



RAKE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Minutes of a meeting of the governing body held on Wednesday 13th February 2019 at 4:00pm in the school.

Attending: David Bertwistle, Sarah O'Malley, Neil Ryder, Paul Brown, Kate O'Kelly, Steve Rea, Trish Bancroft, Mark Poeti, Margaret Farwell, Nik Taylor (chair), Caroline Bott.

Also attending: Pippa Bass (clerk).

1. Apologies for absence:

There were no apologies, all governors attended.

2. Declarations of interest:

NR is chair of governors at Rogate.

TB reported that her son pays for use of the school premises.

DB reported that he and PB had obvious financial interests in the discussions about the partnership with Rogate.

KO reported her personal interest in the school as a County Councillor.

3. Urgent matters not covered by the agenda:

- a. Rother Valley Governors' Association funding. NT reported that funding for the RV group will end shortly and any further activity of the group will need to be covered by the participating schools. The proposal is for schools to contribute £5.00 per pupil per year. Governors discussed the benefit and positive impact of the RV activities:

- Forest School leaders in every school
- Inclusion hub
- Teacher training in how to support other schools
- PB has been trained as improvement champion
- Experience of working with other schools
- Much good work has been done that benefits teaching staff, parents and the locality.

Governors felt the negative aspects of the RV activities were the tendency for a wider focus (on centralised buying and IT, for example) and the way the group supervises its activities. However, overall, governors felt the RV group was a worthwhile investment and **agreed, in principle, the proposal for the school to contribute to the future funding.**

[SOM joined the meeting]

- b. Parent and Staff surveys. SR circulated draft analysis reports from the recent parent and staff surveys.

29 parents had returned the survey. Parents felt the school's strengths were its spirit, the staff, its small size and family feel. Areas for improvement included the school's facilities. Parents were basically very positive about the school and commented that they wanted the partnership with Rogate to work, but were concerned the school did not change. Governors agreed that it is important to provide formal feedback to parents about the survey results. SR agreed to circulate the report and draft feedback to parents for governors to comment.

13 staff surveys were returned, representing a reasonable spread across the school. Staff felt the school's strengths were that it has a happy team spirit, a good caring ethos, a varied curriculum and the collaboration with Rogate. Staff wanted to see improvements in communication (within the school) and particularly on decisions being made. Generally, the results were positive, with some neutral views expressed, for example, on whether the governors have a good understanding of the school. The collaboration with Rogate also received some negative responses; DB's presence was missed, there was some confusion about who staff report to, and staff wanted clarity about where the partnership is going. Possibly as a result of these views, staff indicated a slight dip in morale, which was not felt to be a permanent thing as staff could envisage benefits further down the line. Governors discussed the results of the staff survey, they agreed it was understandable (and normal) that staff had concerns about change. A staff meeting was suggested as an effective forum to communicate with staff. Governors also suggested that giving a clear forward view about the school's finances and the challenges of Ofsted for small schools would help provide staff with the background and wider context for the changes.

Governors thanked SR and agreed there were useful lessons to learn from the process. Governors asked for a further discussion on the finalised survey results at the next meeting. It would be useful to compare the results with the similar surveys done at Rogate and NR agreed to share the Rogate results when they are available.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th November 2018 were approved and signed. Governors also confirmed that FGB meeting minutes are now available on the school website but agreed that committee minutes would not be published as the committees' outcomes are incorporated into FGB minutes.

5. Actions from the last meeting:

Minute	Person	Agreed action
20181128-3b	Clerk	Add "Rake/Rogate partnership update" as a standing item to future FGB agendas. Done.

20181128-3c	Clerk	Next FGB meeting to discuss nursery provision. Done.
20181128-7	Clerk	Progress the draft IOG with the Diocese and WSCC Done.
20181128-8	DB	Consider any risks to the SIP resulting from the partnership with Rogate, add a version control date, and re-circulate following any changes from Rogate FGB. Done.
20181128-10	SOM	Discuss with CB how to take the safeguarding work forward. Done.
20181128-11	SOM/DB	Complete the highlighted sections in the WSCC Model Pay Policy. Done.
20181128-12	SOM/DB	Discuss how to co-ordinate staff surveys with Rogate. Done.

6. Rake/Rogate partnership update:

- a) This will be a standing item on future FGB agendas.
- b) NT introduced the discussion referring to the recent parents' consultation evening, which was very successful, and the survey results already discussed. NT invited NR to summarise the position from Rogate's perspective:
 - Rogate governors have been discussing the school's future for a long time – since the school was put into special measures a few years ago.
 - Options that were considered included federation, academisation, collaboration.
 - In Autumn 2017, Rogate made the decision to pursue collaboration following the lifting of the Academy Order.
 - WSCC was developing its School Effectiveness strategy and alongside this, Rogate held a long series of meetings with various stakeholders.
 - Rogate's headteacher and business manager left the school last year.
 - No good fit could be found with other local schools, until discussions started with Rake.
 - Rogate was deeply impressed with Rake's speed of decision to enter the temporary partnership.
 - Rogate is delighted with progress thus far - all credit to DB, the joint leadership team and staff from both schools.

NR explained that Rogate is seeking to make the partnership permanent. Amongst other benefits, a permanent arrangement would provide stability for setting budgets and planning, budgets need to be finalised by May 2019. An Ofsted review is expected this year and the very positive changes that are being put in place at Rogate will not be sustainable without the partnership continuing.

NT explained that Rake made its decision to enter the partnership quite quickly and wanted to take time considering the right final decision for the school – hence the partnership agreement being set for 12 months. It is only a few months in, which feels too soon to make a final decision.

Governors discussed the implications of making the partnership permanent and reflected on the views expressed in the survey relating to the collaboration with Rogate. Governors wanted parents and staff to be involved in the decision-making process and did not want to feel pressurised by Rogate’s timetable.

However, continuing the uncertainty will not benefit anyone and governors agreed that both schools needed to be able to plan for the future. Governors wanted to explore all options for Rake to determine the best way forward, and to consider the wider context of small village schools and the implications of government’s future funding, as well as engaging with stakeholders. In the meantime, **governors agreed that the partnership should be extended for at least another year, while they explored longer term options – the working assumption being that the current partnership arrangement will continue.**

- c) Governors agreed the next step was to take detailed discussions with Graham Olway, WSCC. DB agreed to make the arrangements.
- d) DB reported that the recent Rake/Rogate joint governor meeting with Rosemary Black was very positive, there was plenty of opportunity for governors from both schools to talk together. However, DB felt that the time is not yet right to take the ideas forward.

7. GB constitution:

- a) Governors noted the new Instrument of Government is now in place.
- b) Governors discussed the proposal for a Co-opted governor from Rogate to be on the GB. NR is currently an Associate governor, SOM is a Co-opted governor at Rogate.

NR left the meeting.

Governors voted on whether NR should be appointed as a Co-opted governor. The vote was unanimous and NR was elected as a Co-opted governor for a 4 year term of office.

NR re-joined the meeting.

8. Reporting to the governing body:

Due to lack of time, DB agreed to provide his HT update and visit reports at the next meeting. Governors noted that the committees had met recently and that full reports would be provided at the next meeting. In the meantime, SR reported that the Finance/Staffing committee needed a new committee member following EE’s resignation and asked governors to consider the role.

9. School Improvement Plan:

Governors noted the updated SIP, which continues to be a ‘living’ document.

10. Nursery provision:

DB reported that the two nurseries who had been considering the space had both decided that it was not adequate. Wigwams has now closed.

11. Safeguarding update:

CB presented her report outlining what is required of the safeguarding lead governor. DB suggested CB considers using Rogate’s safeguarding proforma as a starting point, and NR suggested CB looks at Rogate’s Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, which reflects the latest guidance. CB agreed that having governors from both schools working together on safeguarding would be an obvious benefit from the partnership.

12. Policies review:

- a) Governors noted the Pay policy had been finalised.
- b) Governors approved the Assessment policy.
- c) Governors confirmed that the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy needs updating (see item 11).
- d) The discussion on website compliance was deferred.

13. Staff Wellbeing:

This item was deferred.

14. What difference/impact have we made:

- There is a much clearer view of the way forward.
- The surveys have provided great results.
- The parent survey was positive.
- The staff survey gives governors things to work on.
- It was good to have completed the surveys.
- We have a way ahead on the partnership.
- It will be interesting to compare survey results with Rogate.

15. Date of next meeting:

The next FGB will be on Wednesday 13th March 2019 at 4:00pm.

16. Any Other Business:

None.

Chair signature:..... Date:.....

ACTIONS:

Minute	Person	Agreed action	Target date
20190213-3b	SR	Circulate the parent survey report and draft feedback to parents.	As soon as possible
20190213-3b	NR	Share the results of Rogate's parent/staff survey for comparison.	2019.03.13
20190213-3b	Clerk	Add item on further discussion on the survey results at the next meeting.	2019.03.13
20190213-6c	DB	Invite Graham Olway, WSCC, to discuss future options with governors.	As soon as possible
20190213-12c	CB	Update the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.	2019.03.13