

**The Viridis Schools Federation of Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden  
Schools**

**Resources Subcommittee Meeting Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**Present:**

Stephen Hall (SH)

James Gowland (JD)

Sara Fox (SF)

Sara Walsingham (SW)

Laura Theobold (LT)

Minutes taken by Beverley Shore

**Apologies**

No apologies

**Governing Body Organisation**

- Membership of the Governing Body

**Action** SH to ensure the membership reflects Laura Theobold

- Declaration of interest in items on the agenda and pecuniary interests for 2017/18  
None declared.
- Terms of Reference noted by all Governors.
- Governing Body Annual Calendar  
Next meeting 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at Hoxton Garden Primary School at 4.30pm, before the full Governing Body meeting.

**Action** before the next meeting – An unsigned draft of the budget needs to be sent to HLT by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018. The budget will be agreed by the Governors at the meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and then a signed copy sent to HLT. Next year the Governors could consider meeting to agree the budget earlier.

**Agreements of minutes from last meeting**

- The minutes from the last meeting need to be changed to show that Sara Fox was present at the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and also to reflect the discussion that JG had no conflict of interest and could be both Chair of the resources committee and Chair of Governors. Minutes agreed once these changes are made.
- At the last meeting the Governors discussed the gender/equality and disability policy. SH has looked at the school workforce census data that happens every November. The policy states that the Governors should be aware of this information.
- SH shared information on the staff ethnicity at each school site. The main ethnic groups relating to staffing shows the profile is slightly different across the 3 schools. The support staff tend to come from the local community. Orchard has a larger number of Asian Bangladeshi staff, at all 3 schools the majority of staff are White British. All of the schools have a variety of staff from different ethnic backgrounds,

SW has the largest Black African/Black Caribbean staffing group. Hoxton Garden has very low black Caribbean staffing. This will be shared again after the next workforce census.

- The schools do not have any staff with noted disabilities, but some staff have chronic illnesses. All 3 schools have an overwhelming percentage of female staff, this is common in primary schools.
- SF asked for a safety note for a contractor that has not been received. SH said that this is a work in progress, this is a continuing action for the next meeting.

**Action:** Safety Note for Contractors to be sent to SF and shared with committee.

- Governors had discussed getting some estate agents to quote a market rate for the house at HG. GCM has been looking at this. SH said that the Governors should make a decision about actions related to the school keeper's house at the next meeting. The Governors need to know the figure for the market rate and then decide if they should spend £80,000 on renovating the house to rent out. The Governors agreed that the figure for renovation could be nearer £100,000.

**Action:** GCM to find market rate of the house and also if there is a mechanism by which the school can borrow money to fund the renovations and pay back at a low rate of interest. SH will circulate the estate agents quote as soon as it is received.

- All agreed that the Health & Safety policy will be redrafted so that it is more specific and not written in the 'passive' tense e.g. to show more clearly who is responsible for inspecting the work at height equipment each year. SF suggested that an example would be for the policy to read "The premises manager will inspect the equipment every month/year" as agreed with the responsible person.

**Action:** SH to redraft and circulate the Health & Safety policy.

### **¾ Year Budget review & forecast. Current status of budgets & changes**

- SH shared the budget with Governors in the absence of the School Business Manager. The income section showed that there is a £43,000 positive variance. This is related to adjustments for the number of children in the nursery, Erasmus and income generated by SH for NLE and Ofsted work, this is £8-£10,000 per year.
- SF reminded Governors that the number of nursery pupils was discussed at the previous meeting. SH explained that some of the money is Nursery pupil premium money, the nursery at Orchard is nearly full, numbers at HG have increased. SW still has places and the Headteacher at Southwold is working hard to improve numbers at SW.
- SW informed Governors that the school is due to receive another £16,000 funding as an adjustment to numbers on roll for this term for full time entitlement. BS advised Governors that nursery places will be offered next week for the 2-3 places still available at Orchard. SH informed Governors that there was also another £25K in a separate budget for Hoxton Garden that would be brought into the Federation budget at the close of this financial year.

- SH said that one of the risks for next year will be reception numbers for Hoxton Garden, this year the school had 2 reception classes and hopes to have 2 again next year. Orchard will have 3 reception classes again and the school is typically over-subscribed. The numbers will be sent to the schools at the end of March early April. The numbers have been falling at SW.
- £10,000 has been taken out of the expected income from extended schools as only 82% of the income has been received. This may increase as the schools are expecting a cycling grant, the cycling will start at HG in the summer, and therefore all 3 schools will be having the cycling sessions.
- The budget for 2017/18 was around £9 million. Next year the income will be around the same possibly another £50,000 more but the school does not have the information regarding the variance within that. Orchard will have an additional class each year for the next 3 years.
- At this point in the year the expenditure should be at around 83%. Most of the figures shown are within that %. Interestingly E01 shows 78% which is 5% below, this is countered by E26 which shows 113%. If both are added together they would show that the budgets for these are on target. This is due to staff who have left being replaced by agency staff, going forward one of the strategies is to replace support staff with agency staff. This is with a view that the new fair funding formula may result in cuts. The school is forward planning in the event that fair funding may impact the budget. In terms of costs they are much the same as the school does not typically pay for holiday pay to agency staff.
- It has been a challenging year for staffing, as there has not been a full SLT which meant less expenditure. When planning for next year the school's need to be careful as they are planning for a full SLT and expanding the SLT at Orchard as the school is growing.
- SF reminded the Governors that next year Orchard will have a further 30 children, this will increase the budget. It was noted that last year's Ofsted report for HG was issued after the closing date for reception applications. It is hoped that the Good report will have a positive impact on applications for HG in the next academic year. SH explained that there is a lot of competition for places in the local area, the fact that there were 2 reception classes this year is down to Stephen O'Brien's hard work. HG is about 90 children below roll and have 2 split year groups, there is potential at HG for further increases in pupil numbers.
- Indirect expenses relate to advertising and agency costs and the schools have spent £46,600. SH explained that the schools are planning for the future and have been advertising for staff since January. SW said that the Bursars Forum had a representative from Teacher-In which is an app that does not charge agency fees for. SH explained that the schools also have the Apprentice Teacher programme and he is working hard on the process, but believes that it will pay dividends.
- E09 is staff training and the schools saved £17,000 as on the advice from GCM they did not buy into the traded services package with HLT. It is likely that the schools will again not buy this SLA.
- The other occupation cost that was above at 104% was CCTV, but GCM is expecting £6,000 from a security grant. There were additional costs for extra pest control visits at HG and Orchard. Catering supplies are also shown at 107%, this is due to equipment repairs, ovens and also fire shutters at HG. The schools also had to purchase additional

cutlery and crockery during the year. The expectation is that now the repairs are completed there will be fewer further issues.

- The anticipated balance brought forward in 2018/19 is £272,000, at the beginning of the year the figure brought forward was £286,000. SF asked how much of the £272,000 is committed, SH said that this includes all of the commitments, this is the anticipated net carried forward figure. SF asked if the £80,000 for the HG house would need to come out of this figure, SH agreed that it would and so would be a significant commitment. GCM is conservative with her commitments so the carry forward is likely to be in excess of £300,000.
- There have been a lot of conversations regarding the house at HG. HLT have now agreed that the house could be rented, SH suggests that it goes to a key worker, but this would mean a lower rental income. If the school were to borrow the money for the refurbishment SH anticipates that it would take approx. 4 years to recoup the money spent. JG suggested looking for grants towards the costs. SF suggested that 4 years was perhaps an ambitious timeframe.
- £100,000 was put into capital from the revenue budget and this was spent. There have been substantial capital works undertaken across the 3 schools. The plans for next year include playground works at Orchard and a decorating programme at all 3 schools. The biggest works would be to replace all of windows at SW but this would be very expensive, the school would be looking at the local authority to fund this project. The building is listed to that is the reason for the very high costs for the windows. The schools have not received any notices about planned AMP works by HLT.
- The Governors noted that GCM has done a great job managing the budget.
- It was noted that everything is getting more expensive, if all employees are awarded a 2% increase that will be expensive. There are also changes to the pensions that would also impact the budget. The Governors agreed that having the 3 schools budgets together makes it easier to budget.
- It was agreed that at the next meeting the Governors will close the old budget and agree the new one.

#### **Budget forecast for 2018/19, risks and planning**

- The risks that the schools have are: staffing costs, needing to build a contingency, the schools have started to renew and update the websites for all schools at a cost of £10,000, this is marketing so should bring in more money to the schools. SH will continue to do schools support work, for example the schools are currently supporting Berger Primary with reading provision, this brings in some money. The National Fair Funding Formula is the biggest risk and may mean staff cuts. This won't come into place until 2020/21.
- A budget for 2018/19 will be drafted and agreed at the next resources meeting.

#### **Staffing update**

- The schools have recruited 2 Assistant Heads, 1 for Southwold following a change of staffing when Rachel Adams took over as Head at Hoxton Garden. An experienced applicant is also coming to Orchard as an Assistant Head. A new EYFS lead starts at Orchard at Easter. The schools are still running an advert for another Assistant Head and the advert closes on 21<sup>st</sup> March. The plan is to increase the capacity from external

candidates this could be considered a risk. There are 3 staff returning from maternity, there are another 4 NEO's going on maternity leave.

- The schools have been recruiting teachers since January using agencies and adverts, early advertising has reaped the benefits and 2 Assistant Heads and also a couple of teachers are joining the schools at Easter. SH was concerned that the schools did not have any school direct or students coming through, but feels confident now as 9 teachers have been recruited for September, some new recruits and some returning from maternity.
- JG asked where the staff are coming from, Inner London Schools or outside? SH explained that they prefer experience within London but have recruited successfully from outside of London before and have recently recruited a teacher from Leicester. There have been a few recruitment issues at Orchard this year which has resulted in a class having 3 teachers this year, this is not typical.
- SLT have canvassed staff asking about their plans for September, some staff are leaving due to relocating and some have mentioned working in private schools.
- The schools have offered a referral programme to current staff with a financial incentive for successfully recommending someone, but there have not been any recommendations this year. SH confirmed that he is also working on the Teaching Apprentices Programme and is hoping that this will be successful. These people would be pre-NQT's similar to Teach First students with their training paid from the apprenticeship levy.

### **Health & Safety**

- A paper was shared which summarised the actions from the Health & Safety audits for the 3 schools. Some actions have already been completed, some are in progress and some are on-going. BS said that staff training requirements are all in hand and will be completed in due course. Site Managers have been given new thermometers to ensure we are compliant.
- SF asked about the fire doors, SH replied that there was a separate fire risk assessment. SF said that it was difficult to understand why HLT have been saying that everything is okay for the last 5 years. BS informed Governors that HLT staff and Ensigna came to Orchard on Wednesday to look at the issues again. All 3 schools have had a fire safety audit carried out and quotes given for remedial works, after this HLT arranged for audits to be carried out by a Company of their choice. Interestingly both companies' quotes for the remedial works were close and in the region of £30,000 per school. SH contacted HLT and said some of these works should have been done at Orchard during the multi-million pound refurbishment, including a potential issue with the risers. HLT advised the school that not all of the recommended works need to be done, only in the designated fire routes and the fire doors in those areas, however they have not yet advised the school which areas or doors this relates to. HLT have informed Orchard that the risers are contained spaces and don't need to be done, others have advised that they are a conduit and need to be sealed. The schools would like some clarity around what needs to be done but are waiting for HLT to present a definitive expectation. The hope is that these works might be done as funded AMP works.
- SW has spent money on the recommended works to the basement at SW, doors were replaced and the basement has been cleared during the half term holiday. The cost to

the school was £8,000, fire doors were fitted and also an escape hatch. HLT paid for fire retardant material to be fitted to the ceiling in the basement.

- At Orchard there have been some issues with the door in the boiler room not having the correct ventilation. The schools continue to have discussions with HLT, there are clear records of all of the meetings and conversations regarding fire doors and fire safety. ` All schools can be evacuated in good time.

**Action:** SH to send copies of the full H&S audits to SF

- There have been a couple of incidents with door safety at Orchard recently. Two separate external UPVC doors have fallen off and this could have caused serious injury. There has now been a full audit of all external doors which found a design issue, in that the doors are held on by pins that work loose and then they are hanging and lots of use cause the doors to fall off. Some emergency remedial works were done a few weeks ago, all doors were then audited. The audit has recommended some remedial works to several doors, the works are booked for Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March. Once the remedial works are done, the site manager will do a weekly check and keep a log. The school will be looking at putting a contract in place for a yearly audit of all external doors.
- There has been updated safeguarding training and a safeguarding annual report will be presented to Governors at the meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

#### **Financial Value Standards Review**

- There is one form for each school, all Governors completed the form and returned them to SH. The Chair of governors read and completed an overview review. It was hoped that next year there would be one form for all 3 schools.

#### **Premises Update**

- The school believes that they have resolved most of the damp issues at SW after the gutters were cleared. The flooring in the girl's toilets is being replaced at Easter so that may also help to improve the damp. The adult toilets at HG are being slowly replaced, making them more modern. HG had to be closed for a day last week because there was no water due to a burst main following the freezing weather.
- There are plans to create a new office on the top floor at HG, works have been done in the library at Orchard to make more space. The library at SW is being moved to a room on the first floor in the Easter holidays. There have been roof repairs at HG and SW, these were done after a survey by the local authority identified some problems. The local authority has assured the schools that the roofs are now safe.
- At Easter Orchard school are having some laurel bushes planted in front of the small black fence in the entrance to the school, this is to increase security but will also look greener.
- The school keeper's house at HG should be considered if the finance could be found. It was advised Governors that the school are paying empty building rates on the house. The school has got 3 quotes for the works, and if there is an option to take a loan out Governors agreed it would be worth considering.

#### **General Data Protection Law and related changes**

- SH shared a document from NAHT which has a clear outline and summary of the new requirements. HLT are working on a model Data Protection Policy that the schools can adopt it. GCM and a member of the finance team attended a training session so they know what needs to be done. The member of the finance team, Anoushka, will have this role put into her job description to become the general Data Protection Officer. It cannot be GCM as she is the Business Manager, it is recommended that it is a member of the school staff. HLT are producing an audit tool to enable to schools to do an audit, at that point there should be a policy and an audit and a plan to comply. The schools do not need to be fully compliant on the 1<sup>st</sup> May but need to show that during that year they have a plan in place to be compliant by 2019.
- The schools are considering moving to Office 365, emails will also have to be encrypted under the new Data Protection Act. The schools are looking at employing a new company to oversee the IT across the 3 schools. JG mentioned that the schools also need to ensure that any third party companies that they are using also need to be compliant.

### **Policies**

- The Emergency & Critical Incident Management Plan has been updated with some amendments added by SF. The plan has been combined with guidelines for snow and icy weather, and the contact details have been updated. The schools had to put this plan into action last week due to the snow and bad weather, all 3 schools had to close for 1 day. The communications worked well, texts and websites were updated remotely from the Office Managers school phones.
- SW asked where in the policy it states that you need to inform the parents, SH explained that it is not on the flow chart but is in the text of the policy. The policy contains personal contact details so is not on the website or given out.

### **AOB**

None

The meeting concluded at 6pm.