



DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Wednesday 7 May 2025 at 4.00pm in the Boardroom and via Zoom.

Prayers: Archdeacon Rich led the opening prayer.

Present:

Mrs Jane Addis
Mrs Liz Campbell
Mrs Maggie Elder
Mr Tim Fairbairn (via Zoom)
Mrs Julia Grainger
The Ven Rich Henderson (Chair)

Mr Hugo Parker
The Revd Rachel Revely
Mr Paul Ryle (via Zoom)
Mrs Debs Shipp
The Revd Toby Tate
The Revd Canon Susan Taylor

Apologies:

The Revd Jo Gunn

The Revd Laura Mumford

In Attendance:

Miss Rachel Cutts	Diocesan Schools' Adviser
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 Sue Todd	Deputy Diocesan Director of Education (DDDE)

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, particularly the Deputy DDE, back from sick leave and Liz Campbell who was attending her first meeting.

25.20 DBE MEMBERSHIP

The DDE noted that no further members had been elected following a second round of elections and that a third round of elections is underway and will close on Thursday 8 May 2025.

25.21 CONSIDERATION OF CO-OPTIONS

Members unanimously agreed to appoint Liz Campbell as a co-opted member.

25.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

25.23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2025 were approved and signed.

25.24 MATTERS ARISING

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

The DDE advised that concerns of DBE members following the last meeting were fed back to the Chair of Governors. Academisation is in progress, following DBE consent.

25.25 HOW DBE MEMBERS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE DBE

The DDE introduced discussion on the DBE Strategy Action Plan and particularly what aspects of the plan members would be interested in monitoring. Members discussed in pairs.

Following the discussion, Revd Canon Susan Taylor expressed an interest in chaplaincy, as a governor at Debenham High School, which has a new chaplain, Revd Keith Rengert. Susan would also be interested in developing the chaplaincy role in primary schools, particularly Sir Robert Hitcham CEVAP, Debenham.

Paul Ryle joined the meeting at 4.20pm

Tim Fairbairn expressed an interest in the recruitment of foundation governors.

The Chair asked members to advise the DDE of areas they would be interested in monitoring.

25.26 HOW THE DBE CAN HEAR PUPIL VOICE

The Chair advised that the Diocese is looking at ways to give young people a voice and asked members for suggestions of how this could be done with the DBE.

Revd Canon Susan Taylor highlighted how pupils attend part of governing body meetings at Debenham High to talk about what they are doing and what is important in school. Susan suggested young people might attend part of DBE meetings.

Julia Grainger advised that the Local Authority is looking at different strategies to hear pupil voices. Young people attend meetings, both in person and virtually, and contribute, for example, to the SEND Improvement Board.

Revd Toby Tate suggested that DBE members could visit schools and then report on these visits at DBE meetings. The DDE suggested that DBE members accompany members of the education team on school visits.

The SEO highlighted that school visits by the education team often involve speaking with children about how they perceive the effectiveness and impact of being in a church school. The SEO felt that pupils would not have an understanding of the DBE and its role, and that there should be a purpose to the visit and the need to liaise with schools when arranging the visit. Paul Ryle suggested a theme for the visit which the DBE would explore with pupils to get their feedback which would allow the DBE to introduce themselves in a meaningful way. Julia Grainger added that the Local Authority has the same challenge of explaining who they are and why they are visiting schools.

The Chair asked members to email the Chair or DDE if they have any other thoughts about this.

25.27 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:

- links with Christian charities continue to be developed, the latest being with [KICK](#), a not-for-profit sports provider with a strong Christian ethos, and [Care for the Family](#), which provides excellent resources for parents
- the DDE is exploring the possibility of running the [Bible Society's course](#) for Headteachers and senior leaders, with clergy colleagues, which DBE members welcomed

- Cavendish CEVCP and Bawdsey CEVCP Schools joined Tilian on 1 April 2025 despite academisation being nearly delayed by the Local Authority. The DDE has received assurances that similar problems would not happen in the future and the DDE was grateful to the Buildings Officer for ensuring that the conversions went ahead
- an academy order has now been issued for Honington CEVCP and the DDE has discussed issues of support and challenge for maintained schools with the Local Authority
- interviews for a part-time Schools' Adviser will take place on Friday 16 May and DBE members are warmly invited to attend the presentations in the morning
- following the success of the Big Sing service on 1 April, the DDE has arranged for [iSingPOP](#) to help lead our annual cathedral service on Monday 23 June. iSingPOP will be visiting the 11 schools attending the service to teach pupils the songs they will sing in June. DBE members are warmly invited to the service.

Liz Campbell advised that Tudor CofE Primary had recently been involved with the iSingPOP project, which involved pupils learning songs with actions and then giving a concert for parents and carers. As well as learning the songs, pupils were taught about the background to the songs, which are based on an important and inclusive Christian value. Both children and parents really enjoyed the experience.

The Chair thanked the DDE for her report.

25.28 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:

- recent Ofsted inspections at Stutton CofE Primary and also Hopton CEVCP
- SIAMS inspections are expected in eight church schools before the end of term
- recent work providing support to schools on school improvement, preparation for SIAMS, Headteacher recruitment and whole governor body training.

Tim Fairbairn asked whether parents understood about SIAMS inspections and if there was any communication which could be given to parents to help.

Action: The SEO to draft and report back at the next meeting.

Revd Canon Susan Taylor asked if there was a particular focus with the SIAMS support visits to church schools. The SEO responded that the focus is on the Christian vision of the school and the development of a theology which underpins this. The visits also explore the development areas typically highlighted in SIAMS inspection reports around spirituality and courageous advocacy. The DDDE highlighted courageous advocacy and how schools need to recognise and challenge injustice and become agents of change. The Chair added that the showcases provided by schools at the Big Sing service highlighted the courageous advocacy work going on in schools. Jane Addis highlighted how a knowledge of the school is needed for SIAMS support visits which was evident in the recent visit by the SEO to Stoke by Nayland, which led to helpful conversations.

Liz Campbell highlighted how time is needed to prepare for SIAMS to embed the Christian vision in the culture of the school.

The DDE thanked the SEO for his work preparing schools for SIAMS and highlighted the pilot with five schools on Christian spirituality which will be rolled out widely to other schools. The DDE added that church schools are also being encouraged to

develop courageous advocacy through the Christian Aid Global Neighbours Scheme. Revd Canon Susan Taylor felt that it was important to empower children and help them learn that they have a voice.

The Chair thanked the SEO for his report.

25.29 DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' ADVISER REPORT

The Schools' Adviser referred to Paper C and noted:

- preparation is underway for the RE and Collective Worship training offer for 2025-26
- work continues on moving the Emmanuel Project to an online subscription model
- attendance at an event led by the National Society for Education (NSE, previously Church of England Education Office) on 'Lifting Every Voice: reflecting on shared human experiences through diverse voices' which explored how faith and spirituality shape belonging, inclusion, and equity in a complex world
- the launch of a new CofE resource, Christianity as a Global World Faith, which will be rolled out to schools next term with Diocesan Education Teams providing the training. The Schools' Adviser is looking at how this resource may work in our schools alongside the Emmanuel Project.

Debs Shipp highlighted the usefulness of the RE and Collective Worship padlets and especially the latest padlet for VE and VJ Day.

The Chair thanked the Schools' Adviser for her report.

25.30 BUILDING OFFICER REPORT

The Buildings Officer referred to Paper D and noted:

- confirmation is awaited of the VA School Condition Allocation for 2025-26, the DfE's capital funding grant designed to improve the learning environment for pupils
- examples of the projects in church schools in 2024-25 which received capital funding
- unsuccessful applications for capital funding for nurseries at Morland CofE Primary and Chelmondiston but opportunities for future rounds of grant applications will be monitored
- the Local Authority has issued a safety alert to all schools in Suffolk requesting that their buildings be inspected for the presence of traditional lath and plaster ceilings. VA and Diocesan MAT schools are being supported with this
- work is ongoing to draft a schools Net Zero 2030 Action Plan which will form part of the wider Diocesan Net Zero 2030 Action Plan, and a draft of the Action plan will be brought to a future meeting.

The Chair thanked the Buildings Officer for his report.

25.31 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Julia Grainger referred to Paper E, the Local Authority report and noted:

- the Local Authority is working with the Diocese to ensure the smooth running of academy conversions
- the Standards and Excellence Team works with school leaders on school improvement, supporting and challenging but ensuring the best possible outcomes for Suffolk children and young people

- visits to school leaders in maintained schools during the Spring term to receive feedback on the School Improvement Engagement Model and that changes have been implemented
- the appointment of four Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) advisers for Suffolk: Jonathan Taylor, CEO of Sapienta MAT, Tim Coulson, CEO of Unity Schools Partnership, Lucie Calow, Director of SEND, Unity Schools Partnership and Clare Flintoff, CEO of Asset Education
- the Suffolk summary of Ofsted outcomes for 2024-25 which shows improvement in education in Suffolk compared with the national level, particularly within quality of education and leadership and management.

Debs Shipp asked about figures for Ofsted outcomes before the new Ofsted framework. Julia Grainger advised that under the former single word judgement, Suffolk Schools had increased at twice the national average between 2022-24. The SEO checked which schools were covered in the Ofsted outcomes and Julia Grainger confirmed this was for all schools in Suffolk.

The Chair thanked Julia for her report.

25.32 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

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

The Administrator noted that information on how long foundation governor positions have been vacant had been included in the Appendix. This represented vacancies across all 87 church schools.

The Chair noted that priority should be given to schools with two or more vacancies. He added that the role of the ex officio foundation governor is now more prominent in parish profiles when advertising for new clergy. The Chair thanked each governor serving in schools.

The Chair thanked the Administrator for her report.

25.33 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

DBE Strategy Action Plan and monitoring by DBE members

The Chair advised members to email either the Chair, DDE or Administrator if they have suggestions for items to include for discussion at future meetings.

25.34 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair expressed his thanks to members of the Education Team for their hard work in supporting church schools.

25.35 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that the next meeting would be Tuesday 23 September 2025 at 4.15pm at Debenham High School.

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting. The meeting closed at 5.15pm.

Signed: _____
[Chairman]

Date: _____