

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

Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 30 January 2020 at 6pm
at Southwold Primary School, Detmold Road, London, E5 9NL

Attendance

Governors Present:	Role
Laura Theobold (LT)	Co-opted Governor and Vice Chair of Governors
Rachel Davie (RD)	Executive Headteacher
Richard Allen (RA)	Co-opted Governor
Sara Fox (SF)	Co-opted Governor
Hannah Lownsbrough (HL)	Co-opted Governor
Lenna Marson (LM)	Parent Governor
Claudia Moreira (CM)	Staff Governor
Kay Richardson (KR)	Parent Governor
Others in attendance:	
Stephen O'Brien (SOB)	Headteacher, Southwold School
Rachel Adams (RAd)	Headteacher, Hoxton Garden School
Aimee Walker (AW)	Acting Headteacher, Orchard School
Governors not present:	
James Gowland (JG)	Co-opted Governor - Chair of Governors
Andrea Klettner (AK)	Co-opted Governor
Cllr Ian Rathbone (IR)	LA Governor
Alberta Senyah (AS)	Co-opted Governor
Sara Walsingham (SW)	Co-opted 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 JG, AK, AS, IR and SW. The meeting was confirmed as quorate and LT chaired the meeting.

2. Governing Body Organisation

- 2.1. Membership of Governing Body (Paper 2a) was reviewed. AW as the Acting Headteacher at Orchard Primary was welcomed as an Associate member to the Governing Body.
- 2.2. Terms of Reference / Election of Chair / Vice Chair – had been reviewed and elections held

at the last meeting.

- 2.3. The Register of Business Interests (Paper 2c) was reviewed. KR's job role had changed so a new declaration of interests' form was required from her. Otherwise, the register was accurate and up to date. **KR to complete a new declaration of interests' form.**
- 2.4. There were no comments on the Code of Conduct for Governors (Paper 2d).
- 2.5. On the GB Calendar, Governors were reminded that the next school governor visit morning was coming up shortly at Hoxton Garden. Invites for that will be sent out by RD tomorrow.

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

- 3.1. Going through the actions from the last GB meeting held on 3 October 2019, the following comments were made:
 - 3.1.1. On the Chair's 360; the first part of it had been completed but the application window for the second part does not open until February. So, the action was in process but not yet complete.
 - 3.1.2. Actions 2.1 and 3.1 about amending the GB's membership and terms of reference and agreeing the new terms of office with Governors had both been completed.
 - 3.1.3. On Action 3.2, Hackney Council were still being chased for the air pollution test results for Orchard. However, the Council was in the process of producing a report which will include results from all the different school settings that had pollution tests done. Hoxton Garden appeared to be involved in another pollution test whilst still waiting for the results of the first one.
 - 3.1.4. Action 4.1 – Hackney's governors training programme had been circulated as part of the papers for this meeting and was on the agenda.
 - 3.1.5. Action 4.2 – the Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) policy review has been rescheduled for the summer term meeting. The reason being that DfE has yet to publish its final guidance and until that is done and the full expectations established it is not needed for the policy to be reviewed.
 - 3.1.6. Action 7.1 – EG and DSR had not been added to the glossary. **RD to add them to the glossary.**
 - 3.1.7. Action 10.1 – due to the EHT logistics of last term, the newsletter could not be drafted and circulated but will now be done this term.
 - 3.1.8. Action 11.1 about amending the safeguarding policy and adding acronyms to the glossary had been completed.
 - 3.1.9. Action 12.1 on the website; the link from the Viridis website back to the schools' websites still needed to happen and there was a process in place for that now to happen. The focus in the autumn term had been about improving each of the school's website, which had been done.
 - 3.1.10. Action 12.2 was about checking the Section 106 agreement for the development. The planning documents are on Hackney Council's website but the link to the s106 agreement does not work. The school has emailed the Head of Buildings at Hackney to try and get access to it. After discussion it was concluded that since the school had not been engaged in the process for agreeing the s106 agreement the chances of any direct benefit coming back to the school from the agreement was remote. It was more likely that Hackney Council had received a cash payment as part of the s106 agreement. So, it might be worth asking the Council for some of that money for something specific to benefit the school. However, this may be a lot of work for little to no return. Alternatively, the school could approach the developer direct to see if they may want to make contribution to the school as a goodwill gesture for any inconvenience caused by the construction works.

- 3.1.11. For action 12.3 it has been agreed to have a Stephen Hall Music Award for each school, given that Stephen had been instrumental in setting up the music programme in the three schools.
- 3.2. There were no other matters arising from the minutes.
- 3.3. The minutes of the last Governing Body meeting, held on 3 October 2019, were APPROVED as an accurate record by Governors.

4. Executive Headteacher's Report Spring 2020

- 4.1. Referring to Paper 4, RD reported that the focus remained on pupil outcomes at the end of KS1 and KS2 and the usual tracking was taking place for children in Year 6 to ensure no child was falling behind. At the moment all three schools are on track to meet their targets for the numbers of pupils to exceed national averages at the end of KS2.
- 4.2. Assessments have been completed for all children across all year groups from Nursery to Year 6 to determine where each pupil was in relation to age related expectations for that academic year. Pupil progress meetings had been held with leadership teams across all three sites to identify which groups of children may need additional support.
- 4.3. There have been some staffing changes. This has included AW stepping up to be the Acting Headteacher at Orchard, which has released RD to be work across the three schools and, in turn, has increased senior leadership capacity. In order to allow for that there has been some transitioning of deputies across the three schools to ensure there is the right balance of staff at each school. The transition has been smooth and helped by secure systems which are the same across the schools.
- 4.4. There have also been some changes to the teaching staff at Orchard, where three teachers left at the end of the autumn term. Otherwise, staffing is stable across the federation. The recruitment process for the next academic year is just about to start though teacher recruitment is becoming an on-going process. **SF asked if there were any reasons for concern over the recent staff departures?** No there were no reasons for concerns two out of the three departures were teachers who started in September and where it quickly became apparent, they were not going to reach the expected standards set by the school. A collaborative decision was taken with the staff about what the best next steps should be. The Federation expects high expectation from teachers about what children can achieve but give back to staff is equally embedded as the recent Ofsted inspections show teachers are well supported and looked after. However, where its clear expected standards are not going to be met, for the learning and progress of children it is best to intervene quickly and resolve the situation. KR added her daughter's year were affected by the departures and the school acted quickly to resolve the situation by putting children in sets.
- 4.5. The Federation has 8 apprentice teachers this academic year, and the vast majority of them are making good progress. All have worked with middle leaders over the autumn term and are taking greater responsibility for teaching their classes. Recruitment for apprentice teachers for the next academic year has already started and 35 applications have been received so far. Two interview rounds have been held and out of that four high calibre applicants have been selected. The Federation is setting a high bar for selection to ensure the best trainees. The Federation is looking for 8 apprentice teachers next year in total, as that is a manageable number but could go up to 10 if it is viable to do depending on what staffing looks like next year. What will help is that this year's apprentice teachers have been mapped into teaching posts for next year, which minimises the need for recruitment and helps to maintain stability.
- 4.6. Two of the schools had Ofsted Inspections during the autumn term and there is a separate

agenda item on this. However, Ofsted from September will start inspecting outstanding schools on a rotational basis and Orchard need to be fully prepared for inspection.

- 4.7. Parent surveys have been completed and the responses have been evaluated. There are on-site action plans for each of the schools focusing on addressing the specific issues raised by the parents of each school. The website continues to be reviewed as it is one of the common issues coming out of the surveys and more will be done to establish why. The parent survey action plans will be shared within sub-committees this term.
- 4.8. The Federation continues to host visits from other schools, networking events and visits from the Local Authority (LA) with a focus on the arts, the curriculum and sustainability.
- 4.9. The CPD focus of the autumn term has continued with weekly staff training on pedagogy, reflection and research. All middle and senior leaders are undertaking a leadership programme on rotation, working with an external leadership coach and the head teachers to develop their leadership skills in the areas that they work across their school.
- 4.10. Hoxton was successful in getting re-accredited with the Leading Parent Partnership Award. Southwold with the Inclusion Flagship Status. Orchard was re-accredited with the Gold Arts Mark and the Eco Schools Green Flag Status, and is the only school in Hackney with Green Flag Status. All three schools achieved the Gold TfL Stars Award as well and is the only group of schools to have that award across all its schools. **HL asked what the Gold TfL Award was about?** It references sustainable travel and what is offered to support that, like the cycling programme, walk to school programme and a whole range of other initiatives.
- 4.11. The wider curriculum offer continues and all enrichment opportunities have now been planned out for the year such as the annual Work Week experience that children have just finished. There is also broad range of trips planned linked to topics of learning, which the schools will continue to evaluate to assess how effective they are towards the children's learning. The structured model of cross-site visits that took place in the autumn term have been moved across into the spring term, and have been effective. Children are moving cross site for Digital Leaders, Eco Teams, Peer Mediators and School Councils and getting a good cross-site experience in being able to dialogue with their peers from the other school sites to support the Federation work on pupil voice opportunities.
- 4.12. On health and safety, new cleaning contractors have been appointed (via a tendering process) and are in place across all three schools. New catering contractors have also been appointed via a tendering process. The general feedback at this point, from all three schools, is that apart from a few teething problems the catering is significantly better, and children are now getting opportunities to experience better quality and healthier meals. Children are now eating more and there is less waste which bodes well. **Governors asked about the cost of meals?** It was confirmed the cost is the same as the previous supplier. However, the new supplier is listening to the feedback they are receiving from pupils and staff and responding accordingly. Their yoghurt station has proved successful.
- 4.13. De-escalation training for senior staff has been booked for this term with a focus on positive handling. This is to ensure all senior leaders are trained to support a situation that may need de-escalation with a high-need pupil using the appropriate handling techniques.
- 4.14. A resolution to the external façade works needs to take place at Hoxton Garden and continues to be a high priority. RD will now be joining upcoming meetings around that to ensure there is a good understanding of what is going to happen and when. However, the LA is in the process of tendering for who is going to undertake those works. It is looking like a late spring, early summer before a decision will be made and then a plan will be drawn up about when the actual works will take place.
- 4.15. A new company has been taken on to do the annual risk assessment of all the playgrounds. This means that there is now one company undertaking all of the assessments and there

will be one set of recommendations. Instead of being disjointed and having different companies doing them across the three schools. Also, the additional assistant site manager post, to work across the schools, is being re-advertised as the Federation had not been successful in recruiting to it in the autumn term.

- 4.16. **HL asked about the health and safety recommendation around free-standing cupboards that was discussed at the last meeting?** Everything that the audit had directed had been done and the cupboards at potential risk of falling have been secured.

5. Ofsted Reports

Southwold Primary School

- 5.1. SOB reported that Southwold had a two-day, section 5 inspection under the new framework where to be an outstanding school there cannot not be any areas for development. It was an intensive two days, with the first day full of deep dives which carried on into the second day. There were aspects that the school had not anticipated like inspectors wanted to see children in Year 3 who had not passed the phonics re-check in Year 2 and whether they could access the wider curriculum. There was then a maths deep dive, a humanities and a science deep dive.
- 5.2. Then on the second day the school got to choose the areas for the deep dives to showcase good practice and the school chose MFL, where children learn Spanish, and the Arts. The school also show cased all its enrichment activities and the inspectors were thoroughly impressed. In talking to pupils, the inspector focus was on pupil premium children and those in the bottom 20%. They asked them about what they were learning and what they had learnt previously. These children did really well and the school's curriculum held up.
- 5.3. RD said across both inspections the key strength that spanned both of them was the structure of the Federation's curriculum which is extremely secure. This has sparked interest and recognition from the LA into the Federation's curriculum, which offers pupils a really clear progression of knowledge over time. SF highlighted the potential that the LA may ask Viridis to take a fourth school into the federation. RD replied this may not be a risk per se but an opportunity to share exception practice with other schools to benefit even more children. Governors suggested that may be the Federation leadership team should be thinking strategically about taking on another school.
- 5.4. The other key strength to come out of the two inspections was the links the schools have and their knowledge of the potential risks to children from their local areas and then how that is used to support children. For example, links with gang workshops, transition to secondary, opportunities to meet people from the local communities, Work Week experiences etc.to support their access to the wider world and knowing their local areas.
- 5.5. The new Ofsted framework is tough but fits very well with what the Federation has and is doing, which means there is the evidence base to show impact unlike a lot of other schools who may have only started to focus towards the requirements of the new Ofsted framework and been caught out on their curriculum coverage.
- 5.6. Although the inspection outcomes are to be celebrated, the written reports do not quite do the two schools justice as they are quite short, capped on words they can use and limited to capturing a lot of detail in a single summary sentence.

Hoxton Garden Primary School

- 5.7. RAd reported that Hoxton had had a two-day section 8 inspection, which was different to the Southwold inspection. Hoxton had deep dives into just two areas reading and history. The inspectors spoke to a range of stakeholders from governors, senior leaders, middle leaders, parents and the headteacher. They also spent a lot of time speaking with pupils.
- 5.8. In terms of the outcomes the inspection highlighted and confirmed all the things that the senior staff already knew about the school. As a parent reading the report it highlights what

Hoxton and its pupils are all about. Reading and high-level reading is a real strength along with the fact that the children really love to learn. The school also has very high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, there is a real sense of belonging and being part of a family, and the school is safe place for children.

- 5.9. Leaders had well considered plans. The subjects link well together, writing came as a strength from early years right through to Year 6 and children showed a real love for reading. The report also highlighted the breadth of experiences children have at the school and that they are really motivated to think and learn about the world around them.
- 5.10. Safeguarding is effective. The one area for development identified is around knowing more and remembering more. This is about making sure children and teachers are clear in terms of the specific knowledge that they need to learn and then embedding that into children's long-term memories.
- 5.11. RD said this all links into the aims of the Federation on improving children's oracy and having the highest level of expectations on what pupils can achieve. All the governors who attend the inspections were thanked as they helped to contribute towards the leadership judgments. Governors commented that the two inspections were tough but distinctly different. The Hoxton inspection focused mostly on the Quality of Education judgement and the Southwold inspection evaluated all the areas of the new framework. Governors were asked some difficult questions like how do they ensure all children are making progress. If there is a small group of children not making progress, in say reading, how do governors ensure the school is supporting them to make progress and catch-up over time. At Southwold governors were asked by inspectors about what makes this school outstanding and not just good.
- 5.12. RD was pleased with inspection outcomes for both schools and exceptionally proud of the leaders, staff and governors working in those schools. The both inspections have been great CPD for all involved and the feedback and learning from them is already being fed into reviewing training and improvement plans to help the Federation continue to improve.

6. Feedback from School Sub-committees

- 6.1. Each School Sub-committee was asked to share three key outcomes from the discussions they had at their last meeting during the autumn term.

6.2. Southwold

- 6.2.1. RA reported that Southwold sub-committee had spent some time talking about CPD and how it is now much more like research-based learning and was described as going well beyond expected standards so, it was interesting to hear about that. RD said it was different and not what other schools do but there was still room for improvement and refinements particularly with regards the different career stages that teachers are at.
- 6.2.2. The Governors then heard about the DfE timetables check pilot, which the school is involved in and how that was influencing the curriculum. SOB added that the pilot has helped the school to prepare for the check when it comes in later this year and has meant pushing timetables across the curriculum and making sure children know them. There were some concerns expressed by Governors about the importance of this test and pupils having to get 100% to pass.
- 6.2.3. The Federation uses Time Tables Rockstars, which is an online programme for learning times tables in an interactive way and can be access from home for children to practice. If children fail the test, they cannot retake it. However, pupils are not stressed about that and actually enjoy the daily tests and the challenge that provides.
- 6.2.4. The sub-committee then discussed the leadership / pupil voice work and how every child

can contribute in some shape or form to make the school a better place, whether that be through digital leadership, promoting arts and sports etc. RD added that this year the Federation has mapped in opportunities for cross site pupil voice activities.

- 6.2.5. Lastly, the sub-committee celebrated that there were now 150 pupils on peripatetic music learning, including a high number of PPG children.

6.3. Hoxton Garden

- 6.3.1. SF reported that since joining the Viridis Federation the pupil roll has been increasing at Hoxton but is still under capacity but it is much better than before. So, the sub-committee discussed what could be done about recruitment. However, it is worth noting that there is an over provision of nurseries in the local Hoxton area and there is an outstanding rated nursery that is not full. This is impacting on the school's ability to recruit children at nursery and from an early age.
- 6.3.2. Hoxton was re- accredited with the Leading Parent Partnership Award which is a fantastic turnaround because when SF first became a governor at the school, it had absolutely no parent involvement or engagement.
- 6.3.3. The school's academic results keep on improving and worth celebrating. For example, the KS2 results were 20 percentage points higher than national average for combined reading, writing and maths.
- 6.3.4. Lastly, Hoxton now has a dedicated music teacher, instead of a shared one which should help to further raise the profile of music across the school.

6.4. Orchard

- 6.4.1. LT reported that the sub-committee discussed the phenomenal results that Orchard has achieved – 92% combined reading, writing and maths when the national average is 65%. The school is especially proud of its latest reading result which is 97%, where only two children did not reach the expected level, which is very impressive.
- 6.4.2. A potential Ofsted inspection was then discussed and what that might entail. Ofsted are inspecting 10% of outstanding schools including schools in Hackney, so Orchard could get an get inspection and it is useful to have it on the radar.
- 6.4.3. Staffing was discussed with the school having 5 NQTs and 7 teachers that are new to the school at the start of this academic year including two NQTs. This means a continual focus on CPD, pedagogy and improving subject knowledge.
- 6.4.4. The sub-committee talked about improving the sports profile of the school through improving the teaching of PE, participation in local competitions and having a dedicated kit to wear when representing the school locally or in cross site competitions.
- 6.4.5. The school development plan has also been amended to fit in with the new Ofsted framework and the school's key strengths were identified as oracy, the build-up of key skills and ensuring all pupils including disadvantaged ones make good or better progress.
- 6.4.6. KR mentioned the Hackney reading map programme which has been introduced with an investment in books, into Year 5 to encourage children to read, and how well it was doing.

7. Awards and Achievements

- 7.1. Paper 7 listed the awards that had been achieved across the Federation. RD reported that unfortunately, the Bronze Anti-Bullying Quality Mark had been missed off the list. The Federation was in the process of making an application for the silver anti-bullying award.

- 7.2. The list has been compiled following a discussion at the Hoxton sub-committee about what awards the school and Federation had achieved. All the awards that the schools take part in are designed to allow senior and subject leaders to have a focus on different aspects of curriculum or school provision. It provides the opportunity for senior and subject leaders to be accountable for their subject area and to have something to work towards to improve practice.
- 7.3. Most of the awards last for three years and then you have to reapply to keep the accreditation, you do not automatically get it. Some of the awards, like Investors in People, the schools do not go back for as practice and provision has moved beyond them and they become meaningless. **SF asked if there were any awards that the schools currently do not have but should be aiming to achieve?** There were a couple in the aspirational pipeline around supporting the most able pupils, like the Pupil Investment Award that the schools could apply for. However, it was about choosing the right ones as it does take time, effort and money to go for these awards.
- 7.4. It was acknowledged that there was an error with the Arts Mark and that all three Viridis schools had achieved it not just Orchard, though Southwold needed to re-apply for it again. There is a teaching assistant award that Orchard is working towards, and sometimes it is good to trial an award on one site to see if it is worth rolling out to the other schools.

8. Feedback from Link Governors

- 8.1. On health and safety, SF said that following the audits that were reported on at the last meeting, there are a small number of on-going health and safety actions. These will be picked up in the Resources Committee meeting next month and an update can then be provided at the summer term governors meeting.
- 8.2. There was no further feedback on governor visits.

9. Governor Training

- 9.1. Hackney Learning Trust (HLT) had produced a useful programme of the training (Paper 9a) that is available to governors throughout this academic year. The Hackney Governors Framework (Paper 9b) was new and interesting and had recently been issued by LA.
- 9.2. Governors were asked to review both the training programme and framework. Most of the training courses are free and governors were encouraged to book themselves on any training that HLT offered.
- 9.3. Prevent training had come up at the Hoxton inspection and it was decided that the whole governing body should undergo this training. It was AGREED that it would be best to do Prevent training during this term's and next term's morning visits.

10. Consideration of key policies to be updated

- 10.1. The Safeguarding Policy had been updated to include a sentence saying that Governors were subject to section 128 checks. This is an additional check to make sure that Governors have not been barred by the Secretary of State for Education from taking part in the management or running of a school.
- 10.2. Governors APPROVED the updated Safeguarding Policy.

11. Any other business (AOB)

- 11.1. RD reported there was no update on the Schools Futures Group as essentially the pressure from government to become an academy and join a MAT was no longer there. Instead a Hackney Schools Group Board has been created.
- 11.2. The Group Board which is chaired by somebody from outside education is discussing the core priorities in Hackney related to schools. These priorities currently being curriculum, reading and SEND. The Board will form committees for each of these priorities and facilitate dialogue amongst schools about what could be done to improve in these areas.
- 11.3. RD thanked everyone for the support and trust over the last term. It was a difficult transition in the autumn term without the two Ofsteds and the support she had received was greatly appreciated. So, thank you.
- 11.4. There had been communication with Stephen Hall and he is enjoying his new job at HLT. He is developing the support that HLT provides to help schools improve through the SIP programme.

12. Any Confidential Business

- 12.1. No confidential business or matters were raised.

The meeting finished at 7:30pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Laura Theobald

**Acting Chair of the Full Governing Body (FGB)
The Viridis Federation**