



The RAG

Thursday 20th June 2019

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Annual General Meeting from Richard Rolfe

RGA Officers would like to invite you to their AGM, to be held at The Wren School on Wednesday, 26th June at 7pm.

Officers will present a roundup of their work this year, and plans for 2019/20. We will then be joined by Deborah Jenkins, Chair of Brighter Futures for Children, and Mark Fowler, Director of Education, to present the three key drivers for Reading schools. This will be followed by a workshop in which governors discuss how these drivers might affect the strategic direction of our schools, and the additional benefits and challenges which would result.

As usual, sandwiches, cakes and drinks will be available from 6:30pm, which provides a good opportunity to catch up with colleagues.

See [here](#) for this event flyer and directions to the venue.

Governor Survey by RGA Officers

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! RGA want to make sure that our activities and events are as relevant and suitable to governors' needs as possible. Please take a couple of minutes to complete our online survey. Just click the link on the left to survey.

Mental Health Is Not Extracurricular by Julia Cottee

"Young people continue to be judged on academic performance with little regard for their mental health. Literacy and numeracy are seen as the key markers of success. Yet young people are facing unprecedented pressures in life, leading to anxiety, depression and eating disorders.... We want to put emotional wellbeing at the heart of the school curriculum... by giving health and wellbeing the same importance as literacy and numeracy, and creating mentally healthy schools where pupils and teachers can thrive."

Mark Rowland, Chief Executive, Mental Health Foundation

Katrina Jenkins from the Mental Health Foundation visited Reading on 9th May to present their two key initiatives for schools, 'Make It Count' and the 'Peer Education Project'.

Firstly, she painted a very powerful picture of increasing incidence of mental health problems compared with a lack of training and confidence of school staff. The MHF 'Make It Count' campaign offers resources for parents, pupils and staff, combined with policy briefings and a public petition to influence government. Their specific challenge to governors and school leaders is:

“By 2020, let’s give school leaders the evidence to understand what works in supporting their own pupils’ mental health by introducing a mental wellbeing measure in our schools.”

Requirements:

1. School leaders to promote mentally healthy ethos and culture
2. Evidence-based and strategic interventions
3. Measuring wellbeing (e.g. Good Childhood Report, 2018)
4. Ofsted inspection framework - accounting for wellbeing
5. Training for school leaders/teachers in interpreting wellbeing data

Secondly, Katrina presented the Peer Education Project, and schools-based programme which was rolled out in 2016, and pairs Year 12 children with Year 7s. Offering resources to school staff and children, this programme has reached over 30,000 children already, and the latest material incorporates this year’s Mental Health Week focus: body image.

If you missed this event, we would strongly recommend that you request a copy of the presentation via the link [here](#).

Reading Climate Change Partnership by Julia Cottee

Chris Beales spoke to governors, sharing some very sobering statistics on global warming. He alerted us to Reading Borough Council’s declaration of a climate emergency, aiming to eliminate CO₂ emissions in Reading by 2030, and looked at the measures which would need to be put in place to achieve this.

Governors discussed how environmental issues are covered in their curricula; current school initiatives such as solar panel investment, Green Schools; and the importance of engagement by the children in order to achieve success. Chris recommended that schools add two issues to their risk registers: the risk of children and staff becoming affected by excessive heat, and the risk of the premises flooding substantially.

NGA – Spring Conference Roundup by Richard Stainthorpe

This was a useful conference to attend with a range of relevant presentations and significant opportunities to interact with the speakers and to network with colleagues.

The conference delegates were welcomed by Emma Knights who is Chief Executive of the NGA. Her introduction summarised good governance as being comprised of ethical governance, effective governance and accountable governance. These themes continued throughout the day.

The keynote speaker in the morning was Matthew Purves, Deputy Director, Schools, Ofsted and he gave an extended overview of the revised Ofsted Inspection being introduced this Autumn. He stressed that the emphasis in the new regime would be to “put the curriculum at the heart of the new framework, bringing the focus of inspection back to the substance of education” and that they would “not include separate judgements on teaching, learning, assessment and outcomes”. Instead those would be considered as part of a broader view on the quality of education pupils receive. He also said that there would be a reduction in the focus on data, particularly internal progress data thereby reducing unnecessary workload. In respect of governance he itemised the three core functions of the governing body as 1) ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, 2) holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff and 3) overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money was well spent.

The second presentation in the morning session was from Simon Richards who is the Chairs’ Development Manager at the NGA. Simon supports schools and academy trusts in

Full presentations
can be found [here](#)

the succession-planning for a future chair of governors/trustees, vice chair or committee chair, and in the induction and development of future chairs. This was an interactive workshop session with good discussions on the role of the chair, what makes a good chair (and what makes a bad chair), the need for succession planning and what deters governors/trustees from putting themselves forward for more senior positions. The consensus view seemed to be that the most important factor in good chairing was ensuring meetings kept to the agenda and finished on time!

Following the opportunity to network over lunch the afternoon session was given by Steve Edmonds, Director of Advice and Guidance at the NGA and was concerned with the quality and content of reports being submitted to the governing body. He outlined the requirements for reports to 1) alert the board to changes impacting strategic aims; 2) alert the board to changes affecting the day-to-day running of the school; 3) assure the board that strategic milestones are being met; 4) focus on progress, behaviour, attendance and attainment; and 5) high level reporting of RAG milestones. Once again there was a considerable amount of workshop interaction which led to lively discussions.

Cultural Enrichment Opportunities by Richard Stainthorp

Many Reading-based organisations are keen to enrich the school curriculum - if any schools have specific requirements, I may be able to help, but here is the latest list of opportunities which should be applicable to any school.

Please click on the names in the list below to access their contact details. We would love to hear about any events which you run for your schools as a result of our introduction.

Organisation/Individual	Offering	Contact Name
Artsmark	Accessing art and culture	Various
Berzerk Productions	Drama workshops	Matt Whitehead
Berkshire Maestros	Music tuition and activities	Steve Christmas
Jelly	Visual arts	Kate Powell
Jon Lockhart	Visual artist	Jon Lockhart
Museum of English Rural Life	Heritage	Susanne Ivy
OpenHand OpenSpace	Visual arts	Neile Wright
Reading Between The Lines	Theatre/English/Drama	Toby Davies
Reading Düsseldorf Association	Heritage and town twinning	Robert Dimmick
Reading Guild of Artists	Visual arts	Linda Saul
Reading Museum	Heritage	Various
Reading Rep	Theatre/English/Drama	Christie O'Carroll
Readipop	Contemporary music	Lizzy Bell
Real Time Video	Participatory media	Clive Robertson
Robert Fitzmaurice	Visual artist	Robert Fitzmaurice
The Annual Daydream Harvest	Cultural enrichment	Nick Garnett
The Rock Academy	Contemporary music	Matt Foster
Terry's Reading Walkabouts	Heritage of Reading	Terry Dixon