

Minutes for the School Governance Committee (SGC) Meeting at Hornbill School (HBS) on Thu 28 Nov 24

Attendees	Role	Name	Remarks
	Chair & Secretary	Captain Dan Knott (DK)	Stand in Chair
	Head Teacher	Mrs Caroline Neal (CN)	Gapped
	Deputy Head Teacher	Mrs Louise Brown (LB)	
	Assistant Head Teacher	Mr Mark Walters (MW)	
	Parent Rep RGR	Mrs Melanie Norfield (MN)	
	Parent Rep JWD	Mrs Abi Hamilton (AH)	
	BFB Community Rep	Mrs Lucy Moggridge (LM)	
	Parent Rep GST	Sgt Nabin Shrestha (NS)	
	Parent Rep 230 Sqn	Mrs Chrissie Emmerson (CE)	
	DCS	Tricia Wood (TW)	
	Staff Rep	Jo Brown (JB)	
Apologies			
	Treetops Deputy Manager	Mrs Katie Garbutt (KG)	
	DCOS	Maj Simon McMahon (SM)	
	Parent Rep 230 Sqn	Mrs Elizabeth Sanderson (ES)	
	BFB Comd Rep	Maj Jiwan Pun (JP)	

DESCRIPTION	ACTION
<p>Item 1 – Opening Remarks (Chair 5 mins)</p> <p>DK opened the meeting, welcoming everyone and thanking them for their attendance. The SGC has seen a significant number of members leave over the past quarter, but fortunately, several new volunteers have stepped forward to fill the vacancies.</p> <p>Efforts are ongoing to further diversify the SGC, focusing on increasing representation from the Nepali community to ensure the committee better reflects the demographic makeup of the wider BFB community.</p> <p>Action: Continue recruiting to ensure the SGC membership reflects the BFB demographic</p>	DK
<p>Item 2 – Matters Arising from Previous Minutes (5 mins)</p> <p>The teacher training available at the school was praised for its variety and quality, but CN acknowledged the need for a system to gather feedback from teachers on the effectiveness of the training. This will help assess its impact and refine future training programs.</p> <p>The school has seen an unexpected number of new pupils joining, which has led to concerns about resource allocation, particularly with Unit Move 25 approaching, adding complexity to staffing and resource planning.</p> <p>Action: Develop a feedback system for teachers to evaluate training.</p>	CN

Item 3 – Headteacher’s report Hornbill (15 mins)	
<p>CN briefed the SGC on the ongoing School Improvement Plan, which is a key focus for the term. CN shared the exciting news that Hornbill School will also be expanding to accommodate children up to 13 years old. This expansion is part of a strategy to address a perceived decline in families wishing to come to Brunei, particularly families with 11-12 yr olds, as these children are typically set to international boarding schools (ISB & JIS) located in Bandar Seri Begawan which is ~90 minutes journey time from the Garrison.</p> <p>The timing of this expansion coincides with Unit Move 25, which will see several families (230 Sqn and 1 RGR) move back to the UK, creating a temporary reduction in the student population. CN emphasised that now is an ideal time to implement these changes.</p> <p>Staffing remains a challenge due to the uncertainty over pupil numbers and ages, but teachers will be encouraged to identify the age range and any subjects they may be passionate about, aligning their teaching with their strengths and the needs of the school. The flexibility of teachers’ roles is key to maintaining quality teaching across year groups. CN also noted that while Some teachers may prefer to work with just one year group, teaching all National Curriculum subjects, whilst others may want to teach several year groups, specialising in a subject or subjects, while meeting the school’s requirements. The importance of teacher quality over subject expertise was also stressed. CN mentioned that a recruitment request had been submitted for four teachers; potentially two to teach at upper KS3 and 2 to backfill for vacancies. This staffing model is seen as key to managing the school’s expansion effectively.</p> <p>MW has been working hard on the curriculum for the new age groups. MW and CN have been collaborating with DCS to prepare the new curriculum, including identifying suitable standardised assessments across KS3 and providing predications for pupils onward achievement into KS4 to track academic progress.</p> <p>CN mentioned that the school will continue working to increase parental involvement by offering more opportunities for parents to engage with the school. She also noted the importance of maintaining a strong link with the community to ensure that Hornbill School remains a key part of the families’ experience while in Brunei.</p> <p>Action: Continue monitoring staffing levels and ensure appropriate teacher placements.</p> <p>Action: Meet with teachers to identify their teaching preferences about age range and any subject specialist areas they would be keen to undertake the teaching of.</p> <p>Action: To explore additional ways to engage parents, including offering invitations for them to contribute to school activities.</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>CN</p> <p>CN</p> <p>CN</p>

Item 4 – Treetops Report (15 mins)	
<p>The report for Treetops was presented by KG, the Treetops Deputy Manager, as she was unable to attend the meeting herself. CN delivered the updates in her place, covering key staffing challenges, the provision of early years education and the ongoing efforts to meet the demands of the growing BFB community.</p> <p>Staffing in Treetops remains a critical issue due to the lack of qualified personnel with level two and three qualifications. CN expressed concern about the lack of qualified professionals within the community to fill these positions. Without additional support, the service is at risk of not being able to meet the needs of the children. As a result, Treetops may have to make difficult decisions, including the possibility of closing the service on Fridays.</p> <p>KG has done an exceptional job managing the limited resources, but more staff with the required qualifications are needed to ensure the continuation of services. KG is on a TMP 6 month contract as an acting manager and it is essential that level three-qualified staff are in place to supervise children according to legal requirements.</p> <p>CN took the opportunity to recognise KG’s outstanding efforts in managing Treetops despite the staffing challenges. CN praised KG for her excellent communication skills and 1:1 briefings with staff, which have been crucial in maintaining the continuity of care for the children.</p> <p>Parent representatives also highlighted their appreciation for KG’s communication, noting that her approach has kept parents well informed and involved, even in the face of such significant challenges.</p> <p>CN stressed the importance of early years education in laying the foundation for children’s development and wellbeing. She emphasised that offering employment opportunities to those with the relevant qualifications is vital for maintaining continuity in early years settings.</p> <p>CN highlighted the importance of ensuring that all legal requirements are met, particularly in relation to the ratio of teachers to pupils. The minimum legal requirement for early years education is for a level three qualified staff member to supervise children, and currently, Treetops is facing issues in meeting this standard.</p> <p>CN noted the ongoing parental support for Treetops, particularly in terms of financial contributions and involvement in school initiatives. However, the continued uncertainty around staffing is leading to increased anxieties among parents about the future of the service.</p> <p>MN and LM raised concerns about the stability of the service and how the changes in staffing may impact BFB children. Both MN and LM emphasised the importance of ensuring continuity of care and expressed the need for clear communication to reassure parents.</p> <p>Action: Continue efforts to recruit qualified staff for Treetops.</p>	<p>CN / TW</p>

<p>Action: Explore ways to sustain services despite staffing shortages.</p>	<p>KG</p>
<p>Action: CN to explore possible avenues to recruit more qualified early years staff and liaise with DCS for additional support.</p>	<p>CN</p>
<p>Action: KG to ensure continued and clear communication with parents to alleviate concerns about staffing and service stability.</p>	<p>KG</p>
<p>Item 5 – Safeguarding / Health and Safety Update (5 mins)</p>	
<p>CN explained that the school is transitioning to the ‘My Safety’ system, which will be implemented across DCS schools. This system allows staff to report safety concerns or incidents in a clear and accessible way.</p> <p>CN reported that two near misses had already been recorded through this system:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A monitor lizard entering through a gap in the fence, which could have posed a danger. 2. An injury when a staff member bent their finger back while playing a ball game. While the injury was minor, it underscored the need for vigilance during activities. <p>The school highlighted the ongoing need for speech and language therapy (SALT), particularly in the early years. This continues to be a priority for supporting children’s development.</p> <p>Action: CN to continue the roll out of the ‘My Safety’ system, ensuring full staff and pupil participation.</p>	<p>CN</p>
<p>Item 6 – Finance Update (5 mins)</p>	
<p>CN reported that the school is currently running at a deficit but reassured the committee that this was forecast and is closely monitored. The school is staying within its budgetary constraints, though some areas have seen higher expenditure than initially forecast.</p> <p>CN highlighted that printer costs and telephone charges are proving to be particularly high. These costs are under review and CN is looking at ways to cut back on these areas without compromising the quality of service.</p> <p>CN also mentioned the Leave Travel Scheme where all UKBC staff and eligible family members are entitled to a return flight to their appointed location after 12 months employment. As a result of the distance between the UK and Brunei, this is a significant cost. CN noted that this cost is a known overspend.</p> <p>CN shared that several fundraising initiatives, such as Hornbill Helping Hands, have been planned. These activities are aimed at raising funds to For specific purposes, such as last Year’s Jolly Holly Fayre, which raised funds for playground equipment, including the new sandpit, and the Hallowe’en disco, which raised funds for Books from Santa for each child.</p>	

<p>The School Council have suggested other fund raising events, such as Wacky Hair Day, were also planned, which would further contribute to the school's fundraising efforts.</p> <p>CN stressed the importance of transparency in the way that funds raised have been used highlighting that the school's financial processes are open and clearly visible. This includes making the budget accessible to the children so they can see how the money is being spent on their behalf, making the process more inclusive and transparent.</p> <p>Action: CN to explore cost saving measures for printer and telephone usage, while maintaining efficiency.</p> <p>Action: CN to ensure all upcoming fundraising events are well advertised and effectively supported by both staff and parents.</p> <p>Action: CN to maintain financial transparency by regularly updating both staff and students on the school's fundraising.</p>	<p>CN</p> <p>CN</p> <p>CN</p>
<p>Item 7 – Sub-Committee and Individual Governor Feedback (5 mins)</p>	
<p>MN asked if a particular year teacher would only teach their pupils or if they would teach across multiple year groups. Caroline clarified that while some teachers, like Simon (Art teacher), teach across all year groups, this is more of an exception than the rule. Ideally, teachers are assigned to teach where they are confident, as their enthusiasm for the subject enhances teaching quality. However, due to the needs of the school, it may be necessary to move teachers between year groups to ensure the continuity and success of the curriculum.</p> <p>A concern raised by MN was the difference in extracurricular activities offered at Hornbill compared to ISB and JIS, which are better resourced and offer a wider range of activities. CN assured the SGC that the school in preparation for the expansion, is looking into options available including consideration for LEC staff working hours to potentially cover extra-curricular activities and exploring working collaboratively with other local schools to enhance extracurricular opportunities for pupils.</p> <p>Action: Investigate and address the discrepancy in extracurricular offerings compared to ISB and JIS, exploring options with local schools for Yr 7 and 8 enrichment.</p>	<p>CN</p>
<p>Item 8 – Teacher / Practitioner Representatives Feedback (5 mins)</p>	
<p>JB (Staff Rep) asked for updates on staffing and the number of pupils, especially in relation to ensuring that adequate ratios are maintained in the classroom.</p> <p>JB raised concerns regarding communication within the school. Specifically she highlighted that there were errors in communication that resulted in amendments having to be sent about what was happening each day. JB requested improvements in the way information was shared with staff to ensure everyone was kept up to date on daily activities and developments.</p>	

<p>CN acknowledged this issue agreeing that the early sharing of the daily update briefing email, prior to the start of the school day, did sometimes mean that information needed to be edited or changed after being circulated. It was agreed that circulating the daily update at a slightly later time in the morning would help to enable checking, which would remove the need for amendments to be made.</p> <p>CN also explained the staffing difficulties in securing staff for specific areas, particularly in the early years. She mentioned there was currently a recruitment freeze, meaning permission was required to recruit.</p> <p>Action: Ensure staffing levels are sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils.</p>	CN
Item 9 – Parent Representatives Feedback (5 mins)	
<p>AH (Parent Reps) discussed the importance of acknowledging and supporting cultural practices. It was requested that a booklet is distributed across the BFB community to inform non Nepali families on the customs and traditions so they can be better understood and celebrated. They emphasised the need to integrate these into the school's activities.</p> <p>Action: Continue integrating cultural practices into school activities.</p>	CN/KG
Item 10 – Unit Representatives Feedback (5 mins)	
<p>There was no update from the GM or 1 RGR UWO as they were not present.</p> <p>Action: Add Comd BFB to the distribution of minutes for his SA.</p>	DK
Item 11 – Any other business	
<p>CN informed the SGC that Kieran, a dedicated teacher at Hornbill School, will be leaving to move to Australia. CN thanked Kieran for his outstanding work and the positive impact he had on the school community. CN wished him the best for his future endeavours.</p>	
12. Date of Next Meeting:	
<p>The date will be confirmed between DK and CN, with the likely time being scheduled within the school day to accommodate childcare issues for attendees.</p>	DK/CN

Key dates for this academic year:

Date of meeting	Focus
Mar 24	Inclusivity and culture
Jun 24	Inclusivity, curriculum design and culture
Sep 24	SGC meeting date post summer standdown
29 Nov 24	SGC meeting date pre Christmas leave.