



Downland Village Schools Federation

Minutes of a meeting of the board of governors held at Compton & Up Marden school on Wednesday 28th April 2021 at 3:30pm

Present: Rev Trish Bancroft, David Bertwistle, Paul Brown, Richard Christmas (via Teams), Jeremy Cogman, Carolyn Costello, Rev Edward Doyle, Vicky Elms, Margaret Farwell, Steph Garwood, Rita Harrison-Roach, Chris Hawker (via Teams), Sarah Hill, Susie McAuley, Ed Platt, Neil Ryder (chair).

In attendance: Pippa Bass (clerk).

1. Welcome and apologies

NR welcomed everyone to the meeting, the first to be held at Compton & Up Marden school. Apologies were accepted from Kate O’Kelly.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Urgent matters not covered on the agenda

None.

4. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the final meeting of the ‘old’ DVSF held on 31st March 2021 were approved. The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the ‘new’ DVSF held on 31st March 2021 were also approved.

The outstanding actions were reviewed:

| Reference | Who | Action |
|---------------|----------------------|---|
| 2021.03.31-5 | RC | Check with the IT supplier for Compton & Up Marden (CU) that i-frames can be used on the CU website. Complete. |
| 2021.03.31-8 | NR, vice-chairs | Propose a suitable approach on allocations of governor responsibilities for discussion at the next meeting. Covered at item 7. |
| 2021.03.31-8 | NR, vice-chairs | Propose how to take forward the NGA review of governance. Complete. Covered at item 7. |
| 2021.03.31-9a | NR | Adjust any references to individual names in the DVSF joint policies. Carry forward, clerk/NR to complete this. |
| 2021.03.31-9b | CC, SG, rectors | Work on the SIAMS document. SG reported that this is a significant task, requiring input from others. Work has started and an action plan is being developed. RC agreed to assist with the work. |
| 2021.03.31-9d | Foundation governors | Approve the Christian ethos policy and the well-being & collective worship policy. Complete, SG will circulate the approved policies to governors. |
| 2021.03.31-10 | NR | Ensure the new governors had logins to TTG, The Key, NGA Learning Link, MS 365. Complete, NR will circulate instructions for login, etc. |
| 2021.03.31-11 | Clerk | Add agenda item on local school committees to the next meeting. Complete. |
| 2020.09.16-8a | NR/all | (Action carried forward) Arrange ongoing follow-up with staff on their well-being. Covered at item 7. |

| | | |
|---------------|-------|---|
| 2020.10.21-5b | NR | (Action carried forward) Set up small group to take forward work on the school websites. Covered at item 7. |
| 2020.10.21-9 | Clerk | (Action carried forward) Add item on safeguarding training courses to future agenda. Complete, governors agreed to undertake the NGA training, unless they had completed an equivalent course, and provide course certificates to the clerk. |
| 2020.12.02-6b | DB | (Action carried forward) Provide recommendations for SLT pay progression. DB will report on pay at the next meeting with the finance governors. |

5. Governor monitoring since the last meeting

The following activity has been undertaken over the period:

- 12 Apr 2021: SH/NR - Governor induction
- 12 Apr 2021: EP/NR - Governor induction
- 13 Apr 2021: VE/NR - Governor induction
- 14 Apr 2021: VE/TB/CH/NR - Chair/co-chairs meeting
- 16 Apr 2021: DB/SG/PB/NR - SLT-chair meeting
- 19 Apr 2021: SH - NGA online course: "Arts and cultural education, improving your school and its curriculum"
- 19 Apr 2021: SH - NGA online course: "Ofsted and the new inspection framework"
- 19 Apr 2021: NR - Rother Valley locality meeting with Graham Olway (WSCC asst director, school org)
- 20 Apr 2021: SH - NGA online course: "Understanding school structures and what children should learn"
- 20 Apr 2021: DB/CH/NR - Finance meeting with LA (Graham Olway + Paul Little)
- 20 Apr 2021: EP/NR - Marketing / comms meeting
- 22 Apr 2021: NR - FFT webinar: Getting the most out of Aspire in 2021 for Primary Schools
- 22 Apr 2021: NR - Century Tech webinar: Challenging the purpose of assessment (Tom Sherringham)
- 27 Apr 2021: NR - WSCC termly governor briefing

NR encouraged governors to use the TTG forum to record their monitoring and training activity and provide commentary on meeting agenda items and papers; the forum provides a useful record of governor activity for Ofsted.

6. HT report

DB provided his report – see Annex A. Governors raised the following queries:

- Q It's great to hear the SLT has settled into the new arrangements. Do you minute the staff meetings and could these be shared with governors?
- A Yes, we do minute our staff meetings and we can share these with governors, if required.
- Q You were following a 6-week 'Covid recovery plan' for the children's return after Easter, is that still the case?
- A Yes.
- Q What more can you say about the 'troubled' families?
- A We don't have enough resources in our small schools to cope with the needs of these children, a bigger school would be more able to provide them. Covid-19 has had a big impact on these families, and all three families have been let down by social services. We are constantly reminding social services that we are effectively doing their job for them. It has also had an impact on the staff who are spending a lot of time dealing with the issues.
- Q Have you noticed language skills lacking since the children have returned to school?
- A Not particularly. We adopted a play-based curriculum at Rake and Rogate, and the early years provision at Compton has been significantly changed to help the children get into a more consistent regime. The September intake will be interesting to assess as they are likely to be significantly affected by the past year.
- Q Regarding the delegation of responsibilities across the SLT, what more are you planning to do? Do you feel the governors are supporting you enough?

- A I think both Steph and Paul are heavily loaded and I don't plan any further delegation at this point. Yes, the governors continue to be very supportive to me.
- Q Has using Teams helped make things easier for the SLT and staff?
- A Yes, we use our technology all the time and have regular meetings using Teams.
- Q Do you plan to adjust the current arrangements for Steph (as SENCo) spending 3 days at Rogate and 1 day at each of the other schools? [Other governors also expressed concerns about any HoS regularly spending less than 3 days a week at their school.]
- A [SG] I would be concerned about changing my arrangements because as HoS at Rogate, I need to keep a handle on things at the school, and the parents and staff need the consistency of knowing when I am in school.
- Q Is there anything else we can do to improve how the Rake parents are feeling?
- A It has been an issue since we first federated with Rogate, particularly the parents of children who have been at school the longest - they miss seeing David at the school. The current restrictions mean that parents pick up their children from the school gate and therefore they don't have a chance to connect with the teachers either. We know how important face to face meetings are.
- Q The teachers at Compton know what they need to work on, when do you think the improvements will have been made?
- A Improving teaching and learning is ongoing; for example, at each staff meeting we introduce a new initiative. I expect all the subject action plans to be in place by the end of term. I want Compton to be 'Ofsted ready', and one of the concerns is not having enough of the children's work displayed around the school.

Governors congratulated the SLT and thanked them for their hard work. In particular, the feedback from parents and the local community at Compton continues to be very positive.

7. Governance

- a. Governors agreed their allocations of roles and responsibilities. NR encouraged meetings to be arranged as soon as possible, particularly on safeguarding, curriculum and pupil premium, which would be the primary concerns for Ofsted.
- b. Governors agreed the terms of reference for the local school committees (LSC). NR suggested the committees meet twice this term, the meetings could be via Teams or in person, and asked the vice-chairs to organise their meetings as soon as possible and identify further members, as necessary. He and SG would produce an agenda for the first meeting of the Rogate LSC, which might give a steer to the others.
- c. DB confirmed that monitoring visits could easily be arranged, and NR suggested the LSCs get involved with learning walks at their schools. Governors noted the governor visits policy.
- d. NR proposed that the 3 vice-chairs and DB meet with the NGA consultant first, and then ask her to facilitate a longer session with governors, the diocese, and staff to work on vision and values. NR agreed to circulate potential dates.
- e. NR reported that the analysis of the survey responses is not complete yet, but the early results were showing that Rogate and Compton are reasonably happy, but there are concerns at Rake that need addressing. Governors offered to be available at the school gate to help re-assure Rake parents. The complete set of survey results would be discussed at the next meeting.
- f. Governors noted the draft strategic priorities, which would be developed into an action plan:
 - Support SLT aiming for Ofsted (Compton) and SIAMS (Rogate and Rake)
 - Vision and values
 - Get to know schools and staff
 - Websites, marketing, communications
 - Finance – help DB with AIB application (federation support)
 - Action plan to start getting benefits of federation
- g. NR encouraged all governors to undertake at least one training course relevant to their role.

[EP left the meeting]

8. **Finance**

The finance governors would be meeting later this week to work on additional funding. NR reported that WSCC had confirmed they will cover the remaining salary costs for the departing headteacher, but they would not pay the redundancy costs. Governors noted that this was not what Paul Wagstaff had verbally agreed, but the outcome was probably the best that could have been hoped for.

9. **Safeguarding**

RHR proposed that safeguarding audits were started in all three schools and would work with SG and the DSLs.

10. **Policies**

Governors agreed the LSCs would be responsible for monitoring the following school policies and reporting back to the FGB:

- a. Accessibility plan
- b. Premises development plan, and any other premises plans and proposals (including site security)
- c. Uniform policy
- d. Local behaviour policies, although governors noted that discussing behaviour issues should be for the FGB and may not be appropriate for the LSCs.

11. **Future meeting dates**

The next FGB meeting will be held on **Tuesday 15th June 2021** (note: moved from 9th June 2021) at Rogate school at 3:30pm.

Approved by the board of governors and signed by A Neil Ryder

Date: 15th June 2021

ACTIONS:

| Reference | Who | Action | By when |
|---------------|---------------|--|------------|
| 2021.03.31-9a | NR/clerk | Adjust any references to individual names in the DVSF joint policies. | 28.04.2021 |
| 2020.10.21-9 | All | Undertake NGA safeguarding training, if not already done equivalent, and forward certificate to the clerk. | 28.04.2021 |
| 2021.04.28-7b | Vice-chairs | Organise their Local School Committee (LSC) meetings for 18th, 19th, 20th May 2021 and identify further members, as necessary. | asap |
| 2021.04.28-7d | NR | Circulate potential dates for a session with the NGA consultant. | asap |
| 2021.04.28-7e | Clerk | Item on parent/staff survey results to be added to the next meeting agenda. | 15.06.2021 |
| 2021.04.28-7g | All | Undertake at least one training course relevant to their governor role. | 15.06.2021 |
| 2021.04.28-9 | RHR, SG, DSLs | Safeguarding audits to be started in all three schools. | 15.06.2021 |

Annex A:

Headteacher's Report to Governors
28th April 2021

School Context

We are now into our fourth week of the federation and using this report as an opportunity to reflect on what has been completed, I am impressed with the amount that has been achieved in such a short space of time.

The members of the SLT and a selection of governors met with representatives of the LA and the diocese last week at our Task Group meeting, and I was delighted to be able to report that the staff morale within Compton (where I have spent most of my time) is much improved. It must be remembered that the staff have been through a great period of uncertainty since the school was put under threat of closure. The staff are working extremely well as a team and many of them have been in contact with their counterparts in the other schools, either to support their subject leadership or class planning. There is a great feeling of the staff wanting to improve, of wanting success and, in the main, they know what is needed to improve.

With the resignation of the Year 3/4 teacher, at short notice, we have had some difficulty in finding a supply teacher who was willing to take on the role. We have finally managed to employ Mrs Susan Todd and Mrs Andrea Taylor to cover the class.

The make-up of classes is detailed below:

Rake:

| Robins | Sparrows | Jays | Goldcrests | Kestrels |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Reception | Year 1 and 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 and 5 | Year 5 and 6 |
| Sarah-Jane Smith Lizz Tinder | Louise Muir | Holly Hayward | Lizz Tinder Susie McAuley | Emma Gregory |
| 16 | 30 | 16 | 22 | 20 |
| | | | Total | 104 |

Rogate:

| Wrens | Starlings | Kingfishers | Red Kites |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Reception | Year 1 and 2 | Year 3 and 4 | Year 5 and 6 |
| Deb Hockley | Katarina Jarratt | Susie McAuley Rachel Field | Christine Ward |
| 13 | 15 | 20 | 21 |
| | | Total | 69 |

Compton and Up Marden:

| Hedgehogs | Owls | Foxes | Buzzards |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Reception | Year 1 and 2 | Year 3 and 4 | Year 5 and 6 |
| Sarah McLauchlan Hayley Smith | Amy Stevens | Sue Todd Andrea Taylor | Richard Christmas |
| 6 | 18 | 20 | 14 |
| | | Total | 58 |

Neil, Chris and I met with Paul Little and Graham Olway to discuss budgets and they are happy, at the moment, that we keep the levels of staffing as they appear here.

Quality of the curriculum

Staff are currently updating their subject action plans. Staff are expected to undertake a planning scrutiny, book scrutiny, conduct pupil interviews, moderate children's work and meet with governors to ensure that their subject is being taught effectively. This also prepares staff should their subject be chosen by Ofsted as a 'deep dive'.

Leadership and management

At the Compton Task Group meeting, I was able to report that the action plan that I had presented as part of the AIB (bringing an agreed £8,200 into the federation) was already having an impact. This also formed part of the Strategic Improvement Plan that I have completed in draft form. It has been shared with Paul, Steph, Neil and Vicky. I look forward to their input before it is shared more widely.

The Strategic Improvement Plan draws upon the last Ofsted report (March 2018) and the monitoring visit from the LA (March 2020). The AIB funding will allow staff from all three schools to share best practice.

I have undertaken observations of teaching and learning in every class. I am pleased to report that I have not seen anything that I am worried about. I have not yet had the opportunity to look in depth at children's books which will give me a better picture of teaching and learning.

I am concerned that in Compton it is the classroom environment that is affecting the quality of teaching and learning. Using the Communication Friendly Classroom checklist, I have established what needs to be seen in each classroom as a minimum and teachers are already addressing these. Both Hedgehogs and Owls need to be redecorated. I have already approached the PTA who are happy to provide manpower to support this.

This term I am spending 3 days at Compton and 1 day at the other schools. Steph and Paul do 1 day each at Compton, 3 days at the school where they are Head of School and 1 day in the other school.

At Compton Steph has already put Individual Learning Plans in place, backed up with focused interventions. Both she and I have held meetings with the support staff – which was very much appreciated.

Paul has introduced the federation assessment tool and teaching staff have begun to populate this. This will help to build up a picture of individual children's achievement and their next steps in learning. Later in the term the SLT will meet with staff to interrogate the judgements.

The teaching staff of all three schools are attending an INSET day on Tuesday 4th May. The training is run by Tom Sherringham and focusses on Rosenshine's Principles in Action. Staff will be sitting in socially distanced class groups.

Behaviour and attitudes

Within Rogate there are 2 families that are causing concern. The children of these families can be disruptive and aspects of their behaviour is unacceptable. One child is on a partial timetable and requires 1 to 1 support when he is in school.

Within Compton there is 1 family that is causing concern. One of the children from this family is causing huge concern. His behaviour is aggressive and can be violent, particularly towards children on the football field. Paul, Steph and I have held regular meetings with the mother and I have suggested a managed move to a school that may have better resources to support the family.

It is interesting that all three of these families have support from social workers. The SLT have concerns about the level of support the families are receiving and the strategies that they are being given.

The behaviour of the children across the federation is good and much of this is due to the close relationship children have with the adults in the schools.

Personal development

All the adults in school are carefully monitoring the personal development of the pupils, within this uncertain time. Any concerns are shared with the SLT. We 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.

David Bertwistle
Executive headteacher