



DAMERS FIRST SCHOOL.

Minutes of the Governors' meeting held at school on Monday 1st July 2013 at 19.00 hours.

Persons Present	CSA	Mr. L. Phillips Mrs. M. Moss
	Community	Mrs. D. Taylor (Vice-Chair of Governors) Mr. T. Putnam Ms. R. Bettenson Mr. P. Rothman
	Parent	Mr. T. Barnes Mrs. J. Wibley Mrs. R. Davis (Chair of Governors)
	Acting Headteacher Teacher	Mrs. M. Bearwish. Mrs. S. Prendergast Mrs. G. O'Donnell
	Support Clerk	Mrs. S. Scott Mr. D. Hall

Other Persons Present

Mrs. Catherine Smith (Newly Appointed Headteacher).
Mrs. Sarah Kenny.
Mrs. Penny Campbell (Prospective CSA Governor).
Two Pupil representatives of the School Council.

1. **Welcome.** The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting, Mrs. Catherine Smith (Newly Appointed Headteacher) and the Two Pupil Representatives from the School Council.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
 - 2.1. Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs. S. Hosford & Mr. P. Adams.
3. **Junior Governor Presentation.**

Mrs. Kenny introduced the Pupils to the Governors and Governors briefly explained their role on the Governing Body. The Junior Governors gave a brief presentation to Governors about their role as Junior Governors on the School Council and as part of the Pupil Voice in DASP. They made the following points;

 - 3.1. What have Junior Governors been doing?
 - 3.1.1. Junior Governors explained about the setting up of the special Book Corners in each of the classes as part of the overall research into reading. They had conducted a questionnaire amongst the pupils of the School to find out how often pupils visited the corners and the type of reading that it encouraged them to undertake. Governors were shown some favourite examples of some of the Book Corners and the Junior Governors explained to the Governing Body the reasons for their choices. They also informed Governors that the Book Corners had been very successful because of the new books placed in them and the comfortable furniture.
 - 3.1.2. Junior Governors often design questionnaires to find out the key issues concerning Pupils. Junior Governors visit the classes on a monthly basis to carry out this research.
 - 3.2. What research have we been doing?
 - 3.2.1. Junior Governors have been asking questions of other Pupils to find out how marking and feedback helps Pupils with their learning. Pupil Governors visited their link classes to find out more. Pupils were pleased when;
 - 3.2.1.1. the marking showed where work was correct.
 - 3.2.1.2. in Foundation, pictures and words were used to indicate how well Pupils were doing in each of the tasks.
 - 3.2.1.3. in Years 2 -4, Pupils were complimented on their good work and given clear targets about how they could improve.

3.2.1.3.1. Pupils also suggested that Staff give more verbal feedback on Pupil's work.

3.2.1.3.2. Pupils suggested that 'expert ' Pupils should be used to help and support those Pupils who were finding work difficult.

3.2.2. Story Night Survey. Pupils used questionnaires to find out about patterns of adult reading to see if any lessons could be learnt that would assist with reading in Schools. The survey found that;

3.2.2.1. most adults enjoyed reading when they went to bed.

3.2.2.2. reading was a relaxing and peaceful activity that they preferred doing towards the end of the day.

3.2.2.3. a large number of Adults in the school spoke and read in different languages.

3.2.2.4. a large number of adults mention that the author Enid Blyton was popular when they were at school and that when Pupil Governors asked others in the School, Enid Blyton was still a popular author.

3.2.2.4.1. Junior Governors were of the opinion that more Parents should be encouraged to come into the School to assist with reading activities.

3.2.3. Junior Governors also researched what Pupils used every day to help them with their learning and this information was reported back to Members of Staff at some of their meetings.

3.3. What is new this year?

3.3.1. Junior Governors advised Governors that as part of the School Website there was a section for a Junior Governor Newsflash. This alerted Pupils and Parents to events that were taking place in the School.

3.4. What have been our concerns this year?

3.4.1. Junior Governors have been concerned about the amount of rubbish around the playground and suggest that more litter bins are placed outside.

3.4.2. Junior Governors have also been concerned about the lack of re-cycling. We found out that most of it was peel and apple cores.

3.5. Headteacher Interviews.

3.5.1. Pupil Governors advised that they had been able to accompany some of the possible candidates around the School and had posed questions as part of the interview process.

3.6. What we enjoyed about being a Junior Governor.

3.6.1. Constructing questionnaires and asking questions.

3.6.2. Feeling responsible.

3.6.3. Getting to know Pupils in other classes.

3.7. The Chair thanked Junior Governors for their informative presentation. Governors expressed their gratitude to the Pupils for sharing the information with the Governing Body.

Following the presentation several questions was asked. The questions and responses by the Pupil Governors are summarised below:

3.7.1. Junior Governors suggested 2 ways in which the feedback on work and the marking could be improved. Have they been tried? Junior Governors stated that it had been tried with small groups in some classes. Mrs. Bearwish advised Governors that the results of all research was fed back to Staff and where improvements could be made they were often trialled and if successful rolled out across most of the School.

3.7.2. Do you think the experience of being a Junior Governor has helped you? Both Junior Governors were of the opinion that the experience had helped them.

3.7.3. Have the results of the feedback been reported back to Staff? Junior Governors stated that all the results of the research and the questionnaires was fed back to Mrs. Bearwish. Mrs. Bearwish explained that the information supplied by Junior Governors was then fed back to Senior Staff.

3.8. The Chair thanked the Junior Governors for their confident and informative presentation and stated that the Governing Body always looked forward to the presentation by Junior Governors. The Chair asked that the Junior Governors pass on the thanks of the Governing Body to the Junior Governors who could not be present at this meeting.

(Junior Governors & Mrs. Kenny left at 19.25 hours.)

4. Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business & Declaration of Interest.

4.1. No Urgent Business was Declared.

4.2. No Declarations of Interest were made.

5. Minutes.

5.1. Mr. Phillips proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th May 2013 were accepted as an accurate record. Mrs. Davis seconded. Governors agreed unanimously.

6. Matters Arising.

- 6.1. Action Plan. Item 1. Consider including the Assessment Briefing given by Mrs. Ellie Goodridge on a future agenda of the Full Governing Body.** The Chair reported that this had been discussed at the last agenda Setting Meeting and that this matter would be included on the agenda as soon as time allowed. The Clerk briefly reminded Governors that under the new inspection guidelines there was an increased expectation that all members of the Governing Body would have a clear ideas of the trends in achievement and progress, particularly the strengths and the weakness and the strategies the School was employing to improve.
- 6.2.** Governors agreed that all the other action items had been completed or appeared on the agenda for this meeting for discussion.

7. Correspondence.

- 7.1. Letter from a Teacher requesting a change of hours from full time to 0.8.** Governors were informed that Mrs. Bearwish had agreed to this request after discussion with the Chair of Governors as there was no operational impact on the School.
- 7.2. Letter from a Teaching Assistant requesting a change of hours from 25 hours per week to 20 hours.** Governors were informed that Mrs. Bearwish had agreed to this request after discussion with the Chair of Governors as this Member of Staff was highly valued, there were good personal reasons for this request and there was no operational impact on the School.
- 7.3. Letter of Resignation from Mrs. Davina Taylor.** The Chair thanked the Vice-Chair for all her support over a number of years and for the contribution she had made in the life of the School. Governors also thanked Mrs. Taylor for her contribution. The Chair advised Governors that as the retiring Vice-Chair was a Community Governor it might be worth considering appointing a Governor with a link to Poundbury. Several Governors suggested Mr. Dennis Holmes (Retired Town Clerk). The Chair asked Mr. Phillips to approach Mr. Holmes on behalf of the Governing Body.

8. Head's Report. (Appendix 1).

The Head spoke to her report. The following points were highlighted;

- 8.1. Mainstream Pupil Numbers.** At the present time there were 403 Pupils on roll. This was predicted to be 423 Pupils in September 2013. 90 Pupils were being admitted into Reception but Mrs. Bearwish advised that several appeals were taking place that could possibly increase the numbers. Mrs. Bearwish highlighted that if the additional numbers continue to progress through the school at 90+ there would be consequences to this action. Significant numbers of new Pupils were joining the School increasing the numbers overall. Year 2 was predicted to have 95 Pupils, this included 5 speech and language Pupils. The average class size was now 28 Pupils. In recognition of the increasing numbers the School has drawn down some of its formula capital and proposes making modifications to the Music Room in order that it could be used as an additional teaching space.
- 8.2. Speech & Language Base Numbers.** At the present time there were 14 Pupils on roll. This was predicted to be 12 in September 2013.
- 8.3. Staffing.**
- 8.3.1.** Mrs. Bearwish detailed the changes to Staffing for September 2013 and the allocation of Staff to classes.
- 8.4. Attendance Report.** Governors scrutinised the latest attendance data compared with national averages. Mrs. Bearwish advised Governors of the following;
- 8.4.1.** That the national average is 95.6%. No explanation has been given for the 0.7% rise in this average. Unfortunately this puts Damers First School in the lowest 40% of all Schools.
- 8.4.2.** That the School attendance data shows that attendance has improved steadily since 2008.
- 8.4.3.** That in 2012 the school average fell below the national average for the first time.
- 8.4.4.** That current data for 2013 shows that although attendance is slightly higher than previous years, it is in line with the national average for Primary Schools.
- 8.4.5.** Governors briefly discussed the data and the measures that the School had in place to improve attendance. Governors were advised of the recent changes to the attendance regulations. The amendments removed reference to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. The amendments made clear that Headteachers were not able to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there were exceptional circumstances.

8.4.6. Governors considered the new attendance guidelines from OfSTED. They were;

8.4.6.1. 96%+ is outstanding.

8.4.6.2. 95.6% is good.

8.4.6.3. 94.2%-95.2% requires improvement.

8.4.6.4. Below 94.2 is inadequate.

8.4.7. Mrs. Bearwish stated that this data had now been included in the reports. Vigorous procedures would be updated further in September in order to improve attendance.

8.5. School Improvement Update. Governors were informed that normally the Governing Body would be considering the main priorities for inclusion in the SDP at this time of year, but due to the fact that the New Headteacher had been only recently appointed it would be necessary to delay this matter so that she had time to consider this when she was fully aware of the needs of the school in the intervening year. However Mrs. Bearwish updated the Governing Body on the School Improvement up to the present date. She explained that Members of the Curriculum Committee regularly discussed improvements to the Curriculum and details could be found in the minutes of those meetings. She briefly reported that;

8.5.1. Significant investment had been made in the acquisition of new reading materials. Additionally Mr. Oram was researching the possibility of having a subscription with the 'Bug Club'. This was an online reading resource.

8.5.2. the Creative learning Project on what motivates Pupils to read, was coming to a conclusion and the information learnt was being processed to inform future planning. The Book Launches were taking place and Mrs. Bearwish distributed examples of the professionally published books for Governors to examine. She stated that the Pupils had been very excited to see their work published in such a professional way. The Chair encouraged other Members of the Governing Body to attend any of the other Book Launches as the book launch she had attended had been very exciting and was a useful way of Governors experiencing the teaching and learning taking place in the School.

8.6. Recent Events & Forthcoming Events. Governors discussed with Mrs. Bearwish the events that had taken place over the last 3 months and the events that were yet to take place.

8.7. Staff Development. Governors considered the Staff Development that had taken place during weekly Staff Meetings. They were made aware that records of individual Staff training was kept but that it was too detailed to share with the Governing Body.

8.8. Artsmark Gold Application. Governors were advised that the funding to support Artsmark was now being provided by Trinity College London. The School had consistently achieved this award over a 9 year period. The process was rigorous and lengthy. The Assessor had been visiting the School, and was overwhelmed by the provision on offer in Damers First School. The School found the process a very positive experience and the results of the application should be known in 8 weeks time.

8.9. Racial Incidents. Governors were informed that there had been 2 racial incidents in the past year. These had been reported to Dorset LA and no further action had been taken.

The Chair thanked the Acting Headteacher for her Report. No further questions were asked.

8.10. Annual Inclusion Report.(Appendix 2). Governors were circulated with a copy of the Annual Inclusion Report that compared Attainment & Performance of Vulnerable groups with mainstream Pupils. The Clerk advised that the discussions concerning the report could be found in the latest minutes of the Curriculum Committee. The purpose of circulating this report to all Governors was to improve the understanding of all Governors with regard to the latest trends in Attainment & Performance.

9. School Development Plan. (SDP). Mrs. Bearwish outlined some of the suggested priorities for the next SDP but explained that these would not be confirmed until after Mrs. Catherine Smith was in post.

10. Four Year Governing Body Planner. (Appendix 3)

10.1. Mrs. Davis proposed that the Four Year Governing Body Planner. Year 4 2013/14 be approved for use. Mr. P. Rothman seconded. Governors unanimously approved.

10.2. The Clerk agreed to e-mail a copy of the 4 Year Planner to Mrs. Bearwish so that a copy could be made available to Members of Staff.

11. DASP Conference on Federation. Mrs. Davis reported on the latest developments in the Partnership. The Chair reported on the following points from the Conference.

11.1. A presentation was given informing the Partnership of the arrangements for a federation of 7 schools in Devon. The Federation had an Executive Headteacher and then individual Heads of Learning on each site. Each school in the federation was considered as separate in terms of OfSTED Inspections.

11.2. The aim of the conference had been to consider the possibility of federating the mini-pyramids within the DASP Partnership. A presentation had been given by Cerne Abbas and the Winterbourne Valley Schools about the possibility of federating in a mini-pyramid. The Chair stated that the problem within the Partnership was that the very small schools were not financially viable and therefore were looking at ways that they could pool resources. She advised that Damers First school had always been financially viable and with the possibility of moving to a new site and the increase in size to a 4 form entry the Governing Body would have a lot to consider in the next few months without the further distraction of the possibility of federating. Several other Members of the DASP Partnership were unhappy about this stance as they felt the Governing Body of Damers First School had a responsibility to the other schools within the Partnership. A lengthy discussion ensued.

11.2.1. *Governors agreed to minute that they considered that at the present time they had other priorities to consider and would not be considering the possibility of federating at the moment.*

12. **First School Provision.** Governors agreed that this matter should form part of the Part 2 Confidential Minute of this meeting. (*See Confidential Minutes Part 2 of the Meeting held on 1st July 2013*)

13. **Current Issues of Committees and Groups.**

13.1. Report of Environment & Premises Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 18/06/2013 Appendix 4)

Mr. Phillips spoke briefly to the minutes.

13.1.1. Sex Education Policy. Members of the Governing Body had been circulated with a copy of the updated Sex Education Policy (Appendix 5) that had been scrutinised at the Committee Meeting

13.1.1.1. *Mr. Phillips proposed that the Sex Education policy (Appendix 5) be approved for use and have Public Access. Mr. P. Rothman seconded. Governors unanimously agreed.*

13.1.2. Damage by Skateboarders. Governors briefly discussed this item. Mr. Putnam asked if those trespassing were past Pupils. The Chair informed Governors that this was not known. Mrs. Bearwish advised Governors that the matter had been followed up and was now closed. No further incidents had taken place.

13.2. Report of Curriculum Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 20/06/2013 Appendix 6)

Mrs. Wibley spoke briefly to the minutes.

13.2.1. No further matters were discussed.

13.3. Report of Finance & People Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 17/06/2013 Appendix 7)

Mrs. Davis spoke briefly to the minutes.

13.3.1. **Outturn Report.** Governors considered the Outturn Statement. The Clerk explained that the Outturn Statement indicated the projected end of year balance if spending patterns remained the same and no other factors changed between now and the end of the financial year. The Chair of Governors signed the outturn statement on behalf of the Governing Body.

13.3.2. **Carry Forward.** The Chair of Governors informed the Governing Body that due to the late invoices being submitted for approved works on the swimming pool and Foundation outside area the school had breached the 8% limit on the carry forward for the previous financial year. Mrs. Coker was required to write a note of explanation to Accountancy at Dorset LA for consideration by the Schools' Forum. No claw back of funding was expected.

13.3.3. **Virements.**

13.3.3.1. *Mrs. Davis proposed that the Governing Body approve the virements listed below. Mrs. Moss seconded. Members unanimously agreed.*

13.3.3.1.1. £23,272 from Unallocated to Repairs & Maintenance. (This was to cover the outstanding invoices for the outside Foundation Area and the Swimming Pool as discussed above).

13.3.3.1.2. £3,619 from Reserve Fund to Teaching. (This reserve fund was set up by Phil Minns to support extra cover for the CPD project.)

13.3.3.1.3. Mrs. Davis advised Governors that when Mr. Minns left at the end of the term under his terms and conditions of employment he was entitled to a full months remuneration in April 2013. This had not been taken into account when setting the new Budget.

13.3.3.2. £6,845 from Unallocated to Teaching. (Reasons given in section 7.1.2.3)

13.3.4. **Dorset Scheme of Financial Management.** The Clerk explained to Governors that this Policy was contained in a bulky file which could be viewed in the main office. Governors needed to be made aware of its existence as it determined the financial relationship between the School and Dorset LA. No approval was necessary.

13.3.5. Financial Efficiency Policy. Governors were informed that this Policy had been formulated by Dorset LA to manage surplus balances on budgets for the benefit of all schools.

13.3.6. Mrs. Davis proposed that the Governing Body approve the Dorset La Financial Efficiency Policy. Mrs. Moss seconded. Governors unanimously approved.

14. Clerk's Report (Appendix 8).

14.1. Standing Orders. Governors were advised by the Clerk that there were no further suggested amendments to the standing orders. **Mr. Phillips proposed that the standing orders were approved until July 2014. Mrs. Davis seconded. Governors unanimously approved.**

14.2. Membership of the Governing Body.

14.2.1. Parent Governors. The Clerk reported that he would be organising Parent Governor Elections early in the Autumn Term.

14.3. Membership of Committees and Named & Link Governors. Governors decided to defer consideration of this matter until the next meeting.

14.4. Annual Timetable and Management of Meetings. Governors agreed to the timetable as set out in Appendix 9.

15. Governor Visits & Training.

15.1. Feedback from Governor Training. No feedback was given. The Clerk agreed to investigate the possibility of several Schools organising a Hosted Governor Services Course on mutually beneficial themes. Possibly Understanding Data and Preparing for OfSTED.

15.2. Feedback from Governor Visits. No feedback was given.

16. Any Other Urgent Business.

16.1. Damers Fest. Mrs. Scott reminded Governors that the Damers Fest was being held on Saturday 6th July 2013. Any offers of help would be gratefully accepted.

16.2. The Chair of Governors thanked all Governors and Members of Staff for their input into the running of the Governing Body over the past year and wished everyone an enjoyable summer holiday.

The meeting concluded at 21.02 hours.

Date of next meeting, **Monday 7th October 2013** at 19.00 hours in the Main School Hall.

Certified as a true record.

Chair Date

D.A.Hall.

Clerk / Manager to Governors.

6th July 2013.