

The Viridis Schools Federation of Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden Schools Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 20th September 2017

Governors present	James	Gowland	Co-opted Governor –Chair of Governors
	Stephen	Hall	Executive Headteacher
	Richard	Allen	Co-opted Governor – Vice Chair of Governors
	Sara	Fox	Co-opted Governor
	Lenna	Marson	Parent Governor
	Claudia	Moreira	Staff Governor
	Ian	Rathbone	Local Authority
	Kay	Richardson	Parent Governor
	Alberta	Senya	Co-opted Governor
	Sara	Walsingham	Co-opted Governor
	Laura	Theobald	Co-opted Governor
	Andrea	Klettner	Co-opted Governor
	Hannah	Lownsbrough	Co-opted Governor

- Others Present:
- Rachel Davie, Headteacher, Orchard School
 - Stephen O'Brien, Headteacher, Southwold School

Samuel Franklin – samuel@gideonfranklin.com

Clerk:

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 None.

2. Presentation from Maggie Kalnins re Schools Futures and the LA perspective & Discussion of Schools Futures Summary Paper

- 2.1 Maggie Kalnins of the Hackney Learning Trust gave a wide-ranging talk on schools' futures. She summarised the main points of a presentation given by David Cater, the National Schools Commissioner. These included that every school is a giver and receiver of support; MATs add to the quality of the school system; and that there should not be a 'dual system' overall.
- 2.2 It was cautioned that MATs do not always work and that the case of Wakefield should be noted. MATs are not always able to adapt to the local needs of each school. Additionally, it was pointed out that where a MAT falls into financial difficulty, it cannot easily re-join the Local Authority system.
- 2.3 In Hackney, many schools are waiting to see what others do first. This is in part due to the lack of a clear steer from national or local policy.
- 2.4 A comparison was drawn between the Learning Trust's early work with Hackney schools and the more recent initiative of academisation.
- 2.5 It was emphasised that the label 'MAT' is less important the school's essence in relation to improvement.
- 2.6 Three areas of focus were highlighted: conviction of moral purpose; the means by which groups of schools invest in capacity – for example in relation to economies of scale; and how challenges and pressures are negotiated.
- 2.7 Robert Hill's education blog was recommended. A blog considering the vertical accountability of the school system was noted. The idea of 'horizontal accountability' was also emphasised. This includes representing beneficiaries of education at a local level and involving families.
- 2.8 It was asked whether anything replaces the accountability of the Local Authority once a group converts to a MAT. It was answered that while the Local Authority does not exercise statutory power over a MAT, wider links with the Local Authority community may not be lost.

- 2.9 A governor expressed the lack of certainty felt, as there has been minimal instruction or strategy shared by the Learning Trust. It was suggested that other areas may be ahead in this regard.
- 2.10A governor shared experiences of circumstances of greater volatility in the past and emphasised the importance of moral conviction and maintaining strong results for children.
- 2.11Maggie spoke about the increasing complexity of the school system, including more sophisticated notions of school improvement. In this context, schools working as part of a community was given as key.
- 2.12It was noted that whilst overall results in Hackney remain positive, much movement has been school-led and there is now less of a sense of a Hackney community of schools and that this may partly be due to a lack of a substantive Director of Education.

1848: Maggie Kalnins left.

- 2.13It was suggested that it would be worth having the timeline for decision-making even in the context of political uncertainty but that this would be used as a guide and subject to flexibility. It was agreed that governors will continue to attend briefings and seek further reassurances from the Learning Trust. It was noted that this is also the concern of the sub-committee on schools' futures.
- 2.14It was noted that Modern Governor has many useful links for understanding the MAT system further.

ACTION 1 (Executive Headteacher)

Include 30 minutes for discussion on the next agenda.

ACTION 2 (Executive Headteacher)

Update glossary to include acronyms on p.33 of the meeting materials.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- 3.1 James Gowland was nominated for Chair by Stephen Hall. His nomination was approved unanimously and James Gowland was appointed Chair.
- 3.2 Richard Allen was nominated for Vice Chair by James Gowland. His nomination was approved and Richard Allen was appointed Vice Chair.

4. Governing Body Organisation

Membership of governing body

- 4.1 No changes. It was noted that recruitment had been successful and currently it was felt the Governing body reflected a good range of the stated skills it sought.

Agreement of delegation of responsibilities to School Sub Committees & SLT and length of office

- 4.2 The same terms of reference were agreed.

Election of Chair of finance and resources committee, agreement of TOR & Membership

- 4.3 James Gowland was nominated as Chair of the finance committee and this was agreed. James Gowland was appointed.
- 4.4 Sara Walsingham was nominated as Vice Chair of the committee by Stephen Hall. Her nomination was approved and Sarah Walsingham was appointed.

Governor training, development and self-evaluation

- 4.5 There was positive feedback on training. The Executive Headteacher encouraged Governors to undertake online training provided by Modern Governor, in particular the safeguarding training. It was noted that a number of Governors had completed this and returned certificates.

ACTION 3 (Executive Headteacher)

Re-circulate details of the Modern Governor training portal website

Declaration of interest in items on the agenda

4.6 None.

Register of pecuniary interests for 2016/17

4.7 None. A document was circulated where governors could make any relevant amendments to interests.

Governing Body Annual Calendar n.b please note change of date for first Southwold Committee Meeting

4.8 The Annual Calendar was noted. The change of time for Southwold's committee meeting to 5pm was noted.

5. Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising

5.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the 25th May 2017 were agreed as an accurate record, subject to one qualification.

5.2 Point 2.38 should have been expressed as an action point, but had since been taken care of.

6. Executive Headteacher's Report (Incorporating School Subcommittee Reports)

6.1 The Executive Headteacher presented his report. It was noted that the sub committees have already looked the individual school reports.

6.2 A high quote for the remedial repairs to fire doors was noted. This is being disputed with the Local Authority and is currently ongoing. A meeting is scheduled in the next two weeks to try to resolve this.

6.3 Capital works were noted and there was positive feedback on the installation of LCD screens in classrooms and the two new teaching spaces at Southwold.

6.4 All schools were reported above the national average in reading, writing and maths. The dip in Orchard School's reading results was noted and it is being addressed.

6.5 It was noted that primary school assessments will change in 2023, but there is also scope for further change before then.

6.6 Hoxton is in the process of recruiting a Headteacher. Stephen Hall is presently the interim Headteacher.

6.7 The discrepancy in boy/girl results at Southwold was queried. Reasons were suggested for the greater progress among boys, including their lower base to begin with.

6.8 It was noticed that Year 6 progress is greater than in Year 5. This was attributed to increased booster sessions and regular gap analysis in Year 6, as well as a general cognitive shift that tends to come about then, whereby pupils naturally begin to make sharper connections between different areas of the curriculum.

7. Feedback from School Sub Committees

7.1 None. Relevant meetings are yet to take place. Feedback from previous school committees was heard at the last meeting and minutes from these meetings were again presented in Governor packs.

8. Consideration of SIP annual reports

8.1 It was noted that the summary SIP results distributed include the results of the whole previous academic year.

9. Presentation of School Development Plans

9.1 It was given that each school subcommittee should look at their respective plans.

9.2 An A3 sheet on Leadership and Management which is common to all three school development plans was distributed. Aspects of the Core Tasks such as further development of the ICT curriculum were highlighted.

9.3 Plans to self-publish an 'action research' book were shared. Additionally, the development of an MA program with London Met was shared. It was fed back that this was a healthy part of an innovative school plan.

ACTION 3 (Headteacher)

Circulate school development plans for all three schools.

10. Senior Management Team proposes attainment targets for the year

10.1 The sub committees are to agree targets, which will then also be sent to the Local Authority for approval.

11. Consideration of Key Policies & document 'No need to exclude.'

11.1 It was noted that exclusions at Orchard and Southwold, as well as in the Local Authority more widely, are both above the national average.

11.2 A variety of strategies are used by the Federation, including inclusion mentors, a pastoral program and side-by-side therapeutic support as well as the engagement of external agencies.

11.3 The document is used actively. It was suggested by a governor that while the document offers many options, it is not always clear from the school's perspective which course of action is appropriate. It was responded that funding factors and the specifics of each case require the school to take the lead.

11.4 At Orchard, the fair access policy has increased the probability of admitting pupils with behavioural issues. However, many pupils with such a history often leave the school in year 6 with no problems.

11.5 Concerns about staff welfare were also raised. The context of adverse SEND funding conditions was also acknowledged.

11.6 It was given that the Federation is able to track progress of excluded pupils, who are typically referred to New Regents College. Staff have been engaged in handover discussions and parents often stay in contact too.

11.7 Two Governors shared their experiences of sitting on exclusion Governor panels and the thorough evidence of wrap around support that these particular pupils had received prior to their exclusion.

12. Governor communication and funding bids

12.1 A document setting out costing was noted, which may assist with pitches for private funding.

12.2 It was suggested that a further cost breakdown and itemisation would be useful so that potential funders can more easily understand how they might contribute. It was also suggested that the list of projects be prioritised.

12.3 Examples were shared of when private individuals had also funded projects. It was given that parents might also be able to assist.

12.4 Given the project is a governor led one, it was suggested that the community of governors could further develop the initiative. This was agreed with Sara Fox offering to take a lead. Other Governors offered their support.

12.5 It was shared that the 'Erasmus Plus' funding has been successfully obtained, assuring a further £55,000 in funding for Spanish partnership projects which will be shared between Viridis Schools and their Spanish partner school.

13. Governing Body Meeting & School Visit Dates

13.1 The relevant dates were covered by the meeting materials.

14. Delegated authority of HR and performance management (within the remit of school policies) to the Executive Headteacher

14.1 The governors agreed to delegate to the leadership team within the remit of agreed policies.

15. Any Other Business

15.1 None.

16. Confidential Business

16.1 There was no confidential business.

Meeting closed at 20:00.