

GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024

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 Ms Carr will be taking up the role of Headteacher at Hoxton Garden School and Ms Grover the Headship at SOuthwold School. Members of the governing body formed part of the recruitment panel in appointing our new school leaders. In the Autumn, a governor recruitment panel will be undertaken to establish succession to the Executive Headteacher role as Ms Davie leaves us after 15 years of service to the Federation. Ms Davie will be moving to a new role at a neighbouring Local Authority to continue sharing her expertise in education.

We have heard regularly across this year how provision for pupils across the three schools continues to reflect a high standard of education. 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. The schools have hosted a number of best practice visits including 16 Early Career Teachers, a USA university and an academy from Norfolk 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 the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education provided at Viridis Schools. Governors learnt about enrichment, PSHE lessons and how children are celebrated, valued and kept safe. Governors spoke to children and who shared their personal experiences of school life and had a tour of the school to see learning in action,

Each term we receive a report from school leaders who outline the ways in which teachers and support staff are given the opportunity to develop and progress their skills. A fantastic progression route has been developed over the years, with many teachers who have joined us as teaching students or newly qualified teachers going on to become leaders in our schools. Staff development sessions are joined up across the three schools, with a weekly staff meeting to share ideas and explore the most recent theories of both learning and teaching. We have also been running our own apprentice teacher and leadership development programmes. For five days each year there is a teaching training day when all staff attend sessions to develop skills. Evaluations are gathered from staff to make sure they have been successful and inform future sessions. School leaders have also been exploring with teaching staff ways to reduce workload pressures with an audit of what could be improved or changed and a review of our marking policy. We will be asking school leaders further about the impact of this work on our ability to recruit and retain the very best teachers.

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:

Safeguarding

Each year Governors consider the schools safeguarding policy and take note of any new guidance from the Government. Safeguarding is a particularly important area for schools as it is the way in which we make sure that all children are safe and their needs are met. We make certain that there are clear systems in place for the reporting of concerns as well as preventing issues from arising in the first place. All Governors have received safeguarding training, and in our annual safeguarding report from the schools we are able to check that school staff also hold up to date suitable training. Our most recent policy is available on the school website and in school reception areas.



Building and Premises

All three of our school buildings are very old, and despite significant investment require a lot of looking after! Hackney are currently undertaking extensive work at Southwold School to upgrade the outside of the building and repair older windows.

Finances

The resources committee meet termly to review the federation finances. All three schools share a budget. Over time, the reserve funding has fallen as a result of less income and higher costs. This does not just affect the federation but all other schools in the borough and beyond in a similar manner. Governors track carefully the spend on resources, staff and running costs, asking questions and looking in detail at identified areas. As pupil numbers continue to fall across London, steps are being taken to manage costs including only opening one Reception class at Hoxton Garden and only two at Orchard in Autumn 2024.

