

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

**Resources Governing Body Sub-committee
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams**

On Thursday 4th November 2021 at 4.30pm

Committee Attendees

Sara Walsingham (SW)
Laura Theobald (LT)
Giuseppa Colella-Mare (GCM)
Clerk: Manna Ghidey

James Gowland (JG)
Hanna Lownsborough (HL)
Rachel Davie (RD)

1. Apologies/Consent for Absence

Apologies were sent from Laura Theobald who was absent.

2. Governing Body Organisation *Election of Chair and Vice Chair*

The Resources Committee were all in agreement for the meetings to remain remote for the rest of the year.

a. Membership

Sara Walsingham was elected as the Chair of the Resources Sub-Committee and James Gowland was elected as Vice Chair.

b. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda & register of pecuniary interests for 2021-2022

(RD) Noted that there were some changes documented in the FGB and a reminder given to complete declaration – there were no updates and this had no effect on the resources meeting.

c. Acknowledgement of TOR

No changes or comments made.

d. Code of Conduct

No changes or comments made.

e. Governing Body Annual Calendar

All agreed with the resources meeting calendar. Next resources meeting is on 24th February 22.

3. Agreements of the minutes from the last meeting

No comments made, all in agreement.

4. ½ Year Budget Review & Forecast, current status

6 month budget review report was presented to the governors prior to the meeting

a. 6 month budget review

On 1st page of report - Income

(GCM) Noted The Federation will receive £260K more funding than predicted. The Federation will receive a 'recovery premium' for all children who receive PPG, in the sum of £145 per child, a second year extension of the 'covid catch up' funding.

(RD) Noted that for this academic year the recovery funding criteria has changed. Last academic year the 'covid catch up' funding was received for all pupils but for this academic year the funding applies to the pupils who are in receipt of PPG only. RD confirmed that the 'recovery premium' is included in the PPG statement.

(SW) Queried if this was why the 'covid catch up' funding was noted on I05 and not I18 in the report.

(GCM) Stated that the 'recovery premium' funding was considered as additional Pupil Premium funding hence allocated to I05. This affects approximately 650 children across the Federation. The final instalment of the 'covid catch-up funding' is due to be received in the current financial year and the additional PPG will be partially received in this financial year.

GCM does not anticipate any further changes to income for this financial year.

On 2nd page of report – Expenditure

(GCM) Stated that some savings have been made in salaries due to staff who have taken maternity leave who have not needed replacing due to held capacity within staffing teams. The initial plan was to employ a fixed term member of staff to cover maternity leave, which had been planned for in the budget. Instead of a fixed term contract, stable and reliable agency staff have been holding the roles. GCM noted that money allocated in the budget for the recruitment of contract Teaching Assistants have yet to be filled because recruitment has not as yet been successful despite two advertisement rounds.

(RD) Explained further that the quality of recruitment of TAs continues to be a challenge, not just for the Federation but across Hackney. This has meant reliance on staff coming thorough agencies which also varies in calibre. RD stated that the recruitment strategy and advertising has been reviewed and adapted and the Federation is currently advertising for Graduate Teaching Assistants. The role comes with a slightly different salary band and working requirements. The interest and response hasn't been what was anticipated. In the last 4 weeks only 12 applications have been submitted.

(HL) Queried if this was due to living standards in London and the new entry requirement following Brexit.

(RD) Stated that Covid and Brexit have had an influence. The Federation has had some support staff mobility over the last 2 years as a result of both. The uncertainty of the last 18 months has meant that some agency staff have pursued secure contractual work for example.

(HL) Queried whether there was any support from the LA and if the LA were aware of the issues.

(RD) Stated that Hackney Education have a training offer as well. RD stated that it is important the Federation is responsive in reviewing the recruitment process and adapting the ways of recruitment to meet the demand. There is the apprentice route into teaching, the graduate TA role and the Federation will continue investing in agency recruitment.

(SW) Asked whether there was a scheme similar to the Early Career Teacher programme linked to universities that applies to teaching assistants.

(RD) Explained that the ambition for the Graduate TA role is to employ a TA on a fixed term contract, with the intention that, after a year, the candidate will progress to the Apprentice Teaching Programme. The teaching apprenticeship applications went live last week and what RD expects to see a number of applications from candidates who have an interest in the Federation because they have knowledge of the Federation and will want to work in our school context. Through the Graduate TA role, there will be the opportunity to give a candidate who may not fit the criteria of the Apprentice Teaching role, a counter offer to gain a years' experience within the Federation and then continue working within the Federation through the Teaching Apprenticeship.

(RD) Stated that the Federation has a strong enough base of teaching assistants who have capacity, knowledge and experience to support and drive the graduate TA's. RD is mindful of the projected recruitment and covering gaps such as maternity leave and other absences.

(GCM) Explained that there had not been much change in buildings and maintenance expenditure.

(SW) Noted that she would have expected an increase in energy costs.

(GCM) Stated that energy costs had been expected to rise but since Hackney acquired a new company for gas and electricity no payments have been taken since April 2021 despite chasing them. However the money is accounted for in the budget. The only variable may be in building maintenance where 75-80% of the budget has been spent already. GCM stated that curriculum and IT budgets are on track to be spent in full; 63% has been spent thus far. The ICT budget for learning resources has almost been spent in full due to annual expenses in software and applications and the new iPads for EYFS.

(GCM) Noted that most changes in the budget have been seen in E26 and E27 for supply staff. The budget for teaching supply staff has been increased from £250k to £400K which counter balances the £150k that has not been spent in salaries. GCM does not anticipate any other changes in expenditure.

Final page of report – Capital money spent on buildings/improvements:

(GCM) Stated that so far the capital money has been spent on the works to the playgrounds at ORC and HG, the 3 year decorating programme, which is in progress, the refurbishment of the parent rooms and sheds across all 3 schools and the new iPads for EYFS plus added expense of replacing a broken classroom interactive board.

(GCM) Noted that £985K is predicted to be the carried forward. The money for the refurbishment of the Caretaker House at HG has been accounted for in the predicted C/F. However, applications had to be submitted to Hackney and the initial response from Hackney has been that in principal the refurbishment has been agreed but the plans need to be approved by the Council Committee due to the building being listed. The plans will then need to be brought forward through Hackney's procurement policy procedure, which may create some delays.

(JG) Asked if the estimate received was £400K.

(RD) Confirmed it was between £350-400K.

(RD) Stated that during the assessment of the school building for the façade works, it was noted that the steel canopy next to the caretaker house cannot be removed as it is protected by the environmental fiscal societies who are responsible for conservation areas and buildings. The assessment for the façade works also highlighted that there was cause for concern for the caretaker house as it is in a state of disrepair. RD has used this as an advantage in pushing Hackney to get the house project moving. RD is chasing this with vigour so that there is an outcome before the end of this month and so the money can be spent in this financial year.

(GCM) Stated that in the event that the house refurbishment does not get started in this financial year, as a forewarning, the total carry forward may be more but the carry forward as it stands has taken into account the £400K capital expense of the house.

(JG) Noted that it was good to see the shape of the budget and that it was a sensible reduction from £1.5mil to £1mil. JG stated it was a favourable problem to have but noted that the money needs to be spent.

(SW) Noted that building quotes can sometimes come in at 50% of the final total. SW asked if the amount of PPG is for the full academic year or if 50% is being paid in this financial year.

(RD) Confirmed that the federation will receive the next instalment in the next financial year.

(SW) Noted that it may be the case that the budget has been overstated. SW queried if there were plans to spend the extra PPG funding on the intended recipients.

(RD) Noted that last year the Federation had invested the catch up funding into a specific SaLT teaching assistant who is specifically trained for speech and language interventions. This has created more consistency in interventions and has allowed for less disruptions to class based TA responsibilities where TAs were previously being released from classes to lead the interventions. The impact of this has been seen in the data received from the intervention analysis and ensures funds are spent both accurately and with precision.

(RD) Noted that the funding has also been used for released time to support middle leaders supporting Early Career Teachers and making sure that there is enough high quality support and intervention going into developing their teaching practice.

b. Update on carry forward

Governors presented with the carry forward expenditure report seen in previous resources meeting

(RD) Stated that the progress of spending the carry forward had already been mentioned in the budget update but added that some of the C/F has been invested in IT hardware for EYFS so that all EYFS classrooms have a bank of ipads. This is to facilitate technology development for children and to make sure there is a breadth of learning resources embedded in all EYFS classrooms across all 3 schools. There is an EYFS development programme in place, focussing on the efficient use of the ipads in the children's learning.

(RD) Noted that the replenishment of library and reading books across the Federation is currently in progress. The schools are evaluating the breadth of books available and are ensuring that stock levels are at full capacity across all key stage year groups, especially for home reading books. The library renovations are planned to take place in the Spring Tem.

(RD) Stated that the telephone system upgrade across the Federation is partially complete but due to unforeseen issues with the servers on 2 sites it is currently on pause.

(SW) Queried what the additional costs of £3k was for.

(GCM) Stated that it was for any miscellaneous costs that may occur.

5. Staffing Update

Current structure including: pupil roll, recruitment, retention, teacher training, risks and priorities

An overview report was included in the pack presented to governors of the trend over time

(RD) Noted that it was agreed in previous resources meetings, that the trend overtime of staffing and pupil numbers was to be reported to the resources committee. The 1st table in the report details the total number of pupils on roll. (ORC→594, SW→347 and HG → 312). The total numbers from Autumn 2020 is also included as a comparison (ORC → 612, SW→ 366 and HG→299). Below this in the table is the

total capacity figures for each school (ORC→630, SW→420 and HG→420), the number of gaps excluding nursery and the total number of classes.

(RD) Stated that the pupil numbers on roll at HG have increased, partly due to the nursery recruitment drive and the trend of children transitioning from Reception to Nursery, which has been more consistent in the Reception cohort this year. At Southwold, there has been a slight decrease in numbers, due to some families relocating out of the immediate Southwold catchment area and there is also a significant number of children in the SW area who are part of the Jewish community. A number of children transfer out to Jewish schools in the Stamford Hill area. The Federation's numbers are typically stable compared with some schools in the borough. However, RD is mindful of the trends across the borough.

(RD) Noted that also included in the report was an overview of the Federations retention and recruitment numbers to show the trend in numbers of leavers across the Federation in the last 4 years. Last academic year there were 16 leavers in total across the Federation. One was due to retirement, one due to gaining a headship position, 10 were relocations out of London, 3 were due to different experiences and one leaver had moved into the private sector.

(RD) Stated that the apprentice teacher numbers have been stable over the last 4 years. Last academic year the number of apprentices reduced to 6 and it was anticipated that in the year moving forward there would be a further 6 apprentices. However, currently there are only three apprentices, due to the need for capacity in supporting newly employed Early Career Teachers (ECTs). This is to make sure the newly introduced programme that replaces the NQT programme is being developed effectively.

(RD) Stated that the priority is to continue effective leadership and to make sure it is sustained across time. RD noted that one DHT secured a headship outside of the Federation which was rewarding to know that the leaders of the school are exiting at that capacity. The aim is to grow leadership teams and increase capacity so that there is a secure succession plan in place at all levels. Maintaining the Apprentice Programme is also a priority. Stephen O'Brien is leading the Early Career Framework across the Federation. Stephen is responsible for developing, delivering, overseeing and assessing the programme.

(RD) Noted that the public profile of the Viridis Federation through action research continues to be a priority. The Federation has invested in a Communications Manager which has been an excellent resource in developing the Federation and will continue to do so. Impact has been seen in terms of public representation of the Federation and sharpening the recruitment process, especially in terms of presentation and advertising. The process of new staff inductions has been reviewed, with the staff profile in mind.

(JG) Stated that the pupil roll point and trend is one to watch especially if other school numbers are reducing quite significantly.

(RD) Added that there are other schools in the borough that have had significant drops in pupil roll numbers. RD is mindful of the trends in and around the schools' areas and will continue the drive to increase the pupil numbers. RD noted that the schools' public profile and communications would be

evaluated and would apply the same approach in increasing pupil roll numbers at HG to SW and ORC with vigour.

(JG) Noted that the 3rd bullet on the Current Risks & Priorities list plays into wellbeing of staff and whether the leadership structure alleviates the load fully.

RD is mindful of the leadership structure playing a part in maintaining good wellbeing across the staff. This includes regular evaluation of systems and feedback from staff. Communication, care and understanding are expected principles.

(RD) Noted that the leadership structure at ORC is a priority. Given the number of pupils, the structure needs to be evaluated regularly so that it works efficiently and effectively. This also means focusing on the right calibre of staff being recruited, which can be challenging.

6. Pay Committee Performance Management Update

Confirmation of Pay committee approval

(JG) Stated that on Monday 1st November the Pay Committee met with the support of Hilary Ryan to discuss and assess Rachel Davie's performance against the objectives and targets that were set last academic year. The committee found that RD highly exceeded on all targets set. JG noted that the same was done by RD for HT's projections and the proposed pay changes were accepted by the pay committee. The School Improvement Advisor was present to support the performance management evaluation.

(JG) Queried what the next step in the process was following the pay committee's decision.

(RD) Explained that JG needed to send the documents to RD and that there was nothing required to be done beyond this by the resources committee.

(RD) Noted that there are 6 applications for threshold for teachers across the federation for the upper pay scale. The applications will go through an assessment process and RD will consult with HR to ensure all the criteria are met. RD will relay the outcomes of the applications to the resources committee in the Spring Term meeting.

(SW) Asked if the threshold applications were dated from September.

(RD) Confirmed that if the applications were successful the teachers would receive back dated pay.

7. Health and Safety

- ***Outcome of Health and Safety Audit and Action Plans***
- ***Staff Training update including Health and Safety / Fire Safety***

Health and Safety Audit and Action Plan for all three schools was shared with the governors

(RD) Explained that the action plan for all 3 schools was detailed on 1 page and outlined the areas that were identified as risks during the H&S Audit. A review happens every ½ term during the premises meetings to ensure that the identified actions have been completed. RD stated that the majority of the actions have been completed and if the actions have not been completed, then those points were part of a rolling programme of H&S review that takes place.

(SW) Noted that it was concerning that ORC, being a new building, had so many action points, especially the point on asbestos.

(GCM) Noted that the asbestos is only removed if identified on the parts that are touched/exposed whilst building works are taking place. This particular area of concern was in the basement between the ceiling and floor of the level above. Hackney instructed a company to remove the asbestos present, which has now been completed. ORC is mostly free of asbestos now.

8. Premises Update

- ***Risks and longer term planning: façade works, Hoxton Garden caretaker house***

(RD) Noted that the façade works at HG, were well underway. Fortnightly meetings with the company undertaking the façade works are successful and there has been minimal impact on teaching and learning. The MFL room has been allocated as a spare room in the event that a particular area of the building is very noisy which will impact the children's learning. RD noted that during the fortnightly meetings, the company keeps the school informed of which areas of the building will be worked on, which helps to plan for potential disruptions to learning. One of the back entrances of the school is out of use to enable the movement of equipment and debris. GCM has reassessed the fire exits and evacuation plan, taking into account the door which is out of use. New amended signs have been put in place around the school.

(RD) Stated that the works are due to be finished by 24th December 2021. RD noted that ORC and SW are on Hackney's Long Term plan for façade works to be completed at some point in the future.

(RD) Stated that there are no other major risks across the 3 schools. . .

(JG) Asked where the figure of £400k for the refurbishment of the caretaker house was derived from.

(RD) Explained that the preliminary meetings with two architects were used to benchmark costs and to get an idea of what the refurbishment would entail. Both architects gave similar estimated figures and the top end figure given was £400k. Once the procurement process has taken place, a more finite cost would be established and a contingency fund put in place, but based on discussions so far it is a bit premature to anticipate the final costs.

(JG) Asked when the refurbishment is completed, what the planned use of the space would be.

(RD) Confirmed that the plan is to have three open planned learning spaces across 3 floors. Once completed, the refurbishment of the house will provide a unique selling point and puts the Federations at a potential advantage in terms of pupil recruitment.

9. Policies

a. Pay Policy

(RD) Noted that the updated version had only just been released by HE and was under review but would be adopted by the Federation.

b. Procurement Policy

Content has been reviewed and there are no changes to the policy but the committee is required to review it annually.

c. Code of Practice and Scheme of Delegation

Content has been reviewed and there are no changes to the policy but the committee is required to review it annually.

d. Finance Procedures

Content has been reviewed and there are no changes to the policy but the committee is required to review it annually.

The Procurement Policy, Code of Practice and Scheme of Delegation Policy and the Finance Procedures Policy have been approved by resources governors.

GCM will send electronic copies of the policies to the appropriate governors to sign and return.

10. Any Other Business

No other business.

11. Glossary of Common Terms

Meeting Concluded: 5.55pm