



## **DAMERS FIRST SCHOOL.**

Minutes of the Governors' meeting held at school on Tuesday 6th May 2014 at 19.00 hours.

<b>Persons Present</b>		
CSA		Mrs. M. Moss (Chair of Governors)
		Mrs. P. Campbell (Vice Chair)
Community		Ms. R. Bettenson
		Mr. P. Rothman
		Mr. T. Putnam
Parent		Mrs. J. Wibley
		Mr. T. Barnes
Headteacher		Mrs. C. Smith
Teacher		Mrs. S. Prendergast
		Mrs. G. O'Donnell
Associate Member		Mrs. M. Bearwish
Clerk		Mr. J Quinton

<b>Other Persons Present</b>	Miss Rachel Nesbitt
	Ms E Goodridge

1. **Welcome.** The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
  - 2.1. Apologies for absence were given and approved for Mr Davidson, Mr Phillips and Mrs Scott.
3. **Election of Vice – Chair.**
  - 3.1. The Clerk advised Governors that following Mrs. Moss' election as Chair of Governors the position of Vice Chair had become vacant. Nominations had been sought from Governors and one such nomination had been received from Mrs Campbell.
  - 3.2. Mrs Campbell left the room during the consideration of this nomination.
4. **Mr Rothman proposed that Mrs. Penny Campbell be appointed as the Vice Chair of Governors for the remainder of academic year 2013/14. Mr Barnes seconded. Governors unanimously approved.**
5. **Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business & Declaration of Interest.**
  - 5.1. No Matters of Urgent Business were declared.
  - 5.2. No declarations of interest were made.
  - 5.3. The Chair informed Governors that an updated list of current contact details would be circulated and Governors could express their preference in terms of how and where they would like to be contacted and sent paperwork.
  - 5.4. Governors agreed that Miss Nesbitt and Ms Goodridge should be appointed Associate Members of the Governing Body and therefore should be included on the contact list.
6. **Minutes.**
  - 6.1. **Mr Putnam proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 be accepted as an accurate record. Mrs. P. Campbell seconded. Governors agreed unanimously.**
7. **Matters Arising & Action Plan.**

- 7.1. Minutes – Item 1. Governors were informed that although a specific communication had not been received from the County Council it appeared as though Mr Davidson had been appointed as a CSA Governor with effect from 19 March 2014. He however had pre booked holidays that would mean that he would not be able to make the next couple of Full Governing Body meetings.
- 7.2. Action Plan. Item 2. Generic leasing agreement that Damers First School could use. Mrs. Campbell reported that she had had no success in obtaining a copy of the Leasing Agreement from the Dorset LA. Mrs. Campbell also reported that Mrs Scott was attempting to secure a copy of the lease agreement that Sunninghill used. Governors asked that this matter be retained on the Action Plan until completed.
- 7.3. Action Plan. Item 3. Meeting with Governor linked with the allocation of Sports Funding. Mrs Smith reported that it had not been possible to hold the meeting with Mr Phillips but that she would raise this as part of her report on the involvement of Governors within the school
- 7.4. Action Plan. Item 4. Review Pupil Premium Data and Ensure Knowledge of Current Trends and OfSTED Dashboard. The Chair reminded Governors of the need for them to keep up to date with the information that is regularly provided to Governors linked with Pupil Premium funding (previous evaluation of impact of interventions report, SIG feedback, data dashboard). A further detailed end of year review and evaluation will be provided at the final FGB meeting of the year.
- 7.5. Mrs Campbell asked for a reminder of log on details for Governors on the Governor support website.
- 7.6. All other matters had been dealt with or were agenda items for this meeting.

## 8. Correspondence.

- 8.1. No correspondence was reported.

## 9. Chair's Report.

The Chair informed Governors of the actions she had taken or was about to take, since becoming Chair. She now meets with the Headteacher weekly to discuss current issues. In addition she updated Governors on;

- 9.1. DASP. She felt the umbrella organisation had a lot of strengths in terms of groups of schools working together. She recently attended a DASP AGM meeting at Puddletown of Chairs and Heads at which they had discussed the resolutions previously agreed by the Governing Body (Item 15 – 17 March 2014). She reported that both resolutions were unanimously agreed at the AGM. They also discussed the accounts for the organisation which had been set up as a limited company. The budget was in the region of £300k with funding from schools in the order of £40 per pupil. There were not a lot of details in these accounts but Mrs Smith confirmed that Heads received monthly details of the budget and it might be appropriate for this to be shared with Governors. Mrs Smith felt that the direction of DASP and its operational model was starting to move towards a more focused CPD model. Redundancies were planned for 2 Behaviour Support staff and 1 ICT support. This meant that the levy for the next year would remain the same in order to cover redundancy costs but the cost of a future levy would be reviewed.
- 9.2. Governors questioned whether they were getting value for money from the funding paid to DASP. Mrs Smith reported that at one stage this was definitely questionable as the school didn't need ICT support and limited Behaviour Support due to the skills of our own staff but she was very hopeful that the new direction of the organisation would mean that there would be more emphasis on continuing professional development (CPD) initiatives that would benefit the school.
- 9.3. Governors agreed that the monthly figures should be brought to the Finance Committee for them to report onwards to the full Governing Body if there were concerns.
- 9.4. The Chairman also reported on DASP discussions on academy status. She had attended a general discussion with the DfE, alongside the Headteacher and Heads and governors from other DASP schools, on multi-academy trusts (MATs) and these discussions would continue. At the DASP AGM mini-pyramids gave an update on where they were in terms of academy status.
- 9.5. Governors questioned what the benefits were for the children of the school in terms of academy status. Mrs Smith responded that it depended on what type of agreement was reached. Discussions so far had been based around the formation of a mini-pyramid MAT involving the middle school and 4 feeder first schools. She emphasised that as Head she had taken the line that no decisions on academy status for Damers would be taken before July 2014. This was the deadline for a number of schools to submit their applications and to access additional funding (approx. £100k). The alternative on which there had been

some discussions, was for a vertical model involving Damers, DMS, the Thomas Hardye School and the Studio School. This would appear to have significantly more benefits for the school in terms of professional development opportunities for all staff, a simplified establishment process in order to formulate a core MAT that other schools could potentially join in the future and shared economies of scale. Mrs Smith said that it was important to allow significant time to explore these potential models and the potential impact on outcomes for the children in our school.

- 9.6.** The Chair encouraged all Governors to broaden their knowledge on academy status and to be open minded about the issues.
- 9.7.** Mrs Smith informed Governors that she had informed teachers that these discussions were taking place.
- 9.8.** School Improvement Group (SIG). The Chair briefly updated Governors on the recent SIG meeting. They had looked at the SEP C document and the Governors' Action Plan which were both on the agenda for this meeting. (Minutes of the SIG meeting enclosed)
- 9.9.** Governors' Action Plan. The Chair highlighted the comments in the SEP C report concerning Governor involvement in the school. An action plan was needed to address this issue and that of attending relevant training. There were numerous training events held at the school such as Safeguarding, Pupil Premium, SEN etc. Governors asked that they be given advance notice of these events and their attention was drawn to the regular issue of the Dorset Governor that contained advance dates. The school faced significant issues such as universal infant free school meals, SEND reforms and assessment without levels in September which required greater Governor involvement. Some Governors had been involved in interviewing staff recently and had attended an informative Learning Walk led by the Headteacher.
- 9.10.** Governor Vacancies. The Chair reported that there were 3 Parent Governor vacancies currently. It was intended to recruit to 2 of these vacancies straight away and to recruit to the third vacancy after September when the new intake came into the school. There was also one vacancy for a community governor and Mrs Smith intended to approach DMS to see whether a joint appointment was possible. Governors emphasised that it should be made clear to parents/carers that the Governing Body would welcome nominations from a wide background, with a wide skill set, and that assistance could be given towards care arrangements. Governors were asked to help with the recruitment.
- 9.10.** New School. The Chair reported that the launch of the official consultation event would take place on 10 June at Damers at 3.00pm until 7.00 pm. Governors were encouraged to attend.

## **10. Governor Involvement in School.**

- 10.1.** Mrs Smith emphasised the need for Governors to become more involved in the everyday life of the school. Mrs Smith shared a number of documents including the audit for GovernorMark which could provide a process through which the Governing Body could assess their relevant strengths and areas for development and provide a vehicle through which an action plan could be drawn up to address various issues. The aim would be to create a key document that highlighted how the Governors would hold the Headteacher to account and would be a vital reference document in preparation for OfSTED.
- 10.2.** Mrs Smith also asked that the Vice Chair and the Deputy Head work together to highlight connections to the Curriculum where specific Governor involvement would be beneficial. Mrs Smith emphasised that Governor involvement could come in a variety of forms but all would facilitate learning more about our school.
- 10.3.** *Governors agreed to hold a BodyBuilding exercise on 21 May at 6.00pm to work through this process.*

## **11. SEP C**

- 11.1.** The Chair reminded Governors that the circulated report (Appendix 1) was an internal document for the school and therefore contained some confidential information.

- 11.2.** Governors asked for explanations of the Floor Standard levels and where the school was in relation to this standard. Mrs Smith reported that the school exceeded these standards but that they were being reviewed and would be increased significantly. Dorset had historically done well on attainment figures but the current emphasis was on progress and value added and Dorset did not fare so well in this respect.
- 11.3.** Governors questioned whether this was because the base data against which improvement was measured was wrong in the first place. Mrs Smith responded that significant work had gone into moderating KS1 data this year and ensuring that this was completely accurate. Over inflated KS1 data makes it difficult for us to prove outstanding progress in KS2 in our school at this point even though we know that our children make outstanding progress during their time at the school. New assessment methods which will come into effect in September would require schools to possibly move away from the levels system. All pupils would be tested at Foundation level and then this would be used as a benchmark to chart progress to Year 6. Governors asked about the difficulty in comparing pupils born early in the academic year and those born late and Ms Goodridge explained how these children were considered to be a vulnerable group and that their progress throughout the school was tracked rigorously .
- 11.4.** Governors highlighted the success of the Phonics provision and how this had become embedded within the school. Ms Goodridge confirmed that high quality provision for phonics was seen as a non-negotiable throughout the school.
- 11.5.** Governors questioned how confident they could be of the predicted grades. Mrs Smith reported that 2014 predictions were based on teacher assessments rather than tests. These were far more realistic but initially may appear as a perceived drop in standards, particularly in KS1 Level 3 Maths attainment. SATs will continue to be used to underpin teacher assessments in KS1 but the reported result will be a confident and moderated teacher assessment. In response to questions from Governors Mrs Goodridge confirmed that parents would still get their school report together with the national curriculum levels that their children had achieved based on teacher assessments. Mrs Smith confirmed that this will provide the benchmark against which progress will be measured across KS2 and will give the opportunity to show greater progress in both Year 3 and Year 4 and consequently for the possibility for the school to be regraded as outstanding. Progress in Year 3 is currently challenged by overinflated KS1 L3 data in Maths.

## **12. Budget 2014/15**

**12.1.** Mrs Smith reported that the School had set a balanced budget and briefed Governors on the assumptions on which the budget had been based. The numbers on roll are predicted to increase to 444 in 2014/15 and it was predicted that the school would be at capacity of 450 in 2015. Base children were in addition to these figures. In terms of pay and performance the projections were set at the highest possible level to accommodate all potential pay progression. The staff establishment had been increased by the recruitment of 5 additional midday supervisors during the current school year but the staffing costs as a proportion of the overall budget were 76% which is still lower than the guidance figure of 80%. This gave some flexibility should it be necessary to increase the office staff or if there were any issues around the staffing levels within the Base. The budget was closely aligned to achieving the objectives within the School Development Plan. The budget showed a big reduction in the supply teaching category. Supply teachers in September will be paid according to the level of experience required and 3 bands will be established alongside the teachers standards so that all supply teachers are aware of expectations. A number of changes have also been introduced this year, such as the appointment of Senior TAs to cover Foundation PPA rather than the use of supply teachers, these will have an impact on costs.

**12.2.** Mrs Smith explained to Governors the position regarding the carry forward figure and the set aside figure. Every effort would be made to protect the carry forward figure to enable a rolling programme of ICT replacement to commence prior to moving to the new school. The set aside figure of £22k had been shown in the budget on the recommendation of the County Council as a contingency should some of the funding for free school meals be clawed back.

**12.3.** Governors highlighted a number of areas where there appeared to be some anomalies and Mrs Smith undertook to resolve these. In particular Governors questioned whether, as there was no longer a requirement to formally request the take up of free school meals, the school ought to encourage parents to do so anyway just in case this might subsequently affect Pupil Premium numbers and funding.

**The Chair proposed, and Mrs Campbell seconded, that subject to all of the assumptions behind the budget being completed, the final draft budget be approved.**

### 13. Safeguarding Update

13.1. Mrs Bearwish updated Governors on Safeguarding. There were no safeguarding issues to report within the school. No children were on the at risk register. However the new statutory guidance had been issued and a report outlining the main provisions (Appendix 2) was circulated. Mrs Bearwish drew the specific attention of Governors to Part 2 of the Document which dealt with the responsibilities of Governing Bodies in relation to safeguarding.

13.2. Mrs Bearwish highlighted areas where the Governing Body were already meeting the requirements, contributing to inter-agency working and ensuring arrangements took into account the practice and procedures of the local authority, but also that the new guidance no longer required the specific mention of the nominated Governor for child protection, or the annual report to Governors, or indeed any reference to training of Governors. However the County Council still recommend that all Governing Bodies nominate a Governor to work closely with the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and that all Governors receive training which focuses on their duties. In addition the DSL role has to be formally acknowledged within that person's job description and there always has to be cover for that role so that Deputies were appointed and there was always somebody within the school at any one time to deal with safeguarding issues.

**13.3. Governors confirmed that notwithstanding the statutory guidance, the school would continue to maintain current standards and best practice in relation to safeguarding.**

### 14. SEF – Quality of Teaching

14.1. Mrs Smith tabled Section 3 of the SEF on the Quality of Teaching (Appendix 3) and mentioned that it was her intention to circulate a separate section of the SEF at each Governing Body meeting. OfSTED criteria is used to judge the quality of teaching within schools. Currently the SEF rates the quality as good within the school and until more realistic data on progress is available that is where the rating will remain. Mrs Smith was aware that there were pockets of outstanding teaching but these are currently not reflected in progress data although evidence is clearly there in children's books. This means that the Quality of Teaching could be questioned as the judgement should be triangulated with evidence such as lesson observations, childrens' work and progress data. It should never be based solely on a lesson observation.

14.2. In response to questions from Governors Mrs Smith reported that data is collected mainly on a termly basis and that in exploring what we need to do to match the outstanding criteria that in a number of areas the school was on the cusp of an outstanding rating.

### 15. Current Issues of Committees and Groups.

15.1. Report of Environment & Premises Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 29/04/2014 Appendix 4)

15.2. In relation to Item 5.1 Mrs Smith circulated a draft Cycle/Scooter Policy for approval.

**Mr Barnes proposed, and Mr Putnam seconded, that the Cycle/Scooter policy be agreed.**

15.3. Report of Curriculum Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 01/05/2014 Appendix 5)

15.4. Mr Putnam reported that the Committee received a detailed and very interesting presentation from Mrs Newlin on music teaching within the school.

15.5. Report of Finance & Staffing Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 28/04/2014 Appendix 6)

**15.6.** Mrs Campbell drew Governors attention to Item 12 and the Committee's wish that should there be multiple uses of the spending powers over the £5k limit, an urgent meeting of the Finance Committee would be called.

## **16. New School Update**

**16.1** Mrs Smith circulated architect drawings and elevations of the new school and its layout. She confirmed the intention for there to be a second, semi-detached hall for potential joint use with the Dorchester Community Church. The new school provided the opportunity for there to be a welcoming entrance area (termed "the heart" of the school). The bell tower proposal had now been dropped and a sculpture of some sort had been proposed.

**16.2.** In response to questions from Governors Mrs Smith confirmed that the fully integrated school hall would be thinner but longer than the current hall but would be fit for purpose in terms of providing PE facilities for 30 children. The classrooms were bigger than currently and it was possible to provide some group space for SEN teaching and possibly a 2 way mirror for observation/ CPD purposes linked with 1-to-1 work.

## **17. Governor Visits & Training.**

### **17.1. Feedback from Governor Training/Induction**

**17.1.1.** No Feedback from training but the effectiveness of governor training would be dealt with under the BodyBuilding exercise referred to under Item 10.3 above.

**17.1.2.** No induction had been undertaken recently.

## **18. Feedback from Governor Visits.**

**18.1.** Mrs Campbell reported on her session on ICT provision with Mr Oram.

**18.2.** Governors had also attended the Learning Walk on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and found discussion of key areas of the SDP within the 'real-life' context particularly informative.

## **19. Any Other Urgent Business.**

**19.1.** Mrs Smith asked for Governors views on the current committee structure. Currently a number of issues for the Environment Committee could more easily be dealt with by the Finance Committee or the Curriculum Committee depending on their relevant links with teaching and learning. She proposed that for the next cycle of meetings they pilot two committees with slightly longer meetings rather than three shorter meetings. This would be an opportune time as the date for the consultation event for the new school was on the same date, 10 June as the proposed meeting of the Environment Committee.

**19.2.** Governors were supportive of this pilot and were encouraged to attend either or both meetings depending on their particular interests.

**Governors agreed that for the next cycle of committee meetings a two committee system of governance be piloted and that the division of business between those two committees be determined by the Headteacher in consultation with the Clerk.**

**Governors agreed that for the duration of this pilot the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders of the Environment Committee be temporarily suspended to enable that business to be transacted by the most appropriate of the two remaining committees and that their Terms of Reference be extended for the duration of the pilot to enable this to happen.**

The meeting concluded at 21.35 hours.

Date of next meeting, **Monday 30th June 2014** at 19.00 hours in school.

Certified as a true record.

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

John Quinton, Clerk / Manager to Governors, 7th May 2014

**DAMERS FIRST SCHOOL.****Action Plan following the Full Governing Body meeting held on 6th May 2014**

Action to be Taken	Agenda Item	Members Involved	Suggested Completion Date
1.Update contact list of governors.	5.3 and 5.4	Clerk to Govs.	ASAP
2. Secure generic leasing agreement for school use	7.2	Mrs Scott	ASAP
3. Provide governors with log-on details for the governor support website.	7.5	Clerk to Govs.	End of May
4. Submit monthly DASP budget figures to the finance committee.	9.3	Mrs C Smith	June 2014
5. Arrange bodybuilding exercise for governors.	10.3	Mrs C Smith	By 21/05/14
6. Finalise assumptions behind draft budget.	12.3	Mrs C Smith	ASAP