



# Debenham High School

A Church of England High Performing Specialist Academy



## Debenham Parish Council AGM 2015

It is my pleasure to provide my report for the Debenham Parish Council AGM, my apologies that I am unable to attend the meeting.

I hope that I might be able to attend one of your meetings in the year ahead. To keep in touch with what we are up to please feel free to follow my weekly blog on our website or access our half-termly newsletter, *Aspire*, also published online via our website.

Julia Upton  
24 April 2015

### **Attainment success**

The school has been delighted to receive an award for the second year running from the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust acknowledging the attainment of our students at GCSE. In 2014 the school, once again, was in the top 10% of schools nationally for the grades achieved by students at the end of Year 11. With continued placing at the top of the county league tables this national endorsement is of course very pleasing for the school.

### **Jubilee Celebrations**

On Friday 7 November 2014 we gathered as a whole school community along with invited guests for our Jubilee Service. The school was officially opened in 1964. On that occasion the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich was joined by the Minister for Education, Mr Reg Prentice to formally open the school.

When the school opened in 1964 there were 176 students enrolled in the school, not much bigger than one of our year groups now. By the 1980s it had grown to 295 and in 1994 educated 374 young people. We now have on role 648 students.

Our Jubilee Service was followed by an 'open house' invitation to former colleagues and students to see our Jubilee display, take a tour and enjoy a cream tea. Dr Poulter kindly unveiled our new honours board, now in pride of place in the hall. We were delighted that Mrs Sue Denny (daughter of Mr Arthur Hollifield, the first Headteacher at the school) and Mrs Angela M<sup>c</sup>Lelland (the second Headteacher) were able to attend. The school has only had four Headteacher's in it's history (myself included).



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## **Commemorative Assembly**

On Thursday 13 November 100 of our former Year 11 students joined us for their Commemorative Assembly. On this evening we invite back students who have recently left to share with them one last time, their journey at Debenham High School. Former student and recently published author, Mr Kieran Lyne returned to the school to share his memories, give some advice for the future and present the awards.

## **Summer Celebration Evening**

In the second of our awards evening across the year, this one held in the summer term, over 100 students from Year 7 to 10 were awarded with certificates and prizes that recognised their hard work and academic attainment over the previous school year. We were delighted that Mr Steven Phipps was able to give a keynote speech and award the prizes.

## **Admissions**

The school continues to be popular within and beyond our catchment area. We are oversubscribed in all year groups.

## **Building work**

The school is at present work on a £1 million project to renew the boiler and heating infrastructure in the school. This is a significant piece of work, which will replace pipework and heaters that were installed when the school was first built (some 50 years ago). The new boiler will be a biomass solution, demonstrating our commitment to the sustainable heating of our school in the years to come.

We are delighted that thanks to funds from a Section 106 grant that we are able this year to refurbish and redesign the PE changing rooms in the school. This busy area of the school has not been adapted since the school was built and is in much need of improvement.

## **Sad news**

Miss Upton will attend the funeral of Mr Kevin Haddock on Monday 27 April 2015. Kevin was a leading educational figure in the local authority for many years and worked closely with Debenham High School since our conversion to academy status, his passing will be mourned by many.



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## Primary links

We continue to work closely with our primary feeder schools and have welcomed two new Headteachers to the parish in the last twelve months. Julia Van Ek at Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School and Sharon Waldon to Stonham Aspal Primary School.

## The Friends of Debenham High School

The Friends held a hugely successful Auction of Promises at the school in November. In order to drum up numbers attending the event the original night was postponed but with further advertising 80 tickets were sold for the event. With parent and auctioneer Haydn Foster at the helm no-one escaped a bid. The final sum is yet to be calculated and will include ticket sales and receipts from the bar but from money spent on bids alone the total was over £6,000. This money will go towards a new school minibus. All members of the committee did a wonderful job but special thanks must go to Chair, Ann Mann and her husband Charlie Mann who led the organisation of the event.

## RE Quality mark

As a Church of England Academy the school places a great importance on the spiritual growth of our students. We were delighted to be awarded the Gold RE Quality Mark for our work with students in curriculum elements of Religious Education. This represents the highest possible grade in this certification and is an honour for the school. This further endorses the Outstanding grading that we received in December 2012 in our Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools.

## Extra-curricular activities

We continue to place importance on involvement in activities outside the classroom, as well as academic success in the classroom. The breadth of activities on offer at DHS is impressive. Here are just a few of the opportunities on offer:

- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Awards
- French Exchange
- Numerous music ensembles, workshops and orchestra
- Sporting clubs and teams from cricket, hockey, football and athletics to the less obvious equestrian team, karting team and archery.
- Curriculum trips which include Colchester Zoo, The Science Museum, the Imperial War Museum, Geography Fieldtrips
- Diversity week with connections to local groups such as our Lunch for the Elderly and Debenham Project support.
- Year 10 and 11 History and Art trip to Berlin
- Year 10 and 11 Geography trip to Iceland



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- Inter-house sporting competitions
- Debating club
- Textiles and knitting club
- Art projects with the local community and Cathedral
- Extended Project academic research opportunity

Quite literally, there is something for everyone.