



DAMERS FIRST SCHOOL.

Minutes of the Governors' meeting held at school on Monday 25th March 2013 at 19.00 hours.

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

Other Persons Present Mrs. Rachel Nesbitt. (Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator)

1. **Welcome.** The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
 - 2.1. Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs. S. Hosford and Mr. P. Adams.
3. **Teacher Led Briefing to Governors on Anti-Bullying Procedures.**

Mr. Minns introduced Mrs. Rachel Nesbitt and explained that Mrs. Nesbitt was involved in overseeing the implementation of the Behaviour and Anti-bullying procedures and policies.

 - 3.1. **Background:**
 - 3.1.1. New guidelines had been published in the Autumn Term of 2012. The detailed procedures and guidelines had been written by Children's Services Department at Dorset LA.
 - 3.1.2. The Policy and guidelines were very child centred.
 - 3.1.3. The Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures were key Policies in terms of OfSTED and had very close links with the Single Equality Policy.
 - 3.1.4. The Policy gives very detailed guidelines to Staff.
 - 3.2. **Development from Model Policy**
 - 3.2.1. The Policy has been modified after extensive consultation.
 - 3.2.2. Pupils were consulted concerning the definition of what constitutes Bullying. Mrs. Nesbitt informed Governors that she had been surprised by the detailed suggestions that had been made by Pupils concerning what constituted bullying. Several of the Guideline sheets had been modified in response to the Pupil suggestions.
 - 3.2.3. Parents were consulted via the Parent Focus Group.
 - 3.2.4. Staff were consulted at Staff Meetings.
 - 3.2.5. Mr. Minns explained to Governors that the Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures fitted together with the Behaviour Policy. The Behaviour Policy outlines how the School uses positive reinforcement to obtain high standards of good behaviour. It also details the procedures for exclusions where all other means to deal with poor behaviour have failed.
 - 3.2.6. Matters or incidents are considered as bullying if a Pupil or Parent considers it to be so. The School does not try to be judgemental in what it considers to be a matter of bullying but tries to take all incidents seriously and reach a satisfactory conclusion.

3.3. Further Development. Mrs. Nesbitt explained that as the school implemented the Anti-bullying Policy there was an increasing need to develop with young children a vocabulary in order to explain to adults what was happening to them. This process would continue. The School was also using standardised forms to record any perceived bullying incidents.

3.4. Following the presentation several questions were asked. The questions and responses by the Mrs. Rachel Nesbitt are summarised below:

3.4.1. As the School begins to record the incidents of anti-bullying will this lead to a spike in the number of incidents recorded? Mrs. Nesbitt stated that when the School had previously held an anti-bullying week a spike in the numbers or reported incidents had been noticed as there was a heightened interest in the matter throughout the School. This would also be true if a course was held on Anti-Bullying for Staff as there would inevitably be a heightened interest and therefore more incidents being recorded. When looking at any subsequent data produced it would be important to note the dates of any additional training or initiatives within the School so that this could be taken into account.

3.4.2. When considering the forms at the back of the Policy for recording incidents the language used seems to be focussed on older Pupils. Will the School be modifying them to cater for younger Pupils? Mrs. Nesbitt advised that the forms that had the Damer's School Logo on had already been modified and that the others were in the process of being considered

3.4.3. Governors discussed with Mrs. Nesbitt the presentation and no further questions were asked.

3.5. The Chair thanked Mrs. Nesbitt for her presentation.

(Mrs. Nesbitt left at 19.24 hours)

4. Anti-Bullying Policy (Appendix 1).

Governors had been previously circulated with the Anti-Bullying Policy (Appendix 1).

4.1. After further consideration Governors agreed to adopt the Policy.

4.1.1. Mrs. Campbell proposed that the Anti-Bullying Policy as outlined in Appendix 1 be approved for use. Mrs. R Davis seconded. Governors unanimously approved.

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

The Clerk asked that 1 matter be considered;

5.1. Approval of the Schools Financial Value Standard. Governors were circulated with an updated copy of the Schools Financial Value Standard. (Appendix 2). The Clerk explained briefly about the standard, which Members of the Finance Committee had considered in more detail. He advised Governors that all 23 questions had received a yes answer and evidence could be produced to support these judgements apart from question 23. This stated;

5.1.1. 'Does the School have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up to date asset register and adequate insurance?' The Clerk advised Governors that the answer to this question, in common with the majority of schools in Dorset, had been answered 'in part'. He explained that the majority of risks were covered by adequate insurance but that the School did not possess a Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery Plan. The Clerk stated that in the Action Plan the school would submit that it would formulate such a plan after receiving guidance by the end of the Summer Term. Mr. Minns advised Governors that Dorset LA was offering a Service Level Agreement to put such a plan in place and that it might be in the School's interests to consider this for the present year. He would make reference to this later in the meeting when the Service Level Agreements were discussed.

5.1.2. Mr. L. Phillips proposed that the Schools Financial Value Standard Form be signed by the Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body. Mrs. M. Moss seconded. Governors unanimously approved.

5.1.3. Governors asked that compliance with question 23 in regard to the Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery Plan be retained on the Action Plan of the Finance & Staffing Committee until completion.

5.2. No declarations of interest were made.

6. Minutes.

6.1. Mr. L. Philips proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2013 were accepted as an accurate record. Mrs. P. Campbell seconded. Governors agreed unanimously.

7. Matters Arising & Action Plan.

- 7.1. Action Plan. Item 1. Contact new Governors to begin the mentoring process.** Mentor Governors reported that they had started the process but it had not been completed yet. Governors asked that this matter be retained on the Action Plan until completed.
- 7.2. Action Plan. Item 3. Consider including the Assessment Briefing given by Mrs. Ellie Goodridge on a future agenda of the Full Governing Body.** The Chair informed Governors that this presentation would be included at the next meeting of the Full Governing Body on Tuesday 7th May 2013.
- 7.3.** All other matters had been dealt with or were agenda items for this meeting.

8. Correspondence.

8.1. There was none.

9. Headteachers Appointment.

The Chair discussed with Governors the appointment of a Headteacher. She briefly reminded Governors that 3 candidates had been selected for interview in the first round. At the last moment 1 candidate dropped out of the interviews due to the cost of transport. After consultation individually with Governors the consensus had been that the majority would not support paying this cost. She explained that the Advert had been placed again and previous candidates could apply. The closing date was 16.00 hours on 15th April 2013. Governors briefly discussed the fact that Year 4 would be away on the date of the interview. The Chair was of the opinion that although it would have been better to have year 4 present, considering the situation overall, the appointment of a Headteacher for September had precedence. Some concerns were expressed about a break down in communications and the speed of the process. All Members of the Governing Body including the Clerk agreed that communication was very important in any organisation and everyone involved would endeavour to keep Governors as fully informed as possible. Mr. Minns reminded Governors that the task of leading the appointment of a new Headteacher was an important but time consuming job which the Chair of Governors had undertaken. He also advised Governors that having a second round might be very positive in that a wider range of candidates might apply. 4 possible candidates had requested tours of the School and therefore he considered the situation promising. The Chair thanked several Members of the Governing Body for their advice and support when a decision was required with regard to stopping the interview process. The Chair agreed to endeavour to keep Governors as fully informed as possible about the process.

10. Head's Report. (Appendix 3). Governors had been previously circulated with the Report and Mr. Minns asked if there were any further questions. The Head spoke to his report in answer to several questions. The following points were highlighted;

10.1. Mainstream Pupil Numbers. At the present time there were 403 Pupils on roll. This was predicted to be 411 Pupils in September 2013. Governors briefly discussed the criteria being used to admit Pupils under the Dorset LA Admissions Policy and the number of speech and language Pupils being included in the class sizes. Governors discussed the numbers of Pupils in Key Stage 1 as the figures indicated that in September 2013, Reception and Year 1 would have 90 Pupils each and Year 2 would have 88 Pupils. Some concerns were expressed about these increasing numbers. Mr. Minns explained to Governors that the School would not be able to prevent Pupils coming into those classes until they reached 90 Pupils in each of the year groups. The Speech and Language Pupils were in addition to these figures. Mr. Minns advised Governors that thought had already been given to having some Pupils taught in small groups away from the main classroom in order to relieve some of the pressure on space.

10.2. Attendance Report. Governors scrutinised the latest attendance data compared with national averages. Governors noted that overall attendance whilst slowly improving over time, had fallen below national averages for the first time in 2012. This was because there had been a rise of 0.7% in the national average. Mr. Minns suggested that part of this rise might be attributed to the fact that Damers was now being compared with primary schools. Several Governors questioned how the School would tackle this problem. Mr. Minns stated that there was a problem with a significant group of Pupils. Although rigorous procedures were in place to follow up poor attendance the School would need to consider how to address the basic problem with this significant group. This would need to be high on the priority list as non-attendance was directly linked to poor performance.

10.3. The Chair thanked the Headteacher for his Report. No further questions were asked.

11. RAISE Online Data and Dashboard Report.

Governors viewed selected highlights of the data on the Interactive Whiteboard. The overall results from the dashboard indicated that the School was performing as follows;

11.1. Reading 2nd Quartile

11.2. **Writing 1st Quartile**

11.3. **Mathematics 2nd Quartile**

11.4. **Attendance 4th Quartile.**

11.5. Mr. Minns highlighted several significant items from the data.

11.5.1. Pupils are significantly above the national averages in Reading, Writing and Maths.

11.5.2. Significantly, half of the Pupils in receipt of free school meals are doing as well as the other Pupils. Half are not. This is an area that the School will need to concentrate on and Governors will need to monitor.

11.6. **RAISE Online data.** Governors were reminded that this was based on the results at the end of Key Stage 1. Governors reviewed the overall characteristics of the School and in the majority of measures the School was considered to be average.

11.6.1.1. Trends Over Time.

11.6.1.1.1. Comparing the data over the last 5 years the national averages are improving in reading, writing and maths. The School is managing to stay above this

11.6.1.1.2. In reading, performance overall dipped in 2011 but improved again in 2012.

11.6.1.1.3. In Maths there is an issue because the gap between the national average and School performance is narrowing.

11.6.1.1.4. Although the results are again good this year the data suggest that we are not as significantly above as we were before. The School has concentrated on making more even progress throughout the School and this is resulting in Year 4 results improving year on year.

11.6.1.1.5. Summarising, Mr. Minns suggested that once the detail was thoroughly analysed it would be used to inform how the School would target groups of pupils to improve attainment and progress.

11.6.2. Governors were reminded that the information in the RAISE Online data was confidential. If however Governors wished to view the entire Report they should e-mail the Clerk who would obtain a copy from the Headteacher.

12. Pupil Premium Report.

Governors had been previously circulated with the Pupil Premium Report (Appendix 4). This Report detailed the current level of spending and the predicted levels of income for next year together with the its allocation and use. In 2012/13 the School received £55,574 in Pupil Premium Funding. This was used to provide;

12.1. A Reading Recovery Programme in Year 1 and Year 2 to ensure that all Pupils in receipt of Free School meals (FSM) became fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1.

12.2. Individual Tracking and targeted support from a dedicated members of Staff.

12.3. **Development.** Mr. Minns stated that the School would be looking carefully at how it could narrow the gap between FSM Pupils and the rest. Governors briefly discussed the problems with multi vulnerability Pupils i.e. FSM and poor attendance. Mr. Minns stated that where there was a broken pattern of attendance there was a significant educational problem and if this was linked with any other form of vulnerability the problems were compounded. Mrs Wibley asked if there was a Maths Recovery Programme. Mr. Minns stated that there was not a similar programme to the Reading Recovery Programme but that Staff were aware that that there was an issue with a narrowing gap in Maths between national averages and school performance. He suggested that it was difficult to keep the momentum going in all areas of the curriculum at once.

13. Safeguarding.

13.1. **Safeguarding Policy.** Governors were informed by Mr. Minns that there had been no further updates to the Safeguarding Policy since it had been approved in March 2008. Several of the procedures had been modified but they had been brought to the attention of the Governing Body.

13.1.1. **Mrs. Taylor proposed that the current Safeguarding Policy be approved for continued use. Mr. Rothman seconded. Governors unanimously approved.**

13.2. **Safeguarding Update.** Mrs. Moss had attended the Safer Recruitment Course.

14. Dorchester Area Schools Partnership (DASP).

Governors were advised that the Headteacher had attended the recent DASP Conference. He was of the opinion that the topics under discussion were still items that had been discussed many times before without any measurable progress. Mrs. Davis advised Governors that there had been a suggestion that the DASP Partnership appoint a Project Manager but Mrs. Davis was concerned that without clear projects to manage

this could be an expensive mistake. A conference was being organised for 10th May 2013 to consider various aspects of federation. Mr. Minns explained that under the proposed changes to the way that schools were funded under a national formulae, small schools would find it increasingly difficult to remain viable. Mr. Minns advised Governors that Schools with more than 200 Pupils would be financially viable. Mrs. Davis reported that a positive development was the proposed mentoring of new Chairs of Governors.

15. Current Issues of Committees and Groups.

15.1. Report of Environment & Premises Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 05/03/2013 Appendix 5)

Mr. Phillips spoke briefly to the minutes.

15.1.1. Medicines in School. Mr. Minns confirmed that Calpol could not be administered in School unless it had been prescribed.

15.2. Report of Curriculum Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 07/03/2013 Appendix 6)

Mrs. Taylor spoke briefly to the minutes.

15.2.1. No further matters were discussed.

15.3. Report of Finance & Staffing Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 04/03/2013 Appendix 7)

Mrs. Davis spoke briefly to the minutes.

15.3.1. Budget 2013/14. Governors were informed that when the draft Budget was set and viewed by Members of the Committee the information relating to the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) had not been finalised. At the present time although more information was available there was still a lot of confusion within Dorset LA. Funding that had been previously retained for services was now being de-delegated. For example this will be the first year that the school would set funding aside to manage the payroll service and the complaints service amongst others. After considering what was needed it appeared that the SLAs would cost £77,000. However after considering some of the services it appeared that several were duplicated in a slightly different format. The Finance Officer was monitoring this and considered that after the removal of any duplication the final cost of the SLAs could be approximately £43,000. However the original figure of £77,000 had been included in the Draft Budget. A slightly revised Draft Budget 2013/14 would be presented to the Finance & Staffing Committee members at their next meeting for further scrutiny.

15.3.2. Virements.

15.3.3. Mrs. Davis proposed that the Governing Body approve the virements listed in section 15.3.3.1 below. Mrs. Campbell seconded. Governors unanimously approved.

15.3.3.1. £9,954 from Other Contributions to Support Staff.

16. Governor Visits & Training.

16.1. Feedback from Governor Training.

16.1.1. Mrs. Moss advised Governors that she had attended a safer recruitment course recently. Governors updated the course register.

16.2. Feedback from Governor Visits. No reports were received concerning Governor Visits.

17. Any Other Urgent Business.

17.1. The Chair of Governors thanked Mr. Minns for his time at the School in making it a fun learning environment but also at the same time raising expectations and standards. She also thanked him for his advice and support in her role as Chair of Governors. She wished him good luck in his future career. Governors applauded the Headteacher. Mr Minns thanked the Governors for their good wishes.

The meeting concluded at 21.04 hours.

Date of next meeting. **Tuesday 7th May 2013** at 19.00 hours in school.

Certified as a true record.

Chair Date

D. A. Hall.

Clerk / Manager to Governors.

26th March 2013.