Head Teacher’s report to governors – March 2025

1. **In the news**

This will be the first governing body meeting since Jane Canavan, our clerk and former business manager, sadly passed away. This was a shock to us all. Jane has served the school over many years, always showing tremendous commitment and dedication to the school. She was also a lovely person. We will all miss her very much.

A lot has been happening in school recently. There are times when it is hard to keep up with all the things that are going on. This list will give you a flavour of recent activities: two poetry trips in town; learning support bowling competition; two parents’ evenings; animation workshop; geography field trips; visit to and from the Rev Dagmar at St John’s church; world book day and book swap; reading visits to primary schools; Globe trip; Macbeth theatre trip; Barnet dance festival; dance workshop; music workshop; feeding lambs with ARP students; Galia has been out to Swansea and Dundee as part of her work for the Paul Mellon Centre, helping children across the UK understand British art and culture. They have all been a source of much joy.

1. **Curriculum**

In September I reported that the DfE had set up a curriculum and assessment review group, headed up by Professor Becky Francis, CEO of the Education Endowment Foundation. The interim report has just been produced and can be viewed online. However, I thought may be worth summarising some key points (most are straight quotes from the report):

* ‘The national curriculum is an investment in all our young people, for their benefit and for the benefit of the nation. In addition to supporting individual success, it plays a crucial role in providing the knowledge and skills required to build a prosperous economy and flourishing civil society, as well as promoting social cohesion and sustaining democracy.’
* In comparison to other countries, we have a reasonably broad and balanced curriculum to age 16 which has had a positive impact on attainment. Likewise, the national assessments and qualifications ‘are broadly working well, including the phonics screening check, the multiplication tables check, national tests at the end of key stage 2, GCSEs, A levels, T Levels, and some wider applied general qualifications at 16-19.’
* ‘The socio-economic gap for educational attainment remains stubbornly large, and young people with SEND make less progress than their peers’
* ‘There is strong evidence that securing mastery in a subject is vital for raising standards and enabling future expertise. But we have also heard that in some subjects the current construction and balance of content appears to be inhibiting this’
* ‘The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and trends in digital information demand heightened media literacy and critical thinking, as well as digital skills. Likewise, global social and environmental challenges require attention to scientific and cultural knowledge and skills that can equip young people to meet the challenges of the future.’

There are two other curriculum updates to report on. By the end of July we will have had a full academic year of our changes to the Inclusion Hub provision. We have focused support on intervention at Key Stage 3. Students are allocated a place on the termly programme. Oribi Davies and Jane Mullan meet with all the families prior to their placements to explain the provision. Students attend the Hub and are not in mainstream lessons with a curriculum taught by subject specialists (in English and maths); other subjects are taught by our two Inclusion Hub staff and three other FBS teachers. During the termly review cycle decisions to support reintegration back into some or all mainstream lessons are made. Emerging concerns are identified early allowing us to review the provision, meet with relevant professionals and the family and agree next steps.

By July we will have completed three years of ARP provision. This means we have a curriculum in place for years 7 to 9. Next year will be our first cohort moving into KS4. Richard Young, Director of the ARP, is planning a yr10 curriculum. This will have to be tailored to the needs of the students; they will not be following the typical GCSE pathway.

1. **Attainment and progress**

Yr11 students are preparing for their GCSEs. We have already looked at their mock results from their December exams. However, they all did a second set of mocks in the core subjects recently. These are really a way of helping to structure revision and help identify where students need to improve. The next set of results we will be bring to governors will be the GCSE results.

I am using this report to remind governors of how we assess students through the year. Whilst different subjects will have a different number of assessments each term, all subjects must complete one assessment point each term so that we can send a report home to parents. These reports give information on:

* Attendance and punctuality
* Achievement points
* Reading age
* Attitude to learning
* Whether the student is working at, below or above expectation (this judgement is made by the teacher by using assessment data and targets). At KS4 there will also be an assessment grade

We have an online parents’ evening for each year group. This year we have been closing school to students at 12.30pm so that we can start consultations in the afternoon. These online meetings finish at 7pm; we have simply increased the time for parents to make appointments so they can speak to more teachers. We will review this with parents in July.

1. **Numbers on roll**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year 7 | | Year 8 | | Year 9 | |
| Boys | 45 | Boys | 65 | Boys | 64 |
| Girls | 40 | Girls | 65 | Girls | 80 |
| Total | 85 | Total | 130 | Total | 144 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year 10 | | Year 11 | |
| Boys | 75 | Boys | 72 |
| Girls | 61 | Girls | 75 |
| Total | 136 | Total | 147 |

Our roll is now 642. I have reported in a previous report that pupil numbers in this part of Barnet are declining and will continue to decline. Of our nineteen main feeder primary schools twelve are either undersubscribed or have falling rolls; two of these have already reduced their PAN (published admission number) to reflect smaller numbers.

We have established a meeting of a small group of governors (Ann; Helen; Nishad) to look at our response. We have met once in school and once with a group of local authority officers, including Neil Marlow (Director of Education). In this meeting we were told that Barnet has seen a drop of 500 reception applications in the last seven years and 600 yr7 places. Our area (planning area 4) has been particularly badly affected. There were some outcomes from the meeting:

* We will be speaking to Barnet SEND about filling our ARP places. This is probably going to mean taking children who have more complex needs
* We will be invited to a meeting for planning area 4 to look in more detail at pupil numbers
* The local authority has taken our plans and costings to convert the caretaker’s house. It is not clear why it is of interest
* The alternative provision review is yet to be finalised; we will be informed in the next month or so. This may involve use of the caretaker’s house

1. **Attendance**

The attendance data is in the pack for this meeting. Our attendance for the spring term is currently at 91.12%. This is a slight drop from the autumn term but a small improvement from the same time last year. However, the figure is still low by historical standards and our persistent absenteeism is high. Below I have shown our figures alongside the national data. As you will see, although our figures are still low, we are only slightly below the national average for state-funded secondary schools. I have looked at the DfE data and we are in the seventh decile for absence across all schools i.e. in the bottom 30 to 40% of all schools. The data also shows our persistent absence which relates to the number of children with less than 90% attendance. I have also checked our severely absent students (50% or lower attendance) and we have a figure of 3.2% (or 22 students). This is very high. I have spoken to the EWO service in Barnet – all schools in Barnet are experiencing a similar trend. I think we have reached a point at which some parents are allowing their children to stay at home when previously they would be insisting on attendance. The rise of EBSA (emotionally based school avoidance) seems to give a label to this and to some extent avoids parents facing any consequence for low attendance of their children. The educational psychology team would argue that emotional and mental health of children has got worse since the pandemic which accounts for the attendance problems.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2024/25 | Absence | Authorised abs | Unauthorised abs | Persistent abs |
| All schools (national) | 6.7% | 4.6% | 2.1% | 18.8% |
| State secondary schools | 8.2% | 5.2% | 3.0% | n/a |
| FBS | 8.9% | 5.3% | 3.6% | 24.9% |

1. **Suspensions**

The usual data sheet has been provided with these papers. Suspension figures are lower than the autumn and less than at this time last year. Work with students in years 9 and 10 seem to show a positive impact from the autumn term. The rise in yr7 numbers clearly need close monitoring.

1. **SIP**

Members of SLT are currently RAG rating the SIP and we can look in detail at a future meeting. All I have done below is to list the objectives for this year.

**Objective 1: support students in their socioemotional learning and development, promoting well-being across the school**

**Objective 2: to have high expectations of all students, providing engaging and appropriately challenging lessons and home learning**

**Objective 3: to ensure high attendance and reduce persistent absence**

**Objective 4: to improve reading and disciplinary literacy**

**Objective 5: to ensure the school is financially viable in light of falling rolls**

1. **Student wellbeing**

This is the set of data of child-on-child abuse for this academic year:

Child-on-child abuse is an umbrella term for several categories of behaviour. I have looked at the data for last year to give us a comparison. The data is broadly similar for each category except for LGBTQ phobic abuse. Whilst even these figures have decreased in some cohorts, year on year, years 7 and 8 have higher records. Part of the explanation for the rise will be because there was training given to all staff at the start of this year around inclusivity with a specific focus on LGBTQ+ phobic abuse, so there is now more consistency in terms of how staff are logging it. Also, staff were made aware that there was an expectation that all incidences of LGBTQ+ abuse were logged as it wasn't all recorded previously. However, during our Pride Day there was some more LGBTQ+ phobic behaviour which is why we made this a focus area this year.

1. **Staff wellbeing**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Staff absence** | **2024-25** |
| Overall | 2.78 |
| Teaching | 2.84 - 57 members of staff |
| Support | 2.71 - 51 members of staff |

The figures in the table above show staff absence for this academic year. For a comparison the figures for the whole of last year are below. The low staff absence in school is testament to staff dedication and commitment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Staff absence** | **2023-24** |
| **Overall** | 4.47 |
| **Teaching** | 4.81 – 57 members of staff |
| **Support** | 4.10 – 51 members of staff |

1. **Safeguarding**

Jim has included in the pack an update on the safeguarding numbers.

1. **Complaints**

| Date | Choose an item. | Actions/Investigations | Referred to/why | Further Action Req? Resolved? |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 04/09/2024 | Quality of support for a student | RE: KL – SEN support | S Horne | Resolved |
| 05/02/2025 | Quality of support for a student | RE: SW – emotional support | S Horne | Resolved |
| 14/03/2025 | Behaviour of a member of staff | Re: IN – teacher interaction | S Horne | Resolved |

Simon Horne





**Monthly Safeguarding Report to the Full Governing Body**

**Monitoring period: March 2025**

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr J Robinson

Senior Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Mrs T Josif

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Tammy John

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Safeguarding** | **Year 7** | **Year 8** | **Year 9** | **Year 10** | **Year 11** |
| Early Help (EH) | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Targeted Youth Service | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Child In Need (CIN) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Child Protection (CP) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Looked After Child (LAC) \* | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Under Assessment | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Young Carers | 0 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 6 |

**\*Looked after children are not just Barnet students; we currently have Two from Hackney, one from Greenwich, and one from Nottinghamshire**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Other** | **Year 7** | | **Year 8** | | **Year 9** | | **Year 10** | | **Year 11** | |
| **M** | **F** | **M** | **F** | **M** | **F** | **M** | **F** | **M** | **F** |
| School Counsellor (Internal) Current | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| School Counsellor (Ended) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| School Counsellor (Waiting List) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Terapia (External) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| \*CAMHS (Referred) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| \*CAMHS (Accessing) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Grief Encounter \*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| BICS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

**\*CAMHS referrals are not only made by schools. Therefore, we may have students who have been referred or are already accessing CAMHS that we are unaware of.**

**\*\* Two referrals to grief encounter have been made 19/03/2025**