governors/>.

Tim Fairbairn wondered if it might be helpful to provide further information on the time involved in being a governor. The DDE advised that further information would be available to those who expressed an interest. Gillian Mitchell added that the amount of time given can vary. Revd Laura Mumford asked if shorter clips from the film were available for social media.

**Action:** The DDE to liaise with the Communications Team about shorter clips for social media platforms.

The Chair advised that Revd Keith Rengert has been appointed as the full-time chaplain at Debenham High School and is due to start on 10 January 2025.

The Chair thanked the DDE for her report.

#### **24.47 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT**

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

- his recent work providing support to schools on school improvement, preparation for SIAMS, Headteacher recruitment, performance management and wellbeing
- from September 2024, schools no longer receive Ofsted single headline grades at a graded inspection
- recent good Ofsted reports for East Bergholt CEVCP, Elmsett CofE Primary and Boxford CEVCP, with the latter receiving an outstanding judgment for the personal development of pupils
- from September 2024, there is no explicit reference to the J1 wording in SIAMS written reports but if a school is judged J2, then the wording of the J2 judgment will feature in the report followed by the reason
- analysis of summer 2024 KS2 pupil outcomes from FFT Aspire for church schools, which follows the pattern of previous years.

Mary Lewis asked how parents have responded to the change in reporting for SIAMS inspections. The SEO will report back at a future meeting.

Mark Bennett advised that the Local Authority has been asked by Ofsted for feedback about proposed changes that are due for public consultation in January 2025.

**Action:**

- The SEO to report back on parents' views of SIAMS reports.

The Chair thanked the SEO for his report.

#### **24.48 UPDATE ON DIOCESAN MAT**

The Chair advised that Tracey Caffull would provide an update at the next DBE meeting.

#### **24.49 DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' ADVISER REPORT**

The Schools' Adviser referred to Paper C and noted:

- visits to 38 church schools since September 2024 to discuss RE, Collective Worship, Christian vision and ethos
- following the success of the Big Sing pilot in March 2024, another Big Spring Sing will be hosted on Tuesday 1 April 2025 at the Cathedral, using ideas from Christian Aid

- the DfE are currently holding a Curriculum and Assessment Review to refresh the curriculum and statutory assessment system for 5-19 year olds, to make sure they meet the needs of every child and young person. The call for evidence is split into nine sections and is open until 22 November. National RE agencies and networks have suggested making submissions to help raise the profile of RE.

The Chair thanked the Schools' Adviser for her report.

## **24.50 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE**

Mark Bennett referred to Paper D, the Local Authority report and noted:

- the Local Authority is not proposing to make any changes to its current admission arrangements for the 2026/27 school year
- the Local Authority is currently consulting on the school term dates for the 2026/27 school year and the Post-16 Travel Policy for the 2025/26 school year, both consultations will close on Monday 16 December 2024
- since October 2024, the weekly Suffolk Headlines email spotlights a school across the county, to celebrate and share what is being done for the children and young people of Suffolk. The first spotlight featured Trinity CEVAP School and Debenham High School will be featured shortly
- the Local Authority in partnership with the Suffolk Education Partnership has produced a [framework document](#) to prevent permanent exclusion and promote better inclusion. An opportunity to discuss and inform this protocol moving forward will take place at the upcoming conference at Trinity Park on Tuesday 28 January 2025.

The DDE noted that the planned new high school within the Ipswich Garden Suburb is no longer going ahead due to changing population demographics and some volatility in housing growth.

The Chair thanked Mark Bennett for his report.

## **24.51 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS**

The DBE ratified the appointment of Foundation Governors listed in Paper E noting that Revd Nicola Tindall is the new ex officio at Whatfield CEVCP School.

Revd Laura Mumford asked about the number of foundation governors being ratified at Elveden Church of England Primary Academy. The DDE advised that with the formation of the Elveden Schools Trust, governors have started a new term of office.

## **24.52 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

## **24.53 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **24.54 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Board noted that the next meeting would be Wednesday 12 February 2025.

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting and for their time and service as members of the DBE. The meeting closed at 4.50pm.

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

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