

The Viridis Schools Federation of Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden Schools

**Resources Governing Body Sub-committee
Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

On Thursday 16th November 2023 at 4.30pm

Committee Attendees

James Gowland (JG)
Sara Walsingham (SW)
Alberta Senyah (AS)
Giuseppa Colella-Mare (GCM)
Rachel Davie (RD)
Clerk: Sandra Rodrigues

1. Apologies/Consent for Absence

Hannah Lownsborough currently on maternity to return in Spring Term
Albert Senyah has joined the resources sub committee.

2. Governing Body Organisation

a. Membership

Sara Walsingham was voted in as Chair of the Resources Committee Meeting
James Gowland was voted in as Vice Chair of the Resources Committee Meeting

b. Acknowledgement of TOR

No changes have been made or noted.

c. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda & Register of pecuniary interests

No new interests. No changes have been made or noted.

d. Code of Conduct

No changes have been made or noted.

e. Governing Body Annual Calendar 2023-2024

All agreed Annual Calendar and next Resources Meeting will be 29th February 2024.

3. Agreements of the minutes from the last meeting

All agreed

4. 1/2 Year budget review & forecast, current status

Income:

At the six months of the budget for 2023/24 there are no major differences predicted for the income:

- SEND & PPG - only 1st payment received so far which is expected at this point of the year.
- I07 Other grants - £81k is predicted to be received from the Government towards the Teacher Pay Award of 6.5%, this will not cover the complete salaries increase but it will mitigate the extra expense.
- I08 – Due to increase in Bank Interests an Income of £50K has already been received from bank in the first 6 months, so income has been increased by £50K to reflect the next 6 months as it is predicted that the interests will continue at the same level for the foreseeable future.
- I09 - Income from Catering will be significantly lower than expected due to the Mayor of London incentive to provide free meals for all KS2 children. In September the schools received the first allocation of funds from the Mayor initiative (£67k) to support the campaign. Another tranche will be received before the end of the financial year, therefore the projected income here, coupled with the Recovery Premium Funding predicts an increase in total funding of £110K – see I18.
- I12 - Trips, the amount will increase as the PGL trip is awaiting contributions from parents, this has been increased in order to sustain the trip and parents given a choice to pay in instalments.
- I13 – Donations will receive at least £3.5K from the 'Friends of Southwold' for new stage lighting, FOS Treasurer aware.

Total of £159K more than predicated for the annual budget is expected.

Expenditure:

- Teaching Salaries predictions – actual spend so far 45%, slightly below expected at 6 months due to increase in salaries not having been applied yet. A budgeted 3% pay increase for Teachers was already taken into consideration in the original budget to cover the expected average 3% increase. Actual increase awarded 6.5%.
- Support Staff have also had a fixed figure £2350 increase confirmed and will be backdated to April 2023 prorated according to contracts terms.
- Extended School salaries have been increased to reflect the cost of a new member of staff appointed to cover a maternity leave.
- Building and Improvement expenditure is on point and the majority of the works were carried out in the summer.
- Cleaning & Cleaning Supplies expenditure is on point as contracts are confirmed amounts.
- Water no variance with expenditure is expected at this point.
- Energy expenditure has increased. Hackney increased the cost this year due to the way they buy from the supplier; a contract which was a fixed rate with a cap is no longer in place and they have re-negotiated the price. This was only communicated a couple of months ago which was after the budget had been set and agreed.
- Other occupational cost slightly higher as statutory testing costs have increased due to the cost of living and inflation rates.
- Learning resources expected to increase due to the increase in the cost of the PGL trip and the purchase of new core texts books for groups.
- Software licences increased slightly due to increase in prices as above.

- Catering increased due to the Mayor of London incentive for free school meals to all children in KS2.
- Supply teaching and Supply support predicted increase due to high daily rates and number of agency staff employed long term in schools. Agencies are asking for higher daily charges to match the schools rates paid to contracted staff including 6.5% for teachers and a flat fee to support.
- Caretaker house – the Committee decision is for the project to go ahead as predicted, £400k still ring-fenced to accomplish this.
- Extended day slight increase in expenditure in this areas as well – this is due to more children taking up this service.
- Early Years funding currently there are unfilled places in all 3 Nurseries. Orchard is operating at one class instead of two which decreases class based teacher numbers from 23 to 22.

At this point a deficit of around £242K is predicted, however this is only a prediction based on the current 6 months budget outcome. The schools should be in receipt of more funds from various grants and the DfE, of which there is no clarity around when and how much this consist of, so it is prudent not to include any unknown income at this stage.

Setting the new budget for 2024/25 is going to need careful allocation as there is unlikely to be a carry forward from the 2023 / 2024 budget.

Request for an E26/E27 (Teaching and Support) discussion – see staffing update below.

5. Staffing Update

Current structure including: pupil roll, recruitment, retention, teacher training, risks and priorities

- There were three applications for the HT role at Southwold, two shortlisted for interview and outcome pending. Anticipated departure of the HT at Hoxton Garden at end of academic year. Federation stability beyond the current leadership team is a core focus. Long term succession planning for headships remain a core priority.
- SENCO departure at Southwold in December 2023. Recruitment is live.
- Within Hackney recruitment to middle and senior leadership roles continues to be a challenge.
- There was one teacher resignation across the Federation at October half term.
- There are two senior team DHT maternities, one current and one starting in February.
- New staff this academic year have been through induction successfully.
- Leadership training model has been revised this academic year to allow for target development of subject leaders. Middle leadership training is being delivered at borough level. Senior staff continue to access the NPQs which continue to be at no cost under government initiative.
- The teaching assistant recruitment crisis means a higher use of agency staff in turnover roles. The Federation has explored a number of routes already to create contracted stability e.g. graduate TA programme and contracting through agency placement. Systems have been put in place to eliminate use of short term TAs. This has shown successful impact in the budget. Strategies are now being implemented to reduce long-term agency TAs through re-banding of the current criteria (40 cap in year group and EHCP one to one threshold).
- A Teaching Assistant (TA) review case study was presented. Additional adults are being used precisely in proportion to the needs of the child. There continues to be a commitment to a teaching assistant per class when over a cohort of 42 at Southwold and Hoxton Garden and 68 at Orchard.

The government do not fund roll number increase if children join schools after the October census. EHCP funding does not cover the cost of a teaching assistant. The maximum contribution is 50%.

Risks/priorities

- Hoxton Garden has been identified as an amber risk school. Currently roll is rising because of local closures. It is not anticipated the assigned amber list rating will amount to more than a discussion during Hackney Education evaluation.
- The pupil roll at Orchard dropped with the 2023 Reception intake, taking the total number of children down from 90 to 72. It is predicted a similar trend will be seen in the 2024 cohort. This has an impact on budget and staffing.
- Pupil roll continue to be monitored and promotion of the schools remains a core priority

6. Pay Committee Performance Management Update

Performance management has taken place and EHT targets have been met. The panel were supported by a Local Authority representative.

Pay committee hold delegated responsibility directed by the governing body for HT and EHT pay review, this is the same panel who undertook PM and this meeting will take place next week. Confirmation will be given in the next meeting of completion.

7. Health & Safety

- Health & Safety Policy
- Health & Safety Action Plan from audits
- Fire Safety Action Plan from audits

H&S action plans were shared prior to the meeting. Notable that there are very few items to be actioned indicating careful and efficient systems around H&S in all sites. All three schools have minimal H&S actions.

It was questioned that some, dates had already passed. It was confirmed that they have already been actioned prior to the pack being put together. These are live documents and every 6 weeks they are reviewed.

H&S actions come from external assessment. The 3 contracts were renegotiated with the external H&S company these stipulate they conduct their H&S audit every term which means 3 visits a year with a following report and action plan. Fire Risk Assessment Audit is completed once as year as per statutory requirements and general Risk Assessments are evaluated once per year.

Fire audits are in the pack, shared prior to meeting, for Governors information. Action plans typically show very few items that need actions. Evacuation plans needed updating as a result of changing classes at Hoxton Garden, these have now been completed. All actions and items are traced very carefully.

Clarification requested regarding fire practices (fire drills). Drills are carried out termly. Timings are tracked and logged and if there are any issues the drill is re-visited and redone if necessary.

8. Premises Update

Hoxton Garden caretaker house

- A decision is needed as to whether to continue with the refurbishment of the caretaker house at HG or retract. Does the school commit or pull out and use the funds to mitigate any possible forthcoming deficit.

- The space will be an asset to the local community and to the school; over time if the building is not maintained or refurbished it will fall into disrepair. Council tax payment is in the region of £5000 a year as empty buildings are taxed higher. In comparison the caretaker's house at Southwold, council tax is approximately £115 a month (£1380 a year).
- Plans have been drawn up to make the refurbishment as simple and as practical as possible maximising the space. The lower floor is to be a dance floor with the rest of the house having open plan space that can be used for different workshops. The idea is to potentially generate lettings income from the wider community. It will have its own entrance so it can be managed independently from the school entrance.
- Opting out of refurbishment would present a risk to the building which is decaying within the school grounds.

Governor Discussion

- It was noted that the funding is an issue but the amber rating for HG and falling roll numbers is a second issue.
- On the flip side the increase in pupils at HG will increase the funds too next year.
- Question as to whether the final quotes or surveys for the caretakers house have been acquired. It was confirmed that the feasibility study has been carried out but it is still at survey stage and nothing has been contracted as yet, at this stage £15K have been committed to be spent to pay for the feasibility study and the various surveys that are being carried out.
- The school is unlikely to incur any more expenditure during this financial year but the ring-fenced money will need to be brought forward to next financial year.

ACTION: Decision on the caretaker's house is to go forward, an update will be discussed in February.

Staffing Premises team

- Two members of staff have a risk assessments in place due to health issues. Reasonable adjustments have been made to support manageability of workload and these remain under review at interval.

Facade

- Orchard works have been completed pending roof instruction which was delayed by Hackney. Since the works a number of leaks have been evident in the building. This is currently being investigated by Hackney.
- Southwold façade scaffolding is in the process of being erected (run time 8 weeks) with exclusion zones to support. Communication with the community is weekly. Gantries have been put in place to store materials because of the limited playground space. The base timeline of the project is 25 weeks. Full window surveys have been instructed following concerns raised by the school. Other works include roof tiles, flat roof areas and coping stones.

9. Other Policies

- Pay Policy update
- Procurement Policy
- Code of Practice and Scheme of Delegation
- Finance Procedures

Procurement Policy, Code of Practice and Scheme of Delegation and Finance Procedures policies need to be checked off every year. It was confirmed there are no updates and current copies need to be checked and sign off.

A small change made to the petty cash procedures as all petty cash is now paid as a bank transfer, ensuring that site managers no longer need to carry cash to the bank.

ALL Agreed to sign off the above three policies.

Confirmed that all the Policies need to be signed off by all signatures by the end of the meeting as the Finance Team will be audited in the 2nd week of December and all paperwork needs to be completed for the audit.

School Teacher Pay and Conditions agreed by the Government reflecting a 6.5% pay raise for teachers. The Federation adopt the Hackney Policy in line with all Hackney Schools.

A copy of the Hackney pay policy was part of the pack and was adopted at the meeting.

10. Any Other Business

None

11. Glossary of Common Terms

None

Meeting ended at 18.15pm