

**The Viridis Federation of  
Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden Primary Schools  
Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting**

Held at 6pm on 2 February 2023 at Orchard Primary School

<b>Governor</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Term End</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
James Gowland (JG)	Co-opted Governor and Chair	08/26 (T2)	Y	2/2
Laura Theobold (LT)	Co-opted Governor and Vice Chair	08/23 (T1)	N	0/2
Victoria Crawford (VC)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T2)	Y	1/2
Hannah Lownsborough (HL)	Co-opted Governor	08/26 (T2)	Y	2/2
Lenna Marson (LM)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T2)	Y	2/2
Chisara Nwabara (CN)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T1)	N	0/2
Samson Brough (SB)	Co-opted Governor	08/26 (T1)	Y	2/2
Alberta Senyah (AS)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T1)	Y	2/2
Clr Ian Rathbone (IR)	LA Governor	08/26 (T2)	Y	2/2
Aya Haidar (AH)	Parent Governor	08/25 (T1)	Y	2/2
Kay Richardson (KR)	Parent Governor	08/24 (T2)	Y	2/2
Claudia Moreira (CM)	Staff Governor	08/24 (T2)	N	1/2
Rachel Davie (RD)	Executive Headteacher	n/a	Y	2/1
<b>Others in attendance</b>				
Stephen O'Brien (SOB)	Headteacher, Orchard School	n/a	Y	2/2
Rachael Carr	Acting Headteacher, Southwold School	n/a	Y	2/2
Rachel Adams (RA)	Headteacher, Hoxton Garden School	n/a	Y	2/2
<b>Clerk</b>				
Jane Ware	Hackney Education	n/a	Y	2/2
Governor attendance at this meeting			77%	
Governor attendance year to date			73%	

## **Actions Log**

<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Status</b>
06/10/2022	7.1.4	AH to observe a link governor visit with HL	AH & HL	Pending
06/10/2022	7.2.2	Governors to email RD about undertaken in addition to booking themselves on to Hackney Education training.	Governors	Completed
06/10/2022	8.2.2	RD will share the details of the next open discussion group at Hackney with governors when known.	RD	No further meetings held
02/02/2023	8.3	RD to provide link governors with a more structured link visit template.	RD	Pending

## PART ONE: Non-Confidential – Main Business

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome, Apologies and Consent for Absence</b>
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to this meeting of the Full Governing Body.
1.2	Apologies were received from LT, CN and CM.
1.3	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Governing Body Organisation</b> Governors were reminded to read:
2.1	<a href="#">Membership</a>
2.1.1	No changes were noted to membership since the last meeting.
2.2	<a href="#">Viridis Terms of Reference</a>
2.2.1	No changes were noted to Viridis Terms of Reference since the last meeting.
2.3	<a href="#">Viridis Register of Business Interests</a>
2.3.1	It was noted that HL is doing consultancy for NEU and NEHT.
2.4	<a href="#">Code of Conduct</a>
2.4.1	No changes were noted to the Code of Conduct since the last meeting.
2.5	<a href="#">Governing Body Annual Calendar 2022 / 2023</a> and Governor visits
2.5.1	It was noted that the next Full Governing Body meeting will be on 18 May 2023 at Hoxton Garden School and the next governor visits will be in March 2023.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Agreement of minutes from the last meeting and any actions arising</b>
3.1	There were no comments on the <a href="#">minutes of the last meeting of 6 October 2023</a> , which governors APPROVED as an accurate record.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>National Context Update / Feedback from <a href="#">Governor Self Review</a> Meeting - RD</b>
4.1	In terms of the <a href="#">White Paper</a> 's long term vision for school systems, due to a schools bill that started in June 2022, clauses were deleted and it was decided by Government that it will not be pursued so, for academy plans, this means that the 2030 deadline is no longer valid.
4.2	The Hackney focus remains strong collaboration, federation of schools and partner school working as an ethos.
4.3	The key local context continues to be around falling pupil rolls, an estate strategy from Hackney was expected in November 2022 but has not yet been released.
4.4	There are schools in categories of red, orange and green and there is likely to be consultation, next step pathways, amalgamations or school closures, more clarity about this in a Hackney context is anticipated in next few months.

4.5	<p>QUESTION: Are school rolls still falling? ANSWER: In some schools, which is impacting school budgets, creating deficit budgets and bigger buildings hold costs not workable with roll numbers. Viridis schools are stable but this is being monitored. Sustainability in reception numbers is required, as this is reflective of continued stability. The nurseries are full.</p>
4.6	<p>QUESTION: Have the schools had waiting lists in the past? ANSWER: Yes, in previous years.</p>
4.7	<p>QUESTION: In terms of forecast, are they normally fairly good at forecasting or is this a one off? It feels like there is a lot of talk and rumours, but how well is it being plotted? ANSWER: It is not a surprise and has been on going for the last five years. Camden and Islington have closed schools but this has not happened yet in Hackney. There are different perspectives but the estate strategy should inform. Final numbers in April inform pupil roll projection for the next academic year.</p>
4.8	<p>QUESTION: Do parents have more power to move their child from school to school? ANSWER: Yes. The Hackney Education website shows every school in Hackney and where there are spaces, so it is fairly easy for parents to move children. Financial income is based on census so if there is a big movement just before then it causes a budgeting issue for schools who lose children.</p>
4.9	<p>QUESTION: Are the new builds causing slow action in terms of school strategy? ANSWER: It is not clear. Hackney need to consult as much as possible before shutting a school in the community, in terms of fully evaluating such a big decision. There is no conclusive evidence that new schools have impacted slow action.</p>
4.10	<p>QUESTION: What do they do with closed school sites? ANSWER: In Islington for example, a closed site became a special educational needs (SEND) resource school.</p>
4.11	<p>QUESTION: Is the estate strategy national or just Hackney? ANSWER: Just Hackney. The SEND focus is on keeping children in schools rather than moving them to specialist settings and it is expected that funding will be available. <a href="#">Hackney's SEND strategy</a> was released this week in terms of next steps for SEND provision in Hackney and scenarios are similar to before but it aims to revise previously identified issues.</p>
4.12	<p>The food poverty Hackney focus group have been exploring whether there is the option for KS2 children to have free school meals, but it is not feasible financially at this time. Other boroughs do access some public health funding that Hackney does not, that would impact in the longer term but would not happen immediately, if securing funding were possible.</p>
4.13	<p>Food poverty consultation is a priority for the Interim Director of Education and it remains a current topic, particularly with the cost of living crisis, and was a recent agenda item at Full Council meeting.</p>
4.14	<p>QUESTION: Why has there been a move away from academisation? ANSWER: Two thoughts related to this. Firstly the Liz Truss period was timely, and things were not getting through because they kept losing time. Secondly evaluation has resulted in the permanent removal of several clauses in the process of discussion as it was not deemed feasible.</p>

4.15	<p>QUESTION: Could it come back under a Labour government?</p> <p>ANSWER: Putting VAT on independent school fees is a potential plan, but there is no evidence of the government bringing in a schools bill as such.</p>
4.16	<p>QUESTION: The SEND model suggests that schools develop specialisation, and special schools are totally separate. Would the school potentially be asked to provide a particular specialisation in future?</p> <p>ANSWER: Hackney identify the provision they want and invite bids. There are a number of specialist units working at mainstream schools with limited numbers. For example, a social emotional mental health (SEMH) unit attached to a mainstream primary school. Hackney has significantly lower numbers of placements than children who need placements meaning some children go out of borough. There are private placements as well. The prediction is that there will be 400 more children in Hackney with education health care plans (EHCPs) each year. Placing children out of borough can be significant cost to the LA.</p>
4.17	<p>JG and RD met Leader of Governance Services Maggie Kalnins, to do a <a href="#">governance self review</a> and core elements and the context of discussion was about refreshing and understanding governance and legal responsibilities, equalities duties and implementations, exploring governance in schools, the importance of diversity and how it is addressed in schools and linking balanced budget elements to governance.</p>
4.18	<p>The analysis shows key areas for review including functional arrangements of governing bodies, sustained recruitment, ensuring succession planning effectively and accountability structures resulting in robust articulation of knowledge through training across the governing body and developing governor voice through link governor roles.</p>
4.19	<p>The structure of link governor visits ensures a cycle of link governor visits. There was discussion about how further diversifying the governing body could be achieved.</p>
4.20	<p>Maggie Kalnins will be invited to talk at the next Full Governing Body Meeting.</p>
4.21	<p>The session highlighted how governors should ensure that they have channels to connect with the school.</p>
4.22	<p>Governors induction is important, timely and supports the succession challenge.</p>
4.23	<p>The safeguarding update ensures that governors are aware of this area in the school.</p>
4.24	<p>QUESTION: Were there examples of best practice for areas identified for improvement?</p> <p>ANSWER: Link governor visits, more in depth feedback and knowledge building within the training aspect.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<p><b><a href="#">Executive Headteacher's Report (Spring Term 2023)</a></b></p>
5.1	<p>Current year 6 predictions show children across all three schools are on track to exceed the national averages.</p>
5.2	<p>There was an assessment round in December for reading, writing and maths in all year groups.</p>
5.3	<p>Pupil progress meetings have taken place, and are used to inform interventions for quick</p>

	catch ups, led by school leaders, with opportunities to discuss academic and pastoral provision.
5.4	The sub committees will see the data from the last data point in the Spring meetings.
5.5	Attendance remains a focus across all three schools, because, despite all the work around attendance, nationally there is an issue post pandemic. The DfE are now tracking this more robustly and publishing national attendance weekly.
5.6	There is rapid intervention for children at risk of or at persistent absence level which is anything over 10%.
5.7	School analysis systems have been developed to do a deeper analysis of absence in each year group children with persistent absences tracked.
5.8	Attendance is a child's right to education and there are also safeguarding risks which present. The impact of high levels of absence over time on children is significant so it remains a consistent focus.
5.9	There is also a focus on lates which are being monitored and tracked.
5.10	There were no changes to staff or resignations across the schools in the Autumn Term, however national recruitment issues continue to cause concern.
5.11	The annual recruitment programme continues to ensure that quality teachers are successfully found and mean a cycle of support for the schools in ensuring gaps are filled quickly.
5.12	There have been a limited number of applications for teaching, leader and support staff roles so this style of recruitment is essential.
5.13	Recruitment strategies are led on by the Communications Manager and Executive Headteacher.
5.14	The inclusion DHT role has been filled at Orchard School and will focus on SEND.
5.15	Pupil numbers are stable across the schools and Nursery numbers show the significant majority of places are filled.
5.16	There have been visits between the schools and Southend schools following school improvement partner (SIP) recommendations.
5.17	There is a weekly staff programme ongoing in terms of staff development, including early career teachers (ECTs) who access the federation programme.
5.18	Six leaders are doing national professional qualifications (NPQs).
5.19	Curriculum statements are being completed to ensure robust articulation of curriculum content both on the website and by leaders.
5.20	Action research projects are underway, undertaken by middle leaders and this will feed into policy and practice when completed at the end of the year.
5.21	Parent survey outcomes are again positive and will be looked at in sub committee meetings.
5.22	There has been development in key areas of focus over the past 12 months.

5.23	Health and safety audits have been undertaken on the three school sites and there are no concerns.
5.24	Fire audits were completed and there are always a small number of actions which are completed within the set timeframe.
5.25	The annual safeguarding audit was completed for Hackney as part of a set structure for completion and self evaluation.
5.26	The single central record has been reviewed by Hackney HR as part of annual auditing, which is bought into, to ensure that all checks and changes are made immediately.
5.27	At Orchard School, facade works will commence in April 2023, works to be completed by July 2023 and Southwold facade works will take place soon after..
5.28	Renovation of Hoxton school house is slow but looking like a more secure time frame with works hopefully commencing in April.
5.29	The new catering company started in January 2023 and this was a smooth transition.
5.30	Current federation priorities are around governance and ensuring methodology informs future thinking, successful future recruitment of governors and sustained attendance rates, with a focus on early years.
5.31	QUESTION: Why does the federation do research? ANSWER: It is really important for middle leaders to have the opportunity to impact on the federation, and research in the past has led to changes to policy. It is about voice and teacher contribution to the wider context. It goes on the website and is a unique selling point for recruitment.
5.32	QUESTION: Do you decide to close the school based on the number of teachers striking? ANSWER: Yes. Teachers do not need to declare if they are striking. Risk assessment based on known knowledge informs whether the school will open. At the last strike, there were partially open like us, some closed and some remained open.
5.33	QUESTION: What is happening with the recruitment of the headteacher at Southwold? ANSWER: Summer Term.
5.34	QUESTION: What is the latest position for Hackney Education and the interim director, and is it impacting the federation or causing any disruption? ANSWER: Interim Director Paul Senior is staying until the end of the academic year. Jason Marantz has now been made permanent Assistant Director of Hackney Education.
5.35	The new SEND strategy will have a positive impact on SEND.
5.36	QUESTION: Are there any emerging national answers to the national teaching recruitment context? ANSWER: Subsidies were received in the training programme which are no longer available and impact recruiting salaried trainee teachers, however qualifications for leaders are free currently which supports career development for experienced teachers.
5.37	QUESTION: Beside the cost of living, does best practice raise further information about teacher retention? ANSWER: The annual marketing plan identifies mobility and reasons for movement and informs forward planning.
5.38	QUESTION: Do you do exit interviews with staff?



	ANSWER: Yes. Information shows a positive commentary.
5.39	QUESTION: Is there a context of ill health and leaving teachers? ANSWER: It is unusual, perhaps once every three or four years. Last year there were a higher than average number of long term absences at one school site.
5.40	QUESTION: Do you check in on staff wellbeing? ANSWER: Staff preference survey responses undertaken in January have been positive and comments are acted on. There is an open door policy, everything is very transparent. Wellbeing is a focus and there are lots of mediums to check in. There are weekly evaluations to provide key threads of teachers' wants and needs. A full survey takes place in July.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Consideration of Autumn Term SIP Reports: <a href="#">Southwold</a>, <a href="#">Hoxton Garden</a> and <a href="#">Orchard</a></b>
6.1	SIP reports were undertaken in autumn, and a new SIP was provided from the local authority this academic year.
6.2	During the SIP visit there was discussion about school context, data outcomes covering the context of key target areas and vulnerable children in terms of pastoral and academic.
6.3	Making sure there is enough opportunity to evaluate SEND is a core focus area for SIP visits this year and one element is discussion with pupils. SIPs are meeting children to understand the received provision.
6.4	On the learning walk with the headteacher, key priorities were identified and included for future follow up. For Southwold, writing, SEND outcomes and apprentice teachers and, in Hoxton, marking, SEND and pupil voice articulation and, in Orchard, marking, pupil voice and leadership.
6.5	The SIP did a deep dive into subject areas, and was given the opportunity to talk to teachers and leaders and set key development points for school to reflect on as the schools move through the academic year, these reviews will be shared in sub committees in terms of seeing the core areas.
6.6	QUESTION: Is the SIP a headteacher? ANSWER: She was previously at New Regents pupil referral unit (PRU).
6.7	New exclusions guidance states that exclusions are now called suspensions unless referring to a permanent exclusion which remains called as such.
<b>7.0</b>	<b>School Sub Committee Feedback</b>
7.1	Southwold - SOB
7.1.1	The <a href="#">Southwold Committee meeting minutes of 17 November 2022</a> were shared for information.
7.1.2	KS1 outcomes reflected that in reading, writing and maths there was above average progress.
7.1.3	Outcomes at the end of KS2 were also above the national average.
7.1.4	All teachers are graded as good or better in school.
7.1.5	There were no suspensions or exclusions in the autumn term.



7.1.6	One child who was placed in New Regents PRU in the summer term successfully transitioned back to the school with no further suspensions or exclusions.
7.1.7	Pupil roll is stable at 367 and has now gone up by five.
7.1.8	Staff survey headlines reflected a positive outcome and lots of staff reported that they had appreciated the support they had received throughout the year.
7.2	Hoxton Garden - RA
7.2.1	The <a href="#">Hoxton Garden Committee meeting minutes of 1 December 2022</a> were shared for information.
7.2.2	There was a strong focus on outcomes for early years, KS1 and KS2.
7.2.3	KS2 outcomes are high in maths and reading and much higher than the national average score.
7.2.4	Staffing is stable and a new experienced special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) was welcomed into the senior team, and the induction is progressing well.
7.2.5	Average attendance was above national figures.
7.2.6	Quality Mark was in the autumn term.
7.2.7	The staff survey was positive.
7.2.8	Pupil roll is stable, with 20 new children in the last three weeks.
7.2.9	QUESTION: What is the status of children from the Afghan scheme? ANSWER: They have been relocated outside London, as unfortunately it was always going to be short term.
7.3	Orchard - RD
7.3.1	The <a href="#">Orchard Committee meeting minutes of 3 November 2022</a> were shared for information.
7.3.2	In terms of the autumn data, expected standard at the end of KS1 and KS2 phonics check and level of development, there is a very healthy data picture.
7.3.3	The teacher profile reflects two members of staff graded required improvement on CPD plans but they are now graded as good.
7.3.4	There had been a number of suspensions in autumn term, reasons were discussed, and there has been work with the re engagement unit, which is now free and a universal offer to all Hackney schools.
7.3.5	The third deputy head will be overseeing inclusion and will be line managing the two SENCOs.
7.3.6	The staff survey was discussed in terms of focus on staff wellbeing and strategies such as cutting weekly staff inset, starting it early allowing staff to leave earlier to get children and staff breakfasts.
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Link Governors and Training</b>
8.1	<a href="#">SEND visit at Hoxton Garden</a> - HL

8.1.1	<p>Discussion during the SEND governor visit at Hoxton Garden School included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● distinguishing different needs within SEND</li> <li>● Measures of progress with granular breakdown</li> <li>● Mental health provision and use of the children and adolescents mental health service (CAMHS)</li> <li>● Increased number of SEMH in KS1</li> <li>● Managing relationships with parents and carers of children with different types of needs and challenges</li> <li>● SENCO alert form for staff to flag concerns about a child</li> <li>● Meeting some of the children</li> </ul>
8.2	<p><u>Curriculum link visit at Southwold on 23 September 2023 - VC</u></p>
8.2.1	<p>Discussion during the Curriculum link governor visit at Southwold School included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Early years foundation stage curriculum</li> <li>● A class room visit</li> <li>● Reading through the curriculum and looking at development matters guidance which matched the school's curriculum</li> <li>● That the children are appropriately challenged and particularly in reception / getting ready for school</li> <li>● Learning environment contained appropriately challenging materials / also in reception, for example maths.</li> <li>● Promotion of tidying is a life skill, and self value</li> </ul>
8.3	<p><b><i>Action: RD to provide link governors with a more structured link visit template.</i></b></p>
9.0	<p><b>Any Confidential Business</b></p>
9.1	<p>The Chair or Clerk were not notified in advance of any Confidential Business.</p>
10.0	<p><b>Other Supporting Papers</b></p>
10.1	<p><a href="#"><u>Glossary of Common Terms</u></a></p>

The meeting finished at 8:00pm.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**James Gowland**

Chair of the Full Governing Body (FGB)

The Viridis Federation