

The Viridis Federation of Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden Schools

Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 22 May 2019 at 6pm

at Hoxton Garden Primary School, Ivy Street, London, N1 5JD

Attendance

Governors Present:	Role
James Gowland (JG)	Co-opted Governor - Chair of Governors
Stephen Hall (SH)	Executive Headteacher
Richard Allen (RA)	Co-opted Governor - Vice Chair of Governors
Alberta Senyah (AS)	Co-opted Governor
Lenna Marsen (LM)	Parent Governor
Sara Fox (SF)	Co-opted Governor
Laura Theobald (LT)	Co-opted Governor
Hannah Lownsborough (HL)	Co-opted Governor
Other in attendance:	
Rachel Davie (RD)	Headteacher, Orchard School
Stephen O'Brien (SOB)	Headteacher, Southwold School
Rachel Adams (RAd)	Headteacher, Hoxton School
Governors not present:	
Cllr Ian Rathbone (IR)	LA Governor
Andrea Klettner (AK)	Co-opted Governor
Sara Walsingham (SW)	Co-opted Governor
Kay Richardson (KR)	Parent Governor
Claudia Moreira (CM)	Staff Governor
Clerk:	
Ghulam Abbas (GA)	Hackney Learning Trust

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Non-Confidential – Main Business

1. Apologies/consent for absence

- 1.1. Apologies were noted and accepted from IR, AK, SW, KR and CM.
- 1.2. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

2. Governing Body Organisation

- 2.1. Governors were provided with the latest Governing Body (GB) membership details for information (Paper 2).

- 2.2. GA described The Box, an online storage facility, which is available free to all GBs who subscribe to Hackney Learning Trust's governance and clerking service. Governors agreed to use it for storing GB documents and meeting papers.

Action 2.2: GA to provide all Governors with access to The Box.

2.3. Agreement of proposed terms of office

- 2.3.1. Governors were asked to consider the proposed terms of office set out in the latest terms of reference (Paper 3). This included governors having a four-year term with staggered start dates. So, the renewal of terms of office would then happen in four phases over a four-year period to preserve institutional knowledge and avoid the whole GB stepping down in one go. There would be an automatic renew from the first term into the second term. However, after the second term governors would be expected to stand down and a selection process undertaken to find a suitably skilled replacement.
- 2.3.2. SF asked what the mechanism would be for evaluating and selecting a governor. It was agreed that there should be a voting process amongst the GB to select a new governor and that this should be included in the terms of reference.
- 2.3.3. Both parent governors were included in the same phase, SF suggested one of them be moved into the next phase to avoid both stepping down together.

Action 2.3: SH to amend the GB's Terms of Reference based on the feedback and comments provided by Governors.

- 2.3.4. Subject to the comments made above Governors approved the terms of reference

- 2.4. There were no new declarations of interests.

2.5. Governing Body Annual Calendar 2019/20

- 2.5.1. Governors were asked to approve the dates for GB and Subcommittee meetings for the next academic year.
- 2.5.2. GA was unable to attend any of the GB meetings as all the proposed dates clashed with commitments that he had with another GB. If the proposed meeting dates could be either bought forward or back by a week then GA would be able to attend.

Action 2.5: SH to review and put forward new proposed dates for GB meetings in 2019/20.

3. Agreement of minutes from the last meeting

- 3.1. The minutes of the last GB meeting held on 24 January 2019 were approved as being accurate.
- 3.2. **Action 4.1 on storyboards:** was ongoing.
- 3.3. **Action 6.2: Hackney Schools Group:** was on the agenda to be discussed later in the meeting.
- 3.4. **Action 7.5, SEND link Governor position:** AK was confirmed as the SEND link Governor and an update was to be provided at the next meeting.
- 3.5. **Action 10.3:** The Governors spring newsletter had been sent out and work had started on the next one that will be sent out in the summer term. It would follow the format that was agreed at the previous meeting. It was suggested that the summer term newsletter should have a spotlight on parent governors and on CPD and how that works across the three schools.

Action 3.5: SH to draft the summer newsletter and send it to Governors for review with the aim of sending it out towards the end of June.

- 3.6. SF asked about the results from the test tubes being used to check for air pollution. The results

were not yet known as they had been sent the wrong test tubes and then had to wait for the right ones to be delivered before the testing could commence.

- 3.7. **Action 6.2:** Governor self-review and skills audit were on the agenda to be discussed later in the meeting.
- 3.8. JRSO was to be added to the glossary. **SH to action.**

4. Executive Headteacher's Report

- 4.1. The report provided to Governors included an overview report from SH, the Executive Headteacher, and an overview from each Headteacher.
- 4.2. SH reported that statutory testing had taken place in KS1 & KS2 and all three schools have reported EYFS and Year 1 phonics check outcomes. Hoxton Garden was being moderated for writing at Year 6 and Orchard was being moderated for EYFS.
- 4.3. All other children were also being assessed and data from that assessment round will be available to share at the next round of School Subcommittee meetings. There were no big surprises anticipated from that data.
- 4.4. There was some good news, Hoxton Garden achieved the Inclusion Quality Mark Centre of Excellence award, joining Southwold and Orchard, which are both flagship schools. This is a testament to the very strong inclusive practices across all three schools.
- 4.5. Hackney Learning Trust were paid to conduct a detailed review of provision at Hoxton Garden. The person conducting the review was an Ofsted inspector which was really useful and they have been asked to come back and do a similar review at Orchard in two weeks' time. Reports from the reviews will be shared at each School's Subcommittee meeting.
- 4.6. Recruitment is underway, 8 apprentice teachers have been recruited for September 2019. Most of them are already working in Viridis schools and have been employed early. There is not a lot of movement of teaching staff this year, with the resignation date a week away, it is looking fairly stable. The Federation has had some adverts running for teaching staff with interviews planned for tomorrow. Teacher recruitment generally remains challenging.
- 4.7. Admission numbers for Reception this September have been received. Southwold is expecting 60 children, which is great news. Orchard is expecting 90 children and was three times oversubscribed. Hoxton Garden is expecting 44 children, which is two classes. Pupil recruitment at Hoxton is a concern and is something that will need to be a priority for next year with a much stronger marketing campaign.
- 4.8. Viridis has also been supporting a rural school in Bury St Edmunds as part of DfE's new National Support Programme work and have hosted visits from their staff to Orchard. A series of further visits are planned as the school is struggling and is looking for support to improve rather than wanting to federate with Viridis. The Bury St Edmunds school is part of a multi-academy trust (MAT) and the support programme is interesting in that it is trying to plug a gap where some MATs just do not have the capacity to support all of their schools. Although, the context is completely different they too are facing similar issues like high deprivation and low aspirations.
- 4.9. Viridis also continues to work with the Mossbourne Federation undertaking termly reviews at both their two schools, Mossbourne Parkside and Mossbourne Riverside, reporting back to the CEO and Governing Body. There have also been visits from Sweden and Norway and The New Wave Federation. A visit from Japan is also expected shortly so there is a lot of outreach work happening.

- 4.10. Federation schools have also participated in Debate Mate and other curriculum events, which demonstrates a very rich and broad curriculum. It is something the Federation is passionate about and provides interesting experiences for the children which informs their greater achievement and is part of the new inspection framework from Ofsted. The Orchard Debate Team won their regional final and has now made it through to the national finals, which will be held in Oxford in mid-June. Governors were pleased with this achievement.
- 4.11. The wider curriculum is also being reviewed by the Federation so that the planning shows progression and focus. Action Research projects have also been undertaken in every phase, which are now coming to an end. The last round of Action Research projects, were published into a book and disseminated amongst staff and the plan is to do the same for this round.
- 4.12. There is whole raft of premises' works happening over the summer which are outlined in the report (Paper 8) alongside the professional development programmes for teachers and teaching assistants. The Federation remains committed to the broader curriculum and ensuring teachers are trained in the best pedagogy and sharing best practice, which is why the schools continue to perform so well.
- 4.13. The school development plan (SDP) will be reviewed at the end of this term and a new one will be produced for September, taking into account the pupil outcomes for the end of Key Stage 2. JG asked what was the initial feel or sense from the KS2 SATs. Children were confident, well prepared, there were no real surprises in the papers. The last part of the Reading paper was tough but children were finishing it.

Action 5: SH to e-mail out to Governors the KS2 SAT results as soon as they come out.

- 4.14. At Key Stage 1, the results are teacher assessments, it is anticipated that Orchard and Southwold will be just above national averages with Hoxton Garden being broadly in line.

5. Feedback from School Subcommittees

- 5.1. Each School Subcommittee was asked to share four outcomes from the discussions that were had at each meeting.
- 5.2. Hoxton Garden**
- 5.2.1. SF reported that the SEF and SIP were consistent with one another. They show that the large majority of children are working at expected standards or at greater depth.
- 5.2.2. The term CIN has been identified in the minutes (para 4.1) and is not in the glossary. **SH to add CIN to the glossary.**
- 5.2.3. There is one less split year class which is good. A combined Year 3 and Year 4 class now ceases to exist and instead two separate classes have been formed.
- 5.2.4. High mobility at Year 2 was identified as an issue. A discussion was had whether that was unusual. The conclusion was that it wasn't unusual and typical of Hackney as a borough which has high levels of pupil mobility.
- 5.2.5. RA had asked for a phonics review from the HLT as the results had dipped just below national averages due to a higher proportion of SEN children and a smaller cohort. Children are making progress but not meeting the expected level.
- 5.2.6. Finally, the SIP report has described the school as happy, secure and highly focused, behaviour is very consistent and progress in the books is sustained. Also, the school's most recent parent survey had a response rate 40%, which is good news and is historically unheard of and shows improving parental engagement which is positive.
- 5.2.7. The latest SIP Report includes another acronym (IDSR), which is not in the glossary. **SH to**

add IDSR to the glossary.

5.3. Southwold

- 5.3.1. RA reported that the good social media presence has attracted lots of parents to the school and there has been very successful period of school tours. As a result, the school roll has increased to just under 400, which Governors pleasingly noted.
- 5.3.2. Mobility is at about 20% across the school and this was discussed in the meeting. Pupils are regularly joining the school but also leaving. This is due to re-housing elsewhere in the Borough and the Federation tries as much as it can to keep these pupils amongst its schools.
- 5.3.3. The SIP Report highlighted the progress of disadvantaged and ethnic minority groups which was interesting. The Ofsted letter was received and from that it was noted the need for teaching and learning plans to be in place to address the progress of different groups of pupils.
- 5.3.4. About a third of parents took part in the parent survey, which is almost double the number from last year. Responses were positive. HL asked if the survey delivery mechanism had changed. The survey has been slimmed down to make it easier to complete and also parents were asked to complete it during parents evening.
- 5.3.5. Lastly, Southwold will become a Hackney School Street on 3 June. This means no traffic will be allowed to drive along Detmold Road in the vicinity of the school during the school's opening and closing times. If you do, then you will be fined £60 and cameras have been put up to enforce the road closure. The school welcomed this intervention.

5.4. Orchard

- 5.4.1. There was interesting presentation from the school SENCO, about a fascinating project that they were part of about building the confidence of teachers in working with SEN pupils in conjunction with the DfE and Institute of Education. It was recommended that other schools should also hear about that work.
- 5.4.2. The Subcommittee went through the Dashboard and looked at the key statistics, which all looked good. The attendance strategy was discussed and what the school actually does to manage and improve attendance, which was interesting.
- 5.4.3. The SIP Report was reviewed which was all rather glowing and positive. The Intervention Impact Report was also reviewed which was interesting in highlighting the number and nature of the interventions which pupils they were targeting.
- 5.4.4. On the parents' survey besides the quantitative responses the qualitative responses were very complimentary and positive. SF asked if the results of parent survey get fed back to staff. It was confirmed that they do through the weekly school newsletters.

5.5. Resources Committee

- 5.5.1. The Federation has reached the end of another financial year and the carry forward balance is higher than what was projected at just over £900k, which is good position to be in. In drawing up the budget for the new financial year there is a plan in place to whittle that surplus down. Such as improving playgrounds, a lot newer ICT, a music room for Hoxton, more classroom teachers etc.
- 5.5.2. Governors thanked Giuseppa and the team for successfully managing the three schools'

budget to enable a surplus to be built up. This is a good place to be in the current funding climate and gives the Federation the opportunity to invest in its schools.

6. Feedback from Link Governors & Governor Visits

- 6.1. There was no report about Link Governor visits. However, Governors did visit Orchard School a couple of weeks ago which was very insightful.
- 6.2. HL commented that presentation at the end of that visit was excellent. It gave a really good cross section of what reading looks like across the school.

7. Approval of 2019/20 Budget & Scheme of Delegation

- 7.1. JG reported that the Resources Committee has gone through the budget for 2019/20 in detail with SH, Giuseppa and the team. The aim being to align the budget to each school's priorities and to significantly reduce the carry forward by investing in the schools as mentioned earlier.
- 7.2. The 2019/20 budget being recommended by the Resources Committee to the Governing Body for approval would leave a surplus of about £450k at the end of the financial year. About 85% of the budget was staffing and the other 15% factored in pension costs, salary increases and risk management across the three schools.
- 7.3. The Governing Body formally approved the 2019/20 budget recommended by the Resources Committee.
- 7.4. Governors also approved the Scheme of Delegation.

8. Annual Safeguarding Report to Governors

- 8.1. The annual safeguarding report (Paper 16) was presented to Governors and noted. All DSLs have had training within the last two years. All staff have received safeguarding update training and all relevant policies have been reviewed.
- 8.2. The Safeguarding policy was the only one that changed last year and that has already been adopted by the governing body. This policy provides a summary of the system process that are in place for referring a child. The number of referrals made by each school are recorded in the annual report.
- 8.3. SF asked how can they close more causes than they opened. Sometimes the referrals are not made by the school, they can come from other professionals. Also, this can be hangover from the past cases that have taken time to process.
- 8.4. SF asked what Child Protection invitation were? If a child is classified as child protection that is the top level of concern then there are statutory meetings that have to be held and the Local Safeguarding Board issues the invites.
- 8.5. RA commented that there was high level of concern at Orchard compared to the other two schools, why is that. Generally, staff are cautious and make referrals when they have any concerns. Also, Orchard has more pupils than the other two schools so you can expect more referrals.
- 8.6. Hackney has been inspected on children's social care, which did not go as well as anticipated. As a result, Hackney are engaging with schools to find about their experiences and quality of the service. Viridis has been invited to meet with that group to discuss their experiences and how the service could be improved.
- 8.7. Also, in the autumn an Orchard School case has been selected for a case conference review by

the London Safeguarding Board to see how the case was dealt with and how each professional responded. There then will be recommendations either for the school and or the borough about what could be improved.

9. Governor Self Review

- 9.1. Governors noted the results of the skills audit, which had had an over 90% turnout.
- 9.2. The scores overall were really high and show the governing body is a well-functioning body. There are no clear reflections on what it tells us and where the areas of development are that need to be targeted. There are a broad range of skill sets represented on the GB.
- 9.3. Overall, Governors felt the self-review had been a worthwhile exercise which had resulted in a couple of actions like the Chair review and terms of office.
- 9.4. It was agreed to defer the Chair's 360 till the autumn.

10. Governor communication

- 10.1. The governor newsletters had been discussed earlier. It was suggested that the Governor Self-Review be included in the next newsletter.

11. Hackney Schools Group

- 11.1. Governors were asked to note the updated paper describing the Hackney Schools Group (HSG).
- 11.2. Schools were being asked to endorse the principles of the HSG, even though they have no choice about whether to join it or not. The GB was content to endorse the principles.
- 11.3. There were two vacancies on the Schools Forum for primary school governors in case any Viridis governors were interested

12. Consideration of key policies to be updated

- 12.1. The Intimate Care Policy, the Positive Handling Policy, the Drug & Alcohol Policy and the Acceptable Use Policy had all been updated. Governors were asked for their comments and then to approve them.
- 12.2. SF commented that the Intimate Care Policy had two conflicting statements: one of them said two adults should be present when intimate care was being delivered. Then another statement said reducing the number of people present when intimate care was being delivered can reduce stress levels and it sounded like at times one person would be fine. Both statements cannot stand as they currently are and one needs a caveat. **SH to amend intimate care policy.**
- 12.3. In the Acceptable Use Policy, the acronym AUP is repeatedly used and is not in the glossary. Also, the LGfL acronym is not in the glossary. **SH to add AUP and LGfL to the glossary.**
- 12.4. SF recommend the four policies to Governors for approval and JG seconded it.

12.5. Governors approved the Intimate Care Policy, the Positive Handling Policy, the Drug & Alcohol Policy and the Acceptable Use Policy.

13. Any other business (AOB)

13.1. No matters were raised under AOB.

14. Any Confidential Business

14.1. JG reported that SH would be leaving Viridis in July to take up a new role at Hackney Learning Trust (HLT) as their Assistant Director of School Improvement.

14.2. After 9 years with Viridis the Governing Body wanted to thank SH for all his hard work and effort. His contribution to the three schools in the Federation has been phenomenal and Governors wished SH every success in his new role.

14.3. A small steering group has developed a communication plan in place to inform all staff and parents.

14.4. The steering group is also linking up with HLT to recruit a replacement so that an Executive Headteacher can be in post for the start of the new academic year.

The meeting finished at 7:40pm.