

Learning, Enjoying & Succeeding Together

The Local Governing Board of

Bearwood Primary & Nursery School

Minutes of Local Governing Board Meeting
Held on Monday, 25th January 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Present:

Mrs Ann Harris (Chair)

Mrs Rebecca Bridger

Mrs Laura Bennett (Headteacher)

Mrs Ingrid Fido

Mrs Nicola Best

Mrs Kate Gunstone

In Attendance:

Mrs Patricia Rushton (Clerk)

<p>1. Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>1.1 Mrs Harris welcomed Governors to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs Carolyn Bennett, Mr Michael Sussman and Mrs Helen Todd.</p>	
<p>2. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>2.1 No declarations of interest were made that had not previously been declared within the Governing Body's Register of Business Interests.</p>	
<p>3. Minutes of the Last Meeting</p> <p>3.1 Governors agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2020 were an accurate record.</p>	
<p>4. Matters Arising</p> <p>4.1 <u>Finance Handbook (minute 4.5)</u>: Mrs Bennett confirmed that Mr Sussman had been sent a copy of the Finance Handbook.</p> <p>4.2 <u>Skills Audit (minute 4.6)</u>: Mrs Harris confirmed that the skills audit would be sent to Governors by Mrs Rushton. Governors were requested to complete this and return to Mrs Rushton. Action: All Governors. Mrs Rushton confirmed that she would compile the responses. Action: Mrs Rushton.</p> <p>4.3 <u>TA Provision (minutes 6.38 and 7.3)</u>: Mrs Bennett confirmed that this forms part of her Headteacher's Report.</p> <p>4.4 <u>Raising Achievement Plan Tasks (minute 7.2)</u>: Mrs Harris advised that this task had partially been superseded by Hamwic's list of Governor activities for the spring term. This will be discussed later in the meeting.</p> <p>4.5 <u>Questions (minute 10.3)</u>: After discussion it was agreed that in future questions would be sent to Mrs Harris to review prior to being sent to Mrs Bennett. All Governors were requested to try and send at least three questions having read the paperwork. Governors were advised that they would be requested to forward questions to Mrs Harris around four days prior to the meeting date.</p>	<p>All Governors Mrs Rushton</p>

5. Headteacher's Report

- 5.1 The Headteacher's Report had been sent to Governors prior to the meeting. Governors were invited to raise questions.
- 5.2 *It was questioned whether the numbers in nursery affected the staffing levels.* LB advised that the school did have a student working at the school and she will return once lockdown is over which will help with staffing levels.
- 5.3 *It was noted that there was a category entitled 'withdrawn' in the admissions section of the report and it was requested that Mrs Bennett explain this.* Mrs Bennett explained that this relates to a child that is on the school's waiting list and then removes themselves as they decide to accept a place at another school. Children are on Bearwood's waiting list when there are no places available in a particular year group. Mrs Bennett assured Governors that no children have been removed from the school's register and the school has not lost any children.
- 5.4 Mrs Bennett advised that one family is moving house and will, therefore, be moving schools. This family has two children, one in Year R and one in Year 5. This family are currently refusing to come to school, are not accessing remote learning so papers packs are being dropped off and collected. The new school is closer to the family's home. The school has been in contact with the new school to ensure they are fully aware of the needs of the family.
- 5.5 *It was noted that attendance was good despite Covid.* Mrs Bennett advised that each day the teacher is required to register whether the child is in school or online by 9:30am. If a child is not in attendance, then the office will ring the family. Currently the school has attendance of 96%.
- 5.6 *It was questioned as to what constitutes an authorised and unauthorised absence.* Mrs Bennett advised that if an absence is authorised then the child is away from school due to illness. If the absence is unauthorised then the family are choosing not to send their child to school or attend remote learning sessions. If an absence is unauthorised then the family are contacted to establish if there is any support that the school can offer. Mrs Bennett assured Governors that all children without a device to access remote learning have been given a tablet. Mrs Bennett advised that the school received a donation of several tablets and as the school had spare devices it has offered 14 tablets to Springdale.
- 5.7 *It was questioned how long children had to remain online to be marked as present.* Mrs Bennett advised that if a child is not online later in the day then a phone call is made to the parent to check. Mrs Bennett advised that the current provision was in place from day one and that she is really pleased with how this is progressing.
- 5.8 *It was questioned whether the persistent absence was linked to Covid.* Mrs Bennett advised that the absences relate to the usual families, although there is one family that has had four periods of self-isolation with the child having an attendance of only 84.6%. The school's Pupil Engagement and Welfare Officer is in contact with the parents concerning school attendance.
- 5.9 *It was questioned what the school was doing to support attendance.* Mrs Bennett advised that the Pupil Engagement and Welfare Officer is working with families.

The school has 12 families that have advised that they do not feel safe coming into school. Due to lockdown, parents can now keep their child at home if they want.

- 5.10 *It was questioned whether those parents taking their children on holiday were fined* and Mrs Bennett confirmed that fines were issued, although these appear to have little or no impact as the same families continue to take holidays in term time.
- 5.11 *It was asked whether, bearing in mind the increase in applications from the new houses, whether there had been any further discussions on increasing the PAN and how Mrs Bennett feels about this.* Mrs Bennett advised that she is seeing an increase in numbers as families move into the houses. Dorset County Council and Hamwic will be contacted when the school has waiting lists in other year groups. Mrs Bennett advised that currently the school has two spaces in nursery, two in year 2 and four in year 5, with waiting lists in some year groups.
- 5.12 *A governor expressed concern that the majority of absence is amongst pupils on free school meals or Pupil Premium and questioned what has been done so far and what more could be done.* Mrs Bennett assured Governors that all pupils are carefully tracked by the school's Pupil Engagement and Welfare Officer. In some cases, the school is fining families and one pupil who has been kept off school is now being home-schooled. Governors were advised that of the 40 children in this group, 38 were attending online learning. Referrals are made to social care where appropriate.
- 5.13 Mrs Bennett advised that Mrs Wall tracks all year groups and sees how many Pupil Premium and free school meals children are accessing online learning. Governors were advised that the school is looking to open up its offer to children with SEND.
- 5.14 *It was questioned what is considered to be a safe maximum of children in each class.* Mrs Bennett advised that during the first lockdown, the maximum was 15 children. The school is maintaining a distance of two metres apart. In Year 3 the children are split between a teacher and a TA. Governors were advised that whilst it is about the provision it also needs to be safe. Governors were assured that the school has not had to refuse places to any key worker children. Some children defined as vulnerable by the school are also attending.
- 5.15 *It was noted that there have been some concerns that SEND children are experiencing difficulties accessing learning at home and potentially falling behind.* Mrs Bennett advised that the school has sent home equipment that the children would usually use in school, e.g. cubes to support sentence writing. It was recognised that there will be some parents that do not know what their children use in school to support their learning.
- 5.16 Mrs Bennett advised that there have been changes in performance management and all staff now have a new attainment target rather than a progress target. All staff have a target in respect of disadvantaged children and with the right level of support some of these children could make accelerated progress. Mrs Bennett advised that the school shared Governors concerns around SEND children and Pupil Premium children.
- 5.17 *It was questioned whether staff would be amenable to having additional children in school.* Mrs Bennett advised that the staff would find this acceptable as it is harder for them to give the provision to these children; staff will appreciate the

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opportunity to work directly with these children. Mrs Bennett advised that she has looked at the remote learning offer of other schools and felt that by comparison Bearwood had a good offer, although she would still want to improve on it.

- 5.18 *It was questioned whether parents understood that remote learning was not just about teacher directed learning online.* Mrs Bennett advised that parents did understand and gave the example of a Lego challenge that was sent to parents. Governors were advised that the expectation is that KS1 pupils receive three hours of learning per day and KS2 pupils four hours. The children are given choices with some activities, e.g. they could choose to listen to Mrs Bennett read a story, to read a story themselves or with their siblings/parents, or they could do a PE lesson with school, with Joe Wicks or go for a walk with their family.
- 5.19 Mrs Bennett advised that she would be quality assuring live teaching next week and this will be followed up the week after by Hamwic. Mrs Best advised that from her experience the children are missing the connection with the teacher and with the other children in the class. It was considered that the live lessons make a real difference but that it does not need to be every lesson.
- 5.20 Mrs Bennett advised that the staff have been amazing and have been working very hard. The parents are regularly feeding back positive comments and many are themselves learning.
- 5.21 Mrs Bennett advised that the learning in KS2 has changed to get in more foundation subject learning.
- 5.22 Mrs Bennett advised that she would send the link to the school's remote learning offer to Governors. **Action: Mrs Bennett.**
- 5.23 *It was noted that there had been 19 days of staff absence and questioned how the school had managed to cover this without incurring costs.* Mrs Bennett advised that internal cover had been used, mostly the HLTA and catch up staff. Mrs Bennett and Mrs Wall have also provided some cover.
- 5.24 *It was considered that the school's remote learning plan was very impressive and questioned how the teachers are coping with the pressure of keeping up with blended learning.* Mrs Bennett advised that the offer is under constant review from parents, staff and the School Council. The school website is being developed and recently the school produced a video celebrating the remote learning taking place and providing instructions on engaging in remote learning.
- 5.25 *It was noted, as expected, that the progress of pupils with SEND is less than that of other pupils and questioned what additional support is being offered to help them access learning.* Mrs Bennett advised that the school is tracking the needs of pupils, e.g. sensory. Currently, the school has three children who will be going to panel for an EHCP, giving the school a total of five children with EHCPs. These children are receiving 1:1 support. Two of the children going to panel are in year 6 so an EHCP is needed before they go to secondary school and the third is in year 5. Governors were advised that progress is important although this is difficult to evidence in tests.
- 5.26 *It was noted that year 5 appears to make less progress overall and questioned if the school knew why.* Mrs Bennett advised that it is due to the cohort of children, for example, there are three children (15%) who are not able to access the style of

Mrs Bennett

tests. This year group has some very capable children. The year group has one pupil on a part-time timetable, one working at Pre-Key Stage, one working at KS1 and another with only 86.4% attendance. Governors were advised that the teacher is aware and that teacher assessment is in line with expectations. Assessment has been triangulated with the work in the books and lesson drop ins. It was considered that the children receive the provision required for their needs.

- 5.27 *It was noted that PIRA and PUMA results start from a different baseline and questioned what the benefits of using the tests were.* Mrs Bennett advised that they are mainly used for gap analysis and to support planning. The tests also expose the children to SATs style questions. Governors were advised that Hamwic have indicated that all children will have an end of year test to act as a baseline for next year.
- 5.28 *It was questioned when the school would know about the tests.* Mrs Bennett advised that it was not yet known what format these tests would take. Years 2 and 6 could possibly do a SATs test or Hamwic may choose to use PUMA and PIRA.
- 5.29 Governors were advised that staff need to ensure that they cover the full curriculum. Some curriculum areas were being moved around to suit the teaching.
- 5.30 *It was noted that the responses to the questionnaire on home learning seemed overwhelmingly positive with only 9 out of 79 who were not confident that their child was making progress and only two not satisfied with the support. There were, however, also some comments which showed that some parents have struggled. It was questioned how the school had responded to the questionnaire outcomes.* Mrs Bennett advised that the school is lending equipment to families where needed. It was considered that parents were doing a fantastic job supporting their children. A Parent Governor commented that she felt the remote learning had been set up well and the school were doing a good job. A letter will go out to parents advising of expectations and addressing any concerns that have been raised by parents. It was acknowledged that it would be difficult to please all parents, but would want them to know that the school was operating a flexible approach. Governors were advised that if families choose they can do school work at other times, for example, later in the day.
- 5.31 *It was noted that the attendance of keyworker and vulnerable children in Lockdown 3.0 had risen significantly compared to the first one over the summer. It was questioned how staff coped with this change.* Mrs Bennett advised that safety was the first consideration by looking at ratios and guidance. There has been no guidance on pupil/staff ratios. Governors were advised that the unions had advised staff not to come into work unless it was open only to vulnerable children and those of keyworkers.
- 5.32 *It was questioned as to how many staff chose not to come into school.* Mrs Bennett advised that four out of nine staff initially chose not to come into school. Mrs Bennett spoke to Hamwic and this prompted the union letter to be sent to all staff which resulted in an influx of letters from staff. This led the school to close to all but keyworker and vulnerable children. Mrs Bennett advised that on return to school in January, the first day was an INSET day with the government announcing school closures later that day.

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- 5.33 Mrs Bennett advised that last time the school operated with a skeleton staff with office staff on rotation. This time all staff are in school, although two staff could potentially have been off. Mrs Gunstone advised that she was proud to be part of a team that is delivering the provision in the way that Bearwood is. Governors were advised that staff are aware that things are ever-changing but this is about the progress of the children and doing what is best for them. It was recognised that it can be very motivating for staff to know that they are working for the children.
- 5.34 Governors were advised that the staff are being tested for Covid every week and this should be reassuring to parents that the school is safe.
- 5.35 *It was questioned as to how many cases of Covid have there been amongst the children.* Mrs Bennett advised that there has only been one child with Covid and this was before Christmas.
- 5.36 *It was noted that nursery numbers appear to be increasing and questioned whether this was making the nursery more viable than the school had feared in the past.* Mrs Bennett advised that Hamwic have asked whether the school needs funding for the pre-school. A decision has yet to be made as to whether the pre-school is taken over by the school or whether they stay as a private provider within the school building. It was thought at the moment that the school will not need any additional funding for this project.
- 5.37 *Looking at the PIRA and PUMA outcomes for Year 1, it was noted that the decrease in progress can be explained by a difference in assessment measure. It was questioned when the school would expect to see more comparable results, what is a truer picture and what evidence is there of this.* Mrs Bennett advised that more comparable results would usually be available in the spring when the children would have taken the PIRA and PUMA tests, but the school will now need to see what this would look like across the school, for example, the change of coverage for maths might impact on the tests. It was considered that the truer picture is the day to day work which is being monitored taking a 'business as usual approach'. For example, staff are still monitoring and assessing phonics as though the children would be taking the phonics test at the end of Year 1.
- 5.38 *It was noted that Year 4 have seen some drops in progress and attainment, especially amongst Pupil Premium children and it was questioned what strategies the school had in place to address this this term.* Mrs Bennett advised that Pupil Premium children are part of each member of staff's performance management since lockdown. These children are a focus for all teachers to ensure that the gap does not widen further. Governors were advised that the two children who have not maintained progress and attainment did not attend school during the summer term.
- 5.39 *It was questioned whether all children had devices* and Mrs Bennett advised that the school has ensured that all children have a device.
- 5.40 *It was questioned whether there has been any extra support for the Year 6 children* and Mrs Bennett advised that there is a TA and 1:1 support available.
- 5.41 *It was noted that the Pupil Engagement and Welfare Officer had now been appointed and questioned whether this role was already having an impact on the work of Mrs Bennett and Mrs Wall.* Mrs Bennett advised that this role has had a

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<p>massive impact with Miss Prince driving wellbeing and safeguarding as a result. Mrs Bennett explained that the school has five children considered vulnerable who are accessing education either in school or online. Home visits have taken place and risk assessments are in place where appropriate. Miss Prince is also leading wellbeing sessions to children at home, offering ELSA to pupils in school as well as providing support to parents. This new role also involves the tracking of vulnerable pupils and Miss Prince also walks one pupil to school each morning. Miss Prince is also responsible for e-safety and will escalate any issues where necessary.</p> <p>5.42 Mrs Bennett reported that the school plans to hold a wellbeing afternoon when all the teachers can go home early on Friday and Mrs Bennett, Mrs Wall and Miss Prince will lead a wellbeing afternoon for the children, which will include relaxation, postcards of kindness, bubble activities. This initiative is about the children taking time to reflect on their own well-being as well as staff taking time out to look after themselves.</p> <p>5.43 Mrs Bennett was thanked for her comprehensive report.</p>	
<p>6. Governance</p> <p>6.1 Mrs Harris advised that the Raising Achievement Plan included a range of activities for Governors but this was at variance with the schedule that had been produced by Hamwic. The Hamwic schedule includes Headteacher and staff wellbeing, health and safety, attendance, safeguarding, SEND, remote learning and communication with parents.</p> <p>6.2 Mrs Harris advised that she has done some work on this and suggested that she and Mrs Best work to produce a draft and then meet with Mrs Bennett to finalise. The areas of work will be shared amongst governors, for example, it was suggested that Mrs Fido could take responsibility for Headteacher and staff wellbeing. The final document will be circulated to Governors when agreed with Mrs Bennett. Action: Mrs Harris and Mrs Best.</p> <p>6.3 Mrs Harris advised that the Hamwic year plan would supersede our Accountability Schedule. It was recognised that a Trust wide year plan would be beneficial as it gives the Trust an overview of all schools.</p>	<p>Mrs Harris & Mrs Best</p>
<p>7. Policies</p> <p>7.1 It was noted that Hamwic had the following policies available should Governors wish to access them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Performance Management ● Recruitment and Selection ● Restructure/Reduction ● Flexible Working Requests ● Whistle Blowing Policy. 	

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8. Any Other Business	
8.1 It was noted that there were no items of Any Other Business.	
9. Next Meeting	
9.1 It was noted that the next meeting is due to be held on 11 th March 2021 at 6:30 p.m.	
9.2 Mrs Harris suggested that the Governing Board look at the Governor Health Check on Governor Hub at the next meeting. Action: Agenda item.	Agenda item

END OF MINUTES

Action List

Minute No.	Action	Governor	Date
4.2	To complete the Skills Audit and return to Mrs Rushton. To compile the responses to the skills audit.	All Governors Mrs Rushton	Mar 21 Mar 21
5.22	To send a link to the Remote Learning offer to Governors.	Mrs Bennett	Feb 21
6.2	To review the Hamwic year plan and allocate roles to Governors.	Mrs Harris & Mrs Best	Feb 21
9.2	To include the Governor Health Check on the next agenda.	Mrs Rushton	Mar 21