



Downland Village Schools Federation

Minutes of a meeting of the full governing body held virtually on Wednesday 2nd December 2020 at 3:30 pm

Present: Trish Bancroft, David Bertwistle, Paul Brown, Jeremy Cogman, Edward Doyle, Steph Garwood, Rita Harrison-Roach, Chris Hawker, Kate O’Kelly, Sarah O’Malley, Hannah Pasfield, Neil Ryder.

In attendance: Pippa Bass (clerk), Judith Rutherford (NGA consultant).

1. Welcome and apologies

NR welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that Judith Rutherford would be observing the meeting as part of the NGA board development programme.

Apologies were accepted from Susie McAuley and Margaret Farwell.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Urgent matters not covered on the agenda

None.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on 21st October 2020 and on 5th November 2020 (extra FGB meeting) were approved.

5. Matters arising from the last meeting

a. The actions were reviewed:

Reference	Who	Action
2020.09.16-8a	NR, DB	Review the plans for governors to speak to their associated staff members, including arranging for the rectors to speak with the children. Complete. DB to follow-up on any conversations that are outstanding.
2020.09.16-10	NR, DB	Apply for the federation support package and incorporate into the budget deficit plan. Covered at item 6.
2020.10.21-5b	JC	Discuss the possibility of a name change for the Rake LSC with HP. Complete. The groups are renamed as Local School Forums.
2020.10.21-5b	NR	Set up a small group of members from both school committees to take forward work on the websites. Carry forward.
2020.10.21-5b	DB	Circulate summary of contingency plan for home-schooling. Carry forward.
2020.10.21-6ei	SG	Forward report on SEND / disadvantaged to HP. Complete.
2020.10.21-6eii	DB, finance govs	Follow up on the issue of insufficient TAs at Rake. Complete.
2020.10.21-6e	NR	Finalise the ‘new parent’ survey with the suggested changes (TTG forum) and discuss with SLT. Carry forward.
2020.10.21-8b	NR / PB	Review the remote learning policy with a view to incorporating the (currently separate) ‘privacy’ and ‘acceptable use’ policies. Complete.
2020.10.21-9	NR / RHR	Review existing safeguarding training courses and either recommend them or propose a separate training session from SG. Carry forward.
2020.10.21-9	ALL	Read Part II of KCSIE. Remaining governors to confirm they have read Part II.

2020.10.21-9	RHR	Arrange a safeguarding meeting for Rake with PB. Carry forward.
2020.10.21-10	JC	Discuss outline plan for the school websites with HP. Carry forward.
2020.10.21-10	SOM	Prepare communication points covering remote learning, catchup assessments, and SEND/disadvantaged. Complete.

6. Update on Finance and pay progression recommendations

- a. **Finance.** NR reported that the discussions with Compton had ended and that the application for federation support funding had been put on hold until the Compton discussions reach a final conclusion. The finance governors would re-work the figures to finalise a draft budget, excluding any grants, for submission to WSCC.
- b. **Pay progression.** DB reported that all the teaching staff, other than NQTs, were at the top of their pay scales, so there would be no performance-related pay progression this year. The SLT staff were not at the top of their pay scales and DB agreed to provide his recommendations for pay progression.

7. HT report

DB provided his report – see Annex A. DB suggested that SM provide an update for governors on Lego Training at the next meeting. Governors thanked DB for his report and added their endorsement for the ‘thank you’ to all staff.

8. Local School Forums (LSF)

SOM was concerned that the LSFs have not yet settled into their roles, however, the recent work with Compton had re-enforced the significance of local school representation, particularly if a 3rd school joined DVSF. JC and HP reported that parents are feeling quite disconnected from the school environment at the moment and the situation was likely to continue until parents can come into school and mix with other parents and teachers on a regular basis. PB reported that he had not had any response from his requests for more parents to join the Rake LSF. Governors discussed the difficulties in getting people engaged but agreed that the LSFs should continue as they are until the restrictions are lifted and more people can be encouraged to get involved. The LSF meeting agendas should be set by the LSF chairs and the Heads of School.

9. GDPR/data protection/privacy

DB reported that Rogate no longer had a nominated GDPR person; the plan was to contact GDPR Sentry to discuss support and appoint one person to cover both schools. NR warned of another school’s recent data breach, which had resulted in a prolonged resolution process, and he was concerned that the current data storage in both schools was not compliant. DB agreed to follow-up with the office manager at Rogate.

10. Governor actions/strategy

- a. **3rd school.** NR explained the rationale for halting the federation discussions with Compton and the school to school support programme. Despite this, WSCC were finishing the costing of the action plan that DB had prepared. The project might be re-instated if the ongoing discussions between WSCC and Compton were successful; NR confirmed that Compton was a strategically sustainable school that would fit well with DVSF. Governors thanked DB, the chair and the vice-chairs for the huge amount of work that had gone into the project thus far and confirmed that it was still desirable to find a 3rd school, from either Rother Valley or West Sussex/Hants, to join DVSF.
- b. **NGA board development programme.** JR introduced herself and the programme, which would extend across two school terms. The starting point was the skills audit and the self-evaluation that governors had completed. JR reflected that there had been a good set of responses to both questionnaires; the governing body had the right range of skills in place and there were no ‘red flags’ coming out of the self-evaluation. JR made a general observation that governors were feeling disconnected and that it was hard to generate a strong sense of ‘team’ without face-to-

face meetings. Following earlier discussions with NR and DB, JR proposed the following priority areas for the development programme:

- Developing an annual programme of work for the governing body and a common understanding of the whole structure of governance. A small working party would be formed in the New Year to take this forward.
- Looking at a strategic plan going forward to ensure the federation's vision, values and ethos were firmly embedded across the schools.
- Succession planning to help provide clarity of the different roles and responsibilities that the governing body needs.

JR would start to develop these priorities and offered governors two places on the 'NGA chairs development program' for anyone interested.

11. Policies

Governors approved the following list of policies, subject to incorporating the remaining comments made on the TTG forum:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Confidential reporting | - Finance |
| - Staff discipline | - Behaviour |
| - Privacy (parents and pupils) | - Offsite educational visits |
| - Staff grievance | - Internet safety and acceptable use |
| - Governor visits | - Remote Learning |
| - Charging and remissions | - Freedom of information |
| - Staff capability | - Medicines in school |

There are a small number of policies still to be updated by NR and CH, which are waiting for model policies from WSCC. The clerk will circulate a table showing which policies are associated with each governor role for governors to check through the policies associated with their roles.

[ED joined the meeting]

12. Safeguarding

Governors thanked RHR for her comprehensive report following the safeguarding visit to Rogate in October. DB pointed out that there is a fire drill every half-term.

Governors discussed pupil well-being, which remained a concern for RHR. SG reported that she had made more referrals than ever this term, and particularly noted the increased anxiety levels in girls.

13. Communication

Governors discussed what more could be done to help parents feel connected to the school. HP said that the biggest issue was not being able to come into the school. SG agreed to follow-up on the distribution of the 'Rogate review', which HP had not received. PB explained the plan at Rake to record each class performing their festive activities and post the video on a private YouTube channel. NR suggested that Microsoft Streams was used rather than YouTube. SG reported that, at Rogate, the children would put on a small performance outside, which would be recorded and streamed to parents, plus a Christingle service hosted by ED on Teams. TB asked DB to arrange the Christingle service for Rake.

14. Future meeting dates/times

Governors noted the future meeting dates:

- DVSF FGB 6th January 2021 3:30pm
- Rogate LSF 2nd February 2021 4:00pm
- Rake LSF 3rd February 2021 3:30pm
- DVSF FGB 10th February 2021 3:30pm

TB reported that Margaret did not yet feel able to return to her governor role. Everyone wished her well and hoped to see her again soon.

JR reflected on her observation of the meeting that the governing body had obviously been dealing with Covid-19 and expanding the federation, which meant some normal business had had to be deferred.

NR thanked governors for their continued support and commitment and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

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

Date: 20th January 2021

ACTIONS:

Reference	Who	Action	By when
2020.09.16-8a	DB	Follow-up on any outstanding conversations between governors and their associated staff members.	06.01.2021
2020.10.21-5b	NR	Set up a small group of members from both school forums to take forward work on the websites.	06.01.2021
2020.10.21-5b	DB	Circulate summary of contingency plan for home-schooling	asap
2020.10.21-6e	NR	Finalise the 'new parent' survey with the suggested changes (TTG forum) and discuss with SLT.	06.01.2021
2020.10.21-9	NR / RHR	Review existing safeguarding training courses and either recommend them or propose a separate training session from SG.	06.01.2021
2020.10.21-9	HP, KO, JC, TB	Read Part II of KCSIE.	06.01.2021
2020.10.21-9	RHR	Arrange a safeguarding meeting for Rake with PB.	06.01.2021
2020.10.21-10	JC	Discuss an outline plan for improving the school websites with HP.	06.01.2021
2020.12.02-6b	DB	Provide recommendations for SLT pay progression.	asap
2020.12.02-9	DB	Follow-up with the office manager at Rogate about GDPR.	asap
2020.12.02-11	Clerk	Circulate a table showing which policies are associated with each governor role.	06.01.2021
2020.12.02-12	SG	Follow-up on the distribution of the Rogate Review, which HP had not received.	asap

Annex A: Executive headteacher's report to governors

Headteacher's Report to Governors

December 2020

Traditionally this is the time of year to reflect on the past year. Governors, I am sure, would agree that this year has been unusual!

So much has been missed from this term – our pantomime visit (a highlight of my year, especially when the dame/ugly sister, drags Ollie Pearce up on stage yet again!), the children all playing together and forming friendships across the school and schools, the FoRSA/RSFF Christmas Fair, the carol singing, the visits to church, Christingle, the Nativity services, Christmas Lunch for the whole school, parents visiting, assemblies – the list goes on.

However, looking at the positive aspects of this year. The schools have remained open every day with very little disruption to learning. The children are happy to be in school (most of the time). The staff have all gone the extra mile to make the learning exciting and engaging. No one has let the covid-19 restrictions become an issue and everyone has followed the recommendations in our risk assessments.

This term the children took part in Children in Need, school photographs were taken, RSFF held a Quiz Night, on-line training has taken place and the Christmas decorations are up!

The **Shop and Wrap** is taking part in both schools, the Christmas **raffles** are being prepared, virtual **Nativity** and **Carol Services** are being rehearsed, **FoRSA** and **RSFF** have paid for an **on-line pantomime** and class based parties are being planned. Never let it be said that we don't pull out all the stops, despite the restrictions.

School Context

Numbers have risen in Rogate with 8 new children joining across the school. Numbers at Rake have been maintained:

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
13	4 + 11	9 + 10	11 + 10
13	15	19	21
TOTAL			68

Attendance in Rake is currently 94.7% and in Rogate is 97%. These compare very favourably with other schools in the Rother Valley.

SLT and Emma Gregory are in discussion about moving the Year 5 children in Goldcrests into Kestrels. Not only would this give parity of experience, but would allow the staff to focus on the Year 4 children – our weakest cohort. The **George Street Trust** have provided funding for two part time TAs to work with this class. Despite the restrictions, I managed to appoint two experienced parents to support the interventions we have in place. This is already having a positive impact.

Our work at **Compton and Upmarden School** has been put on hold for the time being. The relationship between the Headteacher and me has broken down after it became clear that our vision for the future of the school did not match and that the work that I had already spent a great deal of time doing was not being supported. Neil has been a huge support during this process and it was by mutual agreement that we withdrew from discussions about both school to school support and federation. It has been left to the **Compton governors, the local authority and the Diocese** to try to broker a new deal, if they are able.

The new playground equipment at **Rogate** has been fitted and the children have begun using it. Because of covid restrictions we have decided that only one class can use it a week – this week Red Kites, who watched it being fitted, are using it. The feedback has been hugely positive. Many thanks must go to **RSFF** for funding a third of the project.

The work on the new oil tank has begun. The base has been completed and the door to the old tank has been widened to remove the old tank. Work to lower the hall ceiling and fit new lights will begin on Monday. This has, of course, been a logistical headache! Breakfast Club will now take place in Kingfishers, lunches will be served from Steph's office and after school club will be in Starlings. The question has been asked why the work could not take place during the Easter break, but by then the pot of LA money will have been clawed back.

ForSA have funded a new swimming pool cover, which has been fitted.

Steph has taken our new members of staff through Safeguarding Training and Susie has benefitted from a parent recommending the schools for some Lego Training

Governors will be delighted to know that Open Reach will be visiting Rake on Tuesday to undertake an internal survey of the school as part of the move towards fibre optic broadband connectivity.

Quality of the curriculum

Following on from the joint INSET day held in September both schools held an Arts Day. Classes in Rake took 'Winter in Rake' as their theme and produced a large piece of art work with a contribution from every child. In Rogate classes worked individually on their own projects – a notable piece was in Wrens and the finished product is a rainbow.

I am still impressed with the quality of the teaching and learning across both schools and am delighted that, since Louise Stallard's visit, all classes are now arranged in groups rather than in rows. This makes learning more meaningful for the children and the staff are much more able to support individuals and groups.

Behaviour and Attitudes

A very small minority of children in both schools have caused some concerns since half term.

In Rogate the social and economic problems of two families have spilt into school. The families have moved in together and there are now nine people living in a two-bedroom house. This has, obviously, had a major impact on the children with them being over tired, homesick and stressed. This manifests itself with outbursts in class, refusal to work and skirmishes on the playground.

The SLT, class teachers and support staff have worked extremely hard to meet the needs of these children, who are Pupil Premium and some who have SEND.

In Rake a group of Year 6 girls have had a falling out – fuelled both by parents and social media. The situation, expertly handled by Emma Gregory, has got out of hand with parents keeping their ‘exhausted and traumatised’ children off school and one parent moving their children to another school.

Both these situations, which developed during the first lockdown period, should be outside the remit of the school but have taken up an enormous amount of time.

I attended a virtual Headteacher’s meeting this morning and was greatly heartened to hear that similar issues had arisen in every other Rother Valley school.

Personal Development

Jackie Brown has just qualified as an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) which will mean she can offer support to the children described above. She will also be able to advise other support staff on interventions they can try with their children.

During the LA Autumn Conversation, the progress of the disadvantaged children in both schools was discussed. We are still waiting for Louise’s report, but no issues were raised during the meetings.

Leadership and Management

The annual appraisal cycle has been completed (except for Paul’s, which had to be postponed due to his teaching commitments) for all staff.

Each staff member has a target based on improvements in pupil progress, one around their area of responsibility and other one on their own personal development.

I am about to update the school risk assessments now we have moved from lockdown to tier two, although I am not anticipating any great changes in January.

Neil and I are to present to West Sussex Governors next week about our experiences of federation.

An INSET day focussing on action planning has been organised for Friday 18th December.

Many thanks must go to the whole staff team and to Governors for their support during this stressful and difficult year.

David Bertwistle
02/12/2020