



## Governor's Report to Parents 2024 - 25

### **The Governing Body**

Mr Clifton Beard became chair of governors in September 2024 and continues in the role for 2025-26. Anna McElwaine reached the end of her term after contributing enormously to the school, most recently being heavily involved with revisions to the school behaviour and reward systems. Another three experienced governors are reaching the end of their terms this year and we continue to seek a parent governor. Mr Beard would love to hear from anyone who might be curious or interested in these roles; governance really is an amazing way to contribute to education and to gain insight into exactly how rewarding and challenging the sector can be.

As always, we welcome parental comment or feedback outside our very positive parent surveys and these can be directed through the clerk to the governors; [JMcHugh@cranbornemid.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:JMcHugh@cranbornemid.dorset.sch.uk)

The Governing Body meets half-termly, but we also have Curriculum and Assessment and Finance and Premises Committees, which report to the main board following their role-specific meetings.

### **Performance Management**

The chair is in very regular communication with the headteacher and other senior leaders and visits school most weeks. At least two governors undertake the annual performance management of the headteacher, supported by an external advisor from Dorset Council central team.

### **Strategic Direction**

For some years the school leaders and governors have considered that joining an academy trust offered the best long-term investment for educational support and resource management at the top strategic level. An application to join our chosen trust, being Hamwic Academy Trust, has met with many frustrating delays and has very recently been declined by the Regional Office of the Department for Education. We have continually challenged and remain in disagreement about the reasonings

behind this decision but now need to move on. Parents and carers might be aware that during the period of delays, we engaged in a one-year formal support partnership with Hamwic and gained a great deal from this.

We are certainly not going to rush into any situations that do not serve the best interests of our school, so are continuing as a maintained school under Dorset Council. It was a decline in Council support that in part drove our desire to become an academy, but in the last year the council have really stepped up and we have had excellent support, especially from the school education challenge leads. This is also a good opportunity to further strengthen and develop our partnerships with West Moors Middle and Ferndown Upper schools, with which we have collaborated successfully for many years.

### **Educational Performance**

Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the school is a key governor responsibility and we do this by challenging the leaders at our regular meetings and by holding termly link meetings with our staff subject leaders, where we look at progress in each subject area and report back through the Curriculum and Assessment Committee.

Parents and carers will be aware that in January 2025 we had an ungraded Ofsted inspection. There was a huge amount to celebrate, including safeguarding, values and behaviour standards, enrichment, clubs and wider experiences for the children, staff team spirit and relationships with pupils, community satisfaction and support and adaptation to those with additional needs. The areas for development, which we were already aware of, have been a focus all year and continue to be so.

Our 2025 results in the year 6 national curriculum tests (SATs) showed clear improvements in most areas and especially in the combined score. This was a vindication of overall teaching and our specific interventions to support children to do their best. Attendance remains strong when judged against primary or secondary standards, which is a vital factor in academic success.

### **Finance**

Another key role of governors is to challenge leaders on the financial performance of the school and to ensure money is spent wisely. Funding remains challenging and combined with falling pupil numbers across the sector, this has meant leaders and governors have had to work hard in the last year to ensure financial viability now and in the future. We have had to streamline the school by making it two-form entry from 2025 (64 pupils per admission year) and by reducing the staff team, a process that will continue as the existing year groups make their way through the school until we are two-form in every year. It isn't all about cuts however, and where we feel that an

investment offers true value for our provision and efficiency, we will invest, which we did by providing a strong pastoral team to better support children's welfare and free-up leadership time.

Our school now offers a breakfast club and after-school wraparound care with a youth club vibe, after our leaders successfully obtained government funding to set this up. This is seen as an investment for the school and increases flexibility for parents who need to drop off or collect outside normal school hours, or who feel their children will benefit socially. Please do support this provision because it can only continue beyond the funded period if it is used by our community.

### **Focus Areas for 2025-26**

Governors and leaders are fully aware of the financial and academic areas of focus because we are continually striving to improve. The challenges can also be opportunities to streamline and refine, and we have seen this already with our changes in the last year to school structure and push for further improvements to our educational performance.

Financially the school is doing all the right things, as vindicated by external review and while the big structural change has taken place, there will be further evolution of this as we transition to two-form in all year groups and this journey will need to be carefully tracked and forecasted. We are still waiting for the correct billing to feel the true impact of our externally funded green energy investment, which we hope will reduce our energy bills significantly.

In education, our focus is very much around offering consistent teaching and learning across all subjects and classes with a clear lesson structure and expectation of presentation and content in pupil's books.

We want our Year 6 SAT's results to exceed the national average in all areas and we want to increase targeted pastoral support and support for vulnerable students.

As the school becomes numerically smaller, the reduced staff team needs to adapt to teach additional subjects and take on additional responsibilities (e.g. phase and subject leader) so we need to ensure they are provided with the necessary training, support and challenge in these roles.

### **Community**

Parent and carer surveys show that by far the majority of parents and carers are satisfied with our provision and we hugely value that support. We certainly cannot do this job alone and your help in maintaining your child's positive attitude to school and support for our high behaviour and homework expectations is a very valuable

part of their and our overall success and will set your child up for life in further education and beyond.

We continue to offer events like our Summer and Christmas fairs, opportunities for you to meet our teachers and now our wraparound and breakfast club provision to strengthen our community ties. Please do feel part of this community and do contact us with feedback and any interest you might have in our governance positions.

Clifton Beard

Chair of the Governing Body