

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

**Resources Governing Body Sub-committee
at Orchard Primary School**

On Thursday 27th February 2020 at 4.30pm

Committee Attendees

Sara Fox (SF)

Giuseppa Colella-Mare (GCM)

James Gowland (JG)

Clerks: Sandra and Manna

Laura Theobald (LT)

Rachel Davie (RD)

Sara Walsingham (SW)

1. Apologies/Consent for Absence

No apologies, all present

Appendix 1 – Document pack pre-sent to Governors

2. Governing Body Organisation

2.1 Membership

No changes have been made or noted

**2.2 Declarations of interest in items on the agenda & Register of pecuniary interests for
2019- 2020**

No changes have been made or noted

2.3 Acknowledgment of TOR & Code of Conduct

No changes have been made or noted

2.4 Governing Body Annual Calendar

No changes have been made or noted

3. Agreements of the meeting from the last meeting

All agreed.

(JG) Noted that LAC needs to be added to the Glossary of Common Terms

4. ¾ Year budget review & forecast, current status

4.1 Current status of Budgets & changes

(GCM) ¾ budget shows the position of budget up 31/01/20.

Income – Page 1: £204,000 more than initially budgeted. Due to:

I01 – Funds delegated by the LA:-

- EYFS adjustments that occur 3 times a year, this fluctuates depending on recruitment of nursery pupils.
- Teacher pension grant – in September 2019 government increased the teachers' pension contributions for employers from 18.4% to 23.68%. Government, to compensate the increased costs that schools have to take out of their budget to meet the extra pension on-costs, has allocated additional money via a grant devolved to schools

(SF) Queried if there would not be funding in the year following

(SW) Confirmed it is likely to be ongoing and there are talks about adding this to the DSG

- SEN funding - Received more than expected due to increase in EHCP students
- PPG funding - Increased due to more pupils eligible for Free School Meals. Orchard has had a significant increase in the number of pupils receiving FSM. The more pupils in receipt of free school meals, the more grant funding is received by the schools for PPG.

(RD) noted that children who come through in Reception and Year 1 & Year 2 unless you catch the parents personally and individually, don't necessarily fill out the applications forms for FSM. This impacts other areas of schooling because the data recorded in terms of disadvantaged children is not necessarily correct. For example, last year at ORC the number of children recorded on FSM was 19 but through to the end of KS1 a further 20 pupils could have been recorded.

(SF) noted that this also affects funding.

(RD) noted that there are implications around not having a clear system around PPG. As a result, this year across all 3 schools a different system will be implemented to ensure every parent/family completes the application during a one-to-one meeting before the child start schools. The application would only have to be filled in once, so if a child is eligible he/she would be added to the list and funding would be caught via the Census.

(GCM) added further to this, parents are not inclined to fill in the form when the child starts in Reception through to Year 2 due to the children already being automatically eligible for a Universal Free School Meal from the government . Parents don't see the benefit of completing the application without the knowledge that this has a direct impact on the schools' budget in terms of funding. For a child that has applied and is granted a FSM, this eligibility continues throughout their primary education. However, if a sibling has joined and applied for FSM and since the 1st sibling has joined the family circumstances have changed at home, the 2nd sibling does not qualify, hence there will be a situation where the 1st sibling is on FSM but the 2nd is not.

(GCM) The PPG and EYFS funding fluctuates during the year due to difference in Census counts as Nursery children are funded according to numbers effectively in school at every Census (October, January & February) whilst PPG is calculated according to how many children are entitled to PPG at the January count.

(SW) Confirmed that PPG is done on the January census every year.

- Other Government Grants - £11K in deficit due to loss in grants that SH brought in from Ofsted/SIP visits etc.
- Donations – Higher income due to FOS donating £5K towards the canopy on the rooftop playground at SW.
- Community focus – initially expected £190K but estimates by the end of March to be £200K
- Overall forecasting of £200K/£205K more than budgeted

Expenditure – Page 2 (GCM) reported that:

- Salaries - Estimated figures for Feb/March are quite accurate and will have little change. No new staff will start before the next budget year. Estimated savings £188K on Teaching salaries and £180K on Support staff. (RD) noted that savings have been made in Leadership Group salaries as well. (GCM) noted that savings have been made in Premises staff due to unsuccessful recruitment for a Site Manager Apprentice. The calibre of candidates were not good. Savings made also on admin staff salaries due to staff opting out of the pension scheme.
- Building and grounds maintenance is on track.
- Cleaning – There will be an increase due to contract renewals in October/November with London Living Wage built in to the contract as per HLT's recommendations.
- Other occupational costs - Increased due to 5yr electrical testing repairs at ORC and SW and the rewiring at HG.
- Learning and Resources – On track, with a small increase due to Kench Hill, which is a commitment rather than an expense that will carry over to the next financial year as it has with previous years.
- ICT - Small increase due to improvements and software upgrades. Strategic plans to be implemented for the next financial year.
- Admin supplies – Savings have been made due to reduced spending
- Catering supplies – Savings to be made. To look at the trend in the uptake of dinners, it is hoped that with the change of Catering provider there will be an increase in children having a hot meal.
- Supply Costs - £130K more on Teaching, £342K on Support staff, this is partially compensated by the saving in staffing costs.

(RD) When the Apprentice Teaching model was introduced, it was hoped that successful Apprentices would join earlier as a Teaching Assistant. Currently the Federation is looking at the Apprenticeship programme for those interested in training to teach. As a result allocated TA spaces in the classrooms are being filled by higher calibre agency staff who might be interested to apply for the Apprenticeship. Long Term supply staff is sought rather than an ad-hoc supply. There are a higher number of children who have education healthcare plans and those who are at the highest level of funding are more likely to need full time one-to-one support. There is a number of these pupils across all 3 sites.

(SF) noted that the figures for E01 and E03 effectively counterbalance the figures for E26 & E27. There is a salaries savings of 370K versus an additional agency cost of 470K. With a total additional cost to the schools of 100K but its's worth the cost as the quality of staff is the best.

(GCM) noted that consideration for a supply budget is needed anyway to allow for teaching and support supplies covering short term sickness absences throughout the year. In fact E26 and E27 are split into Long Term and Short Term supply staff where the Short Term is used for daily sickness absence.

(LT) To clarify, you recruit apprentice staff as Teaching Assistants through an agency first with the view that they will continue on to teacher training - (RD) confirmed that recruitment

of TAs is mostly done through agencies who provide more motivated and higher calibre candidates who have the view to, within 2 years, go into teacher training.

- (GCM) Extended school staff costs - Has increased due to securing staff on the payroll at ORC for ASC where we have appointed 3 permanent staff. At the same time savings have been made of approximately the same amount on resources for ASC due to a reduction in the amount of resources being bought.

In conclusion GCM foresees an estimated carried forward £500K to £600K.

(SW) queried if that is after putting money into capital

(GCM) Confirmed that in E30, £240K is to be directed to capital by the end of the year. The last section, capital expenditure, is where missing capital funds will be financed from the revenue budget in the region of £240K by Viring the funds from E30 to CI04 to finance capital projects and CE04 to finance IT projects undertaken this year in terms of new hardware.

(JG) Noted that hopefully the carried forward amount will be less compared to last year.

(GCM) Noted that without the carried forward amount the budget would be over-spent. GCM fears that if there isn't a contingency carried forward every year and the new formula funding is applied, reducing the school funding on the average per pupil, then the schools could face financial difficulties.

(SW) Stated every school should have a contingency

(RD) Agreed but it should be a fair and proportionate contingency

(JG) The debate last year was whether £900K is a good contingency across all 3 schools

(GCM) Across the 3 schools it is around than £200K if the carry forward is around £500/600K this year.

(SW) Confirmed that it is thought that in the future the national funding formula will have a reduction in funding. However the LA does not anticipate that the funding will be slashed in the near future. Currently there has been a 2-4% increase in funding and it is assumed this will carry on for the next 3 years.

4.2 Anticipated budget forecast for 2020-21, risks & planning

(GCM) The budget for next year will be just over £10million, which is slight higher than last year budget

(SF) Noted more of it is revenue and less of it is carried forward

(JG) Queried why it is more

(SW) Confirmed the schools budgeted DSG has increased, Teachers pensions funding will be at full capacity this year (for 12 months) and there is a little more funding for pupil premium, about £15 per pupil.

5. Staffing Update

5.1 Staffing Update

5.2 Teaching Apprenticeships Update

(RD) Looking to recruit between 8 and 10 apprentices for the next academic year. The recruitment has become more selective in terms of balancing the distribution between KS1 and KS2. The calibre of candidates is high with a constant stream of high quality applications. The number of candidates within the federation has been exhausted resulting in more recruitment from outside.

Current staff preference forms have been distributed to anticipate where there may be gaps next year. There are 7 confirmed, across all 3 schools, who are intending to leave at the end of this academic year. Although there is another resignation round before that.

3 recruits have been secured for September already. This is due to the reorganisation of the recruitment process to accommodate the changes by having a consistent advert in place for Class Teachers all the way through to Easter with key appointment dates across the period. There are a number of people who are undecided. Currently, it is quite stable and secure.

5.3 Structure including leadership structure

5.4 Risks: Recruitment & Retention

(RD) Stated in terms of Leadership structures, the AHT role has been removed at Hoxton Garden due to the shift and movement of staff across all 3 sites. This has had a positive impact due to realigning responsibilities in a more organised way.

A number of maternities ongoing and due to start; three of which are amongst SLT. One of the teachers to go on maternity is the Music Teacher at ORC, which is proving to be difficult to recruit for, but there is a contingency plan in place if unsuccessful.

(JG) Queried when the Teacher Survey will take place. It will take place in the Summer Term.

6. Financial Value Standards Review

6.1 School Financial Value Standards to be agreed and signed. (please note this is in a format and will be presented and discussed in the meeting)

(GCM) Confirmed the SFVS was not sent in advance as more discussions were needed between herself and RD. This is quite different from last year and has additional questions and sections that had to be completed. One of which is Qu. 16 - *Does the school Benchmark the size of SLT against that of similar schools?* – Looking at the Benchmarking document provided by HLT there is no Benchmarking against SLT only. There is however a national benchmarking facility that can be used. Actions On 1st page - recommended to benchmark against National Benchmarking data which is hoped to be done by July by signing up to the National Benchmarking services.

(JG) Pointed out Qu. 3 – *Does the Governing Body receive monitoring reports at least 6 times a year?* And noted that this does not happen.

(GCM) To answer Qu.3 In part, 3 meetings take place. On the last page there is a RAG rating table which rates all answers comparing information from 2017/18.

Also, brought to attention of the Governors Qu. 21 - *Do you compare your non staff expenditure against the DFE recommended National ideals?* GCM's understanding is that this refers to all resource costs, other than salaries, and whether this is compared to the National Benchmarking. The answer is in part as it is compared to the HLT benchmarking. This also needs to be benchmarked against National DfE data.

Due to time constraints it was recommended the documents be sent to the governors to review via email and to be signed off by J. Gowland once satisfied. – Deadline 31/03/20.

Further discussions to be had on the SFVS during the May Resources Meeting.

7. Health & Safety

7.1 Matters arising (Health and Safety Action Plans)

(SF) Reviewed all actions and is satisfied that all is in hand.

(GCM) Announced that the schools will be undergoing a playground Audit and inspection. More actions may arise from the inspection report.

(SF) To be sent the Playground Audit and Inspection report once it has been received by GCM.

7.2 Safeguarding Audit

(RD) Stated that the CHSCP Self-Assessment document is not something to be approved but the governors do need to be made aware of it. The key criteria has increased for each section. It is in an online format, where a self-evaluation is made against the standard on the front 2 pages. There are no key actions to come out of it. Everything on the audit is evidenced already having been actioned.

To be reviewed and any areas of interest to be added to next resources meeting.

(JG) noted that this should be brought to the attention of the FGB

7.3 GDPR and Health & Safety Training

(GCM) confirmed that all staff have completed the online training.

(JG) queried if we keep a record of which of the Viridis governors attend HLT governor training.

(RD) Confirmed that SG records are kept within the Federation but to her knowledge other governor training is held by LA.

(SF) noted this used to be on agenda for FGB meeting.

(RD) will collate up to date training records for the next FGB.

8. Premises Update

8.1 Recent Capital Works

8.2 Planned Capital Works

(SW) queried small expenditure do not need to be listed as governors do not need to be made aware of these.

(SF) Stated that the document is not relevant to governors. – but a more concise document summarising expenditure would be more appropriate.

(SF) Noted on procurement policy: Having to get only one quote for any expenditure up to £10K is not good due diligence. It is easy to mis-spend on smaller amounts if £10K is the limit before more quotes are needed. This system allows for too much leeway.

(JG) Noted that it would also be more beneficial if there is a total amount spent on each supplier on the report.

(SF) Noted a framework agreement for continued small amounts spent on a single supplier is needed.

(JG) Agreed that a report on aggregate sums on a single supplier in the procurement policy would be helpful. Next resources meeting expenditure to be grouped by supplier across the Viridis Federation.

(SF) Stated that the Procurement policy will not be approved today, if there is an urgency, an email exchange can take place. The current structure allows for weakness in the procurement process.

(SW) Noted it doesn't protect the people who are making the decisions. You want to be assured that you are making the right decisions.

(GCM) Agreed that there is not an urgency to sign the policy but in light of this the upcoming Financial Procedures Manual and the other documents need to be reviewed before the next resources meeting.

(SF) Questioned what the current process is for ordering purchases and who approves them.

(GCM) Stated for each purchase a purchase order is raised, which is signed and approved by GCM and the HT.

(SW) Asked who makes the decision of which supplier is used for a purchase?

(RD) More generally, in terms of the resourcing for the school, the finance team would evaluate and select a supplier that is suitable. Less confident on the evaluation process around premises which will be reviewed during the next resources meeting.

8.3 Site Security

(GCM) Confirmed that the planning permission for the fence at HG has been refused. An appeal would need to be done through the secretary of state. The planning officer has stated that the fence does not comply with the environment and needs to be no more than 2m high. The conclusion is that the whole fence around the playground on that section would need to be taken down.

(SF) Agreed that the appeal needs to be done and stated that if HLT loses the appeal the money will be refunded.

(GCM) Confirmed that Hackney planning officer will attend school to meet the Site Manger and GCM regarding the fence on Friday 28th February – (SF) offered to attend, GCM will send relevant document to SF by 10am tomorrow (28/02/20)

8.4 Caretaker House at Hoxton Garden

To be reviewed at the next resources meeting.

9. Policies

9.1 Procurement Policy

Mentioned under premises update. All in agreement the policy will not be approved today but to be reviewed and noted on the agenda for the next Resources meeting

10. Any Other Business

No other Business

11. Glossary

Meeting ended 6.00pm