



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

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting

Held on 27th January 2022 from 6pm to 7:50pm via video conference

Governor	Role	Present at this Meeting	Attendance 2021-22
James Gowland (JG)	Co-opted Governor and Chair	✓	2/2
Laura Theobold (LT)	Co-opted Governor and Vice Chair	✓	2/2
Victoria Crawford (VC)	Co-opted Governor	✓	2/2
Hannah Lownsborough (HL)	Co-opted Governor <i>(joined meeting at 6:30pm)</i>	✓	2/2
Lenna Marson (LM)	Co-opted Governor	✓	2/2
Chisara Nwabara (CN)	Co-opted Governor	✓	1/2
Alberta Senyah (AS)	Co-opted Governor	✓	2/2
Sara Walsingham (SW)	Co-opted Governor	✓	1/2
Cllr Ian Rathbone (IR)	LA Governor	✗	1/2
Aya Haidar (AH)	Parent Governor	✓	2/2
Kay Richardson (KR)	Parent Governor	✓	2/2
Claudia Moreira (CM)	Staff Governor	✓	2/2
Rachel Davie (RD)	Executive Headteacher	✓	2/2
Others in attendance:			
Aimee Walker (AW)	Headteacher, Orchard School	✓	2/2
Stephen O'Brien (SOB)	Headteacher, Southwold School	✓	2/2
Rachel Adams (RA)	Headteacher, Hoxton Garden School	✓	1/2
Samson Brough (SB)	Associate Governor	✓	1/2
Clerk:			
Ghulam Abbas (GA)	Hackney Education	✓	2/2
Governor Attendance at this Meeting		92%	
Governor Attendance Year to Date		88%	

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Non-Confidential – Main Business

1. Apologies/consent for absence

- 1.1. Apologies were received from IR. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.
- 1.2. All Governors were content to hold the meeting via video conference.
- 1.3. CN was welcomed as a new governor to the Full Governing Body (FGB). SB was member of Hackney Young Governors Scheme and had recently joined as a new associate governor at Orchard. SB was attending this meeting as an observer to help support his development.

2. Governing Body Organisation

- 2.1. Membership of the FGB (Paper 2a) was reviewed. There had been no changes to the composition of the FGB since the last meeting.
- 2.2. Terms of Reference (Paper 2b) was reviewed. There were no changes to terms of reference.
- 2.3. Declarations of Business Interests were reviewed. There were no changes to the Register of Business Interests (Paper 2c)
- 2.4. There were no comments or changes made to the Governors' Code of Conduct (Paper 2d).
- 2.5. The FGB meeting calendar for the 2021/22 academic year was reviewed (Paper 2e). There were no changes. The next Governors' visit morning was scheduled for 2 February 2022 at Southwold, which will focus on PSHE and personal development. The next FGB meeting was scheduled for 19 May 2022 at Hoxton Garden.

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 7 October 2021, the following comments were made:
 - 3.1.1. Action 1.1: there were no new declarations made by governors. So there were no changes made to the Register of Business Interests.
 - 3.1.2. Action 1.2: was for Governors to review the meeting dates for 2021-22 for any issues or clashes. There were none, so this action was closed.
 - 3.1.3. Action 4.30: the word 'oracy' was added to the glossary.
 - 3.1.4. Action 1.3: All Governors had received their login details to access Hackney Education online training.
- 3.2. SW commented that the minutes had recorded her as having attended the meeting, when in fact she had not been able to attend. GA agreed to correct that error.
- 3.3. There were no other matters arising from the minutes.
- 3.4. The minutes of the last FGB meeting, held on 20 May 2021, were APPROVED as an accurate record by the FGB, subject to the change in SW's attendance.

4. Executive Headteacher's Report Spring 2022

Leadership and Management

- 4.1. Referring to Paper 4, RD reported that all pupils were now attending school full-time and have been doing so since the last lockdown period. Attendance across the three schools was 95.5%. This was above the Hackney average of 92%.
- 4.2. Covid risk assessments were still place and they were regularly being updated to reflect the

current government guidance, which is also being regularly updated. The planning for staffing last term had been a challenge due to Covid isolations. Minimising the disruption to pupils' learning remains a key priority, which will be helped by the Covid isolation period now been reduced to seven days. The Remote Learning Policy continues to be in place for pupils isolating due to Covid and they get individualised work packs based on what is being taught in class so that it is easier for them to re-join their class when they return to school.

- 4.3. Year 6, Year 2 and the Phonics Test pupils continue to be tracked. This tracking shows that Year 6 are on track to exceed 2019 national averages. The Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) will happen this year but the school-level results will not be published by the government. The Federation is continuing to ensure all children are being supported in all year groups through key interventions and review of progress conducted by teachers. The progress of disadvantaged children was a key focus of the reviews last term which were shared with each school sub-committee. Vulnerable children have also been identified and appropriate interventions have been put in place to support them.
- 4.4. The rolling cycle of teacher and apprentice teacher recruitment is continuing. However, the quality and calibre of applicants applying now is different than two years ago. The Covid context has also had an adverse impact on the availability and quality of agency staff. Many agency staff have gone into longer contract work making it challenging to find and recruit good quality supply cover or agency staff. The Federation is responding to this situation by advertising on-going vacancies across the breadth of roles in schools. However, the Federation is in competition with all other schools, which makes it challenging.
- 4.5. The apprentice teachers are continuing to work in close collaboration with London Metropolitan University. They are all doing well and are on track in getting the relevant skills and experiences to complete their apprenticeships. A high number of apprentice applications are being received for a September 2022 start. Hackney Education have visited the Federation to review the Early Career Teacher (ECT) Programme. The reason being that the Federation had opted to run a self-designed programme. The visit was successful and the Federation was meeting all the standards expected of an ECT programme. The Federation's recently qualified teachers are following an ECT second year programme. As it is now a two-year programme rather than a one-year programme, this provides them with additional support although not a statutory requirement for this year.
- 4.6. Action research projects have been initiated for this academic year across all phases. The fifth volume of research projects from the last academic year have been compiled and published on the Federation's website. The website also has all previous years' projects and shows the breadth of research that has taken place across the Federation.
- 4.7. The parent surveys were completed in the autumn term. Thanks to the huge effort put in by school leaders across each of the sites, the Federation received the highest number of responses ever. There were 172 responses at Hoxton Garden, 178 at Southwold and 346 at Orchard. The responses have been very positive with some good bespoke feedback. The full outcomes from the surveys will be shared at each sub-committee meetings this term.
- 4.8. The Federation continues to have focus on the wider curriculum and investment in enrichment opportunities for children. Despite the challenges of Covid, the schools have continued with enrichment weeks, trips and visits. These are all reported regularly in newsletters and on social media.
- 4.9. Orchard Primary School had a section 8 inspection in November 2021. The final report has been received this week and has been shared with Governors.
- 4.10. Southwold has successfully achieved the Green Flag Award, the second school in the Federation to do so. As a result, Southwold will be hosting a visit from 10 local schools in the summer term in collaboration with Hackney Education and Sustainable Hackney. The focus of the visit will be to promote the 'green' agenda and spread good practices around

sustainability. All three schools are also continuing to work towards achieving quality marks around identified themes or areas, such as parent partnerships, inclusion, anti-bullying and curriculum subjects.

Premises / Health & Safety

- 4.11. Covid risk assessments remain in place. All schools are still mindful of social distancing, and continue to have high levels of hygiene and a robust programme of cleaning in place.
- 4.12. All three schools are now part of the Hackney School Streets initiative which aims to tackle traffic congestion and improve air pollution outside school gates. The schools report back regularly on the effectiveness of the initiative and are working with Hackney to improve driver compliance, particularly at Southwold. The Federation is pushing for cameras to be installed on Detmold Road at Southwold to ensure driver compliance.
- 4.13. Fire drills took place across all three schools in the autumn term and are planned again for this term. Fire safety audits have taken place across all sites and the minor actions that were identified have all been completed.
- 4.14. The façade works at Hoxton Garden are due to be completed by February half term. Southwold and Orchard have façade works scheduled to start towards the end of the summer term. There has been a tentative agreement that these works will include window replacement at Southwold, which are in desperate need of replacing. Planning has started already about how these works will affect the access to and the running of the schools.
- 4.15. Health & Safety audits have been undertaken on all three school sites. There are currently no significant concerns. There was an issue with some asbestos found in the basement during a routine survey at Orchard, which has now been removed and dealt with.

Core Professional Development (CPD)

- 4.16. The Executive Headteacher's Report (Paper 4) sets out the core training that is taking place this term for both teachers and teaching assistants (TAs).
- 4.17. This half term, across the three schools, there is focus on the core curriculum, the SEND provision and an opportunity for teachers to get together from across the three schools to look at work outcomes and how they are implementing the curriculum on each site.
- 4.18. The TAs across the three schools access the same training and the same planned training is delivered locally, just like the teacher INSETs.

Current Federation Priorities

- 4.19. The Federation's current core priorities are around maintaining the quality first teaching approach. Identifying and effectively supporting SEND pupils, which is a carry forward from the Covid context.
- 4.20. Good attendance is being driven robustly across all three sites with strong tracking of key children. Those who are at risk of low attendance have appropriate measures to support them. The aim is to keep the Federation's average attendance above the Hackney average.
- 4.21. In light of the recent Covid context and the management of staff who have to isolate, teacher workloads and maximising policy efficiencies remains a core priority.
- 4.22. There is a continued focus on evaluating the in-house school leadership training programme, which is key to supporting sustainable succession planning. The Early Career Teachers Framework remains a priority, given it is in its first year of implementation. The Federation's aim is to maximise it along with the teacher apprentice programme to have a ready supply of good talent into the schools.
- 4.23. **JG asked about the statutory exams?** It was confirmed that the SATs will definitely go ahead this year. However, the school results from them will not be published on the government's performance tables website. Schools will still receive their results but there will

be no national accountability. The last published set of results available to the public will still be for 2019. This is in national recognition of the Covid context and that the education of children taking the tests has been disrupted.

- 4.24. **CN asked what the feelings or sentiment of staff, pupils and parents were about the easing of Covid restrictions by the government?** Everyone has done a really good job of being resilient. The parent communities across the three schools have worked relentlessly alongside school staff to ensure children are attending school. The small group of persistently absent children in each school are being tracked closely and daily actions are being taken to improve their attendance. There are challenges in dealing with staff isolation and the impact that has on the remaining staff in the schools. The Federation has lots of support structures in place. One of the schools has been hit harder than the other two in terms of Covid absences. The Federation is mindful of using those structures and has structured welfare check ins with staff and pupils regularly. Children though are very resilient and have bounced back brilliantly from all the concerns that the schools may have had about social engagement with each other and the interruption to social skills development that may have been adversely impacted from the lockdowns. There is support through a programme of social emotional learning including mentors for those children struggling to adjust. But overall the Federation is in a good place in terms of recovery, with gaps in learning and social development closing across all three schools.
- 4.25. **VC asked about for an update on pupil recruitment numbers?** Pupil recruitment is a hot topic across Hackney with many schools concerned about falling numbers. All three schools are in a stable position with no significant drop in pupil recruitment but it is something that the Federation is tracking very closely. The Federation also has the added security of its combined budget and reserves which provide some additional protection. Falling pupil rolls is a London-wide issues and discussion are happening between government, schools and local authorities about what funding or support can be provided.
- 4.26. In terms of Viridis, the numbers of families putting down a Federation school as their first, second or third choice school for admission into Reception in September 2022 is as follows: a predicted 50 intake for Hoxton and Southwold, which is strong position to be in, and a predicted 90 for Orchard. The actual allocations may change as the confirmed numbers will not be known until April.
- 4.27. **AH highlighted, that admissions at Southwold could be an issue, as some parents had concerns that it did not offer after-school clubs as late as other local schools?** The after-school provision runs to 5:45pm each evening, which is aligned with the site manager's and premises hours. There is also a breakfast club each day starting at 7:45am. This historically works well given current after-school club and admission numbers. However, if the after-school club or admission numbers do start to fall then the Federation would look to evaluate and could make changes accordingly.
- 4.28. The Covid context and the challenges with teacher recruitment are London-wide issues. **JG asked if the Federation was able to get any support from the local authority?** RD sits on the teaching schools and recruitment board at Hackney, which meets termly to discuss emerging borough-wide issues. In terms of strategies to address the issues; it is left to individual or groups of schools to determine and manage them. The challenges around recruitment are not new and have always been there with dips and peaks in people joining or leaving the profession from time to time. Reviewing the number of recent applications that the Federation has received, there has been a drop in both quality and number. The key is ensuring the right advertising and marketing avenues are used to attract the right calibre of individuals.
- 4.29. JG informed the FGB about the recent Hackney Virtual Governors Meeting where staff recruitment was discussed. Also, a slide was shown to Governors that set when each of the current year groups had last a normal school year. It was startling to learn that the current

Year 6's last normal school year was when they were in Year 3. Also, there are children who have started school but have never yet experienced a normal school year. This was a stark reminder of the impact that Covid has had on the education of children. This also highlights the importance of catch-up, the recovery curriculum and getting back to normality.

- 4.30. **KR asked when were the schools likely to get back to normal with regards enrichment activities, residential trips and trips abroad?** The Federation has always had a consistent drive to prioritise enrichment activities and its position in the curriculum. That expectation has not dropped off even though the Covid context has made it challenging. The schools during lockdown have had to adapt and improvise to provide virtual or remote enrichment opportunities to ensure the programme continued. All the three schools track the trips and enrichment activities to ensure there is equity amongst pupils and year groups.. With regards residential trips, these are on track to start again this summer and provision is being put in place for a Year 6 trip similar to the one they would have had in Year 5. The current Year 5 will also be having a residential trip.
- 4.31. **JG asked about teacher morale and staff wellbeing?** The structure and systems put in place by the Federation allow for stability and consistency in expectation which helps with typically supports staff morale and well-being. Orchard has had a tougher time with Covid absences than the other two schools, particularly as it has the greatest number of early career teachers. Teacher and staff wellbeing is discussed during senior leadership team meetings. The discussions are informed by feedback from middle leaders and staff. A staff survey is also due to go out shortly for the summer term; staff will have a chance to comment about their wellbeing and morale and identify things they would want to see improved. It is recognised that when staff have to isolate due to Covid, it can be challenging for the remaining staff to cover and cope with their absence. Support staff are also supported with their well-being through a tiered approach. There is regular dialogue and a range of measures put in place to support teachers, support and admin staff identified in the Health and Wellbeing Policy.

5. Autumn Term SIP Reports

- 5.1. The Ofsted inspection report for Orchard was shared with Governors today. The overall judgement from Ofsted was 'Good' with 'Outstanding' in personal development and in the Early Years. It was disappointing that the school did not get outstanding overall. There are very specific development points that have been identified in the areas that were judged as good. However, there were lots of positive comments throughout the report. The opportunities given to children in early years was commended. The teaching of reading was judged to be very strong as were the interventions for rapid progress.
- 5.2. The curriculum intent and the ambition for all groups was another real strength, as was pupil voice and the opportunities given to children to exercise that voice. The after-school clubs and enrichment programme were also summarised with secure positivity. Only two areas were identified by Ofsted for development. The first was the computing curriculum, which had not been as robustly exemplified as other curriculum areas. The inspectors conducted five deep dives into maths, reading, computing, Spanish and music.
- 5.3. The second area for development, whilst acknowledging good support structures, was around leaders acting quickly to address staff workload concern. The disruption relating to the Covid context already discussed is a contributing factor in this. Along with a less experienced teaching profile, including seven early careers teachers means adjusted strategies to reflect context are an important response. Actions will be put in place to address these areas of development and will be discussed in detail at the next sub-committee meeting.
- 5.4. **VC asked if the inspection was a surprise?** Yes, it was not anticipated this would happen as quickly as it did as Orchard were only just in the inspection window. Being a full inspection, it does mean the category of the school will be changed. The Ofsted inspection

handbook is clear in order to be judged outstanding, the school needs to meet all of the criteria within that grade. There is no leeway, which is different to the previous framework. Nevertheless, the issues are not systemic but specific which can be quickly actioned.

- 5.5. Governors were disappointed with the category change but did not want that to detract from all the excellent and positive work that the school did. It was noted the inspection framework had changed making it more challenging to achieve an outstanding rating – 52% of previously rated outstanding schools have had a category change under this new framework. However, the school now needed to focus on making the necessary improvements so that it can achieve an outstanding rating at its next inspection.
- 5.6. The SIP Reports for each school were from the autumn term visits conducted by the SIP from Hackney Education. The SIP during the visit examines a set of core aspects within each school, which are highlighted on the reports. They also examine the outcomes for pupils and the data for key groups of children such those who are disadvantaged or SEN. Across the three schools, all pupils were noted as being on track to make the expected progress for this academic year despite the partial closures. The provision around vulnerable children and exclusion is also looked at by the SIP. There were two exclusions at Orchard at the time of the report and the SIP looked at the processes for ensuring robust support and the right services were working alongside them to reduce exclusions in the longer term.
- 5.7. Curriculum development and implementation were looked at across the Federation by the SIP. It was noted that both the maths and literacy curriculums had been evaluated and updated for this academic year. There was also continued work going on with the geography and history curriculum to ensure teachers had a real breadth support in teaching them to children through the year groups so that they were able to articulate they know more and remember more. This articulation point, also came out in the Orchard inspection. The other aspect of the curriculum that the SIP noted was the changes to the Early Years curriculum that had been successfully implemented across the three schools by SOB.
- 5.8. Learning walks were undertaken across the three schools by the SIP accompanied by the Headteacher. These looked at the learning environment, children's learning behaviours and their learning content. That was supplemented by pupil voice discussions where the SIP met a group of pupils to talk to them about the humanities curriculum, how they were learning, how they knew they were developing and how they were connecting current learning to prior learning. Pupil voice was identified as a strength across the three schools. Follow up in the spring term SIP visits will assess progress and impact. It was confirmed that SIP visits were now being conducted in-person and the spring term visits were scheduled for March 2022.

6. Feedback from the School Sub-Committees

- 6.1. **Southwold** – SOB reported that at their last sub-committee meeting they had reviewed the attainment of Pupil Premium (PP) children; who make up 42% of the pupils at Southwold. PP children were attaining broadly in line or slightly above their peers, which was a really positive picture. Since the last meeting, the percentage of PP children at the school had increased from 40% to 42%.
- 6.2. The teaching profile was then discussed and currently 54% of teachers were graded as outstanding based on observations, learning walks and outcomes in books. Two teachers were graded as requires improvement but one of them has since left the school. The other teacher has been supported and is now graded good. So Southwold now has 100% of teachers graded good or better.
- 6.3. The sub-committee then discussed ECT and recently qualified teachers all of whom were on track to pass at the end of the year. Accreditations were then discussed as Southwold had been accredited for an IQM Flagship Award and was also awarded a Green Flag for being an eco-school, as mentioned earlier. The school was really pleased with these awards. Currently, the school is working on achieving a Rights Respecting Award, for which it has recently submitted an application.
- 6.4. On behaviour and safety, there had been one exclusion, which was discussed because the

child had been previously excluded. That child has now been offered a place in a specialist setting, which is better suited to support their needs. Operational data was then reviewed. The pupil roll at Southwold had dropped again ever so slightly. There are new children coming into the school but then there are also existing children leaving the school as well.

- 6.5. The staff survey was discussed and overall it was a very positive. Questions with responses below 90% were scrutinised and an action plan has been developed to address these areas. LM was congratulated for becoming the new Chair of the Southwold sub-committee.
- 6.6. **Hoxton Garden** – RA reported that the Hoxton sub-committee had focused on the Headteacher's Report, the school development and evaluation and staff survey.
- 6.7. In the Headteacher's report the outcome data was explored. The teaching profile was reviewed, there was a stable senior team with all teachers being assessed as being good or better. The school community was also discussed and the sub-committee was pleased that a significant number of the Reception cohort had come through the nursery. Hoxton Garden had also welcomed six Afghan refugee children into the school.
- 6.8. School development and evaluation was then discussed focusing on identified action points and how the school is supporting a return to full education and welcoming the community back into the school. Hoxton also had a positive staff survey and the strengths were discussed and how staff could be supported further.
- 6.9. **JG asked if other schools in the Federation had taken on Afghan refugee children?** It was confirmed Hoxton Garden was the only school. That was because refugee children were allocated schools nearest to where they were being housed. **AH asked how the school was getting over the language barriers with these children?** The Afghan children are provided with an ESOL teacher (funded by the City of London Corporation) who works with them in school to develop their English language and conversational skills. The children and their families are also receiving emotional support from social services, which the school can supplement if necessary.
- 6.10. **Orchard** – AW reported that the Orchard sub-committee also discussed the summer term data looking at disadvantaged pupils compared to their peers. In the autumn term, the disadvantaged pupils made up 50% of the pupils at Orchard. The sub-committee looked at the key year groups and what the next steps for them were.
- 6.11. The teaching profile was reviewed. Orchard has seven ECT and two apprentice teachers and four new teachers who joined at the start of the academic year. The induction plans to support them were discussed as well as the Covid absences that were impacting on staffing. A new deputy head had been recruited for the upper school and the induction that was in place to support her was discussed. It was also noted that the dissolving of Covid bubbles had had a positive impact on capacity within the school environment.
- 6.12. Behaviour and safety were discussed, the school had had 9.5 days of exclusions since the last report. The key provision for 4 children across Years 1, 2 and 3 was discussed with the view to personalised tracking and what external support was in place for those children.
- 6.13. The school roll was also reviewed, which in the autumn term was at 639 children. The outcomes from the staff survey were reviewed and what the next steps were in terms of staff training and support.
- 6.14. **KR asked if anything could be done with parents to get them to help out at the school to reduce the workload on teachers?** With Covid restrictions easing, the school was looking into welcoming volunteers back into the school particularly reading champions and volunteers in the class. The parents survey could be an opportunity to seek the views of parents and to get additional volunteers.
- 6.15. **SW asked if the roll of all three schools was affected by pupil mobility or was it just a Southwold issue?** All three schools were affected. The Federation has a mobility tracker and it can be reviewed in the sub-committee meetings.

7. Feedback from Link Governors, Link Governor Overview and Governor Training

- 7.1. A safeguarding governor link visit had not yet been conducted. RD reported that all the people involved in recruitment across the Federation, which includes senior team members, finance teams and HR teams across the schools were currently undergoing safer recruitment training to ensure they all had secure knowledge **to support compliance process**.
- 7.2. HL reported that she had a health and safety link visit arranged for later on this term. LT was in the process of arranging a link visit around the curriculum, teaching and learning and will report back in the summer term meeting.
- 7.3. Governors noted the upcoming training on offer from Hackney Education (Paper 7a). RD requested Governors attend the safeguarding training as a minimum. However, if Governors preferred a collective session on safeguarding ahead of the next FGB meeting could they let RD know and she would be happy to arrange one.

Action 7.3: Governors to let RD know if they would prefer to have a whole FGB training session on safeguarding instead of attending the Hackney Education sessions. Governors to alert RD to any completed training for the log.

- 7.4. RD also requested that Governors should also notify her of any training they had attended so that a governor training log could be kept.
- 7.5. JG highlighted safeguarding and how the Federation is governed were two key priorities that were picked up by Ofsted. So it was important Governors conducted link visits and undertook training, particularly safeguarding training. JG agreed to share the slides from the last Hackney Governors Virtual Forum as there was some really useful materials within them.

8. Any Other Business

- 8.1. There was no items raised under AOB.

9. Any Confidential Business

- 9.1. No confidential business or matters were raised.

10. Other Supporting Papers

- 10.1. Governors noted the glossary of common terms.

The meeting finished at 7:50pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

James Gowland
Chair of the Full Governing Body (FGB)
The Viridis Federation