



DAMERS FIRST SCHOOL.

Minutes of the Governors' meeting held at school on Tuesday 22nd March 2016 at 17.00 hours.

Persons Present	CSA	Mrs. M. Moss (Chair of Governors)
	Appointed Parent	Mrs J. Wibley (Vice Chair)
	Elected Parent	Ms F. Daly
		Mrs A Harvey
	Co-opted	Ms. R. Bettenson
		Mr T Putnam
	Headteacher	Mrs. C. Smith
	Staff	Ms S. Prendergast
	Clerk	Mr. J Quinton
	Associate Governor	Mrs. M. Bearwish

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting and thanked Ms Bettenson for chairing the last meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs Scott.

3. Minutes.

Ms Bettenson proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2016 be accepted as an accurate record. This included confirming and approving the confidential minutes of the same date. Mr Putnam seconded. Governors agreed unanimously.

4. Matters Arising & Action Plan.

(a) Matter Arising – Minute No.1 – Governors G Mail Accounts. The Clerk informed Governors that it had not been possible to identify a way of notifying them of emails to their gmail accounts. He would therefore notify Governors private email accounts when agenda and reports were deposited onto the shared documents site.

(b) Matter Arising – Minute No.8A – Prevent Training. Governors were reminded that they should complete the online Prevent training as outlined in the minute. This matter would be reviewed at the next meeting

(c) Matter Arising – Minute No.10A – Governor Training. The Clerk confirmed that the training record for Governors was still to be actioned.

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

No declarations of interest were declared.

6. Membership

Governors AGREED to formally appoint Mrs Gillard as an Appointed Parent Governor for the period ending 21 March 2020. The appointment of Mrs Gillard to committees would be considered at the next FGB.

The Clerk reported that he was in the process of renewing the appointment of Mrs Moss as the CSA appointed Governor. There were currently two Co-opted Governor vacancies.

7. Correspondence

Mrs Smith reported the receipt of a letter from Mrs Guy who was retiring after nearly 20 years service at the school and who had been a vital member of the inclusion team. Her successor had just been appointed and Mrs Guy was staying on until the end of April in order to provide a comprehensive handover to the new member of staff.

8. SEF – Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare Section

(SDP link: PD, B and W - to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the revised Behaviour Policy)

Mrs Smith reported in detail on the updated PD, B and We section of the SEF which had been shared with governors prior to the meeting and which had been revised to reflect most recent Ofsted criteria. Mrs Smith summarised that the school's self-evaluation processes would indicate that this area of our provision should be rated as good but noted several areas of outstanding provision. She highlighted specific areas and explained why each grading had been given. One such area was attendance which she had judged as being outstanding. The school was now in the top quintile nationally with a current attendance rate of 97.1% (this has risen from 95.4% 3 years ago, before an intense focus on this area). The school had good individual case studies where they could provide evidence of improved attendance. Likewise with bullying and pupil behaviour where there were very few cases of the former and where the school had strong and exemplary case studies of where behaviour had improved significantly over time.

Mrs Smith also reported that the school was aware of the areas in which it had to improve. The whole-school learning model needed to be developed further in order to equip pupils with skills for employment and life. Likewise the school continues to face a significant challenge in terms of ensuring that pupils remained safe online and has not yet found an effective way to ensure that key messages have an impact on parental awareness and support from home. The school continues to proactively seek solutions to this transfer of information.

Governors commented on the SEF, in particular on school attendance where they questioned the trigger for referral to the school attendance panel. Mrs Smith commented that the panel had already had a significant impact on individual families within the school, where persistent absenteeism has been a recurrent problem, regardless of intervention. The official DASP threshold is currently less than 95% attendance but the school is targeting persistent absenteeism below 85% at present as these are the families where school interventions are having little impact. In addition, with regard to the challenge of pupils' safety online, one Governor highlighted the use of case studies to highlight what had happened and the impact. Mrs Smith felt that this was a good idea and would share this with the ICT/ e-safety coordinator as something new to try.

Mrs Smith reported that the next section of the SEF to be updated was the Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment which would be reported at the next FGB.

9. Draft Budget 2016/17

(SDP Link – Effectiveness of L and M objective - Ensure that all Governor actions are tightly linked to the evaluation and monitoring of the SDP, the development of the new curriculum and the embedding of a new assessment system.)

The Chair reported that the budget would be very tight in 16/17. The budget would be the same in real terms but additional costs such as increases in pensions and NI contributions and an increasingly expensive staffing budget (if there are no changes in teaching staff this year) would have a negative impact on the budget.

Mrs Smith confirmed this position. Currently staffing costs were in the region of 88% of the total budget and these needed to be reduced. The pension and NI costs added in the region of £60k to the budget and when combined with staff incremental progression these costs totalled in the region of £100k. In addition the school would have to provide maternity cover for one part-time post that wasn't covered by the new staff absence insurance policy as it was known about when the new policy was entered into. SLA costs were pretty similar to previous years with adjustments for inflation.

Mrs Smith confirmed therefore that she needed to give the budget further consideration over the Easter break, with a particular focus on alternative teaching staff models. She would then report the detail to the Finance Committee on 26 April at which time the budget would have to be approved for submission to DCC by 1 May. The detail and the assumptions behind the budget would then be reported to the FGB on 9 May.

It was AGREED that the Finance Committee be given delegated authority to approve the submission of the budget to DCC by 1 May 2016 and that all Governors be invited to that meeting. The assumptions behind the budget would then be reported to the FGB on 9 May 2016.

10. Headteacher's Report – Attendance Update and Office Report

(SDP Link – Effectiveness of L and M objective - Ensure that all Governor actions are tightly linked to the evaluation and monitoring of the SDP, the development of the new curriculum and the embedding of a new assessment system)

Mrs Smith referred to the Headteacher's report and associated documents that had been available to Governors before the meeting. The report had been written to compliment the format of the SDP and contained significant detail on progress in each key development area.

Attached to this report was an update on safeguarding which highlighted progress since the last update report. In particular a review of safer recruitment had highlighted that some longstanding members of staff did not have adequate copies of references in their personnel files. Advice had been sought from Angela Burr at DCC to ascertain whether there was a need to go back to DCC HR and seek copies of references. Angela had said that this would not be possible but that it was important to acknowledge that there was a gap. Mrs Smith assured governors that procedures in place since September 2013 ensure that all new appointments follow appropriate safer recruitment procedures and that 2 references are obtained before an appointment is confirmed.

The office report contained data on numbers within the school, class sizes and school attendance (97.1%). Governors congratulated the school on achieving attendance levels in excess of the national average.

An updated SDP had also been made available which showed current progress against intended outcomes at this point in the year. Mrs Smith reported that there were lots of "amber" rated areas as many were still a 'work in progress' and would continue to be developed in the summer term.

The ICT log demonstrated actions that had been taken since the Ofsted report in 2009 identified this as an area for further development and the impact of these actions.

11. Governors' Action Plan

(SDP Link – Effectiveness of L and M objective - Ensure that all Governor actions are tightly linked to the evaluation and monitoring of the SDP, the development of the new curriculum and the embedding of a new assessment system)

The Chair reported that she had drafted the Action Plan based on the SDP with some slight amendments to format and content. It was intended to contain all committee action and Governor activity in pursuit of the aims of the SDP. There was a need to include safeguarding within the Action Plan and there was a need to include all Governor visits and to extend these to include engagement with more staff. Outside of the SDP there was a need to include DASP activity and the new school.

Governors AGREED that this document should be revisited regularly by the FGB and all Committees should be asked to include their activity.

Mrs Smith said that it was important for Governors to engage fully in the creation of the next SDP in the summer term in order to ensure that Governor activity is fully aligned with school improvement and this process would begin with the SIG group.

12. Performance Management Summary – Support Staff

(SDP link: Effectiveness of L and M Objective – To further develop and strengthen the role of governance in securing improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes for children.)

Mrs Smith reported that this process had not been completed yet and would need reporting to the next FGB. However all TAs and support staff that were due competency increments had been completed.

13. Policy Review – Visitors’ Policy

(SDP Link – Effectiveness of L and M objective – this policy has been recently updated in view of the recent guidance linked to the Prevent Duty.)

Mrs Smith reported that this policy had been updated to reflect the new Prevent duty. This required that it was acknowledged that simple open source background checks would be undertaken on all visitors to the school. All appropriate systems had already been in place to cover volunteers and all visitors to the school but the policy needed to be updated in the light of most recent advice.

It was AGREED that the Policy be approved as submitted.

14. DASP Update

(SDP Link Quality of L and M objectives – To further develop and strengthen the role of governance in securing improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes for children.)

Mrs Smith reported that DMS had not appointed a new Headteacher at the recent interviews and had re-advertised the post. There was a lot of activity within DASP regarding Federation and MAT status. The THS had been awarded National Teaching School status and this was important for DASP as a whole in relation to CPD opportunities for staff. It was important for the school to continue to monitor the situation regarding academy activity and to explore its own options further.

In response to Governor questions Mrs Smith reported that all schools have to have academisation plans in place by 2020 and to have converted to academy status by 2022.

15. Governor Visits and Training

(SDP Link Effectiveness of L and M objectives – To further develop and strengthen the role of governance in securing improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes for children

Establish a clearly defined role for all governors in securing accountability across the school.)

A. Governors Visits

Governors received details of the Chair’s visit to meet the Inclusion Leader to discuss disadvantaged pupils. Also Ms Daly’s visits to the drama club performance, a visit by governors to meet Junior Governors and attendance at the school story night. The chair also met with the Literacy Leader to discuss detailed progress of the current Literacy Action Plan.

Other visits had been made such as a finance governor supporting the SFVS process and the safeguarding governor supporting the development of the recent safeguarding audit, but it was felt that documenting these visits was in the outcome itself rather than needing an additional document.

The Chair hoped that other governors would be encouraged to carry out further visits having seen the simplicity of the recording and said that further guidance would become clear within the new governor action plan.

B. SDP – Community Twilight Session

Mrs Smith gave Governors details of the annual SDP Community Twilight to be held on 14 April 2016 from 3.30 to 6.00pm. The focus of this session will be on what will stay the same and what will change when the school moves to the new site on Liscombe Street. All Governors were invited to attend the session and to complete the questionnaire that had been sent to all staff which would help inform decisions on any potential changes linked with the new school.

16. Current Issues of Committees and Groups.

(SDP link: L and M objective – To further develop and strengthen the role of governance in securing improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes for children

Ensure that all Governor actions are tightly linked to the evaluation and monitoring of the SDP, the development of the new curriculum and the embedding of new assessment system

Further develop the role of governors in ensuring that the school maintains a sustainable and enhanced focus on arts-based provision.)

The following minutes were circulated to Governors.

a. Report of Finance & Staffing Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 7/3/2016)

(i) Virements – Minute No. 5

That the following virements be AGREED:-

<i>Account From</i>	<i>Account To</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Narrative</i>
<i>Other Income</i>	<i>Supply</i>	<i>£1628</i>	<i>DASP Supply</i>
<i>Other Income</i>	<i>Teaching</i>	<i>£3875</i>	<i>Schoolsafe</i>
<i>Other Income</i>	<i>Support Staff</i>	<i>£3779</i>	<i>Schoolsafe</i>

b. Report of the Environment Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 9/3/2016)

c. Report of Curriculum and Policies Committee. (Minutes of Meeting 10/3/2016)

d. Report of SIG (Notes of meeting 2/3/16)

e. Report of the Pay Committee – 10 March 2016

The Chair reported that the Pay Committee had met and considered two threshold applications. Both were agreed as they met all the criteria.

17. New School Update

(SDP link: L and M objective – To further develop and strengthen the role of governance in securing improvements in teaching, learning and outcomes for children.)

Governors received a confidential copy of the minutes of the design meeting held on 26 February 2016 and were given details of the ceremony to mark the laying of the first brick which would be held on 12 April at 1.30pm.

Mrs Smith also reported on activity to involve all staff in the discussions on the new school and all staff had or would have the opportunity to be involved if they so wished. Mrs Smith also made the Governors aware that a letter would be going to all parents that week informing them that it was likely (if all goes according to plan) that it would be necessary to close the school for a week commencing 6 February 2017 to finalise the move to the new site. The week comprised two INSET days and 3 days of closure for exceptional reasons. Governors would be asked to formally approve this in due course but this was to make them aware in advance.

Mrs Smith also reported that she and the office staff and site manager would be in school over the Easter holidays to empty the loft. Mrs Smith has also asked for support from DCC.

18. Date of Next FGB Meeting

Monday 9 May 2016 at 5.00pm.

19. Any Other Urgent Business

- A. Governors Website.** Mrs Smith asked Governors to check their own personal details on the school website (photo and statement) and to update their personal details with Tammie if needed.
- B. Headteacher Performance Management.** Mrs Smith drew attention to the need for governors to conduct her performance management review in the next half term.
- C. Closure of School Swimming Pool.** Ms Daly reported that she had attended the recent meeting of the community group that was seeking alternative provision of a new community swimming pool. The group had asked her to request governors to consider that if the new school build was delayed groups could continue using the school swimming pool on the understanding that they would accept 1 week's notice to terminate their agreement.

The Chair replied that this would be dependent upon the progress of the build and the scheduled completion date. Governors AGREED that legal advice should be sought from DCC on this issue and that this matter should be reviewed in September when progress on the build and completion dates would be clearer.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

Certified as a true record.

Chair Date

John Quinton, Clerk / Manager to Governors, 23 March 2016

DAMERS FIRST SCHOOL.

Action Plan following the Full Governing Body meeting held on 22 March 2016

Action to be Taken	Minute No.	Members Involved	Suggested Completion Date
1. Complete Prevent training.	4b	All	May FGB
2. Reformat Governor training records.	4c	Clerk	May FGB
3. SEF – Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	8	Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher	Next FGB agenda
4. Budget 16/17	9	Finance Cttee	Next FGB Agenda
5. Governors' Action Plan – Update and Revisit	11	Chair and all Governors	All Committees and next FGB
6. Performance Management –	12	Headteacher	Next FGB

Support Staff.			
7. Governor Information on Website	19	All Governors	Next FGB

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