



## **DAMERS FIRST SCHOOL.**

Minutes of the Governors' meeting held at school on Monday 19th March 2012 at 19.00 hours.

<b>Persons Present</b>	CSA	Mr. L. Phillips. Mrs. S. Hosford
	Community	Mrs. D. Taylor (Vice-Chair of Governors) Ms. R. Bettenson Mr. T. Putnam
	Elected Parent	Mrs. T. Gedye Mrs. P. Campbell
	Acting Headteacher	Mrs. M. Bearwish.
	Teacher	Mrs. S. Limmer
	Support Staff	Mrs. S. Scott
	Clerk	Mr. D. Hall

**Other Persons Present** None were present.

1. **Welcome.** The Vice-Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
  - 2.1. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr. P. Rothman, Mr. G. Rolfe, Mrs. R. Davis and Mrs. A. Caldwell.
3. **Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business & Declaration of Interest.**
  - 3.1. No Urgent Business was declared.
  - 3.2. No declarations of interest were made.
4. **Minutes.**
  - 4.1. Mrs. D. Taylor proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2012 were accepted as an accurate record. Mrs. P. Campbell seconded. Governors agreed unanimously.
5. **Matters Arising.**
  - 5.1. Action Plan. Item 1. Mentor Governors to contact new Governors to start the mentoring process. Use the Mentor Governor's Checklist in the Governors' Handbook as a guide. Mrs Campbell reported that she would contact Mr. Adams in the next week and Mrs. Taylor reported that she had arranged to meet with Mr. Rolfe. Governors asked that this matter be retained on the Action Plan until it had been completed. .
  - 5.2. Action Plan. Item 3. Consider possible candidates as a Parent Governor, CSA Governor or Community Governor and pass on their names to the Chair or Clerk. The Clerk reported that Governors Services had suggested Mr. Moss as a possible CSA Governor for the School. Mrs. Moss was an experienced Governor who was moving into the area. The Chair of Governors was arranging to meet with Mrs. Moss and depending on her recommendations the CSA would consider appointing her. Governors agreed to continue to search for other suitable candidates for the vacant positions.
  - 5.3. Action Plan. Item 4. Arrange date for the first meeting of the Governor Visit Working Party. Mrs. Taylor reported that as yet a suitable date had not been arranged. Mrs. Campbell asked if she could become a Member of this working Party. Governors agreed to this request. Mrs. Campbell agreed to contact Members of the Working Party and arrange the first meeting.
  - 5.4. Governors agreed that all the action items had been completed or appeared on the agenda for this meeting for discussion.
6. **Correspondence.**
  - 6.1. Letter requesting leave of absence from Sarah Kenny. The letter requested leave of absence to attend a Sister's Wedding on Friday 12th May 2012. Governors briefly discussed this matter and granted one day paid leave of absence as this request met previous agreed criteria for paid leave of absence.

**6.1.1. Mr. Phillips proposed that Sarah Kenny be given one day paid leave of absence to attend her sister's wedding. Mrs. Campbell seconded. Governors unanimously agreed.**

**6.2. Letter requesting leave of absence from Member of staff.** This letter requested leave of absence to attend a university interview with a daughter. Mrs. Bearwish advised Governors that they were considering this matter retrospectively as the Chair of Governors had had to make a decision on their behalf as the Governing Body were not meeting until after the event had taken place. The decision taken was to grant unpaid leave of absence and to request that the time be made up as the Member of Staff was not full time and the criteria had not been met for paid leave of absence. Governors were satisfied with the Chair's decision made on their behalf.

(Ms. R. Bettenson arrived at 19.15 hours).

**7. Head's Report.** (Appendix 1). Governors were circulated with a copy of the Headteacher's Report.

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

**7.1. Mainstream Pupil Numbers.** At the present time there were 394 Pupils on roll and the on-going trend was increasing numbers. 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. When questioned Mrs. Bearwish confirmed that Speech and Language Pupils were accounted for in the data separately and that in theory this meant that classes could exceed 30 Pupils. She advised that Pupils with a statement could indicate on the statement the School that the Child might attend and that the school would have to comply with this request even though class sizes were being exceeded. Several Governors were surprised that a school could be in a position where because it was successful in dealing with pupils with specialised needs, it might draw increasing numbers.

**7.2. Speech & Language Base Numbers.** At the present time there were 12 Pupils on roll. Mrs. Bearwish explained that numbers were generally lower in early years because people were unlikely to make specific judgements about specific needs early on in a child's career. However she advised that the Speech and Language Service was endeavouring to improve this situation. Governors were advised that although funding was received for 19 places this funding remained in place even if the school had lower numbers as the School would have to make a place immediately available for any Pupil who Dorset LA deemed needed specialist Speech and Language provision.

**7.3. Class Sizes.** Current average class size is 26.8 Pupils. Governors noted that the overall trend was for class sizes to increase. Governors briefly discussed the reasons for this with the Acting Headteacher.

**7.4. Attendance Report.** This Report covered 3 aspects of attendance to form an overall judgement; national & School trends since 2005, a detailed absence breakdown since 2008 and comparison with the Raise Online contextualised data. Governors scrutinised the latest attendance data compared with Dorset and national averages. The data indicated that;

**7.4.1.** there had been a steady rise in overall attendance figures since 2007.

**7.4.2.** that since 2009 school figures had exceeded national averages.

**7.4.3.** that in 2010 school attendance rates were well above the national averages. Attendance was half a percentage point above the national average. The attendance had been steadily improving over the past 3 years. Authorised absence continues to reduce. Unauthorized absence had risen due to holidays being taken in the term time. Governors questioned the School Policy on the granting of authorised absence for holidays. Mrs. Bearwish confirmed that no authorised absence was granted for holidays in term time, except for some very specialised cases, e.g. the Pupils were from families with a member in the Armed Forces.

**7.4.4.** Attendance rates up to this half-term were 95.4%.

(Mrs. Gedy arrived at 17.25 hours).

**7.5. Staffing.**

**7.5.1.** Mrs Kenny was shortly to commence maternity leave.

**7.5.2.** Carrie Hallett (Teaching Assistant) was being covered by Kelly Cheshire for sickness absence.

**7.5.3.** Rowan Seymour (Transition Learning Mentor) was working between first schools.

**7.6. School Development Plan Update.**

Mrs. Bearwish reminded Governors that a detailed progress Report on the SDP had been given at the previous meeting.

**7.7. Performance Management.**

**7.7.1.** Mrs. Bearwish reported that Performance Management observations had been carried out on all Teaching Staff in February and March. She explained that together with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) they had completed some training with the School Evaluation Partner (SEP) on the

new OfSTED framework for assessing teaching and learning. In response to this it was decided that the observations for Teachers would be completed in 2s. This would ensure that a more professional dialogue would take place and also improve the accuracy of any judgements or conclusions made. Staff had been thoroughly briefed beforehand and the SLT practiced on themselves first. Mrs. Bearwish advised Governors that the observations included more information gleaned from discussions with Pupils and from examining paper evidence of work produced rather than just observing the Member of Staff.

**7.8. Staff Development.** Governors were informed that the Staff Training had been included to demonstrate how Staff Training was clearly linked to the priorities identified in the SDP. Several Governors expressed the opinion that this was a useful to include especially for Governors who were unable to visit the School regularly.

**7.9. Headteacher's Development.** Mrs. Bearwish advised Governors that the SEF writing course had been very useful as it matched with the new OfSTED framework. She explained that whilst Dorset LA had retained the SEF a number of authorities had not once the statutory requirement had been removed. Governors agreed to discuss the New OfSTED Framework as a separate agenda item at the next meeting of the Governing Body.

**7.10. Parent Partnership.** Mrs. Scott confirmed that the Family Seal course had now been completed.

**7.11. List of Events.** Governors briefly discussed the events listed at the conclusion of the Headteacher's Report.

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

## 8. Review Summary Expenditure reports for the Period.

**8.1.** Governors had been previously circulated with the Financial Pack (Appendix 2) from Mrs D. Coker. This included a brief financial report, DES Budget Monitoring Report as of 8th March 2012 and a Budget Holder Monthly Monitoring Report from February 2012. The Vice-Chair explained that there were last minute problems with the Finance Committee being quorate and therefore it was cancelled. Mrs. Davis (Chair of the Finance Committee) had been concerned that the Governing Body scrutinise the accounts before the end of year and therefore that was the reason that they were going to be discussed at this meeting. The Vice-Chair and Acting Headteacher highlighted some of the points from the reports;

### 8.1.1. DES Budget Monitoring Report.

**8.1.1.1. Carry Forward** Mrs. Bearwish stated that Mrs. Coker (Finance Officer) had indicated that there would be a projected carry forward figure of approximately £,150,000 This she advised Governors was under the 8% permitted but was still larger than normal as several large items linked to the Olympic Project would need to be financed in the Summer Term.

**8.1.1.2. Fees & Charges.** Governors noted that this heading was indicating that 6143% had been spent on this account to date. Ms. Bettenson suggested that it might be with regard to the secondment of the Headteacher to OfSTED as the income from this was credited in certain accounts and then had to be vired to another heading. In the absence of the Finance Officer Governors agreed to ask Members of the Finance Committee to ask the Finance Officer for an explanation at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

**8.1.1.3. Mr. Phillips proposed that the Governing Body approve the virements listed in sections 5.5.5.3.1 to 5.1.1.3.7. Mr. Putnam seconded. Governors unanimously approved**

**8.1.1.3.1. £2,180 from Account 620 Donations to Capitation SWP.**

**8.1.1.3.2. £200 from Account 620 Donations to 230 RM.**

**8.1.1.3.3. £1,473 from Account 610 Other Contributions to 112 Support Staff Rowan Seymour at Prince of Wales School. 6/12**

**8.1.1.3.4. £1,344 from Account 610 Other Contributions to 112 Support Staff Rowan Seymour at Prince of Wales School. 6/12**

**8.1.1.3.5. £402 from Account 610 Other Contributions to 112 Support Staff Rowan Seymour at Cerne Abbas School. 9/1**

**8.1.1.3.6. £6,341 from Account 610 Other Contributions to 110 Teaching OfSTED Phil Minns November Salary.**

**8.1.1.3.7. £6,671 from Account 610 Other Contributions to 110 Teaching OfSTED Phil Minns December Salary.**

**8.1.1.3.8. £711 from Account 610 Other Contributions to 111 Supply.** THS SCITT  
Autumn 2011.

**8.1.1.3.9. £510 from Account 610 Other Contributions to 111 Supply.** University of Exeter  
Spring.

**8.1.1.3.10. £259 from Account 610 Other Contributions to 113 Admin.** Kids Club Salary.

**8.1.2.** No further questions were asked on the Report.

## **9. Dorchester Area Schools Partnership (DASP).**

Mrs. Taylor reported that a meeting of the Chairs of Governors of the Partnership was going to take place later in the week. This meeting would discuss possible Academy status and Mr. John England (Dorset LA, Head of School Improvement) would be briefing those present on what a change in status would mean for them. Mrs. Taylor said that there was an indication that those present did not want the whole meeting to be dominated by a discussion about Academy status. Several Governors asked how other First Schools in the Partnership viewed changing status to an Academy. Mrs. Bearwisch indicated that most had not indicated a real preference to become an Academy because in the view of most of them the key question on how a change in status would benefit the Teaching and Learning of Pupils remained unanswered. Governors had a lively discussion about the 2 forms of Academy being proposed nationally and any possible benefits to Damers First School. Mrs. Bearwisch advised Governors that some advisors were indicating that it might be better to opt in earlier in the process than wait until the School was pushed.

Governors were asked to inform the Chair of Governors directly before the meeting on Thursday 22nd March 2012 of any questions they would like asked. Mrs. Campbell stated that she would like to know how Thomas Hardy School had retained its present arrangement of Governance if experience elsewhere had suggested that local accountability was much reduced as sponsors were able to propose most of the Membership of any new Governing Body formed.

## **10. Single Equality Policy.**

Governors were circulated with the Single Equality Policy (Appendix 3) and given several moments to read through the documentation. Mrs. Bearwisch explained to the Governing Body that there were nine equality strands, known as protected characteristics that related to direct discrimination, discrimination by association, discrimination by perception, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The equality strands are;

- 10.1.** disability.
- 10.2.** ethnicity.
- 10.3.** gender
- 10.4.** gender identity and transgender.
- 10.5.** faith, religion and belief.
- 10.6.** marriage and civil partnership.
- 10.7.** sexual orientation (homophobia)
- 10.8.** pregnancy and maternity.
- 10.9.** age.

Mrs. Bearwisch explained that the School also needed to publish the equality information on the School Website and additionally set objectives by which the School intended to improve the protected characteristics. Governors were circulated with the equality information (Appendix 4). Governors noted;

- 10.10.** Equality information about the School Population.
- 10.11.** How the School has due regard for equality.
- 10.12.** How the School consults and engages with Parent's Forum, Junior Governors, School Governors and Members of Staff.
- 10.13.** A record of how the School considered equality issues when making decisions.
- 10.14.** The equality objectives chosen by the School to improve the protected characteristics.

After further consideration Governors agreed to adopt the Policy.

**10.14.1. Mrs. Campbell proposed that the Single Equality Policy as outlined in Appendix 3 be approved for use. Mrs. T Gedye seconded. Governors unanimously approved.**

## **11. Safeguarding.**

**11.1. Safeguarding Policy.** Governors were informed by the Clerk 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.

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

**11.2. Safeguarding Update.** Mrs. Bearwish informed Governors that both Mrs. Campbell and herself had attended the Safer Recruitment Course and Mrs. Bearwish had attended a Safeguarding twilight session.

## **12. Current Issues of Committees and Groups.**

**12.1. Report of Environment & Premises Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 28/02/2012 Appendix 5)**

Mr. Phillips spoke briefly to the minutes.

**12.1.1. Swimming Pool Costs.** Mrs. Bearwish advised Governors that several proposals were being considered to do with the cost of the long term maintenance of the Swimming Pool and that these costings and proposals would be considered at the next meeting of the Environment Committee. Governors briefly discussed whether any of the proposals envisaged the closure of the Swimming pool on cost grounds. Mrs. Bearwish stated that at the present time this was not a proposal. The Clerk advised Governors that the costs of the Swimming pool would always have to be considered in the light of the general costs of the school and in terms of best value as this was part of the brief of the Governing Body; to ensure that Public Funds were being spent wisely and with best value in mind.

**12.2. Report of Curriculum Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 03/03/2011 Appendix 6)**

Mrs. Taylor spoke briefly to the minutes.

**12.2.1.** No further matters were discussed.

**12.3. Report of Finance & Staffing Committee.**

**12.3.1.** The Clerk advised Members of the Governing Body that no meeting had taken place due to a unique set of circumstances that meant that the meeting would not have been quorate. A decision was then taken to cancel the meeting.

## **13. Governor Visits & Training.**

**13.1. Feedback from Governor Training.**

**13.1.1.** Mrs. Campbell advised Governors that she had attended two course recently, Appraising Staff and Safer Recruitment.

**13.2. Feedback from Governor Visits.** No reports were received concerning Governor Visits.

## **14. Any Other Urgent Business.**

**14.1.** No Urgent Business was discussed.

The meeting concluded at 20.35 hours.

Date of next meeting. **Monday 7th May 2012** at 19.00 hours in school.

Certified as a true record.

Chair ..... Date .....

D. A. Hall.

Clerk / Manager to Governors.

20th March 2012.