



Downland Village Schools Federation

Minutes of a meeting of the full governing body held virtually on Wednesday 16th September 2020 at 4:00 pm

Present: David Bertwistle, Paul Brown, Jeremy Cogman, Margaret Farwell, Steph Garwood, Chris Hawker, Susie McAuley, Kate O’Kelly, Sarah O’Malley, Hannah Pasfield, Neil Ryder.

In attendance: Pippa Bass (clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies

The clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting. TB, RHR, ED sent their apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Election of chair/vice chairs and statutory items

- a. Election of chair. NR agreed to re-stand and there were no other nominations. Governors voted unanimously, NR was duly elected and took over as chair of the meeting.
- b. Election of vice chairs. SOM and CH agreed to re-stand and there were no other nominations. Governors voted unanimously and SOM and CH were duly elected as co-vice chairs.
- c. Code of conduct. Governors approved the code of conduct and confirmed they had read the document.

[HP joined the meeting]

- d. Register of Interests. Governors confirmed their entries in the register of interests circulated by the clerk were correct, noting the amendments from KO and RHR.
- e. HTPM panel. NR proposed the panel membership of TB, CH and NR, which governors agreed.
- f. Statutory committees. Governors agreed that membership of the statutory committees (exclusions, appeals, complaints) would be appointed on a case-by-case basis with 2/3 appropriate governors who had not been involved with the issue.

4. Governor activity and urgent matters

- a. Rake local school committee (LSC). JC summarised the outcomes from the first LSC meeting held on 15th July 2020. TB had been elected as chair with Nik Taylor as vice chair. The committee proposed Nikki Oakley (chair, FORSA) as an additional member. Governors approved Nikki’s appointment to the committee. A sub-committee had been setup to look at the school’s website. Governors noted that the chair/vice chair positions for this school year would be elected at the next meeting and suggested that (ideally) the chair would not also be a member of the DVSF FGB. JC agreed to speak with TB and Nik before the next LSC meeting on 14th October 2020.
- b. Rogate Local School Committee (LSC). HP summarised the outcomes from the first LSC meeting held on 14th July 2020. Max Harwood had been elected as chair, no vice chair was elected. The committee had agreed to invite Fiona Dix, who is closely involved with the local community, as an additional member. The FGB had already approved Fiona’s appointment. NR reported back on the recent discussions about parking near Rogate school, which Fiona had been involved with, and suggested these discussions continued at the next LSC meeting on 13th October.

Governors discussed the schools’ websites. NR agreed that he would continue to ensure the governor pages and statutory information on both websites were kept up-to-date. JC and HP agreed to discuss who would take responsibility for style and content management of the rest of the websites at the next LSC meetings. Everyone agreed that the websites should highlight the individual aspects of each school as well as the shared elements, eg vision and values. NR also asked that both LSC’s consider whether a DVSF website would be beneficial, particularly from a marketing perspective. The clerk will add these items to the LSC agendas. DB requested that any actions requiring his attention arising from the LSC meetings were raised with him in the first instance.

[KO joined the meeting]

Governors' activities since the last meeting are listed below.

- 12 Jun 2020: CH, SOM, NR - Chair / vice-chair meeting
- 16 Jun 2020: DB, CH, SOM, NR - HT / chairs meeting
- 16 Jun 2020: DB, JC, CH, SOM, NR, JW - Finance govts meeting - budgets & deficit recovery plans
- 18 Jun 2020: NR - WSCC Schools Forum meeting
- 19 Jun 2020: TB, NR - HTPM preparation
- 02 Jul 2020: DB, TB: HTPM meeting
- 08 Jul 2020: DB, CH, SOM, NR - HT / chairs meeting
- 08 Jul 2020: DB, NR - virtual meeting with Compton govts
- 14/15 Jul 2020: Rogate & Rake local school committee meetings
- 14/15/16 Jul 2020: NR / Capita meetings - SIMS ID
- 24 Jul 2020: CH, NR - WSGA meeting with Paul Wagstaff (WSCC dir of educ)
- 10/13/18/25 Aug 2020: NR / Capita meetings - SIMS ID
- 26 Aug 2020: DB,PB,JC,SG,SM,NR - MS 365 meeting
- 01 Sep 2020: DB,PB,CH,RHR,NR - due diligence meeting: preparation for re-opening school
- 02 Sep 2020: CH,NR - WSGA exec committee meeting
- 08 Sep 2020: DB,PB,SG,NR - WSCC link advisor meeting: preparation for re-opening school
- 08 Sep 2020: DB,NR - HT/chair meeting
- 08 Sep 2020: SM,NR - MS 365 meeting
- 10 Sep 2020: DB,NR - Federation support meeting with WSCC (Paul Wagstaff & Claire Conley)
- 10 Sep 2020: SM,NR - MS 365 review with Capita
- 11 Sep 2020: DB,CH,SOM,NR - HT / chairs meeting

NR highlighted:

- the meeting with the new LA link advisor on 8 Sept, which was to check the schools' preparations for re-opening, had involved an immense amount of work by the staff. NR and RHR had visited the schools and satisfied themselves with the preparations for both pupil and staff safety. They particularly applauded the initiative to temperature test children on arrival each morning as part of the precautions to protect staff, pupils (and families against Covid.
 - the meeting with Paul Wagstaff on 10 Sep to discuss the long-promised federation support package. An earlier application for extra funding was largely rejected as not being federation-specific enough, and PW provided some note on the package, from which DB and the finance governors would prepare a new application – probably amounting to £10k for the coming year, and £10k for the following year.
- c. IT update. NR reported that the work with Capita had been a nightmare and was unfortunately still continuing; there were a number of outstanding issues to sort out. However, both schools are now synchronised and the new features mean that children can be supported learning from home (in the event of further lockdowns). NR thanked SM for her support in setting up the new Office 365 platform and working out how best to use the new functions. SM also thanked JC for his help and reported that she is talking with other schools who use the same platform.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 30th June 2020 were approved.

6. Matters arising from the last meeting

All the outstanding actions were either complete or had been incorporated into the agenda.

7. HT update

DB provided his verbal update – see Annex A – and governors raised the following questions:

- Q** What's the implications of staff not having had a proper break over the summer and having to take on additional duties when colleagues are isolating?
- A** I am quite concerned about the health and well-being of our staff and I am monitoring their wellbeing very closely, particularly the SLT.
- Q** Are we obliged to teach children at home?
- A** Not for ordinary colds etc.
- Q** Are parents being over-cautious in keeping their children off school when they have the normal coughs/colds going around?
- A** Possibly, but it is a very difficult balance. The advice is, if you have a temperature (or other Covid-19 symptoms), stay home and take a test. We take the children's temperature and send them home straight away if it is high. At the moment, it is not easy to get tests done or to get test results back quickly, which is making the whole thing very challenging.
- Q** Would it be possible to send a few pointers for home learning if a child has to go home?
- A** The staff do not have the capacity to do home learning as well as full-time teaching at school. Parents can look at the curriculum on the website to see what topics are being covered.
- Q** We agree with your point about individual cases, but this situation is going to carry on for a while yet. Do we need a comms piece for parents that provides a guide should their child be off school?
- A** Good idea, I will look into providing something in the newsletter.
- Q** Have all parents given consent for their children to have email addresses?
- A** Not quite; most have responded positively and agreed, but one has expressed concerns and there are about 15 parents who have not yet replied.
- Q** How is the 'crowd funding' for more hardware going to work?
- A** We send information out to parents, they can send it on to their contacts. There are "rewards" for different levels of funding.

Governors emphasised their understanding of the huge pressures on staff and recognised that the SLT and all the teachers are working flat out after having had little or no proper break over the summer. Governors agreed that tributes were due to DB, PB and SG, and all the staff, for the additional work going on now and during the holidays; everyone is working at much higher levels than usual.

8. Governor actions

- a. DB had updated the staff list in the governor roles table and proposed that each governor contact their associated staff member(s) to ask them how they were coping during this very stressful time, ask how they were getting on, and whether governors or the schools could help more. Governors agreed to do so. MF agreed to add Holly (NQT) to her list of teachers to contact.
- b. NR also suggested that both rectors could meet with the children outside and talk to them about how they are feeling. Governors agreed and MF agreed to speak with ED and TB.
- c. Governors discussed surveying the new parents to ask why they chose the school and how they are finding things so far. Governors agreed the survey would be useful and it should go out in the second half of the term. NR agreed to circulate a draft survey.
- d. Governors discussed how the FGB would input to the LSC meeting agendas and agreed the parent governors (JC and HP) should involve their LSC chairs in any items that the FGB asked to be considered. Governors also agreed that parents should raise any concerns directly with DB, PB or SG as usual, rather than be directed to the LSC.
- e. Governors agreed to undertake some training - for example, an NGA Learning Link course most relevant to their governor role. NR explained that the NGA courses are available on-line and typically take about 40mins to complete, he offered to help if anyone needed assistance with accessing NGA.

9. Policies

NR and CH had been working through the policy review plan over the summer. Governors noted the list of policies that have already been updated and approved (as per the FGB's previous delegation):

Assessment policy	Governors' code of conduct	Health & safety policy
Attendance policy	Governor expenses	Staff appraisal policy
Complaints policy	Governor induction pack	Staff Capability policy

They would incorporate the comments from the TTG forum, and the child protection & safeguarding policy would be updated shortly. NR, CH and DB proposed to continue updating the policies due for review, approving them *pro-tem* so they can be uploaded onto TTG and the websites, and involving the relevant governors for their input. Governors agreed this proposal and HP kindly offered to help out if needed.

10. Budget and deficit recovery plan

NR proposed that the plan is deferred until the outcome of applying for the federation support package is known and can be incorporated into the plan. Governors agreed.

11. Safeguarding

Governors confirmed they had read Part 1 of the KCSIE guidance, which the clerk would report back to RHR. SG agreed to provide a brief update at the next FGB meeting on the changes to safeguarding and highlight areas that governors should be aware of.

12. Communication

Governors suggested the following points:

- Election of chair/co-vice-chairs
- Re-iterate the message about individual school email addresses and support the message about online learning
- Tribute to hardworking staff over the holidays
- Plan to improve IT further but we are ahead of the game with home learning support
- Link to SM's crowd-funding for IT hardware

SOM agreed to prepare a few points for communicating to parents and circulate to CH and DB.

13. Future meeting dates/times

Governors noted the future meeting dates and agreed an earlier start time of 3:30pm.

Approved by the full governing body and signed by A Neil Ryder

Date: 21st October 2020

ACTIONS:

Reference	Who	Action	By when
2020.09.16-4a	JC	Speak with TB and Nik about chairing before the next LSC.	14.10.2020
2020.09.16-4b	JC, HP, clerk	Discuss responsibility for style and content management of the websites at the next LSC meetings, and consider whether a DVSF website would be beneficial, particularly from a marketing perspective. The clerk will add these items to the LSC agendas.	13/14.10.2020
2020.09.16-8a	ALL	Each governor to contact their associated staff member to ask them how they were coping during this very stressful time, ask how they were getting on, and is there anything we can do. MF to add Holly to her list of teachers to contact.	asap
2020.09.16-8b	MF	Speak with ED and TB to arrange a session to talk to the children about how they are feeling.	asap
2020.09.16-8c	NR	Draft and circulate new parent survey.	asap
2020.09.16-8e	ALL	Undertake training, for example, an NGA Learning Link course, most relevant to their governor role.	21.10.2020
2020.09.16-9	NR, CH	Incorporate governor forum comments into the policies, complete the updates to the Child Protection & Safeguarding policy, and continue working through the policy review plan.	21.10.2020
2020.09.16-10	NR, DB	Apply for the federation support package and incorporate into the budget deficit plan.	21.10.2020
2020.09.16-11	Clerk	Report back to RHR that everyone has read Part 1 of the KCSIE guidance and add item on the next FGB agenda for SG to provide an update on safeguarding.	21.10.2020
2020.09.16-12	SOM	Prepare a few points for communicating to parents and circulate to CH and DB.	asap

Annex A: Headteacher's report to governors 16th September 2020

School Context

The start to the term at both schools has been incredibly smooth, with high levels of attendance during the first few days. As we start the second week, we have two members of staff isolating while they wait for covid-19 tests for their children to be returned. A significant number of children (50%) in Goldcrests were off sick at the end of last week, but none report covid-19 symptoms and I have put this down to children mixing with each other again for the first time since March. Today (Monday) we have 27 children (25%) absent from Rake and 10 (16%) from Rogate. I will send an email reminder about the symptoms of covid-19 to ensure attendance remains high.

Many members of staff worked tirelessly through the holiday to ensure that the schools looked vibrant and welcoming for the children's return. Ruth Cumming, deputy director of education for the Diocese, visited Rake last week and commented on the outstanding learning environments in all classes. However, I must share with governors my concern that many staff, particularly members of the SLT, have not had a proper break over the summer and they have taken on additional duties to support the smooth running of the schools. There is a programme of PPA in place as well as subject leader time, but I will monitor the health and wellbeing of the staff very closely.

Both Neil and I met, virtually, with Derry Richardson, our new LA Advisor on 8th September to discuss the measures we have in place across both settings. This was supported by an aide memoire sent out by the LA in August, with the rider that if everything was not in place our public indemnity would not be covered if a claim was made by a parent. Derry was confident that the many measures and the risk assessments we have in place make the sites as Covid-19 secure as possible.

The risk assessments have been updated as the week has gone on and reflect concerns as they have arisen – an LSA working with a child with an EHCP in Robins now wears a visor as he has begun spitting and further measures have been put in place at Rake for drop off and pick up as parents were not keeping to the 2 metre social distancing recommendations. We have now emphasised the one-way system outside the school and staff greeting parents now wear visors.

The arrangement of classes, and their names, are outlined below:

Rake

Robins	Sparrows	Jays	Goldcrests	Kestrels
Sarah-Jane Smith Lizz Tinder	Louise Muir	Holly Hayward	Lizz Tinder Susie McAuley	Emma Gregory
Reception + 1 Y1	Year 1 and 2	Year 3	Year 4 and 5	Year 5 and 6 + 1 Y7
15 + 1	15 + 15	16	15 + 7	5 + 17 + 1
16	30	16	22	23
TOTAL				108

Rogate

Wrens	Starlings	Kingfishers	Red Kites
Deb Hockley	Katarina Jarratt	Susie McAuley Rachel Field	Christine Ward
Reception	Year 1 and 2	Year 3 and 4	Year 5 and 6
10	5 + 10	9 + 10	12 + 10
10	15	19	22
TOTAL			66

We have two children doing a taster morning at Rogate this morning. If this is successful, they will be going into Year 4 and 6. I have also 2 parents moving into the area in October wanting places in Reception for their children. This will take the number on roll to 70!

At Rake we have a Y7 pupil. He has an EHCP and needed a place in a specialist setting, which Hampshire CC could not provide. He will stay with us until a place becomes available. We have taken on a new LSA to work with him on a one to one – this is fully funded by Hampshire CC. It says a great deal about the school that the child has fitted back in straight away.

Quality of the curriculum

Since my last report in June, we have held 3 INSET days. The first, at the end of last term, was to allow staff time to discuss individual children and to plan across both schools.

We held 2 INSET days at the beginning of this term. The first focused on the updating of the staff safeguarding training, including the covid-19 measures put in place, the staff handbook, assessment and the introduction of our new RE and assembly scheme of work. The George Street Trust provided the funding for this new scheme of work.

The second focused on our creative curriculum of poetry, dance, art and music. This was a practical day with all members of staff taking part in activities that can be utilised in classes. At a time when the government is stressing the importance of catching up in English and maths it was a timely reminder that the arts can be used to address areas of the core curriculum, making lessons exciting and engaging.

A great deal of work has taken place to update the computer systems across both schools. We are now able to access Microsoft 365 and utilise it to communicate more effectively across the federation and with parents. We have devoted staff meeting time for staff to learn how to use the system to set up individual email accounts for all pupils which can be used if we are forced into a local lockdown. We are trialling this for the setting of weekly remote learning for all pupils, except those in Reception. Once again, thanks must go to Neil, not only for sourcing £20,000 of additional funding, but also for constant liaison with Capita over the summer break. Again, the George Street Trust made a contribution to this project and we have launched a crowdfunding page to allow for the purchase of more hardware across the federation.

The staff have planned that the first two weeks of term should be used as a settling in period for the children, which is slightly longer than usual, but it must be remembered that many of them have not been in school since March. Once we are sure the children feel safe, secure and settled we will begin the assessment process to ascertain where there are gaps in children's learning. Once we have done this, we can make the best use of the first tranche of additional funding to provide focussed interventions.

I have begun, for the second time, to update the School Improvement Plan, which I have traditionally completed over the summer. The first time the antiquated computer system at Rake shut down and the document was lost! Once completed the SIP will be shared with all staff and governors.

Behaviour and Attitudes

The pupils of both schools have been amazing since returning after the holiday – you would never know that their education has been interrupted!

Once again they show high levels of courtesy and trust of all adults and the focus on lessons that was apparent before lockdown has returned. Staff are delivering lessons with energy that are exciting and engaging. Children are following the measures in place without question (much more than some of the parents) and it is this acceptance that has meant the start of the term has been so smooth.

All the children are delighted to be back! I have had an unusually high number of emails from parents complimenting us on the positive start to the year – the parents are obviously delighted their children are back too!

Personal Development

The personal development of the pupils, within this uncertain time is being carefully monitored by all the adults in school. Any concerns are shared with the SLT. We have begun to have an agenda item on staff meeting agendas to discuss pupil welfare. It often through these discussions that a full picture of a child's welfare can be fully explored.

I am expecting that as the term progresses the impact of lockdown on children's mental health may become more apparent. We will seek advice on how this can best be addressed.

Leadership and Management.

I have had regular meetings, both virtually and face to face, during the summer with governors. Meetings have been held with Paul Wagstaff, director of education, Ruth Cumming, deputy director of the Diocese and Derry Richardson, our LA advisor. All these meetings have been very positive.

Neil and I have supported governors at Bury, Coldwaltham and Amberley and discussions with Compton and Upmarden governors are still on-going. I am due to meet the headteacher next week to discuss possible ways of us supporting the school.

Governors have been tasked to contact their class teachers for a quick health check in these very stressful times we find ourselves in.

Formal lesson observations have been planned for this half term as well as the daily drop-ins that I undertake. These observations form part of the staff appraisal system that is in place. My own appraisal takes place next week – it has been an extraordinary year with the federation of the two schools, two successful Ofsted inspections and keeping both schools open during lockdown.

David Bertwistle
September 2020