



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

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on 8 October 2020 at 6pm
via video-conferencing

Governor	Role	Present at this Meeting	Attendance 2020-21
James Gowland (JG)	Co-opted Governor and Chair	✓	1/1
Laura Theobold (LT)	Co-opted Governor and Vice Chair	✓	1/1
Richard Allen (RA)	Co-opted Governor	✓	1/1
Victoria Crawford (VC)	Co-opted Governor	✓	1/1
Hannah Lownsborough (HL)	Co-opted Governor	✓	1/1
Alberta Senyah (AS)	Co-opted Governor	✓	1/1
Sara Walsingham (SW)	Co-opted Governor	✓	1/1
Lenna Marson (LM)	Parent Governor	✓	1/1
Kay Richardson (KR)	Parent Governor	✓	1/1
Cllr Ian Rathbone (IR)	LA Governor	✓	1/1
Claudia Moreira (CM)	Staff Governor	✓	1/1
Rachel Davie (RD)	Executive Headteacher	✓	1/1
Others in attendance:			
Aimee Walker (AW)	Acting Headteacher, Orchard School	✓	1/1
Stephen O'Brien (SOB)	Headteacher, Southwold School	✓	1/1
Rachel Adams (RAd)	Headteacher, Hoxton Garden School	✓	1/1
Clerk:			
Ghulam Abbas (GA)	Hackney Education	✓	1/1
Governor Attendance at this Meeting		100%	
Governor Attendance Year to Date		100%	

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Non-Confidential – Main Business

1. Apologies/consent for absence

- 1.1. There were no apologies for this meeting.
- 1.2. The meeting was confirmed as quorate. JG welcomed VC to her first meeting. VC had joined the Full Governing Body (FGB) as a Co-opted Governor and had previously been on the Hoxton School sub-committee.
- 1.3. There was an acknowledgment and agreement from all Governors that the meeting should proceed virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic, in line with the current official guidance. There was also acknowledgement that GDPR rules will apply and the Governors Code of Conduct would still be followed.

2. Governing Body Organisation

- 2.1. Membership of the GB (Paper 2a) was reviewed. The composition of the FGB had changed over the summer with some the departures of two Co-opted Governors (Sara Fox and Andrea Klettner). VC had filled one of those positions and the FGB needed think about how to fill the remaining position, which was on the agenda for later.
- 2.2. Also, the GB needed to think about how to fill a couple of vacant Co-opted Governor position on the school sub-committees. SW left the meeting at this point due personal reasons.
- 2.3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair – IR nominated JG as the Chair of Governors, that was seconded by LT. There were no other nominations and JG was unanimously elected as Chair of Governors.
- 2.4. JG nominated LT as Vice-Chair, which was seconded by KR. There were no other nominations and LT was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair.
- 2.5. Terms of Reference (Paper 2b) were reviewed, particularly the terms of office. JG asked if governors were content with the way that their renewal of terms of office had been phased. The phasing had been introduced to ensure that the GB retained consistency and continuity.

Action 1.1: Governors to let JG and RD know if they have any issues or concerns about the phasing of their terms of office.

- 2.6. KR asked about her terms of office. RD confirmed that they had automatically been renewed for another four-years. After that KR would need to step down and go through a re-election process.
- 2.7. IR highlighted that there were some inconsistencies in the terms of reference about the number of Co-opted Governors. There should be eight in total but the first page says nine. RD agreed to review and rectify that inconsistency. RA confirmed he would be stepping down as a governor when his term comes to an end in August 2021.
- 2.8. The Register of Business Interests (Paper 2c) was reviewed. There were no changes or any new declaration of interests.
- 2.9. There were no comments or changes to the Code of Conduct for Governors (Paper 2d).
- 2.10. The GB meeting calendar for the 2020/21 academic year (Paper 2e) was reviewed and the next full governing body was scheduled for 28 January 2021.

Action 1.2: Governors to let RD and JG know if there are any clashes with Governing Body or School Sub-Committee meeting dates

- 2.11. **Given COVID, Governors asked what was happening with open mornings?** Governor opening mornings were still scheduled and will go ahead with precautions being taken, if there is sufficient demand from governors. The next one was scheduled for 20 October at

Southwold and the majority of Governors confirmed that they would like to attend. So, that Governor open morning was confirmed as happening.

3. Agreement of minutes from the last meeting & any actions arising

- 3.1. JG went through the actions from the last FGB meeting, which was held on 20 May 2020, the following comments were made:
 - 3.1.1. The skills audit been circulated by RD and was on the agenda for this meeting.
 - 3.1.2. Feedback from Governors had been received on the meetings dates for this academic year and a few changes to dates had been made.
- 3.2. There were no other matters arising from the minutes.
- 3.3. The minutes of the last FGB meeting, held on 20 May 2020, were APPROVED as an accurate record by Governors.

4. Executive Headteacher's Report Autumn 2020

- 4.1. RD reported that earlier this week, Orchard had had an interim visit from Ofsted. The interim visit falls under the inspection framework but is not a full inspection. It is a more of a research visit to enable Ofsted to establish how schools are rebuilding after the partial closure.
- 4.2. During the one-day visit, Ofsted focused on four key areas: assessment, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding. The discussions and findings from that visit will go to Ofsted to inform their research outcomes. However, all the school will get is a letter from Ofsted within 38 days, with just 250 words to reflect the visit. During the visit there was no qualification of the evidence base, no triangulation, no visiting or classrooms, nor speaking with the pupils or teachers.
- 4.3. Therefore, there will be no judgement on the school from the Ofsted visit. However, the visit is most likely to push Orchard's full inspection further back. Ofsted's current plans are to resume full inspections from January 2021.

Leadership and Management

- 4.4. Referring to Paper 4, RD reported that the children returned to school on the 7th September with all year groups now back. The nursery and reception children were transitioned in through a staggered start across the first few days.
- 4.5. Overall, the attendance has been lower than normal for this time of the year, which was anticipated given the concerns and anxieties amongst some families and the challenges of managing self-isolation. All three schools have worked extremely hard over the last four weeks to ensure they are focusing on those families who are vulnerable or who are anxious about the return back to school. At the point of writing the report, attendance was around 92% across all three schools. Since, then attendance has increased to 94%; in comparison the Hackney and national averages at the moment are at 88%.
- 4.6. There is a special code for recording self-isolation and currently there are no fines being issued by local authorities, these will commence from January. However, Viridis is pushing ahead with all its normal systems of attendance monitoring, that includes focusing on punctuality and vulnerable families. The whereabouts of all children is also being monitored. Mobility in and out remains the same as before so that has not been affected by COVID-19.
- 4.7. The local authority is also working hard on attendance to ensure it is consistent across all schools. They are monitoring to try and identify any children missing from education or who are at risk. Across the borough a growing number of families are electing to home educate their children, and the Council is under pressure to evaluate and ensure arrangements are effective. The numbers electing to home educated from Viridis schools is small.

- 4.8. A recovery curriculum has been implemented as an overarch to the existing curriculum. Therefore, children are accessing their full entitlement across all areas of learning that includes MFL and Music, albeit with no singing. To challenge the gaps in learning that children will have developed during the partial closure, a key skills rehearsal session has been introduced on a daily basis for each year group. This is to analyse the gaps and to ensure teachers are focusing on the core skills that children need in order to move their learning on. Essentially it is about high expectations, quality first teaching and ensuring any gaps are appropriately addressed and not overlooked.
- 4.9. The data currently is showing that the schools do not have any significant issues but there are gaps. But nothing that cannot be achieved or made up by the end of the academic year, which is good given there was lot of anxiety during lockdown that children may struggle and, in some cases, never be able to catch up. In key year groups (like Year 1 and Year 6) assessments have been done focusing on phonics to establish where they are in their learning to identify gaps, given they will have end of year assessments. The good remote learning offer and the effort put in by teachers during partial closure has enabled schools to identify and prioritise their vulnerable pupils when they reopened.
- 4.10. All teachers have attended class context meetings at the beginning of the year to discuss the needs of their class and to establish what academic and social emotional barriers their children may have. The well-being of children and getting them back into good routines will be a key focus over the course of this academic year. Overall, children are back and have settled in well into routines so it has been an easy transition to get them back to learning.
- 4.11. Learning behaviours and behaviour generally across the schools are good and there are less behavioural incidents now compared to the same point in time in previous years. This is because the school day is much more managed and structured than normal with a lot less mixing of children and year groups. However, the schools are mindful though that in the longer term this may adversely affect the development of social skills. Discussions have started about how the development of social skills could be better supported.
- 4.12. There were two INSET days for all staff at the start of September. These focused on the core systems that were put in place, the recovery curriculum and the logistics of coming back. It was not possible to hold a big cross-site INSET to bring all staff across the three schools together due to COVID restrictions. Instead, all INSET days and weekly training session have been held locally. This is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.
- 4.13. The curriculum was reviewed over the period of partial closure to ensure effective use of time was being made and as result development work has been carried out on the History, Maths and PSHE curricula. Teacher training is also being reviewed particularly for NQTs and action plans are being developed about how teachers can the gain the experiences and key skills that they require to improve their pedagogy.
- 4.14. Parental engagement continues to be a high priority this term. With the safety measures put in place there is now less opportunity for parents to engage with teachers and the school. As result, the schools have introduced video coffee mornings, meet the teacher was via videos uploaded onto the website and constantly reminding parents that they can book an appointment and come in to see a member of staff.
- 4.15. Parent consultation meetings have taken place across all three schools for the Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum. Ahead of finalising the policy, which is on the agenda for Governors to approve.
- 4.16. There are eight newly qualified teachers working across the Federation this year, seven of them were previous apprentice teachers and trained with Viridis. There are five new apprentice teachers for this academic year working across the three schools with two Schools Direct trainees joining later this term.

- 4.17. The Federation continues to have a focus on enrichment but is having to think creatively about how to do that given the pandemic. Pupil Voice Fayres have been undertaken across all three school sites. Children have had the opportunity to apply for roles and responsibilities that they would like to undertake around Eco Team, Digital Leaders, Head Gardeners, Road Safety Officers, etc. School Council elections are planned for next week as part of the World Week, which this year will focus on the theme of 'belonging' in order to create safe spaces for our pupils to ask questions and share their own perspectives and views around recent events like COVID-19, the Black Lives Matter and in celebrating Black History Month.

Premises / Health & Safety

- 4.18. A new Keeping Children Safe in Education document has been published. All staff have attended safeguarding training and have received updated safeguarding policies.
- 4.19. Premises work continued over the summer. This included the installation of two new play structures at Hoxton, the repainting of the lower hall at Southwold and new decking in the back playground at Orchard. The electronic mechanism on the main office door at Orchard has also been fixed to improve inclusive access to the school.
- 4.20. Risk assessments and site visits have been undertaken over the summer to ensure health and safety and provide a COVID secure environment for the return of all pupils in September. The risk assessments were submitted to the Hackney Learning Trust for final approval and to ensure they met the expected standard. All three risk assessments were approved. These continue to be reviewed fortnightly by senior leaders or when new government guidance is issued. To support that each school is holding a weekly health and safety briefings to ensure COVID safety messages are being revisited and relayed to staff.

Core Professional Development (CPD)

- 4.21. The Headteacher Report sets out the core training that is taking place this term. The Teaching Assistants (TAs) training mirrors that of the classroom teachers.

Current Federation Priorities

- 4.22. The Federation has a number of priorities for this academic year. Some of them relate directly to the current COVID situation while others would have been priorities regardless of the current situation.
- 4.23. School development plans have been produced and each school has also completed a self-evaluation. These will be shared and reviewed in detail at each school's local sub-committee meeting. However, overarching priorities like the focus on quality first teaching will remain, along with a focus on testing, time tables, phonics etc. as all end of key stage assessments will happen.
- 4.24. The further developing of teacher knowledge and understanding around curriculum bias are going to be explored in a lot more detail this year. This includes the how, why and what is taught or delivered in subjects. This is also linked to developing that sense of belonging and wider work that Hackney are doing around unconscious bias. Attendance is another big focus for this year along with keeping track of every individual child.
- 4.25. Pupil and staff well-being will continue to be key priorities. The focus will be to effectively implement the Wellbeing Framework to support the mental health of all pupils and staff. As well as looking at teacher workloads and the remote education of pupils, if the schools have to go into a partial or full lockdown.
- 4.26. **HL asked how morale was amongst pupils and staff?** Staff have been really good in returning to school, settling down well with the children and returning to business. For staff it was relief to return back to the classroom after the lockdown and to have some form of normality and routine. The children were the same. They too were glad to be back at school. Senior leaders are checking in regularly with staff and pupils to assess their morale and well-

being. Supporting them the best they can to ensure they retain that sense of normality.

- 4.27. **KR asked what life skills the schools were giving children to support their mental health and general well-being given the current pandemic?** The PSHE curriculum has been revised with a focus on health and well-being running through it, enabling children to talk about these issues. The assembly structure also allows children to talk about well-being and the core values needed to manage emotions. The schools are also mindful that talking about core life skills is not enough and they also need to put skills into practice to really develop them. So, there is well-being policy and on-going work on how to do that when children are not allowed to mix with other children outside of their class.
- 4.28. **RA asked how children in early years were coping, given they are so young and new to the school?** The Federation is mindful that home visits to families could not be done this year, which is barrier to establish strong links. Instead, the schools have had small groups of 2-3 children come in to meet the teacher with their parents and were given a tour of the environment. So that they could see how things would work when the school opened. Also, virtual tours were given to Reception parents, which they found really useful. Children across early years are very settled and have got into routines very quickly. The core systems really support that in terms of robust behaviour expectations and a good understanding of their environment. The EYFS Teams across the three schools have done an excellent job of getting children in and settled.
- 4.29. **KR asked what was happening with normal enrichment activities like swimming, cycling and residential, which were no longer happening?** This was part of the Federation's longer-term discussions about what that would look like going forward. Swimming is not currently happening. There is some early thinking about the current Year 6 having a residential given they missed out on that during Year 5. However, a lot will depend on the circumstances that the school and country find themselves in next summer. In terms of other enrichment activities, they are continuing but with some changes; e.g. a virtual sports day was held, World Week is happening next week and there are discussions about activities like the Christmas Fayre and how they could be delivered safely.
- 4.30. **JG asked in the event of another partial or full closure, is there anything that the schools would do differently?** RD replied that the remote learning policy would take over and it includes the recovery curriculum which overarches the schools' existing curricula. The schools learnt a lot during the partial closure over the summer, much of which has already been implemented into the core systems and the remote learning provision. However, the situation is different and the chances of a school closing or partially closing are slim.
- 4.31. **JG asked what the Federation was doing around equality, diversity and Hackney's Black curriculum?** RD said, she had met with the lead of the Belonging Community from the Hackney Schools Group, and they looking to bring in a range of resources for curriculum subjects that schools can use to celebrate diversity, particularly reading materials. The Federation do this as matter of course anyway. However, Orchard will be part of cluster of local schools that will be taking up these resourcing opportunities. There are also other things happening across the borough around curriculum bias and how that can create misconceptions and the development of a Black curriculum running through subjects. The Federation schools already incorporate a breadth of diverse resources and literature running through its curriculum.
- 4.32. **KR asked if there were any particular trends across the three schools that children have developed since lockdown?** The only trend that is noticeable across the three schools is the sense of maturity in children, particularly the upper Key Stage 2 children, which is not necessarily a negative thing. However, children have missed six months of structure, and need time to fully embed back into their routines. This has also led to other or new pupils being identified as vulnerable. So, the Federation is constantly monitoring pupils

to see how they can be best supported.

- 4.33. **VC asked how interventions were being target given that children have had varying levels of support and resources at home? Are children with gaps who are not FSM being supported?** Each class has a shared teaching assistant so there is capacity to support all pupils. The key skills sessions are critical as they allow gaps to be identified so that interventions or support can be put in place to help children. Interventions are being targeted on need rather than FSM or any socio-economic factor.
- 4.34. **HL commented there seemed a lot of focus on promoting Black resources through the curriculum but were children from other ethnic backgrounds being catered for?** The Federation is inclusive and tries to cater for and develop a sense of belonging in children from all ethnic backgrounds. SOB added that Hackney LA has produced cultural diversity booklets and the Federation has been purchasing and using them for the last year or so to support all children.
- 4.35. LT commented that in promoting diversity the Federation should be monitoring teacher recruitment to ensure the staff were representative of the school intakes. Equally the governing body needed to be more representative of the schools' population. RD confirmed monitoring of the workforce does happen and has put the Federation in a good place with a diverse workforce.
- 4.36. **KR asked what was being done about children who have not returned to school and what is being said to their friends who have returned to school?** The Federation has a very small number of cases where the child is effectively missing from education. Lots of work is also being done to develop that sense of belonging and core values.

5. Skills Audit, Governor Recruitment and Self-Evaluation

- 5.1. JG thanked Governors for completing the recent skills audit. The results of the skills audit (that had been undertaken) had been circulated prior to this meeting. The results were positive and the audit had been done to help support the recruitment of new governors to fill the vacancies that have arisen.
- 5.2. As well as filling the skills gaps the audit should also be used to think about the diversity of the GB and how that could be improved. The audit shows that knowledge, experiences and behaviours are strongly represented across the GB already with everyone contributing and bring a particular skill or experience. However, the GB could be further strengthened by recruiting new governors with experience in contract, property and estates management; health and safety; charity law or project management.
- 5.3. In recruiting for those skills or experiences the Federation may need to advertise externally and be very specific with the criteria. However, diversity will need to be another key consideration as currently the GB does not reflect ethnic diversity of the pupil population. Currently, Black African pupils are the largest community group across all three schools. After that the Turkish, Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi communities have significant number of pupils in Viridis schools. So, the Federation needs to think about how those communities can be represented at both the full GB and local school sub-committee levels.
- 5.4. It was acknowledged that the GB was not representative of the pupil population and the communities it served. Governors accepted the challenge to increase the diversity of the GB in filling the current vacancies. JG was in discussion with Hackney Education to look to take advantage of a couple of initiatives they are planning to encourage more Black people to become governors or get involved with schools. Although not applying to this GB, age was another important characteristic to keep in mind given that the average age on a GB was over 50 whilst in Hackney the 50% of the population was under 30. Again, Hackney Education were looking at an initiative with the Youth Council to encourage more young people to get actively involved with school governance. Governors agreed to take up these opportunities to make the GB more diverse.

- 5.5. Governors then had a discussion about what more could be done. Ideas ranged from some governors stepping down or being assigned other roles to maybe few up additional places. Individuals from diverse background being invited to meetings to give them a taster of what it is like to be governor or preparing them to be take a formal role in the future. Roadshows to inform parents about school governance as many of them may not even be aware of the role or opportunity. Contacting ex-pupils who are in good professional jobs to ask them to become governors. Identifying barriers to entry – e.g. time of meetings, childcare, level of commitment required etc. and then addressing them. Advertising through school newsletter home to parents. Making meetings less daunting for new governors. Plugging into the work the Council is doing around Black Lives Matters and the Young Futures Commission.

Action 1.3: JG and RD to take away the ideas put forward by governors and to present a way forward at the next meeting.

6. Feedback from School Sub-committees

- 6.1. The minutes from each School Sub-committee were noted.

7. Feedback from Link Governors

- 7.1. The link governor responsibilities were reviewed. It was confirmed that JG would continue to be the safeguarding link governor.
- 7.2. HL was confirmed as the Health and Safety link governor. LT was confirmed as the Curriculum link governor. LM was appointed as the SEND link governor.

8. Consideration of key policies to be updated

- 8.1. RD reported that the safeguarding policy has reviewed in the light of the new DfE guidance on Keep Children Safe in Education. The yellow highlighted text is where the policy has been updated.
- 8.2. Key points to note are that the definition of safeguarding has now been changed by the new DfE guidance. It now includes preventing a child from facing an impairment of their development or physical or mental health. It is the physical or mental health which is the new addition and incorporates the wider agenda around children's well-being. There are also some changes to early help identification and some administrative changes.
- 8.3. JG asked about training for governors on safeguarding given these changes? Hackney Governor Services run safeguarding training sessions for governors. Also, RD offered to run a virtual session for governors.

Action 1.4: RD to run a virtual training session for Governors on safeguarding.

- 8.4. SOB reported that the Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) policy had been reviewed by each school sub-committee and comments made there have be incorporated into the policy. Parent consultation meetings were also recently held at each school. There were six meetings in total, two at each school and there were between 15 to 60 parents attending each meeting. The policy and the curriculum content were shared with parents at the meeting and all parents went away content, having had all their question answered. As result of the consultation, there have been no changes made to the policy.
- 8.5. The RSE curriculum is very similar to what was already being taught in the schools. The only key changes are that upper Key Stage 2 children will now have to be taught about same-sex relationships and puberty. The teaching of puberty has now become compulsory. In writing the RSE policy the PSHE Association's model template was used and adapted.
- 8.6. Both the Safeguarding Policy and the RSE Policy were APPROVED by the Governing Body.

- 8.7. The Remote Learning Policy gives an overview of the steps the Federation would take in the event of a partial or full closure of the school. It sets out the responsibilities of different groups within the school to ensure children are able to learn from home. It incorporates the lessons learnt by the schools during the period of partial lockdown and there is an operational logistics plan that sits alongside the policy.
- 8.8. The policy is being shared with Governors for review, ahead of it being shared with all staff for their comment. After that the final policy will be brought back to the Governing Body for formal approval.
- 8.9. The Well-Being Policy is basically an extension of the Behaviour Policy. Most of it is not new content but exemplifies what is in lots of other policies to support well-being, mental health and the tiered approach taken to support pupils – ranging from a universal offer through to a more targeted interventions to support individual or particular groups of children.
- 8.10. LT commented that the remote learning policy was very specific about teachers having to provide feedback by a set time on any work that was submitted online. RD noted that point. **VC asked whether any data would be collected on engagement with remote learning?** How children engage with remote learning will be monitored but having a measurement for it would be difficult. A survey of technology at home might highlight potential barriers and gaps. However, until the policy is enacted it is difficult to review and decide what should happen.

9. Health and Safety

- 9.1. The COVID risk assessment is not new and was previously shared with Governors. It has now been updated to take account of the full opening of schools. Behind this risk assessment each school has done an individual risk assessment including staff ones particularly for those that are vulnerable and have then taken appropriate steps to protect them.
- 9.2. **KR asked if the Federation could get flu vaccinations for their teachers, given the NHS was offering a free one to all children?** The NHS ones are for only the children. SOB added that teachers can get a free flu vaccination from their GP so the schools are encouraging the teachers to go see their GP.
- 9.3. Governors noted the COVID risk assessment and that it was a live document that would get regularly updated to reflect changes in the situation and any new government guidance.

10. Any Confidential Business

- 10.1. No confidential business or matters were raised.

11. Other Supporting Papers

- 11.1. Governors were encouraged to update the glossary and to attend the training that was being offered by Hackney Education. **IR asked for PPE to be added to the glossary.**

The meeting finished at 8pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

James Gowland

Chair of the Full Governing Body (FGB)

The Viridis Federation