



## RAKE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Minutes of a meeting of the governing body held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 4:00pm in the school.

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

**Also attending:** Pippa Bass (clerk).

#### 1. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were accepted from Mark Poeti and Caroline Bott.

#### 2. Declarations of interest:

NR is chair of governors at Rogate.

TB's son pays for use of the school premises.

DB and PB have obvious financial interests in the discussions about the partnership with Rogate.

KO is a County Councillor.

#### 3. Urgent matters not covered by the agenda:

NT welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the main topic for discussion following the session with Graham Olway, WSCC, at the previous FGB meeting. NT emphasised that the discussion should be free and open and would help to shape the direction of travel for the school. NT added that the temporary status of the partnership has been overshadowing the future strategy discussions, but now that the partnership will be continuing (as agreed at the February FGB meeting), the governors can set out the timeline for work to progress, including keeping parents informed.

#### 4. Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were approved and signed.

#### 5. Actions from the last meeting:

Minute	Person	Agreed action
20190313-3d	SR	Discuss with the bursar continuing the salary re-charge in the budget, pending the outcome of the MOU discussions. <b>Complete, a temporary contract change has been made to avoid the re-charge.</b>
20190313-7	NR	Provide a link to the ESCC guidance leaflets. <b>Complete, the leaflets are available in TTG under 'governors links'.</b>
20190313-9	SOM	Speak with NT about the way forward on the joint committee/working group and MOU. <b>Complete, covered at item 6.</b>

The remaining actions were carried forward.

## 6. Strategy discussion:

NT opened the discussion by summarising that the partnership has been in place for 8 months and governors now need to decide what they want to do going forward. The Rake GB has perhaps been slow getting these discussions off the ground, and perceives that the Rogate GB is much more informed and knowledgeable about the options. NR stressed that, whilst Rogate has been thinking about collaboration for some time, their GB has not discussed what shape the partnership should take and would welcome joint discussions.

Governors noted the various information documents that have been put on TTG. NR referred to the collaboration/federation guidance tools from N Yorks suggesting that these might be a useful basis for the next steps.

Governors raised the following points:

- Having read a number of case studies about different federations, it is clear that the process takes a lot of time. It is relatively easy to commit to a permanent partnership, but since the full benefits will take time to realise, any formal federation should be left for later consideration.
- Looking at the N Yorks guidance, we should go back to complete the earlier steps in the process even though we have moved ahead already. This would help to build confidence that we are heading in the right direction; we should fully understand why we are partnering with Rogate and what the benefits are before talking to parents about the way forward.
- From the example of Amberley and St James, where they started with a soft collaboration some 10 years ago, they are only now considering full federation. There are inevitable frustrations with taking so long to move forward, for example, not being able to share contracts, and maintaining separate budgets.
- As we continue with the partnership, we can learn from experience and inform ourselves and other stakeholders before considering any further steps towards federation.
- Apart from federation where the GBs are merged, the other organisational approach is collaboration where the GBs remain in each school.
- For completeness, we should consider having three schools involved in the collaboration rather than just two; we need to investigate whether there are additional benefits from a broader grouping, for example, it might make the Exec HT role clearer.
- There are already benefits that have been achieved; the AIIB grant of £10k, which would not have happened without the partnership, requires information on the benefits before further funding is released. DBe recently provided an update on the AIIB funding to the Rogate GB.
- The partnership has been much harder to work through than we thought; the leadership team is exhausted by the end of term. Some of the difficulties have been caused by the SLT roles not being clearly defined.
- We should put pressure on WSCC to provide more support, they have said their support is available when a school decides to federate. However, all the work is done before then and we need that support now to pump-prime the transition phase whilst we look at the longer term.
- Teachers and staff are our most important asset, we should prioritise the support they need. The requirement would be 0.5xteacher to enable the heads of both schools to temporarily step back from their teaching commitments to focus on planning. If external funding is not forthcoming, the GBs should look again at both schools' budgets to fund temporary teaching resource.

Governors agreed to set up a Joint Strategic Development Committee to take forward the strategy work, reporting back to both GBs, made up of the chairs, vice-chairs and Foundation governors from each GB.

The following actions were agreed:

- a. Invite a governor from a federation school to share their experiences.
- b. Raise the question of additional support with WSCC, both directly and via the Rother Valley group, and the diocese. We need (i) extra financial support to free up the SLT and to improve IT, (ii) to provide advice on our approach, and (iii) to help arrange information exchange visits to/from other schools working on collaboration/federation.
- c. Apply to the Schools in Difficulties Fund for financial support to temporarily cover the SLT's teaching commitments.
- d. Complete the audit tool for both schools as part of the initial exploration stage set out in the North Yorks guidance and report back to each GB.
- e. Arrange a date for a joint social event, perhaps following the next FGB meeting, to bring both GBs together. It should be hosted at Rake since the January workshop was held at Rogate.

Governors also agreed that the forthcoming visit by Gillian Keegan, MP, would be an opportunity to emphasise that schools need more support when they are working towards federation, particularly as there are a lot of small schools in her constituency.

NT thanked everyone for their input to the discussion and felt heartened that there was now a clear way forward.

## **7. Preparing for Ofsted:**

NR explained that WSCC has offered to provide 'preparing for Ofsted' training for both schools at a reduced cost of £200. Governors felt this would be very useful training and a good opportunity to bring the GBs together. NR agreed to find suitable dates and make arrangements with WSCC.

## **8. Date of next meeting:**

Governors agreed to try to find an alternative date to replace the next FGB meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019 because NT and TB were unable to attend. NT will provide available dates for the clerk to circulate.

Post meeting note: the next FGB will be on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

## **9. Any Other Business:**

SOM informed governors that the clerk is conducting a policy audit of the policies and other statutory documents that are required in order to be compliant, including those that must be published on the school's website. The resulting actions will be considered at a future FGB meeting.

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

**ACTIONS:**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Agreed action</b>	<b>Target date</b>
20190313-8a	SOM	Arrange for CB to meet with Rita Harrison-Roach, the safeguarding governor at Rogate.	As soon as possible
20190313-12	SR	Conduct a quick desktop review of governor attendance and roles using TTG	15.05.2019
20190326-6a	NR	Invite a governor from a federation school to share their experiences.	15.05.2019
20190326-6b	NR, KO, TB	Raise the question of additional support with WSCC, both directly and via the Rother Valley group, and the diocese: (i) extra financial support to free up the SLT and to improve IT, (ii) to provide advice on our approach, and (iii) to help arrange information exchange visits to/from other schools working on	15.05.2019
20190326-6c	DBe	Apply to the Schools in Difficulties Fund for financial support to temporarily cover the SLT's teaching commitments.	asap
20190326-6d	NR (Rogate) SR (Rake)	Complete the audit tool for both schools as part of the initial exploration stage set out in the North Yorks guidance and report back to each GB.	15.05.2019
20190326-6e	Clerk	Arrange date for a joint social event following the next FGB meeting to bring both GBs together, hosted at Rake.	15.05.2019
20190326-7	NR	Find suitable dates and make arrangements with WSCC for 'preparing for Ofsted' training course.	15.05.2019
20190326-8	Clerk	Find an alternative date to replace the next FGB on 15th May 2019.	asap