

GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2023

TERMLY REVIEW

Welcome to our termly Governing Body newsletter, the purpose of which is to keep our school communities informed regarding the activities of the Federation Governing Body.

This term we said goodbye to one of our long standing co-opted members, Laura Wiersema who has moved out of the London area. She has contributed significantly to the governing body over the years and has supported newer governors in developing the essential skills necessary for governance. We wish her all the best.

This year the Viridis Schools Governing Body held three full governing body meetings and visited each school whilst it is in session. The school sub-committees and resources sub-committee have also held termly meetings. As governors, we offer strategic guidance rather than getting directly involved in the operational aspects of a school. This involves working with other board members to plan the school's strategic direction, overseeing the school's financial performance and ensuring money is well-spent and holding the school leaders to account.

We have worked alongside our new clerk this year, Jane Ware, who has taken responsibility for minuting our Full Governing Body and sub-committee meetings. She also provides guidance and advice on matters relating to governance as well as ensuring that the Governing Body work within the current framework.

At Viridis Schools, we are proud that our pupils receive a core offer of high expectations of achievement in the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics meaning pupils leave our schools ready for secondary school. We are equally proud of the broad range of enrichment opportunities we offer. During the last year, we have continued to offer chess, cycling, a residential trip for Year 5 children, instrumental lessons, trips (both in London and further afield), workshops and theme weeks. In addition, a group of pupils from across the schools visited Tenerife as part of the Hackney Erasmus project. We are delighted to have recently secured more funding to support further visits abroad.



GOVERNOR VISIT MORNING

Each term governors visit one of our schools during the day. The visit includes visiting classrooms, speaking to children and meeting with staff. This provides an opportunity to compare what we see with what we understand from the termly reports we receive from the Headteachers. This term the visit was to Orchard School with a focus on the wider curriculum. We learnt about the curriculum model and looked at children's work outcomes as well as discussing their learning with them. We were very impressed with the strong knowledge children hold and what they can remember from their previous learning.

GOVERNOR LINK VISITS

The Governing Body have strategic leadership responsibility for the Federation's safeguarding arrangements. Our Chair of Governors is the Safeguarding Link Governor and meets with the Federation Designated Safeguarding Lead to know, understand and check the systems in place.



The policies are reviewed by school leaders and the Governors every year and all Governors undertake safeguarding training. This term the link safeguarding meeting focused on the provision in place for children who are looked after.

Our Link Governor for Health and Safety met with the Federation Business Manager this term to understand data protection and the work undertaken to ensure safety and compliance. This included discussions on how data is stored and what training staff undertake.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN TALKING ABOUT

We have many themes and discussion points that we revisit throughout 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.

Resourcing

Managing the school's resources is a complex task, whether it is balancing the finances, recruiting staff, or providing and equipping the classrooms and associated facilities. This year has been no exception. You will be aware from the media that school finances are under strain as all schools struggle with unfunded pay increases and inflationary pressures. The Federation finished the financial year with a healthy reserve to carry forward to next year and safeguard continuity provision for all three schools.

Diversity in the Curriculum

Governors are regularly updated on how the curriculum is relevant, purposeful and accessible to every child. Schools have updated the libraries to ensure that the widest possible range of topics and authors are available to help children relate to the story and promote a love of reading. Subject Leaders have reviewed the curriculum so that a diverse range of scientists, artists and important people in history are being studied.

Attendance

Nationally attendance has been very affected by the pandemic. Attendance is monitored in each sub-committee meeting to understand individual school patterns. Whilst attendance is above national averages at 94% across the three schools, there remains a focus on ensuring every child has their full entitlement to education and that all three schools regain pre-pandemic attendance levels of 97%. Governors have learned this year about the careful tracking in place to identify and support families where absence reaches a persistent level (10% absence or over), and how the schools work with the Hackney Attendance Officer to ensure actions taken to support are in line with school and Hackney policy.

