



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

Held at 6pm on 18 May 2023 at Orchard Primary School

Governor	Role	Term End	Present	Attendance
James Gowland (JG)	Co-opted Governor and Chair	08/26 (T2)	Y	3/3
Laura Theobald (LT)	Co-opted Governor and Vice Chair	08/23 (T1)	N	0/3
Victoria Crawford (VC)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T2)	Y	2/3
Hannah Lownsborough (HL)	Co-opted Governor	08/26 (T2)	Y	3/3
Lenna Marson (LM)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T2)	Y	3/3
Chisara Nwabara (CN)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T1)	Y	1/3
Samson Brough (SB)	Co-opted Governor	08/26 (T1)	Y	3/3
Alberta Senyah (AS)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T1)	Y	3/3
Cllr Ian Rathbone (IR)	LA Governor	08/26 (T2)	Y	3/3
Aya Haidar (AH)	Parent Governor	08/25 (T1)	Y	3/3
Kay Richardson (KR)	Parent Governor	08/24 (T2)	Y	3/3
Claudia Moreira (CM)	Staff Governor	08/24 (T2)	Y	2/3
Rachel Davie (RD)	Executive Headteacher	n/a	Y	3/3
Others in attendance				
Stephen O'Brien (SOB)	Headteacher, Orchard School	n/a	Y	3/3
Rachael Carr (RC)	Acting Headteacher, Southwold School	n/a	Y	3/3
Rachel Adams (RA)	Headteacher, Hoxton Garden School	n/a	Y	3/3
Clerk				
Jane Ware	Hackney Education	n/a	Y	3/3
Governor attendance at this meeting			92%	
Governor attendance year to date			82%	

Actions Log

Meeting date	Item	Action	Person Responsible	Status
06/10/2022	7.1.4	AH to observe a link governor visit with HL	AH & HL	Completed
02/02/2023	8.3	RD to provide link governors with a more structured link visit template.	RD	Completed
18/05/2023	9.1.8	RD to share the wellbeing report with governors.	RD	Pending
18/05/2023	9.2.14	SB to share GDPR report with governors.	SB	Pending

PART ONE: Non-Confidential – Main Business

1.0	Welcome, Apologies and Consent for Absence
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to this meeting of the Full Governing Body.
1.2	Apologies were received from LT who has forthwith resigned due to moving to York.
1.3	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.
2.0	Governing Body Organisation Governors were reminded to read:
2.1	Membership
2.1.1	No changes were noted to membership since the last meeting, however with LT resigning there will now be a co-opted vacancy.
2.2	Viridis Terms of Reference
2.2.1	No changes were noted to Viridis Terms of Reference since the last meeting.
2.3	Viridis Register of Business Interests
2.3.1	It was noted that HL is doing consultancy for NAHT, rather than NEHT, so the register should be amended.
2.4	Code of Conduct
2.4.1	No changes were noted to the Code of Conduct since the last meeting.
2.5	Governing Body Annual Calendar 2022 / 2023 and Governor visits
3.0	Agreement of minutes from the last meeting and any actions arising
3.1	There were no comments on the minutes of the last meeting of 2 February 2023 , which governors APPROVED as an accurate record.
4.0	Current Focus and Priorities (responding to local and national context) - RD
4.1	Hackney 2030
4.1.1	Initiated by the local authority (LA), the Director of Education is staying in post until the end of 2024, and exploring the 2030 strategy with a new focus in terms of how education is moving forward.
4.1.	97% of schools are good or better in Hackney but recent changes are the Covid context, disrupting consistency systems at LA level and emerging priorities around school estates.
4.1.	There is a consultancy process, with leader feedback and ongoing contribution to both.
4.1.	This response from the LA focuses on: school improvement and development offer, pupil strategy and response in terms of falling roll, sustaining recruitment, and a digital and data strategy about the direction of technology.
4.1.	QUESTION: Presumably we have objectives in this process and what are the priorities? ANSWER: It is a consultative multidisciplinary process at top level, to ensure clear direction.

4.2	School Estate Strategy
4.2.1	The school estate strategy sits separately as it is running through until 2030, so it is a long term vision.
4.2.2	Six schools are under consultation to amalgamate or close, another 20 schools likely to fall into the amber category and more information will be shared in the next couple of months from Hackney Education..
4.2.3	There are three criteria which are 25%+ reception surplus primary spaces, 25%+ surplus spaces across the school building or a significant budget deficit.
4.2.4	There are 606 surplus reception spaces in Hackney for September 2023.
4.2.5	There is a London Councils Falling roll paper which projects across wider context of falling birth rate and more movement since covid in terms of remote working, which is London wide.
4.2.6	Reception numbers for the Federation are being carefully monitored. For Orchard a drop will result in a two form reception, which is a significant drop.
4.2.7	There is a 25% deficit in schools across Hackney.
4.2.8	Hoxton is stable.
4.2.9	Two schools for amalgamation or closure are in the vicinity.
4.2.10	Southwold has taken a 5-6 dip so it is fairly stable.
4.2.11	This is being marketed carefully with a revised strategy for nursery places to ensure capacity builds quickly.
4.2.12	QUESTION: What is the impact on pan at Orchard? ANSWER: Pan numbers are set for 90 at Orchard.
4.2.13	There are some sections more significantly affected such as church schools particularly, as they are vulnerable due to agreement requirements between the Diocese and the LA.
4.2.14	QUESTION: Is there a chance that the closure plan will get accelerated and the schools could get considered in the amber category? ANSWER: At present Hackney is two years ahead of predicted numbers so if the trajectory continues it would potentially make the Federation vulnerable.
4.2.15	QUESTION: Will we get a batch of children from closing schools? ANSWER: The consultation process takes a long time, there is some evidence of movement but it is too early to say what the impact on Viridis Schools might be.
4.2.16	QUESTION: So there are no proposals to merge any more schools? ANSWER: No, not at present.
4.2.17	QUESTION: Does the Hackney schools group still exist in terms of 2030? ANSWER: Yes. They input but there are not an active element at present. Hackney Education has been through a vulnerable time recently with senior staff changes, however

	Paul Senior is very collaborative in consultation, with feedback being gathered in various ways.
4.2.18	QUESTION: When will that be finalised? ANSWER: April/May 2024.
4.2.19	QUESTION: So we are well placed to address future challenges with strategies due to RD's involvement in various Hackney groups? ANSWER: Yes, and to contribute.
4.2.20	QUESTION: Are you concerned about moving to amber? ANSWER: No, not at present. In two years time, if the trajectory continues at Orchard that will be a concern. The budget is stable. The three school units are in a strong space. Nursery recruitment is active and critical to ensure we have the biggest presence for new families coming through.
4.2.21	There have been Council assurances that community use is ideally sought for the buildings that close as schools.
4.2.22	There are concerns about the domino effect if multiple schools close over an extended period.
4.2.23	There have been discussions about if the situation is reversed in future years.
4.2.24	QUESTION: Are families worried about this? ANSWER: At present this is an adult led discussion. Parents at schools that are red are opposing decision to amalgamate or close.
4.2.25	QUESTION: Are you anticipating impact on staff retention? ANSWER: No, at present we are stable. It could increase staff leaving Hackney in terms of feeling unsettled. Hackney is also at risk of losing some excellent head teachers which would be detrimental to the borough.
5.0	Executive Headteacher's Report (Summer Term 2023) - RD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actions & impact against areas for improvement ● Staffing and teacher professional development & impact ● Provision for all groups of pupils ● GDPR & Healthy Safety Report
5.1	A temporary deputy headteacher has been appointed to cover maternity leave at Southwold.
5.2	Southwold will be recruiting in autumn to the HT role.
5.3	A systems and technology manager was appointed to work alongside communications manager to ensure that there is a sustainable structure to continue the rigour in terms of wider context and business manager's move towards retirement, as a sustainable long term solution for the Federation.
5.4	There has been an audit of teaching staff completed in terms of their intentions, and results showed that above 85% expected to stay in September 2023.

5.5	Teacher recruitment continues to be an issue as it does nationally.
5.6	The teaching assistant (TA) role has changed slightly as it is often used to gain experience for teacher training and move on rather than staying in the role and it is not easy to mitigate this turnover.
5.7	Statutory testing in years 2 and 6, informs pupil progress interventions for closing gaps and catching up, and this information is shared in sub committees.
5.8	SOB and RD continue to be school improvement partners (SIPs) and have undertaken Ofsted visits.
5.9	Leadership training at the LA means that the Federation will deliver that to leaders across Hackney.
5.10	Links to teacher training are kept open via connections including London Metropolitan University.
5.11	Some pupils participated in a language and literacy project with partner schools from other countries, and whilst funding ends this year for this, alternative funding is being sought to enable it to continue.
5.12	Connections are made with other schools with strong Spanish teaching and learning walks are offered to other schools that visit.
5.13	Science day and keeping healthy week are happening this term.
5.14	Fire drills are undertaken termly.
5.15	Facade works were due to take place in April 2023 but this has not started due to complications with the Hackney contracting process and it was pulled at the last minute, the new start date is not known but is being sought.
5.16	Defibrillator training has been undertaken by the whole senior team.
5.17	The project management team is undertaking feasibility around the house at Hoxton Garden, with an anticipated 10 month timeframe.
5.18	Contracted work will happen within the next four weeks.
5.19	The further decay to windows at Southwold is being monitored, Hackney have done a safety check, this is within the scope of Southwold facade with immediate remedial works in place in next few weeks as cautious action.
5.20	The library has been completed at Hoxton Garden and pupils are using it at lunch time.
5.21	Further research projects are underway, continuous professional development (CPD) is in place and ongoing.
5.22	Attendance is still critical nationally and locally, lates and rates of absence are consistently monitored and the picture is different from pre-covid.
5.23	national guidance for attendance was adopted into policy in September although most of it

	was there already.
5.24	Viridis schools' attendance is stable but not the same level since prior to covid.
5.25	Flexibility around working patterns is very different and the perception around schooling has changed, as some children did not attend school during lockdown.
5.26	Rigour and communications are in place to ensure the whole community is included.
5.27	The persistent absence of 18.5% nationally in primary is a concern, overall including secondary it is 21.8% and it was 7.8% in 2018-2019 primary and secondary.
5.28	QUESTION: Why are the schools really strict on attendance compared with other schools in Hackney? ANSWER: There is an accountability as it is a child's entitlement that we advocate for, and across Hackney schools this is strict, there is a target set nationally and locally and Ofsted also monitor this. There are many impacts of poor attendance.
5.29	Marketing analysis continues in terms of the context of falling roll and there is strategic forward planning.
5.30	QUESTION: Is there any data to show projections? ANSWER: Anecdotally, but it is a bit early for concrete evidence. Presence on social media and the website are really important. Community pages on the website support networking for the wider community.
5.31	QUESTION: What is the impact of the teachers' strikes? ANSWER: We were partially open across all three schools according to teachers that came in. There is currently balloting with one union and there are likely to be more strike days. There are three coming before the end of the academic year although the days are not known. All staff have been very good at communicating. This is not about the school community. It will be impacting teacher's pay.
6.0	School finance and resources, including approval of budgets summary and recommendation to FGB): CoG on behalf of the Chair of Resources committee. Approved by FGB. a) Budget 2021/22 b) Budget 2022/23
6.1	Most of the spend came in line with agreed budgets.
6.2	There has been a sizable bring forward balance in recent years which remained around £1M and some of this has been used so there is a less carried forward.
6.3	Funds have been set aside for the care taker's house.
6.4	There was peer financial benchmarking, in terms of how similar sized federations manage their finances and the only comparable setting with similar demographic, pupil premium children numbers, income and context is New River College in Hackney.
6.5	The budget has been set for the current year as expected.
6.6	Resources are managed as a federation which has been the case for a number of years

	now and finances are fairly secure which is positive.
6.7	QUESTION: So despite the energy and cost of living crisis, the school is all right? ANSWER: There has been termly analysis around resources, the energy crisis was a concern so a budget tracker was initiated that looked at this. Hackney secured a deal which stabilised all the schools' prices ensuring minimal impact. There are various spotlights and trackers around different areas of the budget.
7.0	School Sub Committee Feedback
7.1	<u>Southwold - RC</u>
7.1.1	The Southwold Committee meeting minutes of 9 March 2023 were shared for information.
7.1.2	Standards remain high across the school.
7.1.3	Years 2 and 6 are on track to exceed national averages and all children are exceeding in progress.
7.1.4	There has been an increase in outstanding teachers on autumn term comparison.
7.1.5	86% of staff intended to stay.
7.1.6	There has been only one resignation so far.
7.1.7	In terms of behaviour, safety and wellbeing, behaviour incidents are in line with last year, and there are no suspensions or children at risk of exclusion.
7.1.8	There were 367 children on roll in autumn and now this has moved up to 381, so pupil roll is stable.
7.2	<u>Hoxton Garden - RA</u>
7.2.1	The Hoxton Garden Committee meeting minutes of 16 March 2023 were shared for information.
7.2.2	Outcomes from autumn data collection showed most children expected levels.
7.2.3	Staff remain stable.
7.2.4	Pupil roll remains stable and has increased over time.
7.2.5	Attendance remains above national averages.
7.2.6	The supportive review identified core strengths and the threads which we continue to work on.
7.2.7	The parent survey results were really positive.
7.2.8	The school ensures that the website is widely used and parents know how to use it.
7.2.9	Looking at staffing levels and making sure we are on top of vacancies remain priorities.
7.3	<u>Orchard - SOB</u>

7.3.1	The Orchard Committee meeting minutes of 23 February 2023 were shared for information.
7.3.2	Outcomes were in line with summer data harvest.
7.3.3	The teaching profile shows that all teachers are graded good or better which is a 10% increase on autumn term, the staff survey in January showed that 84% wanted to stay and to date there has only been one resignation.
7.3.4	Blue forms were discussed in terms of tracking system and how the number had decreased in the previous year.
7.3.5	Pupil roll was stable in spring term, and now there are 629 pupils so very stable despite anticipated drop in reception but rest of schools is very stable.
7.3.6	Year 2 and 6 student progress has been tracked in terms of reading and writing, and interventions were put in place which has resulted in the pupils being on track.
8.0	Annual Safeguarding Report to Governors
8.1	There is a breadth of training across staff, there is top up for senior leaders to undertake extra training such as adultification, sexualised behaviour, child sexual exploitation and county lines training to ensure the senior management team (SMT) and designated safeguarding lead (DSL) are up to date.
8.2	Safer recruitment is taken up more widely by staff including learning mentors, so beyond the SMT.
8.3	All staff receive top up training in September in accordance with updates from KCSIE and all governors have had safeguarding training.
8.4	Safeguarding and related policies are updated regularly in accordance with guidance.
8.5	QUESTION: Are core groups for the management of children on child protection plans? ANSWER: Yes, and the groups include health, social care, schools and other involved professionals.
8.6	QUESTION: What is AFC? ANSWER: It means adopted from care.
8.7	QUESTION: With distribution of referrals are there any changes or is there no such things as a typical spread? ANSWER: There is no such thing as a typical spread.
8.8	QUESTION: Have safeguarding referrals increased post covid? ANSWER: It is fairly stable in terms of numbers year on year. There has been a shift to more child protection than child in need.
8.9	QUESTION: Is the record of concern reported by staff related to safeguarding? ANSWER: Yes. This is about vigilance and concerns which may be a small piece of what could be a bigger jigsaw but it does not mean it will meet a threshold.
8.10	QUESTION: Do you think an increase in sensitivity could explain the increase in numbers?

	ANSWER: The Hackney context of Child Q has been included in safeguarding training but we want staff to be vigilant so that things can be explored and closed down. The systems are embedded and well known and staff utilise them. For example, a child who has consistently dirty clothing or smells would trigger a form being completed.
8.11	QUESTION: Is KCSIE an annual refresh? ANSWER: Yes. This is an important vigilance at government level.
9.0	Link Governor Feedback
9.1	<u>Wellbeing - KR</u>
9.1.1	KR met with SOB and attended training with Hackney Education on how governors ensure emotional and mental health of children, which is about the school's responsibilities of the wellbeing of the child, through the wellbeing policy, promoting kindness, having pupil voice and enabling children to articulate feelings.
9.1.2	The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is used for this and methods are used to identify issues.
9.1.3	Teachers can explore this in terms of helping children with finding solutions and staff are trained to notice changes and make safeguarding notes, using the emotional coaching model that they are trained in.
9.1.4	Parents are also supported through coffee mornings and inclusivity, celebrating community cultures, and the trip to Tenerife was to broaden horizons.
9.1.5	Gender focused comments are avoided as per policy, unconscious bias training is in place to ensure equality, fairness and improve outcomes and the curriculum was reviewed to ensure it is reflective of the community, coffee mornings held to engage certain sections.
9.1.6	Different PSHE drop in days will be trialled.
9.1.7	Staff wellbeing is a priority and there is a real Federation focus on managing workloads, staff can confidentially access employee helplines and there is SEN leadership support for emotional health needs.
9.1.8	So few teachers leaving reflects positively on staff wellbeing within the Federation.
9.1.9	There are links with the wellbeing and mental health service (WAMHS).
9.1.10	Unlocking potential is a bought in service which works well.
9.1.11	At Orchard, 134 children accessed speak ups and lots of one to one therapy was taken up.
9.1.12	The World Health Organisation (WHO) state of wellbeing definition has been added to the wellbeing policy.
9.1.13	There have been a few actions from training, such as as a Federation we should think about how good mental health is promoted in newsletters and parents evening, and how services in school can be signposted, thinking about language around mental health, and modelling good mental health around key times such as statutory assessment tests

	(SATs).
9.1.14	The introduction of mental health ambassadors was suggested by Hackney Education, and also consideration of the parent journey.
9.1.15	Link governors should also think about how different areas link to good mental health.
9.1.16	Governors are encouraged to share local community information.
9.1.17	QUESTION: What is the unconscious bias reference about? ANSWER: It is about not placing emphasis on gender and about being conscious about language, particularly in terms of the teacher relationship.
9.1.18	Action: RD to share the wellbeing report with governors.
9.2	<u>GDPR - SB</u>
9.2.1	Data protection was discussed at a meeting on GDPR, ranging from SIMS to USB sticks.
9.2.2	Every school has independent records separate from each other and they also keep hard copies.
9.2.3	Payments require two sign offs in terms of accountability.
9.2.4	In every school there is an IT lead and they meet each term.
9.2.5	Acceptable use of IT systems is signed by parents and its stipulation includes how to prevent cyber attacks.
9.2.6	Emails are kept for two years before deletion, whilst child and staff documents are kept for six years.
9.2.7	USB use has been reduced.
9.2.8	Since GDPR came in in 2018, parents are periodically sent statutory notices and children need permission for anything outside the statutory requirements.
9.2.9	Hackney provides an annual audit and training.
9.2.10	Subject access requests need to be added to the glossary as parents can ask for information about their child and this can be difficult for schools in terms of being timely.
9.2.11	QUESTION: How often do these requests come through? ANSWER: On average, three to four times per year. When they come in at the same time it is challenging. This is managed by only keeping emails for two years.
9.2.12	Moving to the cloud would mean a different form of data collection and different elements of GDPR, and digital storage allows easier searching.
9.2.13	QUESTION: Has there been any shared learning from the incident at Mossbourne? ANSWER: Yes, in response we did a data hack check. A separate business service looked at our vulnerability to cyber attack and it was all checked. This is part of a cycle of checking.

9.2.14	Action: SB to share GDPR report with governors.
10.0	Governing Body Recruitment - RD a) Governor Recruitment Advert b) Nomination Form example
10.1	The plan is to use our own networks for governor recruitment, which is anticipated starting in September, and to consider local networks.
10.2	The communications manager will finalise the advert and recirculate it to the governing body.
10.3	QUESTION: Are there any other qualities other than being local that are being sought? ANSWER: Yes, the skills audit identified the need for a governor with strengths in contracts, estate management and finance.
10.4	It was suggested that the desired skills could be more obvious in the advert.
10.5	QUESTION: How many governors are being sought? ANSWER: One governor and possibly up to two associate governors.
11.0	Governor Communication - RD
11.1	Governors noted the following: a) Programme of Governance meetings in 2023-24 (draft) b) Training Updates c) Draft format for link visits
11.2	RD asked governors to confirm if they are not available for any of the meeting dates.
12.0	Policies - RD
12.1	SEND Policy Review
12.2	RD advised that in wording highlighted in red shows amendments resulting from the review.
12.3	QUESTION: If children with SEN are in need of a specialist setting, how are they supported whilst they remain in the school? ANSWER: For a child with a range of needs that cannot be met in mainstream education, an Education Health Care Plan is likely which will have funding, the highest level enables more support such as add ons and more support.
12.4	QUESTION: And you typically take one or two children? ANSWER: The LA makes the decision about where the children are being placed, it is not the school's decision.
13.0	Any Confidential Business
13.1	The Chair or Clerk were not notified in advance of any Confidential Business.
14.0	Other Supporting Papers

The meeting finished at 8:00pm.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

James Gowland

Chair of the Full Governing Body (FGB)

The Viridis Federation