

**Full Governing Body Meeting**  
**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024, 6.00 p.m.**  
**Queen Edith Primary School**  
**Minutes**

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**Governors present:**

Richard Baldwin  
 Sarah Jarman (EHT)  
 Sean Lang (Cog)  
 Joanna MacKenzie  
 Marsha Merchant  
 Harriet Phillips  
 Ana Toste Rego  
 Steve Rothwell  
 Nicole Wilson  
 Richard Wilson  
 Stanley Wilson

**Others present:**

Hayley Brooker  
 Rachel Holman  
 Julia Neal  
 Nicki Simmons  
 Cath Stubbs  
 Zoe Vassiliou (Clerk)

	Item	Supporting Paperwork	Notes	Action
1	Apologies for Absence (ZV)		Apologies were accepted from Phil Kirkman, Ambili Nair and Sulochana Subramanian.	
2	Declaration of Interest (SL)		No declarations of interest were made.	
3	Welcome and introductions (SL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governor biographies – updated for information</li> <li>Ana Toste Rego, Parent Governor, Queen Edith School</li> <li>Phil Kirkman, Co-opted Governor</li> </ul>	Ana Toste Rego was welcomed onto the full governing body following her election as parent governor at Queen Edith School.	
4	Co-option of new governor (SL)	Marsha Merchant, to join meeting after this item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sean Lang proposed that Marsha Merchant join the full governing body; this was seconded by Harriet Phillips and agreed unanimously by governors.</li> </ul>	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marsha was welcomed onto the governing body and will join the Finance and Resources Committee.</li> </ul>	
5	Agree minutes of the last meeting	Minutes 07.10.2024	Minutes were agreed.	
6	Matters arising		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CoG reported that very sadly Siobhan Dickens has resigned from the governing body.</li> <li>Following a 10 day consultation with staff and Unions the Whole School Pay Policy has been adopted.</li> <li>It was agreed that Federation email addresses for governors will be used from January 2025. Clerk to circulate the helpdesk email.</li> </ul>	
7	Executive Headteacher's Report to the Governing Body (SJ)	EHT Autumn Term Report - 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Governor challenge: Do the NHS MHST (mental health support team) work with children and staff?</b> Initially their work is with children presenting with low level anxieties including work with parents on line. Also members of the MHST team will work with staff, with the first meeting starting tomorrow at lunch time. They will also provide an assembly to support Y6 transition.</li> <li><b>Governor challenge: How did the MHST work with our schools come about?</b> A high level of mental health referrals have been made by Queen Emma School and the MHST team got in touch to see if we would be open to support through the NHS working to prevent children going in to mental health services.</li> <li>Suspensions have reduced significantly with last year's Y6 transitioning to secondary school.</li> <li>Social care referrals have gone up in the last couple of weeks, since the report was put together.</li> <li><b>Governor Challenge: How are the Nurseries running now the staff ratios have changed?</b> Queen Emma are struggling with the reduction of staff, but at Queen Edith the transition has been quite smooth. This is being over-seen by a deputy headteacher at each school.</li> <li><b>Governor Challenge: What are staff struggling to adjust to?</b> Both nurseries were used to having teacher there all week, however a teacher is only working for 50% in each nursery now. Nursery assistants are needing to take on more responsibility in line with L3 requirements.</li> <li><b>Governor Challenge: How are the nurseries being monitored?</b> The EYFS Leads meet regularly with nursery staff and liaise with DHT about any niggles. Currently there is a higher ratio of children with SEN in Early Years. The spare Reception class room is now being used as an additional space and we need to give further consideration as to how we manage this extra space in school.</li> <li><b>Governor Challenge: How do staff feel the behaviour curriculum is working?</b> This is going really well and is being led by NS and CS and introduced this school year; we have developed a blue print for how pupils behave in our schools. Pupils have different home expectations and we are working to teach pupils how to behave consistently well across both schools. We have developed strategies in line with the school rules, both in the classroom and in external areas; this has been implemented following consultation with teaching staff and developing ideas that we think will work. We practice 3,2,1 star which encourages active listening, making eye contact and thinking about what you say.</li> <li><b>Governor Challenge: Has there been any response from parents?</b> We haven't yet shared the behaviour curriculum with parents. We are mindful that children can come in to contact with a number of member of</li> </ol>	

			<p>staff and we needed consistency of respect for all staff.</p> <p>10. The first meeting for our work force well-being initiative takes place on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 3.45pm. We would really appreciate a couple of governors attending that first meeting at Queen Edith. Sean Lang and Harriet Phillips volunteered to attend this meeting.</p> <p><b>11. SCR checks will have been conducted by the safeguarding governors by end of term and reports will be shared at the FGB meeting in Spring Term 1.</b></p>	
8	Financial Audit Report (SJ)	Draft Financial Audit report	<p>1. The financial audit was set up by the FIG due to the high deficit at Queen Emma. We have already made several changes to reduce costs; changed nursery staffing, reduced PAN in Reception at Queen Emma to 30 for at least two years and significantly cut agency staff.</p> <p>2. We have received the draft report and do not accept some of things reported and have made representations to auditors.</p> <p>3. Auditors want there to be a factual accuracy check so we have responded highlighting inaccuracies.</p> <p>4. Once the report is final we will receive detailed findings and will need to review all actions required, allocate the actions to an appropriate member of staff and set a date for completion.</p> <p>5. The audit took place when we had no Federation Business Manager in place so a lot of responsibility fell to the finance manager on the day.</p> <p>6. The final report, including our amendments will be shared with the CoG.</p> <p>7. In the executive summary item 5.2 it details that the deficit for 23/24 was reported in February 2024. However this will be changed to reflect that the deficit was forecast by the Local Authority in February 2024.</p> <p>8. They state that the finance software is now working; it is live but is not fulfilling all the functionalities required of it.</p> <p>9. Under item 1.2 of the detailed findings they highlight that Invoices are outstanding. However this was a deliberate decision to avoid going into the red which it details later on in the report.</p> <p>10. References to the school business manager (SBM) will be changed to federation business manager (FBM).</p> <p>11. Under item 5.8 'Agency Spend' the figures are questionable. The expenditure on TAs at QED during Sept 2023 and Sept 2024 is inaccurate.</p> <p>12. They detail 'significant periods of illness' which we would like amended to 'multiple significant periods of illness'. A member of the SLT was absent for a long period of time, as were teaching staff, TAs and other support staff.</p> <p><b>13. The total deficit cannot be explained by agency spend alone and we would like there to be some reference to the impact of the SEND budget, the unfunded teacher's pay award, pensions increasing and the high cost of energy. However, the Local Authority does not want to put these into the report. <b>Could we add 'cannot be solely attributable to'?</b></b></p> <p>14. The EHT and COG met with the new Head of Education at the Local Authority and were able to share that the budget deficit was not due to our Ofsted challenge.</p>	

			<p>15. Our previous FBM had signed off some order forms (item 5.10) and purchase orders. However we have been advised that we have to implement a system where the budget holder signs them off; this should be signed by a DHT with the EHT as the third signatory. It was pointed out that whilst the Federation had gone through the correct procurement procedures for a catering provider, and minuted the FGB decision correctly the final paperwork should have been signed by the EHT.</p> <p>16. It was pointed out that the terms of reference for the Finance and Resources Committee don't fully tally with the financial regulations. The amended ToR will be tabled at the next committee meeting for review and ratification.</p> <p>17. The Local Authority will be wanting to see evidence that governors monitor the implementation of all recommendations.</p> <p>18. <b>Governor Challenge: Were you happy with overall judgement?</b> Yes, we found it to be a very helpful process, and the auditors were very pleasant and provided us with helpful advice. Nothing was raised that is impossible. The delegation of responsibilities need tightening up and the FBM is pulling things together with fresh eyes.</p> <p>19. <b>Governor challenge: Looking at item 5.2 I can't understand the figures provided.</b> No, we don't understand them either and have asked for clarification.</p> <p>20. This draft report took 7 weeks and the date provided to us, by which to reply, had passed.</p> <p>21. The report refers to the Federation developing a plan to move forward however we do need support from the Local Authority to do this and the financial reporting software has not supported us in this process, as it is still not fully functional. Our new FBM has settled in really well and is starting to take over basic amendments to the budget from the schools' financial advisor.</p> <p>22. <b>Governor challenge: With regard to purchase orders (item 5.9) weren't any on the system?</b> That is the case; the current FBM is developing a new system and we are going back to paper copies including the three quotes, the recorded FGB decision, purchase order, order and goods receipt. We should sign off that we have received goods which was hit and miss. All procedures need to be tightened up.</p> <p><b>23. Richard Baldwin is happy to provide some support on how to present our findings page.</b></p>	
9	Attendance Policy for review (SJ, HB, RH)	Attendance Policy 2024	<p>1. The Local Authority's attendance strategy is for schools to offer as much support as possible for families to improve attendance. However if the support does not work the school will follow a notice to improve pathway which is more punitive and can lead to prosecution. Our new Attendance Policy is based on the Local Authority model policy and has been adapted to reflect support our schools can offer.</p> <p>2. Parents whose children have low attendance have had a letter from us requesting that they set up an attendance contract meeting; we ask the parent to work together with us and create a contract to improve and overcome the barriers to attendance for their child/ren.</p> <p>3. With regard to term time leave we do receive requests for absence from parents of SEND children who find it difficult to take a holiday in busy times due to their child's needs. Do governors want to remove it or keep it as an exceptional circumstance? LA said that you don't have to go to busy places.</p>	

			<p>4. <b>Governor challenge: Is it invoked very often?</b> Not regularly but it is not uncommon. The local authority's view is that families don't need to go to busy places and don't agree that this is always an exceptional circumstance; however it is important that senior management maintain discretion.</p> <p>5. <b>Governors agreed to remove highlighted bullet point, as an exceptional circumstance.</b></p> <p>6. <b>Governor challenge: Have DfE got any evidence that court action works?</b> This approach is a lot more supportive than previous policy which reflects that the punitive approach doesn't work.</p> <p>7. <b>Ratification: the attendance policy was ratified by the full governing body.</b></p>	
11	Data Protection Policy for review (SJ)	Data Protection Policy 2024	<p>The Federation buys into the LA service and we have up-dated in line with their model policy.</p> <p><b>Ratification: the Data Protection Policy was ratified by the full governing body.</b></p>	
12	School services business proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Proposal – Photocopiers</li> <li>Business Proposal – School internet services</li> </ul>	<p>Three quotes are provided in this proposal. FBM has also contacted our current provider outside of the DfE framework to see what they could provide and this is also detailed in the proposal. FBM's recommendation is to stick with our current provider which is the second cheapest for five year costs.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: Would you go within framework or direct?</b> It is cheaper direct with machines which are of a slightly lower specification.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: Can you go outside the DfE framework?</b> Yes, if you have 3 quotes.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: Do we want to commit to five years?</b> Yes, the copiers are very well used for worksheets and per copy cost is very important due to amount being copied.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: Do you need much technical support?</b> Yes we do and Sharp are responsive. Cost per copier seems different between the Sharp quotes which the FBM will need to clarify with them.</p> <p><b>Governors agreed to move ahead with the quote from Sharp outside the DfE framework.</b></p> <p>Apologies for the late tabling of this proposal, as we were receiving quotes until the end of the day. The local authority advised us just before half term that they would stop providing schools' internet services and each individual school now has to secure their internet, web-filtering and anti-virus provision and has to meet the DfE's requirements for internet in schools.</p> <p>In order to have this in place by the end of March a decision has to be made as soon as possible, so we can place an order and set a date for installation. It has been difficult to get quotes from providers and some have not sent quotes in line with specification.</p> <p>Governor challenge: Are staff happy with Irvine Knight? Yes, they have set up the i-cloud and their remote response is quick. Although staff at Queen Emma have found them a bit slow to respond. It would be helpful to use the same provider as they are known to us, and they know our machines. We haven't received all the information from Wave Connect whereas Irvine Knight have provided all the information.</p> <p>Governors are unhappy that we have been forced to make a decision in such an unsatisfactory way and haven't had more time to discuss quotes with providers.</p>	

			<b>Governing Body agreed to move forward with Irvine Knight.</b>	
13	Feedback from pay policy consultation (SJ)		The whole school pay policy has been consulted upon with staff and Unions. No feedback has been received.	
14	Safeguarding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sean Lang is inspecting the SCR at Queen Emma on Monday and will provide a report to the FGB.</li> <li>Joanna MacKenzie has completed her inspection of the SCR at Queen Edith and will share her report at the next FGB.</li> </ul>	
15	Feedback from Governor Training, Governor Visits and Link Governor Visits		Science link governor has visited and will provide a report to the next FGB.	
16	What is the impact of decisions made during this meeting upon the standards and improvement of the Federation?		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decisions about internet services and photocopiers</li> <li>Reflecting on how the draft financial audit will drive changes in financial management</li> </ol>	
17	Receive Minutes of Committee Meetings	<p>Standards &amp; Improvement – 18.11.2024</p> <p>Finance &amp; Resources – 25.11.2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussed the task group for staff well-being which SL and HP will be part of.</li> <li>SBS continues to cause problems which is very concerning as governors are unable to properly oversee the budget.</li> <li>A number of coding issues need to be investigated and findings will be shared with the committee at the next meeting.</li> <li></li> </ul>	
18	Items to be reported to parents		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome to our new governors.</li> <li>Highlight that there is new attendance policy which is on the website.</li> <li>At Queen Emma to share that Reception will continue with a PAN of 30 for at least one more school year.</li> </ol>	<u>SFL to write</u>
19	Correspondence Circulated		Safeguarding compliance link	
20	Any Other Business			
21	Date of next meeting:		<b>Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 6pm</b>	

Signed: S. F. Lang Dated: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025  
(Sean Lang, Chair)