



The Viridis Federation of

Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden Primary Schools

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting

Held at 6pm on 6 June 2024 at Hoxton Garden Primary School

Governor	Role	Term End	Present	Attendance
James Gowland (JG)	Co-opted Governor and Chair	08/26 (T2)	Y	3/3
Victoria Crawford (VC)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T2)	Y	3/3
Hannah Lownsborough (HL)	Co-opted Governor	08/26 (T2)	N	1/3
Lenna Marson (LM)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T2)	Y	3/3
Chisara Nwabara (CN)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T1)	N	2/3
Samson Brough (SB)	Co-opted Governor	08/26 (T1)	Y	3/3
Alberta Senyah (AS)	Co-opted Governor	08/25 (T1)	Y	3/3
Clr Ian Rathbone (IR)	Local Authority (LA) Governor	08/26 (T2)	N	1/3
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	3/3
Rachel Davie (RD)	Executive Headteacher	n/a	Y	3/3
Tolu Ojo-Williams (TOW)	Governor		Y	2/2
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 Kinder (RA)	Headteacher, Hoxton Garden School	n/a	Y	3/3
Clerk				
Simon Bravery	Hackney Education	n/a		
Governor attendance at this meeting			79%	
Governor attendance year to date			83%	

Actions Log

Meeting date	Item	Action	Person Responsible	Status
18/05/2023	9.2.14	SB to share GDPR report with governors.	SB	Completed
05/10/2023	8.6	Governors to share all training attended with RD. <i>This is an ongoing request to all governors.</i>	Governors	Ongoing
05/10/2023	8.8	RD to share safeguarding training dates with governors.	RD	Completed
08/02/2024	2.3.1	TOW to be sent declaration of interest form.	Clerk	Completed
08/02/2024	3.2.	Social emotional mental health (SEMH) to be added to glossary		Completed
08/02/2024	4.1	RD to arrange OFSTED training and share notes and previous OFSTED questions	RD	Completed
08/02/2024	4.1	Materials examining options for the schools' future to be circulated and subject to be on the agenda of next Full Governing Body meeting.	RD/Clerk	Completed
06/06/2024	4.4.3	RD to send an invitation to governors for 3 July 2024 to attend an online session on Ofsted questions.	RD	Pending
06/06/2024	9.2.1	KR will circulate a report about Why Unlocking Potential is used and the impact it has on the wellbeing of pupils.	KR	Pending
06/06/2024	11.1	Governors were asked to check the dates for 2024-25 and advise if they were not able to make any so that RD can make any necessary adjustments.	Governors / RD	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 and accepted from IR, HL and CN.
1.3	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.
2.0	Governing Body Organisation
2.1	Membership
2.1.1	Membership was acknowledged.
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 there were no declarations of interest.
2.4	Code of Conduct
2.4.1	The code of conduct was noted.
2.5	Governing Body Annual Calendar 2023/24
2.5.1	The governing body annual calendar was noted.
2.5.2	See 11.0 for next year's dates.
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 8 February 2024 , which governors APPROVED as an accurate record.
3.2	Updates on actions were noted in the actions log on page 2.
4.0	Current Focus and Priorities (responding to local and national context) - RD
4.1	Hackney Education Leadership Team - RD
4.1.1	<p>Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jason Marantz is taking over from Paul Senior next term as Director, and a new assistant director will be starting in school estates. ● Core priorities still exist in terms of relationships with the local authority around special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and communication. ● Jacqui Burke has returned to work, having been off for some time. ● Dawn Carter-MacDonald who was interim Chief Executive of Hackney has now been appointed permanently in the role.

4.2	<u>School Estate Strategy - RD</u>
4.2.1	<p>Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School estates impact has been significant. Hoxton Garden has taken 38 children from closing schools. ● Some schools are temporarily reducing their pupil admission number (PAN) from September 2025, reducing surplus places by 18%. ● Reception surplus spaces are anticipated to be between 5-10% higher than the benchmark so there will still be gaps. ● Orchard PAN has been temporarily reduced from 90 to 60 intake for affordability reasons. Hoxton Garden has been temporarily reduced from 60 to 30. ● Two thirds of maintained primary schools are predicted to be in deficit budgets for this financial year and there is a 70% reduction predicted in carry forward over two years. ● For Hackney the carry forward moves from £9.9 million to £2.6 million for primary schools. ● Falling rolls advisory group has met twice since the last half term, RD attends and positioning is discussed now and moving forward, a core issue is the lack of affordable housing in Hackney. ● Current proposals are about having a formed position matrix to indicate schools at greater or lesser risk. ● Some variables in predictions about housing suggest immediate decision making but there are two camps in terms of waiting to see what happens or responding to the situation now around closing schools.
4.2.2	<p>QUESTION: It is difficult to predict pupil roll in London, but there was an expectation about recovery in 2027-28?</p> <p>ANSWER: It is too unpredictable to say, there might not be a migration back into city spaces. Working styles have changed significantly with blended working and living. The federation has made active decisions around temporarily reducing PAN to manage the budget. Permanent PAN reduction might be required in coming years as there isn't going to be a period of recovery quickly enough.</p>
4.2.3	<p>QUESTION: Does the reduction of PAN last for one year?</p> <p>ANSWER: It is a temporary decision about that one year group and will carry forward unless there is agreement with the LA to remove.</p>
4.2.4	<p>QUESTION: Is there another wave of school closures?</p> <p>ANSWER: No, not at present. The sustainability matrix will come out before the end of the academic year. There will be a new person leading in September which could change the direction of things slightly. Whilst we have to stop and wait for this, in the meantime we have to actively make decisions to support the federation.</p>
4.2.5	<p>QUESTION: It is positive that different departments are communicating with each other about and acting to practically mitigate against the different issues, isn't it?</p> <p>ANSWER: Yes, but we still do not have a decision from Hackney about their next intentions.</p>
4.2.6	<p>QUESTION: Is there any evidence of people transferring into the state sector from the private sector?</p> <p>ANSWER: No. It is the level of single housing and single employment rather than sustained employment for families.</p>

4.3	Vancouver Report - SOB.
4.3.1	<p>Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hackney Education sent a group of various leaders on a study tour to Vancouver. ● There are already existing links between Vancouver and Hackney. ● Really good communication was observed. ● Everything was linked to the school story, rather than a learning development plan. ● Storytelling was the format for connecting and communicating in every scenario, particularly in relation to the indigenous people of Canada, and the start of all introductions was with land acknowledgement. ● Values and beliefs came through storytelling, and justice, enquiry, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) are words frequently articulated by students. ● Takeaways are that storytelling boards will now be used across the federation and consideration will be given to providing staff with a diploma in leadership, transformation and change. ● Social issues in Toronto such as falling rolls were particularly significant in suburbs but not so much in the city centre. Similarities were observed, reflected on and discussed.
4.3.2	<p>QUESTION: Is the JEDI concept going to be developed beyond Viridis, and practised across the borough? ANSWER: The concept is being explored by the network with the intention of developing this line of thinking in Hackney.</p>
4.4	<u>Ofsted Update: Being Ofsted Ready and Ofsted Questions</u> - RD
4.4.1	<p>Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Core structures support always being Ofsted ready. ● Core concepts that governors actively participate in are revisiting safeguarding throughout the year, regular absence and attendance checking and monitoring and statutory duties including reviewing policies at different points in the year through the FGB and subcommittees. ● On 3 July at 4pm, a session will be held online to address Ofsted questions, and governors will be invited to attend this. ● Ofsted are up to date with inspections and there is a probable possibility that Southwold and Hoxton may be visited this half term. ● Changes to the Ofsted framework will be discussed in the autumn term, but include style changes and better checks around wellbeing.
4.4.2	<p>QUESTION: How much notice do you get of an inspection? ANSWER: One day, but the initial call takes 1.5 hours.</p>
4.4.3	Action: RD to send an invitation to governors for 3 July 2024 to attend an online session on Ofsted questions.
4.5	<u>Five year plan (exploring options)</u> - RD
4.5.1	<p>Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The five year plan relates to the academisation agenda and having a structure for exploring the options. ● The rationale is explained within the plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● External factors that influence are failing schools being forced to join academy trusts. ● Budget factors can encourage schools to academise. ● The best interests of children, staff and leadership are the foci. ● The pack reflects the different opinions in relation to academising. ● A working party would do initial exploration consisting of RD, the school business manager and three governors and feedback will be provided to the Full Governing Body in order to agree a direction of travel, which would involve refreshing the federation’s vision, as it is somewhat dated and does not reflect the current status. ● The working party would consider the federation’s continuation as three schools and how the national context would change this over time, the federation could join a MAT or look to expand the federation with more schools. ● Stability and structural implications would need to be explored.
4.5.2	<p>QUESTION: Could Viridis become a multi academy trust (MAT)?</p> <p>ANSWER: No, we are not big enough, we would need to be a group of five to be financially safe enough. If there is the possibility of growing, demonstrable with a projected model, then the DfE would consider it, otherwise it may not be accepted.</p>
4.5.3	<p>QUESTION: What would be the main shift of being an academy?</p> <p>ANSWER: That would be the main focus of the working party. All the options would be considered in detail.</p>
4.5.4	<p>QUESTION: Is an academy funded differently?</p> <p>ANSWER: Yes, academies are funded directly from central government, however it is not necessarily the best answer financially because falling roll would still be impactful.</p>
4.5.5	It was AGREED that SB, VC and TOW would join the working party.
5.0	Executive Headteacher’s Report (Summer Term 2024) - RD
5.1	<p>Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hoxton Garden recruitment to headteacher has commenced as RK leaves at the end of the academic year for a headship in Eastbourne, for a primary through secondary school. ● The acting headteacher role is being evaluated for the substantive post by RD, the school improvement partner (SIP) and the Chair this month, and senior team staffing will be communicated to the Full Governing Body once secured for the new academic year. ● Filling gaps for teaching next academic year is on track, taking into account existing teaching staff’s requirements and needs. ● PAN drop at Orchard and Hoxton Garden has been discussed. ● Budget reviews are taking place, whilst the wider funding context is known in terms of Hackney schools and deficits, and changes in financial positioning are being made to ensure that projections of the budget are coming in on track. ● There are reviews and rebanding of teaching assistant (TA), staff cover and leadership roles. ● Changes in pricing for music lessons and clubs will be made in January 2025. ● Year 6 statutory assessment tests (SATs) have taken place. ● Moderation of assessments is taking place, by Hackney staff, this is random selection but tends to be on a four year cycle and is an important part of validating the federation’s processes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leadership training delivery has been secured for the next academic year at borough level and includes leadership led research. ● Viridis is working with Hackney Education to write a sustainability framework for primary schools as part of the sustainability agenda. ● There have been outreach visits including the Vancouver trip, an early careers teacher event at Southwold which was an identified spotlight school, and a sustainability conference at Orchard. ● There have been best practice visits from an academy in Norfolk and the research team from Canada visited the federation. Early careers teacher research partners are visiting next week. ● 30 children across the federation visited Tenerife in spring term and a member of the public on the plane wrote a really lovely letter complimenting the children’s behaviour. ● Competitions including timetables, spelling and debates have been held across sites. ● The new federation website is underway in terms of a refresh and there is a review of communication strategies within this, to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency. ● The new website will go live at the beginning of the new academic year. ● Fire drills have taken place across the federation. ● Works across schools are progressing well including facades at Southwold, however 15-16 window replacements are needed and this will need careful management. ● The house project at Hoxton Garden has experienced some delays and it is not financially viable or safe to move forward, however surveys and preparatory work remains so if the financial picture changes it could be reconsidered. ● Medium risk work is being addressed through ring fenced funding by Hackney Education which is positive. ● Some policies are being evaluated against teacher wellbeing and workload.
5.2	<p>QUESTION: How are the children for the Tenerife trip chosen?</p> <p>ANSWER: They write their own applications, and SEND, SEMH, gender and ethnicity groups are considered to ensure that the school community is best represented. Funding is the biggest problem, but we would really like to take two groups next year. We have applied for funding to do this again. Unfortunately it is not reciprocal so the Tenerife schools cannot come back. Match funding is being considered to ensure that it is a two way process in the future.</p>
5.3	<p>QUESTION: Is Hackney providing some training around asbestos management?</p> <p>ANSWER: There are areas of asbestos in the schools and additional training has been offered and medium risk work is now being addressed through Hackney funding. All identified asbestos is maintained and managed and presents no risk.</p>
5.4.	<p>QUESTION: So if the federation became a MAT then the schools would inherit these kinds of costs?</p> <p>ANSWER: Yes. For example, the cost of replacing roof materials in Orchard School has been picked up by Hackney. Hackney will also contribute towards replacing windows at Southwold. This is an important area for consideration.</p>
6.0	<p>School finance and resources, including approval of budgets summary and recommendation to FGB): CoG on behalf of the Chair of Resources committee - The Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budget 2023/24 ● Budget 2024/25
6.1	<p>Highlights were:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial year has only just begun. • There was a balance of just over £900k and the year ended with £200k and in the context of 65% of Hackney schools ending with a deficit, this shows the power and benefit of managing school budgets as a federation rather than individual schools. • Looking for the budget for the new year, the carry forward is expected to decline from £200k to £100k. • It is tough that the caretaker's house cannot be progressed at the present time.
6.2	<p>QUESTION: Are we due to get money coming in retrospectively for students? ANSWER: We have received what was allocated to us.</p> <p>School budgets agreed by the FGB.</p>
7.0	School Sub Committee Feedback
7.1	<u>Orchard – SOB</u>
7.1.1	The minutes Orchard Sub Committee Meeting minutes of 7 March 2024 were shared for information.
7.1.2	<p>The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The December data harvest was reviewed and all pupils in all year groups had made better than expected progress in reading, writing and maths. • The teaching profile is very healthy, a third outstanding and all good or outstanding. • Best practice visits were held from Hackney and Essex schools and there are some further upcoming best practice visits planned which is good Ofsted preparation. • 80% of staff confirmed that they wanted to stay for the new academic year according to the staff survey. • The percentage of parents agreeing that the school was well led and managed was 98% which was an increase on last year. • There were no suspensions or exclusions in spring term and so far this term. • A governor visit was hosted.
7.2	<u>Southwold - RC</u>
7.2.1	The Southwold Committee meeting minutes of 18 March 2024 were shared for information.
7.2.2	<p>The following highlights were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from autumn harvest was reviewed showing 75% students achieved expected levels in reading, writing and maths. • Teaching had increased according to targets. • 95% of staff said they wanted to stay at the school. • A pupil numbers case study was reviewed in terms of reception numbers, and 40 parents had chosen the school. • 100% of parents who completed the survey said the school was managed well, and increased in responses about communication and effective dealing with bullying.
7.2.3	<p>QUESTION: Why is year 3 maths in a minus? ANSWER: As per sub committee discussions, some children might have an education health care plan (EHCP) and may not be accessing the national curriculum so their progress is tracked differently.</p>
7.3	<u>Hoxton Garden - RA</u>

7.3.1	The Hoxton Garden Committee meeting minutes of 21 March 2024 were shared for information.
7.3.2	<p>The following highlights were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection round in autumn term was reviewed, all year groups in all subjects had made better or expected progress in reading, writing and maths. • There was a focus on incoming children from closing schools, support and plans for those children particularly those not on track upon arrival to ensure rapid catch up and progress. • Hoxton Garden is in the top 1% of schools in the country. • Attendance is above average but continues to be a focus. • Hoxton Garden achieved an award for attendance last year. • There is a high number of children with EHCPs, SEND and mobility in the school. • Parent survey results were really positive, that the school provides a good education, they are happy with their children's progress, the school is well led and the children feel safe at school.
7.3.3	Governors thanked RA for her hard work over the years and wished her well in her new role.
8.0	Annual Safeguarding Report to Governors
8.1	<p>Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is shared with governors every year to report on key areas that governors need to be aware of. • The safeguarding management team page is the log of all training undertaken. • Safer recruitment training is biennial. • There has been bespoke training to build knowledge in key areas including child exploitation and county lines. • The child protection policy is updated annually in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). • A safeguarding audit is completed biennially. • A safeguarding statement is being drafted currently. • The breakdown of referrals and multi-agency working reflects the number of concerns completed by staff in the different schools, which are reviewed by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) to determine next steps. • Other key information includes pupils in receipt of child protection (CP) plans and child in need (CIN) plans. • There is reporting on allegations made against staff and referrals made to the local authority designated officer to review processes.
9.0	Link Governor Feedback
9.1	CIN and CP plans - JG
9.1.1	<p>Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally, 400,000 children deemed CIN, assessed as needing support by social services, which is on average one child per classroom. • The DfE track and monitor the progress of CIN with start and end dates but this has not yet been published in terms of how these children are spread over local authorities and what services are in place to support them, to be able to evaluate outcomes, but there is no consistency in the national monitoring approach.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 18 children are on CIN plans in the federation, who have regular meetings with key agencies and partners who must attend or send a written report in their absence. ● There can be variations and fluctuations in plans which may not have been sustained, and at formal review meetings, interventions are assessed in terms of their effectiveness and they may be updated or further action taken such as escalation. ● Nationally 51,000 children are on CP plans and this figure has remained consistent over the past five years. ● CP plans are initiated when a child is deemed at risk of significant harm, from emotional, physical or sexual abuse and neglect, and the plan outlines what actions are needed to keep the child safe. ● A CP conference is led by an independent reviewing officer who identifies risks and how to reduce these, and subsequently core groups are held six weekly and CP conferences are held six monthly, to monitor and review. ● There has been a lack of consistency from social services in Hackney with poorly hosted, delayed or online meetings which has caused disengagement and RD has escalated this to Jacqui Burke whom she met last week, and since then there has been a positive step forward in terms of communication between Hackney Social Care and Hackney Education. ● All DSLs are familiar with when there might need to be escalation due to non action from the social work team. ● High risk and vulnerable children are known to the school. ● Each school has a DSL and there are additional more local DSLs. ● Updates to KCSIE will be shared in the next meeting.
9.2	<u>Why Unlocking Potential is used and the impact it has on the wellbeing of pupils - KR</u>
9.2.1	Action: KR will circulate a report about Why Unlocking Potential is used and the impact it has on the wellbeing of pupils.
10.0	Governing Body Recruitment
10.1	<p>Highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CN has decided to step down from the governing body due to moving out of London. ● Current associate governor Caroline English will be recommended to join the Full Governing Body in the new academic year. ● There will be a reevaluation of the skills audit which will be completed in the next term to anticipate gaps, in order to future proof the governing body. ● The young governor programme is being relaunched, giving opportunity and scope to recruit new associate governors in the next academic year. ● KR is approaching the end of her ninth year as a governor and as parent governor will no longer have a child at the school so is looking to leave. ● CM will also be approaching the end of governorship in the autumn term meeting.
11.0	<p>Governor Communication</p> <p>a) Programme of Governance meetings in 2024-25 (draft)</p> <p>b) Training Updates</p>
11.1	Action: Governors were asked to check the dates for 2024-25 and advise if they were not able to make any so that RD can make any necessary adjustments.

11.2	Governors acknowledged the training offers for this and the next academic year, and that financial performance, ethical responsibilities and safeguarding threads were recommended to governors.
12.0	Any other Business
12.1	It was noted that the Hackney governors conference is on 27 June 2024.
12.2	QUESTION: How is cutting funds going to affect TAs in the classroom and after school provision? Will the after school provision be cut? ANSWER: No. Staffing will have to be evaluated due to financial restrictions. The federation has restructured the way things are done but the children are still receiving everything that they should. There is a staggered response to adjustment with training, forward planning and availability of staffing.
12.3	QUESTION: Have you considered using apps? ANSWER: Yes this is under the refresh of website and communications, but has to be cost and time effective and manageable.
13.0	Any Confidential Business
13.1	No confidential business was raised.
14.0	Other Supporting Papers
14.1	Glossary of Common Terms
14.1.1	Governors acknowledged the glossary of common terms.

The meeting finished at 8pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

James Gowland
Chair of the Full Governing Body
The Viridis Federation