

GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2022

TERMLY REVIEW

This is our final termly newsletter of this academic year. We do hope that this has been a useful way to share what Governors have been doing and how we work with the school leadership teams to support the best provision for our communities. This year we have held three full Governing body meetings and each school has held a local subcommittee meeting each term. We have also had the opportunity to visit each of the schools as part of the visit mornings and to see pupil learning opportunities in action.

In September Mr O'Brien will be taking up the role of Headteacher at Orchard School and the Governing Body are delighted to hear that Ms Carr, currently the Deputy Headteacher at Southwold School will be stepping in as Acting Headteacher to provide a stable transition. There will be re-advertisement of the role in the second half of the Autumn Term.

We have heard regularly across this year how provision for pupils across the three schools continues to reflect a high standard of education and rapid recovery from the COVID interruption is reflected in both the data and pupil articulation of their learning. We have also seen how the very broad and rich curriculum offer provides a number of opportunities to pupils through trips, enrichment days, community events and visitors. Most recently the federation have hosted their partner schools from Spain to learn alongside Viridis children. The schools have also hosted a number of best practice visits including 19 Hackney Headteachers to look at the way Viridis Schools leads on curriculum delivery and pupil voice. We look forward to sharing more updates in the new academic year.



GOVERNOR VISIT MORNING

Governors had the opportunity this term to hear personal accounts of the children's experience of mathematics at Orchard School. During a presentation, pupils explained how they are well-equipped with a wealth of resources, knowledge, personal and peer-to-peer support to enable them to become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics. They explained how this supports their conceptual understanding and how they are able to apply their knowledge rapidly and accurately.

During a walk around the school, governors were able to experience first hand how mathematics lessons are undertaken and how the subject is represented in the school environment. Governors left with a wealth of knowledge and a deeper insight into how the maths curriculum is implemented at Viridis Schools.



Governors heard from school leaders about both the Hackney headlines and national agendas in the Summer Term meeting. As a community we were united in upset to hear of the treatment child Q endured at a Hackney secondary school. The safety and safeguarding of our children is a core responsibility and priority for school staff, governors and families. We know that the incident raised worries for some about racism. Our school staff work hard to make sure that every child thrives.

Our schools have clear reporting lines where there are concerns and as a Governing Body we hear regular reports on safeguarding across our schools. We are always asking questions to ensure a consistent and robust approach. Viridis Schools are fully pledged to the Hackney anti-racist statement, leading on anti-racist practices and the tackling of disproportionality of pupils. We were pleased to hear of the attendance of our community at the recent school coffee mornings on tackling bias and racism and would like to thank our communities for the continuation of collaborative working that ensures the very best educational outcomes for all pupils.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN TALKING ABOUT?

We have many themes and discussion points that we revisit through the year. These are driven by both the national and local agendas. Our school sub-committees focus on areas that are specific to each school, but our full governing body also considers themes which are relevant to all three schools. As well as considering the important matters of financial security and pupil safety, some of the areas that have been a focus in the last year have been:

Communication With Parents

Governors have discussed the role of the new communications manager, how well the schools communicate with parents and the response to the annual parent questionnaire that is used to help inform our strategic planning.



Building and Premises

All three of our school buildings are very old, and despite significant investment require a lot of looking after! Recently Hackney Education undertook work at Hoxton Garden School to maintain the external building façade. There is similar work planned for both Southwold and Orchard Schools in the next year.

Staff Retention and Recruitment

There has been a widely reported national shortage of teachers and ongoing challenges for all schools recruiting and retaining staff.

This has been compounded in Hackney by rising rents and living costs. Governors have been hearing from school leaders about their work to ensure that good teachers want to work with our schools and in retaining the best teachers. This work has included a review of the staff wellbeing and workload review. Governors are also regularly updated on the training that our staff receive as well as the Federation teacher training programme for apprentices.



Curriculum Catch Up and Recovery

Government expectations of pupil achievement in reading, writing and mathematics when they leave primary school have significantly increased in recent years. Pupils at our schools achieve exceptionally well and make progress that is significantly better than other pupils in England. Governors have heard from school leaders about the strategies that they have adopted to make sure that pupils catch up following the COVID pandemic through academic and inclusive interventions that enhance quality first teaching in classrooms. The swift, robust and evaluative actions have meant data outcomes are in line with pre pandemic percentages.