



**DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Minutes** of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 1.30pm in the Boardroom and via Zoom.

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

**Present:**

Mrs Jane Addis  
Mrs Maggie Elder  
Mr Tim Fairbairn (via Zoom)  
The Revd Jo Gunn  
The Ven Rich Henderson (Chair)

The Revd Laura Mumford  
Mr Paul Ryle (via Zoom)  
Mrs Debs Shipp  
The Revd Toby Tate  
Revd Canon Susan Taylor

**Apologies:**

Mr Hugo Parker  
The Revd Rachel Revely

Mrs Julia Grainger  
Mrs Sue Todd

**In Attendance:**

Ms Emma Laflin	Interim Head of School Improvement, SCC
Miss Rachel Cutts	Diocesan Schools' Adviser
Mr Daniel Jones	Diocesan Buildings Officer (via Zoom)
Mr Phil Knowles	Diocesan School Effectiveness Officer (SEO)
Mrs Jane Sheat	Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)
Miss Jacqui Studd	Administrator (Education)

**In Attendance for item 25.06:**

Revd Lauren Moore	Headteacher, Honington CEVCP School
Revd Dr Karen Burton	Chair of Governors, Honington CEVCP School
Mrs Melanie Barrow	CEO, All Saints Schools Trust

**In Attendance for item 25.09:**

Mrs Gilly McGill	Chair of Governors, Hopton CEVCP School
Mrs Sarah Almond	Vice Chair of Governors, Hopton CEVCP School

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, particularly new members and Emma Laflin who was attending in place of Julia Grainger. Introductions were made.

**25.01 DBE MEMBERSHIP**

The DDE advised that Mrs Maggie Elder, Revd Jo Gunn, Revd Rachel Revely, Revd Toby Tate and Revd Canon Susan Taylor had been newly elected by Diocesan Synod and that Archdeacon Rich, Revd Laura Mumford and Mrs Jane Addis had been nominated as members of the Board by the Rt Revd Martin Seeley (as Bishop's nominees).

The DDE advised that there were two further vacancies for elected members and that elections by the Diocesan Synod were currently taking place.

## **25.02 CONSIDERATION OF CO-OPTIONS**

Revd Toby Tate asked about co-opted members and the DDE advised that the DBE Measure allows for 6-7 members to be co-opted by the DBE, for their skills and experience.

Members unanimously agreed to appoint the following co-opted members: Mr Tim Fairbairn, Mrs Julia Grainger, Mr Hugo Parker, Mr Paul Ryle and Mrs Debs Shipp.

## **25.03 DBE CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Chair asked new members to sign their agreement to the Code of Conduct, which was duly done.

## **25.04 BUSINESS INTERESTS**

The Chair invited members to complete a business interests form, which should be returned to the Administrator.

## **25.05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None. The diocese was represented at member level on all church school MATs.

## **25.06 HONINGTON CEVCP- CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO PROPOSED CHANGE TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN ALL SAINTS SCHOOLS TRUST**

The Chair welcomed the Headteacher and Chair of Governors from Honington CEVCP School, together with the CEO from All Saints Schools Trust to the meeting. Revd Lauren Moore and Revd Dr Karen Burton provided background to the proposal for the school to become an academy within the All Saints Schools Trust. The school had researched and looked at a number of options for academisation over the past 18 months with particular consideration that the MAT would align with the school's Christian ethos, inclusion, special needs and pastoral care. Children, staff and parents were excited about the prospect of being part of the All Saints Schools Trust. Melanie Barrow added that the Trust had undertaken due diligence and that the school's ethos and culture aligned with the Trust. The Trust had held meetings with staff and governors as well as with the community which had included a representative from RAF Honington. Currently, 42% of children at the school are service pupils.

The Chair invited questions. Tim Fairbairn noted the positive financial position but asked how the legal costs would be covered as the Government's £25k conversion grant was no longer available. Melanie Barrow advised that the Trust has experience of managing conversions and expected legal costs to be less. Tim Fairbairn asked about the budget going forward and whether savings had been identified to offset this position. Revd Lauren Moore advised that staffing costs would be reduced going forward. Tim asked whether pupil numbers were stable. Revd Lauren advised that they have fallen in the last few years because large squadrons have left RAF Honington but the prediction for reception over the next few years is the same as this year. Melanie Barrow added that the Trust has no concerns with the finances as the Trust will benefit from economies of scale with contracts.

Debs Shipp asked about staff wellbeing especially with the reduction in staffing costs. Revd Lauren advised that this is due to a change in staff which will not impact on wellbeing.

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

Discussion followed. Members were satisfied that staff were happy with the plan and that careful consideration had been given to academisation.

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

## **25.07 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 were approved and signed.

## **25.08 MATTERS ARISING**

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

The DDE had liaised with the Communications Team about shorter clips for social media platforms and would advise of developments.

## **25.09 HOPTON CEVCP- CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO PROPOSED CHANGE TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN ELVEDEN SCHOOLS TRUST**

The Chair welcomed the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors from Hopton CEVCP School to the meeting. Gilly McGill advised that Lorna Rourke, the Acting Headteacher and CEO of the Elveden Schools Trust, had been unable to attend due to the school having an Ofsted inspection. Gilly McGill provided background to the proposal for the school to become an academy within the Elveden Schools Trust. The school is a small, rural school with a falling roll and is looking for support for the long-term sustainability of the school. She felt that Elveden would offer opportunities to support the school and staff in their development.

*Paul Ryle joined the meeting at 2.10pm*

The Chair invited questions. Tim Fairbairn asked how the conversion costs would be met as the Government's £25k conversion grant was no longer available. Gilly McGill advised that the school had a surplus which could be used. Tim noted the predictions for in-year deficits over the next few years and asked how the school would work with the Trust to mitigate this. Gilly advised that the budget figures provided were for the school as a maintained school and not as part of a Trust. The figures also include the Acting Head's salary. Gilly felt that more families would be attracted to the school when it was part of the Elveden Schools Trust because of the Trust's reputation.

Revd Toby Tate asked if consultations had taken place with the staff and parents. Gilly advised that this would take place once the Academy Order had been issued but that staff and parents had been told and no negative responses had been received.

Debs Shipp asked whether discussion had taken place with Elveden Schools Trust around the behavioural challenges in the school. Gilly responded that the Trust's experience of behaviour issues has already seen the introduction of a new Behaviour policy this term and plans to introduce OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) which has had a positive impact on behaviour in other schools.

Jane Addis asked how many schools were currently in the Elveden Schools Trust. Gilly advised that Hopton would be the third school to join.

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

Discussion followed on due diligence, the school's financial situation and pupil numbers and the Trust's capacity. The DBE noted that federation with a neighbouring school had been considered.

The Chair asked if members consented to Hopton CEVCP school joining the Elveden Schools Trust. It was agreed that the concerns of members would be fed back to the school particularly around: the consultation with parents and staff; the capacity of the Elveden Schools Trust to support the school with financial and behaviour issues; and due diligence and impact on pupil numbers. The DDE will advise the school.

## **25.10 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT**

The SEO referred to Paper D 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
- the recent outstanding Ofsted report for All Saints CofE Primary, Laxfield
- the good work going on in schools as represented in all the Ofsted and SIAMS reports
- analysis of summer 2024 KS4 pupil outcomes from FFT Aspire for the two secondary schools, Debenham High and King Edward VI
- the SIAMS national report (Appendix).

Jane Addis noted that the report of the SIAMS inspection at Stoke by Nayland CofE Primary had just been published. The SEO confirmed that this would be included in his next report.

The Chair thanked the SEO for his report.

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

The DDE referred to Paper C, which provided an update to DBE members on issues arising since the last meeting. The DDE noted that the Keswick Hall Trust has given an annual grant of £60k towards the provision of RE support for schools and Trustees recently approved an increase to £100k for the next five years. The DDE recommended that the most effective way of using this additional funding would be to employ an additional part-time member of staff to work with the Diocesan Schools' Adviser on RE, subject to the DBE's agreement.

Revd Canon Susan Taylor asked about the cost of training. The DDE replied that governor training would be included as part of the Diocesan subscription model so that there would be no charge for governors attending training from April 2025, wellbeing courses had been offered at no cost but training costs were competitive compared to other training providers.

Revd Toby Tate felt that schools would welcome the increased support and training that could be provided for RE. The DDE advised that a spirituality project was currently being piloted with five schools which will be rolled out more widely in due course. Revd Laura Mumford asked if the additional part-time member of staff would be permanent and the DDE confirmed this.

The Chair asked members if they approved the recruitment of a part-time Schools' Adviser to work alongside Rachel Cutts and members approved.

The DDE noted two papers for approval: the DBE small schools strategy (Paper C, Appendix 1) and the DBE academy strategy, with minor revisions showing as track changes (Paper C, Appendix 2). The DBE approved the revised small schools strategy and the revised academy strategy.

The DDE referred to the DBE strategy and action plan (Paper C Appendix 3) for this triennium, which builds on the previous plan. The DDE noted that it would be helpful to agree how DBE members could monitor areas of interest.

Revd Toby Tate asked about the resources for clergy and whether these were for all clergy or just those undergoing IME2 training. The Schools' Adviser responded that the resources were available for all clergy on the Diocesan website. Revd Jo Gunn highlighted the usefulness of the resources. Revd Toby Tate asked if clergy could be made aware of the resources.

**Action:** The Administrator to circulate the resources to clergy.

The DDE noted:

- the Church of England's latest report [Flourishing Together](#)
- Ofsted's consultation on its [draft report card](#) to be introduced from September 2025
- the DFE's consultation on [its approach to accountability](#) which sets out the role of its Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams in relation to "stuck schools".

The Chair thanked the DDE for her report.

## **25.12 DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' ADVISER REPORT**

The Schools' Adviser referred to Paper E and noted:

- further visits to schools and staff training sessions on 'Refresher on RE', 'Looking at the Emmanuel Project' and 'Exploring worldviews in Primary RE'
- the Big Spring Sing takes place on Tuesday 1 April 2025 at the Cathedral and aims to allow schools to get together to celebrate all that the children in their school are doing to fight injustice and also to enjoy singing together
- attendance at a Strictly RE conference in January was highly informative with a chance to network and discover many practical tips, have discussions and learn more about diversity within world faiths
- an ongoing discussion about whether the DfE should include RE within the National Curriculum
- the Church of England is in the process of updating the Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools, which outlines the expectations regarding RE and is due to be published in the summer
- plans to update the Emmanuel Project with a team of teachers, including specialists in SEND and those with experience of teaching English as an Additional Language, who will be re-writing the Early Years units
- from July 2025, all of the Emmanuel Project resources will be available online via a subscription model.

The Schools' Adviser referred to the Recommendations for RE in Church of England schools (Appendix). The key recommendation is that all Church schools in the diocese should ensure that 50% of their RE curriculum time focuses on Christianity. The DBE approved this paper.

The Chair invited members to attend the Big Spring Sing and Revd Laura Mumford and Revd Canon Susan Taylor agreed to attend together with the Chair.

The Chair thanked the Schools' Adviser for her report.

## **25.13 UPDATE ON DIOCESAN MAT**

The Chair welcomed Tracey Caffull, CEO of the Diocesan MAT to the meeting. Tracey Caffull provided an update for the Diocesan MAT since her appointment in September 2024 and noted:

- there have been seven Ofsted and three SIAMS inspections of MAT schools which have all received positive outcomes

- a recent Directors' away day to revisit the vision and values of the MAT
- an online portal provides MAT schools with statutory and trust resources, as well as good practice and training
- the appointment of Claire Bourne as Head of Inclusion and SEND on a fixed term contract
- a focus on inclusivity and what this means for children, collaboration and relationships
- a new operating system for assessment
- trialling of the "I am me" resource to help children with resilience
- consultation on the school improvement model
- work with the CEOs of other MATS.

The Chair thanked Tracey for her update.

#### **25.14 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

The Buildings Officer referred to Paper F, the DBE environmental sustainability policy which had been updated in line with the new terminology around sustainability.

The DBE approved the revised environmental sustainability policy.

#### **25.15 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE**

Emma Laflin referred to Paper G, the Local Authority report.

The Chair thanked Emma Laflin for her report.

#### **25.16 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS**

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

#### **25.17 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Promoting the foundation governor video.

Details of foundation governor vacancies in each school.

The Chair asked members to send any future agenda items to the DDE or Administrator.

#### **25.18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Revd Canon Susan Taylor suggested that a future meeting could be held in Debenham High School.

DBE members agreed that the meeting on Tuesday 2 December 2025 would take place at 1.30pm.

The Chair asked if members could think about what they are looking forward to contributing to the DBE and to bring to the next meeting.

**Action:** Revd Canon Susan to check the availability of Debenham High School for one of the future DBE meetings.

#### **25.19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Board noted that the next meeting would be Wednesday 7 May 2025 at 4pm.

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting. The meeting closed at 3.10pm.

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

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