

# DOWNLAND VILLAGE SCHOOLS FEDERATION

## INTERIM EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

**At a meeting of the IEB held on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.**

**This was a virtual meeting.**

**Present:** Mrs R Cumming (RC), Mr C Hawker CH), Mr P Little (PL) and Mrs N Waters (NW)(Chair).

**In attendance:** Mrs C Vigor (CV) (Clerk) and members of the shadow governing board – Mr D Bertwistle (DB)(Executive Headteacher), Mr L Alexander-Hill (LA-H), Reverend T Bancroft (TB), Mrs SJ Smith (SJS), Mrs L Thatcher (LT) and Mrs J Wilkinson JW).

The meeting opened with prayer led by the Reverend Trish.

### APOLOGIES

799. Apologies were received from Mrs S Samson (SS) and were approved by the IEB.

800. Apologies were received from Mr M Van Wijk, (MVW), a member of the shadow board.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

801. There were no declarations of interest from those present.

### MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

802. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the IEB meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 be signed as a true record.

### MATTERS ARISING

#### **Q. Who are the DSLs at Rogate?**

803. The meeting was informed that Mr Paul Brown was DSL and Mr David Bertwistle the DDSL.

#### **Q. What is the position when neither are in Rogate school and an issue arises?**

804. The executive headteacher explained that where a major concern arose then the nearest person would travel to the school. Staff were fully aware of the procedure and instructions, which were firmly embedded in staff meeting minutes.

(Mrs SJ Smith arrived at this point)

805. Items in the Action Logs were reviewed and, where appropriate, marked as complete.

<b>14<sup>th</sup> June 2023</b>			
<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Reported completed</b>
611	Admissions discussion with Bohunt MAT	DB/SS	

### **Admission Discussion with Bohunt MAT (previous minutes 611 & 744/23)**

806. DB reported that he had undertaken an informal conversation with the headteacher of The Petersfield School but that there was no will to change their admissions criteria by adding an additional linked school to its admissions policy.

#### **Q. Do we know when they will next review their policy?**

807. This was not known, although relevant schools were required to review their policies on an annual basis. DB to ascertain when the next review would take place.

**Action:** DB

<b>11<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>			
<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Reported completed</b>
694	Provision of Pupil Premium reports at finance committee meeting	DB	Deferred to November finance meeting

<b>12<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>			
<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Reported completed</b>
743	National College log-in for IEB members and shadow board members	All	Complete but all need to log-in within 90 days to ensure link working
744	Admissions discussion with The Petersfield School	DB	See 611 above
746	Invitation to Gillian Keegan, MP to visit Compton & Up Marden School	DB	09/10/2023
748	Reassurance to Rogate parents that the 3 class curriculum structure was based on the national curriculum	DB	09/10/2023
752	Addition of bullet points to Finance Committee TOR following check with PL	NW	09/10/2023
760	Return of completed DBS documents to DB	Shadow board members	One return outstanding
761	Election of chair and vice chair of shadow board	Shadow board members	09/10/2023

764	IEB members and shadow governors to check and amend contact details	All	09/10/2023 Available in Sharepoint folder
768	Contextual data to be included in next Executive HT report	DB	09/10/2023
770	Return of completed business & pecuniary interest register declarations to DB	All	09/10/2023
771	Signing of Code of Conduct on behalf of IEB and Shadow Board	NW	09/10/2023
778	Reading of KCSiE 2023 Part I & II	ED/MVW/JW	ED/MVH/JW to confirm completed
780	Safeguarding Training  Provision of completion certificates to DB	SS/PL/JW/ED/LA-H/MVW/TB  All	SS/PL/JW/ED/LA-H/MVW/TB Still to complete

### **Invitation to Gillian Keegan (previous minute 746/23)**

808. An invitation to visit Compton & Up Marden CE School had been issued to Gillian Keegan, MP, but a reply had yet to be received.

### **Election of Shadow Board Chair and Vice Chair (previous minute 761/23)**

809. The IEB were informed that Mr C Hawker had been elected as chair and Mr Luke Alexander-Hill as vice chair of the shadow board.

### **Reading of KCSiE 2023 Part I & II (previous minute 778/23)**

810. Those who had not done so were asked to confirm they had read KCSiE 2023 Part I & II. Remaining shadow governors were asked to complete this action by the next meeting.

**Action:** ED/MVH/JW

### **Safeguarding Training and provision of completion certificate (previous minute 780/23)**

811. Those who had not done so were reminded of the need to undertake safeguarding training and to return their completion certificate to DB. All were asked to complete this by the next IEB meeting.

**Action:** SS/PL/JW/ED/LA-H/MVW/TB

## CHAIR'S ACTION

812. The chair reported that the SENDCo would be leaving at the end of term and an advertisement had been placed for a replacement. The role had been increased to 4 days per week, to work across all 3 schools. The meeting was reminded that recruitment in general was extremely difficult currently and informed that there had been no interest so far. In addition, a contingency to cover the role from January 2024 would be required.

**Q. How long does the SENDCo qualification take to achieve and have current staff been asked if they wish to undertake it?**

813. The chair replied that the executive headteacher and the deputy had considered this and staff would be informed that it could be a training post if they were interested. This would also be added to the next advertisement.

**Q. It seems odd that there has been no interest. Why have we not advertised more broadly already if there has not been any interest?**

814. The meeting was again reminded of the difficulty in recruiting that all schools were experiencing. The use of national press was not needed, as all teachers looking for a post used online platforms which all local authorities provided.

## REPORTS

### **a) Executive Headteacher's Report**

815. The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and some questions had been submitted in advance. As requested, contextual data had been added to the report.

### **Pupil Movement**

816. Prior to the start of term projected NOR had been partially unknown and had been estimated using LA projections. Numbers had also changed since the report had been written, with 1 less at Rogate and 2 at Compton & Up Marden. However, for comparison, at the same time last year the federation had 222 pupils on roll across all schools and this year the number was 226.

**Q. Regarding the budget, are there any projections showing where Rogate will be?**

817. This information was not yet available but a meeting with an LA officer would be taking place soon. The loss of 6 pupils since the budget was forecast would have a considerable effect on figures. For information, the meeting was informed that the child who had left since the start of term had moved area.

818. 43% of pupils in year 6 at Compton & Up Marden were new joiners which would have an impact on the class. Staff would need to develop their own baseline for these children as assessments from previous schools were often unreliable.

**Q. Regarding Rogate, what is the likely impact on the 3 year strategy of the loss of 6 pupils? It was hoped that a saving of £40k could be achieved.**

819. Until the meeting of the SBMs with the LA it was not possible to know the actual impact and whether the target would be missed. However, it was clear that the following year's budget would be based on fewer pupils. The reduction of one member

of the teaching staff had happened earlier than planned which was likely to have a positive effect on the figures. The chair commented that this would be discussed at the next meeting when there would be more clarity on the current and longer term position.

820. DB stated that the federation was grateful to those parents who had taken on activities to market Rogate School with the aim of increasing the NOR.

**Q. At what point will the IEB review the decision to decrease to 3 classes?**

821. The meeting was reminded that NOR remained the key to a school being financially viable. Comment was made that there was a 'playground vibe' that there was an agenda for the school to close. The executive headteacher replied that there was no such hidden agenda or reason to think that the school would close.

**Q. Numbers were low at the open mornings at Rake and Rogate. How will the federation attract more visitors to the next ones?**

822. DB replied that all Rother Valley colleagues had reported a lower footfall this year. Banners, posters and flyers had been prepared for the next dates. A new Facebook account would be opened for Rogate. In previous years, the most effective routes to encourage attendance had been word of mouth, social media and printed media.

823. The school would action and lead on suggestions from the marketing group.

824. DB reported that a reflection area known as The Barn had been opened at Compton & Up Marden, funded by a trust through St Michael's. It was to be used for RE teaching, acts of worship, small group work and quiet play. The use of The Barn would make it possible to take some curriculum areas out of a class environment to a less formal one.

**School Improvement Priorities**

825. The report provided a reminder of the 7 key priorities and an update was provided.

826. Cost savings had been discussed at SLT and SBM level, in particular how costs could be shared across the federation.

827. Other models of federation within the county had been considered, with all having different leadership structures in place. RC was asked if it would be possible for her to find out any information on East Sussex models of federation as these were more established.

**Action:** RC

**Q. Are children's targets shown in their books?**

828. DB confirmed that this was the case.

**Q. Do children know their targets and can they recount them without referring to their books?**

829. This was confirmed. Targets were shared as they were added to books and when they were reviewed children changed their own books. This practice started with year 1.

830. Four ELSAs were providing support across the 3 schools. At Compton & Up Marden additional funding had been received for 4 Ukrainian pupils. The executive headteacher, deputy and SENDCo meet with teachers for progress review meetings for those pupils not achieving, to consider relevant interventions. Where these pupils were also in receipt of PP then additional funding was allocated.

831. Training for Read, Write Inc had been shared with newly appointed class teachers and teaching assistants. Read, Write, Inc was already established at Rake and therefore less action planning was needed for training of staff.

832. Preparation for the impending SIAMs visit to Rogate was underway, with support provided by RC. At Compton & Up Marden, Mr Christmas was working to ensure that all documentation was in place and advice was being taken from the RE lead at Rogate. DB was confident that all would be completed in time for the inspections.

833. As both Rake and Rogate were judged good by the LA, their officers only made one visit per year to monitor and revalidate their judgement as to where the schools were at. These visits had taken place that day. The focus had been to review the categorisation for each school, but Liz Walker, the Education Adviser, had also looked at the quality of education as major changes had taken place, with there being 2 ECTs at Rake and the new class structure at Rogate. As there were 2 ECTs at Rake, LW would make an additional monitoring visit to look at how the school was supporting them.

834. The chair commented that both visits had been helpful and that the additional ECT monitoring visit would be welcomed to ensure they were receiving the right mentoring and support. At Rogate, staff in all 3 classes were working well with their new year groups. The planning of the curriculum was exceptional and the work of the teams in both schools was outstanding. The chair would write to the staff to acknowledge this. RC stated that having visited Rogate with regard to the SIAMs preparation, the dedication and commitment of the staff had been very impressive.

## **Quality of Education**

**Q. Looking at the data from a leadership perspective, what do you as executive headteacher celebrate? What surprises were there and how will they be addressed?**

835. With regard to celebration, DB replied that, despite the very diverse intake in early years, GLD was high and over national in each school. Without the level of teaching offered, children would not be able to achieve these results. Phonics results in year 1 at Rake were good and there had also been a positive result for the retakes at Rake. In addition, there had been no retakes at Rogate.

836. The meeting was reminded that, in all 3 schools, the % worth for each child was high and therefore this affected the data.

**Q. What about surprises?**

837. DB replied that the biggest concern was the number of children not achieving GD and those only just reaching ARE. He needed to consider whether this was a question of teaching or some not being stretched. Today he had seen evidence of year 6 activities which stretched them and also of additional challenges in their personal folders. The meeting was reminded that the red areas indicated where

figures were below national but this did not give the whole picture of progress all children were making. All children who had been in school from the beginning had achieved ARE but there had been issues with those arriving mid-year.

**Q. You mention that a number of pupils join from year 4 onwards. Is the reason for their leaving their old schools a similar one and if so can we mitigate this in any way?**

838. DB replied that a minority arrive following a house move but the majority because they have been unsuccessful in their previous school. Regarding mitigation, all that could be done was to give them a positive educational experience. Once again DB reminded the meeting that they needed to bear in mind that those pupils may have an effect on outcomes.

839. The reading data for Compton & Up Marden was poor. DB explained that there were a significant number of pupils with additional needs, including those with an EHCP, Ukrainian nationals with English as an additional language and those with other barriers to learning. There had been an increasing complexity of need during the last 3 years, due to a growing reputation the school had for supporting pupils with additional needs. The chair commented that the key point regarding Compton's data was the need for the individual stories of those pupils who had not passed phonics screening to be known, together with detail of what targeted interventions were in place and their impact. Each pupil needed targeted support to help them to read and the IEB needed to be clear regarding what was being done to achieve this.

840. As had been said, Read, Write Inc had been shared across the federation to ensure all pupils received the help they needed, regardless of the school they attended.

841. The chair commented that the presentation of the individual school data was confusing and it was difficult to ascertain what progress looked like across each school. The accuracy of assessment data presented to the IEB for the entire federation was of paramount importance, as this was an improvement priority. The IEB were reminded that all pupils should make expected, if not accelerated progress. The current format did not provide a clear picture of the situation. The IEB only needed to know where children were after assessment, not how this was achieved. The data presented needed to allow the IEB to ask strategic questions but the current format only allowed for operational ones.

842. DB expanded and elaborated on the data provided.

843. It was agreed that an urgent piece of work was needed regarding assessment. Although staff assessed pupils on a day to day basis, from a leadership perspective, if assessment information was not known this did not allow for questions and monitoring. This was particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. Discussion ensued regarding a simplified format and what should be included to show a teacher's best judgement of where pupils were in terms of number on track, not on track and exceeding. Comment was made that numbers of pupils rather than percentages would be most useful, together with the proportion on track for all three schools. This would allow for gauging of gaps that needed attention.

844. It was agreed that a discussion would be held outside of the meeting between NW/RC/DB and LA-H, to decide what should be reported on and what format it should take, to ensure that data reporting was refined.

**Action:** NW/RC/DB/LA-H

845. The executive headteacher was thanked for his report.

### **b) SEND**

846. A meeting was to take place on 18<sup>th</sup> October after which a report would be completed for the full board. It was likely that the number of EHCPs would double in number.

**Action:** RC/TB

### **c) Disadvantaged**

847. NW and ED would attend a meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October which would cover all three schools. However, as the meeting was to take place at Rogate pupil voice would also be gathered. A report would be provided for the board with key outcomes.

**Action:** NW/ED

### **Q. Is there a limit to the number of visits at each school? Do we need to consider staff?**

848. The chair explained how the locations for the meetings had been chosen and that not all meetings took place in classrooms. The readiness of governors for an Ofsted inspection also needed to be considered and the monitoring plan, which was spread across all three schools, indicated what needed to be monitored and when.

## **UPDATE ON ACADEMISATION POSITION**

849. A written report had been prepared by SS and had been circulated.

### **Q. What is the diocesan involvement in the process?**

850. The Rother Valley (RV) group had set up a 'think tank' which had been joined by an assistant director from the diocese. PL had also attended the last meeting. The diocese was viewing the proposal in a positive light and the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) were supportive in principle.

### **Q. Will Rogate's financial position have an impact?**

851. The chair replied that it would do. In addition, as Compton & Up Marden had an academy order they would need to join the RV MAT in the first group, which would entail the other two schools in the federation joining as well.

### **Q. Is there a time scale for the academy order?**

852. NW explained that there was no actual time scale and that the DfE appeared relaxed about timing currently. However, any Compton & Up Marden inspection outcome would have an impact.

853. NW commented that it was important to say that, while the RV were keen to form a MAT, it was far from certain that this could be achieved. In financial terms, all 18 schools would need to agree to join from the outset, which had yet to be explored to the fullest extent.

### **Q. Does the Compton & Up Marden academy order affect the other two schools?**

854. The DfE could force Compton & Up Marden to academise and could dictate which Trust it joined. However, there was a feeling that all three schools should remain together, as if the federation reduced to two schools then it would be very

vulnerable. There was however no suggestion of defederation, the plan was for all three schools to remain together.

## **UPDATE ON FINANCIAL POSITION**

855. The meeting was reminded that the deep dive regarding the financial position of each school would be undertaken at finance committee meetings and only an overview would be provided at alternate full board meetings.

### **Compton & Up Marden**

856. Funding for the work required to the roof at Compton & Up Marden had been agreed and plans now had to be made for this to be carried out with minimal disruption to the school.

857. Expenditure was needed to provide DSL refresher training.

### **Rake**

858. EHCP funding had yet to be received and therefore costs were being taken from the school's budget, however this would even itself out by the end of the financial year. It was important to ensure that the full amount was spent on the children entitled to the additional support.

#### **Q. Is 'Teachers to Parents' used in all 3 schools?**

859. This was only used in Rake and Rogate to send text messages to parents.

#### **Q. Why are we not using the same platform across all three schools?**

860. A subscription had to be taken on an individual school basis and no discount was available for a federation. Compton & Up Marden were not in a position to take out a subscription at the moment. NW explained that, wherever possible, costs were shared across the federation.

### **Rogate**

861. The financial position of Rogate remained difficult. Additional expenditure was required to cover the phased return of a member of staff.

#### **Q. The cost of cover for the wraparound care is high. Parents have applied for DBS checks to provide voluntary cover for this. Why have these not yet been completed?**

862. It was explained that there was a current hold up in the DBS system and 'chasing' was not allowed until 60 days had elapsed from the last occasion.

#### **Q. Why has the deficit increased if the member of teaching staff left earlier than anticipated?**

863. The employment of additional teaching assistants had impacted this. More detail would be given at the next finance meeting.

864. Finance training for all shadow board members had been arranged for Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November from 1.00 - 3.00pm at Compton & Up Marden.

865. A pay committee meeting required to be arranged to consider recommendations of the executive headteacher following completion of the appraisal cycle.

**Action:** NW/PL

## **SHADOW BOARD UPDATE**

### **Training & Induction**

866. No training (other than for safeguarding) had been undertaken. Shadow members were reminded that the first of two induction sessions was available on 2<sup>nd</sup> November from 6.15 – 8.00pm.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

867. Sarah-Jane Smith agreed to lead on Sports Premium. Lucy Thatcher agreed to lead on staff wellbeing. All roles and responsibilities were now agreed.

### **Recruitment of Co-opted governors**

868. Lucy Thatcher would lead on the administration of the recruitment of co-opted governors.

## **POLICIES**

### **Appraisal policy**

869. Copies had been circulated prior to the meeting. NW explained that it was based on the updated West Sussex model policy and gave details of the recent revisions.

#### **Q. Where are we in terms of appraisals?**

870. DB replied that the cycle for teaching staff had commenced and would be completed by the end of October.

#### **Q. What are the deadlines for support staff?**

871. It was explained that the appraisal of support staff was not a statutory requirement but that it would be completed by the end of November.

872. **Resolved** - that the IEB approve the updated Appraisal policy.

### **Behaviour including Anti-bullying policy**

873. Copies had been circulated prior to the meeting. NW outlined minor modifications that had been made to the previous policy.

874. **Resolved** - that the IEB approve the updated Behaviour including Anti-bullying policy.

#### **Q. Does the federation often exclude pupils?**

875. It was explained that this happened very rarely and only as a result of extreme behaviour.

### **Confidential Reporting Policy**

876. Copies had been circulated prior to the meeting. West Sussex had made small amendments to its model policy.

877. **Resolved** - that the IEB approve the updated Confidential Reporting policy.

### DATE OF NEXT MEETING

878. The next meeting of the IEB would take place on 28<sup>th</sup> November at 2.30pm at Compton & Up Marden CE School.

879. There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.58pm

CHAIR.....DATE.....

### ACTION LOGS

<b>14<sup>th</sup> June 2023</b>			
<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Reported completed</b>
611	Admissions discussion with Bohunt MAT	DB/SS	

<b>11<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>			
<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Reported completed</b>
694	Provision of Pupil Premium reports at finance committee meeting	DB	Deferred to November finance meeting

<b>12<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>			
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744	Admissions discussion with The Petersfield School	DB	
760	Return of completed DBS documents to DB	Shadow board members	One return outstanding
778	Reading of KCSiE 2023 Part I & II	ED/MVW/JW	
780	Safeguarding Training	SS/PL/JW/ED/ LA-H/MVW/TB	
	Provision of completion certificates to DB	All	

**10<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Reported completed</b>
807	Ascertain when TPS would next review its admissions policy	DB	
810	Reading of KCSiE 2023 Part I & II	ED/MVW/JW	See 778
811	Safeguarding Training  Provision of completion certificates to DB	SS/PL/JW/ED/ LA-H/MVW/TB	See 780
827	Provision of information on East Sussex models of federation if available	RC	
844	Discussion regarding data reporting and format	NW/RC/DB/LA-H	
846	SEND Meeting and report	RC/TB	
847	Disadvantaged meeting and report	NW/ED	
865	Arrangement of pay committee meeting	NW/PL	