

Finance & Resources Committee Meeting
Queen Emma School
Monday 25th November 2024, 5.30 p.m.
Minutes

Governors Present:

Richard Baldwin
 Sarah Jarman (EHT)
 Sean Lang (CoG)
 Harriet Phillips (Chair)
 Nicole Wilson
 Richard Wilson
 Stanley Wilson

Others present:

Julia Neal
 Cath Stubbs
 Zoe Vassiliou (Clerk)

	Item	Supporting Paperwork	Notes	Actions
1	Apologies for absence		None received	
2	Declaration of Interest		No declarations of interest received.	
3	Agree Minutes of the last meeting	Minutes 30.09.2024	Minutes were agreed.	
4	Matters Arising		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governor: Where are we on SBS? SBS is now working but is still clunky and we are being supported by our financial advisor from the Local Authority. 2. CoG wrote a letter expressing the committee's frustration with SBS which hasn't been responded to. However, EHT and CoG had a meeting with the new Director of Education at the Local Authority and we shared our concerns with her. 3. All schools received a written apology from SBS acknowledging that it has been unhelpful for schools in being able to manage and monitor their budget. 4. CCTV has been cleared by an engineer from the fire company, who has told us that we need new cameras. 	

5	Personnel Update (SJ)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nicky Pedder has been appointed as Federation Business Manager and was welcomed to the committee. 2. EHT has received 4 flexible working requests this term and all have been accommodated. 3. Governor challenge: How have these been accommodated? We look at current staffing levels, and then see if we are able to accommodate revised working hours by moving staff around. In some cases we recruit for the vacant hours. 4. Governor challenge: Are there any cost implications? We are actually saving money as staff taking up the hours are on a lower salary point. 5. We have received resignations from 3 TAs; 1 is leaving to work as a dental receptionist; 1 TA left in July after many years at Queen Emma having decided they would like a complete change and a less physically demanding job; 1 TA has resigned to work in a specialist provision hub at another school. 6. A member of teaching staff at Queen Emma, who works 1.5 days per week is leaving to become a freelance forest school practitioner. We have an advert out for a cover supervisor which would reduce costs by £7k. 7. Governor challenge: Is a cover supervisor a TA? A cover supervisor can be an HLTA; they are not responsible for planning from schemes of work or marking, but are advised by the class teacher and follow the lesson plan provided. We allow a little time within their hours for them to prepare resources and organise the classroom. 8. An Unqualified Teacher (UQT) is expected to fulfil the teacher's standards. 9. Governor challenge: Do we still use Premier Sport to provide PPA cover? Yes. 10. Governor challenge: Will the TAs who have resigned be replaced? We have already replaced 2 of the TA posts with a job advert still out for the third post. 11. The committee should note that where there is a gap between a TA leaving their employment with us and a new TA starting their employment with us we have had to ask the local authority for permission to put agency TAs in place to support our pupils with EHCPs, which is a statutory requirement. This has been agreed by the local authority where necessary. 	
6	Budget Overview (SJ/NP)	Month end report to be tabled at the meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RB cancelled this morning's meeting with the FBM due to personal reasons. 2. FBM shared a finance overview up to the end of October 2024 (period 7) which currently shows an overspend of £637k (£500k from 2023-24) which is alarming. 3. Income looks okay although we do have some insurance claims to go in and we need to check whether we are due a further tranche of Sports Premium funding. 4. Behind each of the CFR codes on the finance overview there are multiple budget codes and we do have concerns that spending is being allocated incorrectly and the FBM will be investigating this alongside the Finance Manager. 5. Teaching budget is looking okay, but figures for TA staffing look a little higher than we would 	

			<p>expect and the FBM will investigate the reason for this.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The supply budget is underspent. 7. E03 E07 are overspent and this is under investigation by the FBM. 8. E08 (indirect employee costs) - is also overspent. E08 includes recruitment costs and we think it could be a wrong coding of an agency fee paid for a teacher recruited through an agency. This is being investigated by FBM. 9. E09 (staff development and training) is incorrect as income has been posted to an expenditure account; it could be payments received for when members of the SLT were seconded to another school. This is being investigated by the FBM. 10. E10 (Insurance) It looks as though the premium has come in much higher than budgeted for and this is being investigated by the FBM. 11. Governor challenge: Where you have concerns that income / expenditure has been wrongly allocated do you think this has happened at school or at the Local Authority? It is a mixture of 2. Some coding errors have been made by school staff, but the local authority also provides us with instructions, for example to put the national tutoring programme into E26 (Agency teaching supply) but that line but that expenditure wasn't anticipated to be recorded in that code and skews the budget. 12. With the problems that have arisen with SBS an external person has set our budget and put in budget lines that are not consistent with how school staff would record expenditure. It will be more consistent when the budget is set centrally. 13. The FBM is hoping to gain full access to SBS and to be able to simplify budget lines so that we can't go wrong. 14. E19 (curriculum resources) is already close to the budget limit so we may need to consider closing ordering in December instead of February. However, this does need investigation as we have concerns that trips income might need to be transferred to this budget code. AB set up spreadsheets for each subject leader so they are clear what money they have left and none of these are overspent, so we aren't sure how this has happened. 15. Governor challenge: how do you get to the projected year end figure? The software extrapolates current expenditure to the year end which is currently a £64k in year deficit. We cannot have an in-year deficit and this has got to be turned around. 16. Safes at both schools have considerable amounts of cash in them; staff have now been advised that this must be taken to the bank at least every 2 weeks. 17. Governor challenge: Why is our energy expenditure already at over 70%? We do need to get on top of meter readings. Also solar panels which previously provided us with an income of about £5k per year are not working so this needs to be looked into. 18. Governor challenge: When you meet with RB what will be your focus? I want to check if he's 	
--	--	--	---	--

			<p>happy how with how our adjustments are made and to discuss budget lines and coding to the wrong place. Also we need to start looking at the three year picture.</p> <p>19. The EHT and FBM spent a day to check that all the staffing is correct in the budget.</p> <p>20. Governor challenge: It is almost impossible to manage the budget when there are so many inconsistencies. You'll just have to start with the big inconsistencies and work through them before you can focus on three year plan.</p>	
7	Policies for review and ratification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid Policy • Home Visits Policy (JN) • Lettings Policy (SJ/NP) • Nappy changing policy (CS) • Organisational Change Policy (SJ) 	<p><u>First Aid Policy</u> The first aid policy as been up-dated to reflect that school staff now administer unsubscribed medicine (section 11) Ratification: The First Aid Policy was ratified by the Finance & Resources Committee.</p> <p><u>Home Visits policy</u> Up-dated to state that there needs to be 2 adults for a home visit. If staff consider that circumstances are unsafe the school can request a welfare check Ratification: The Home Visits Policy was ratified by the Finance & Resources Committee.</p> <p><u>Lettings Policy</u> Safeguarding requirements have been strengthened for all our lettings, following the attack in Southport over the Summer. Governors were confused by the base tariffs and requested that these were reviewed. The FBM will discuss these with our Lettings Manager and will send amendments onto governors for email approval.</p> <p>Nappy changing Policy This policy was previously designed for nursery only but we have pupils in reception who now wear nappies now so amendments have been made to reflect this change. Ratification: The Nappy Changing Policy was ratified by the Finance and Resources Committee.</p> <p><u>Organisational change policy</u> Under Section 8.1 Governors need to consider how many school working days to allow for a consultation with employees; EPM's recommendation is 10 school working days consultations which was agreed by the committee. Ratification: The Organisational Change Policy was ratified by the Finance and Resources Committee.</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures (SJ) Statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders (EPM update) 	<p><u>Recruitment and selection policy</u> Under item 7.2 add “Candidates will be informed of the procedures relating to outcome during the course of the interview.”</p> <p>Ratification: The Recruitment and Selection Policy was ratified by the Finance and Resources Committee.</p> <p>Statement was shared with committee and will be up-dated on the school website.</p>	
8	Schools’ Internet Services (NP)	Business Proposal - Broadband	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Broadband has been provided by to schools by Cambridgeshire and subsidised by the LA, however from March 2025 schools have been advised that they should procure their own internet services. FBM has shared a draft business proposal with the committee and had a further meeting with Janet and Jisc this afternoon and asked for costings as a Federation, which we hope might be cheaper than for two schools. The Local authority internet service provider is Eastnet – the new Local Authority provider is Janet and Jisc. They are on top of cyber security and protections; they offer a service for some universities, the Local Authority and central government. The FBM will prepare additional information to share at next week’s FGB when a decision will be made. The quotes received so far are much of a muchness; if we were to go with Irvine Knight the transfer would be swift as they already provide us with ICT support. The FBM is chasing quotes and information and will prepare a more detailed business proposal for the FGB. Governor challenge: If the current contract costs sub are subsidised will costs therefore increase? Yes, costs will increase. Governor challenge: Why does the decision need to be made in December? There is a lead time on the installation of the line of 90 days. Governor challenge: Are there any proposals for schools to get together and go out to tender? Yes, this has been discussed at SSOR cluster meetings; it depends on geographical location and infrastructure. Many local schools use Irvine Knight. Governor challenge: Do you think all schools would benefit from getting together. This is not possible as MATs procure services as a group of schools. Governor challenge: Do we know why the local authority stopped providing this service to schools? They could no longer afford to subsidise it. Final business proposal to be presented at the FGB for a decision. 	

9	Defibrillators (SJ)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A defibrillator has been found at each school and we wanted to ask the committee if they think the defibrillators should be mounted inside the school or outside our premises. If they are mounted outside they can be registered for community use, but we have to provide housing for the defibrillator which has to be weather proof, which is expensive. 2. Federation will be responsible for replacing batteries and pads for the defibrillators within an advised time frame. 3. Committee agreed that the defibrillators should be mounted inside the schools. 4. We will now move ahead with a training video for staff so they can see how they are used. 	
10	Premises (SJ/NP)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Queen Edith has been selected for a conditions survey in February which is commissioned by the DfE. This is to provide the government with a picture of the state of school buildings across the nation. 2. The EHT has requested that the local authority conduct a survey of our mobile classrooms at Queen Edith as the roof continues to leak. The repairs are the responsibility of the local authority. 3. CCTV cameras at QED and QEM need replacing; we have been advised that this does not invalidate our insurance, but that it would be taken into account if a claim were made. We have not allowed for this expenditure in the capital budget so will put this into the budget for 2025-26. 4. FBM is looking into a bin store for Queen Edith and further information will be shared with the committee when we have received three quotes. 5. The hall floor at Queen Emma has been resurfaced over half term and looks lovely. This was planned work from capital budget. 6. Our catering company have completed a deep clean at both kitchens. 7. A bollard at Queen Edith has fallen down and needs to be repaired. 8. Outdoor furniture at Queen Emma needs making good as the top of the seating area is rotting and the ground needs making good. 9. The Queen Edith PSFA have offered to use their funds to replace trim trail and train in KS1 play ground. 10. Wood in the quiet area at Queen Edith is rotting and some has already been removed; we need to look at what we do with this area moving forward. 	
11	Health and Safety Report	Queen Emma School – verbal update from SW	Health and safety committee conducted an inspection of the first floor at Queen Emma and no problems were identified. The minutes will be shared with the committee in January.	
12	Safeguarding		<p>Lettings policy has strengthened safeguarding requirements for those letting our premises.</p> <p>Safeguarding training up-dates are taking place.</p> <p>Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) meet regularly.</p>	

13	What is the impact of decisions made during this meeting upon the standards and improvement of the Federation?		The ability of governors to monitor the budget and plan ahead is still hampered.	
14	Correspondence Circulated		Safeguarding compliance documents will be re-circulated.	
15	Items to be reported to parents		No	
16	Any other business	Swimming pool costs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The swimming pool is now ready to use following repairs; however the Federation cannot absorb the costs of using the pool i.e. heating of the pool. 2. Pre-covid a letter was sent to parents suggesting a £7 contribution per child for their swimming lessons, with an upper limit of £14 per family. 3. Anna has done some research of costs at local swimming pools; Parkside with changing facilities costs £9.27 per child without transport costs so we propose that a letter is sent out to parents suggesting a £10 contribution per child for swimming lessons, with an upper limit of £20 per family. We hope this might cover some of the costs of using the pool. As swimming forms part of the national curriculum we cannot force parents to pay. Does the committee consider that to be reasonable? 4. Committee agreed that a letter should go out to parents requesting a £10 contribution per child. 5. We have considered renting out the swimming pool and running it all year, but the running costs outweigh any income we could make from renting it out. 6. Governor challenge: Should we have a pool? It is considered a great selling point at Queen Edith and the children were so upset last year that it swimming didn't take place. 7. Governor challenge: Will £10 be enough to cover costs? Yes, as this is across both schools. 	
17	Date of next meeting:		Monday 27 th January 2025, 5.30pm	

Signature:  Dated: 27th January 2025

(Harriet Phillips, Chair, Finance and Resources Committee)