

Finance & Resources Committee Meeting
Queen Emma School
Monday 22nd January 2024, 5.30 p.m.
Minutes

Governors Present:

Fran Hughes
 Hannah Lewis
 Harriet Phillips (Chair)
 Nicole Wilson
 Richard Wilson
 Sarah Jarman (EHT)
 Stanley Wilson

Others present:

Catherine Monument
 Cath Stubbs
 Julia Neal
 Zoe Vassiliou (Clerk)

	Item	Supporting Paperwork	Notes	Actions
1	Apologies for absence		No apologies for absence were received and the meeting is quorate.	
2	Declaration of Interest		No declarations of interest were made	
3	Agree Minutes of the last meeting	Minutes 27.11.2023	Minutes of 27.11.2023 were approved by the Committee	
4	Matters Arising		None raised	
5	Personnel Update (SJ)		<p>Queen Edith</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P/T Y5 teacher resigned her two days per week. The other teacher in the job share has agreed to work 4 days per week (M – Th); a supply teacher is covering Friday. P/T Y5 teacher (4 days per week) has gone on maternity leave. Cover is being provided by a supply teacher. <p>Queen Emma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ZV is leaving on 28th March; the office manager and PA roles will be advertised as separate roles and these are being evaluated by EPM. 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 job-share teachers in Y5 both finished in December and Will Evans has started with us full-time. Will is an ECT. • SLT have had a frank conversation with school TAs, who recognised that very generous cover has been in place which is no longer the case in other schools and which the Federation is no longer able to sustain. 	
6	Budget Overview (SJ/CM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget monitoring report • Capital overview • Capital budget notes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a projected over-spend at the end of this financial year (£200,200) and this figures has been confirmed by Ray Byford at the local authority. 2. Challenge: Does the projected overspend include the significant TA and catering supply overspend? Yes; the figures shared are as at 31st December 2023, however there are outstanding invoices for supply that still need to be paid. 3. We hope that the projected overspend is the worst case scenario and we are keen to implement measures, including stopping using supply TAs moving forward, to ensure we have a balanced budget for 2024/25. We have two months left to make savings and we are trying not to spend. 4. Challenge: If staffing is about 80% of costs how will you make cuts? We will stop employing supply TAs and re-deploy existing permanent staff. We have recruited an HLTA, who along with Premier Sport, will cover PPA sessions. As TAs resign they may not be replaced and when experienced teachers resign we will recruit more junior teaching staff. Curriculum budgets will be very low and only cover what is necessary and not provide any luxuries. 5. Challenge: With the resignation of DH, has the Federation considered if this role needs to be replaced? Yes, we do need to recruit for a deputy Headteacher at Queen Emma School; the impact of this vacancy on other senior leaders has been significant. We have a SENDCO working at Queen Emma one day per week, who is seconded from the Local Authority. 6. Due to the number of gaps we have at each school we are increasingly getting requests from the local admissions team to accept pupils with very high SEND, or high level behavioural problems. We are unable to refuse to accept these pupils, but they do have a very significant impact on staffing costs as we have to provide TA cover sometimes on a 2:1 basis. We hope that the nurture provision, which is now in place at each school, will help support better behaviour and a quiet space for those pupils who need it. 7. Challenge: Why do we have such a high level of EHCPs? We don't; it is 	<p><u>CM to look at invoices to be paid and to report to Committee</u></p>

			<p>the national average. Demand has increased significantly.</p> <p>8. Governors were advised that the ramp for wheel chair users has been completed but we have not yet had the invoice. We were shocked to receive a quote of £20k to provide a liner for the swimming pool and have gone back to PCM to ask them to look for other companies to tender for the work. Before the liner can be put in the guttering needs to be repaired near the swimming pool . The local authority is covering the cost of the guttering and have put the work out to tender – we need to push them for a date as the swimming pool needs to open in April.</p> <p>9. A broader concern is that our pupil numbers are falling, particularly at Queen Emma, which impacts funding. We consider this is in part caused by bad publicity around our Ofsted inspection. We currently have only 33 x 1st choice, 48 x 2nd choice and 21 x 3rd choice. At Queen Edith we have 48 x 1st choice, 30 x 2nd choice and 37 x 3rd choice.</p> <p>10. Challenge: Could we adjust PAN? The Local Authority can introduce a temporary cap under the right circumstances. There are a number of pupils with EHCP who are joining our Reception in 2024, so it would be nice to have a small group of pupils who work with an HLTA or UQT and then a classroom of 30 children. This could work.</p> <p>11. Challenge: Have unfunded pay settlements had an impact on the budget? Yes, we originally only planned for a 2% pay increase and it was settled at 6.5%.</p>	
7	Benchmarking reports	Benchmarking report cards for each school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking reports were shared with the committee ahead of the SFVS. • Challenge: Teaching staff costs are lower at our schools compared to others, particularly at Queen Emma. Yes, this is because the EHT salary is reflected in QED staff salaries and not in QEM. We have also recruited a number of ECTs. • Governors noted that spending on support staff (TAs) at both schools was higher than other schools we were compared to, particularly at Queen Emma. 	
8	Policies for review and ratification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redundancy Handling Policy and Procedures • Shared Parental Leave (Adoption) • Shared Parental Leave (Birth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratified: Redundancy Handling Policy and Procedures had not been up-dated by EPM, so remains the same. • Ratified: Shared parental leave (adoption) policy had not been up-dated by EPM so remains the same. • Ratified: Shared parental leave (birth) policy had one small EPM up-date 	<u>Clerk to amend dates on policies</u>

			<p>which was noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With regard to the shared parental leave, there are now agencies who support teaching staff to maximise their income during maternity leave. Teachers are entitled to return to work for three separate periods of time; by ensuring that these three periods fall in school holidays they cannot be asked to work but receive full pay. In one case this is having a very significant impact on our budget; the teacher providing cover for the maternity leave is absent and so during holiday periods we will pay both of them in full, along with the member of staff who is now covering the class. 	
9	Premises (CM)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The swimming pool and guttering at Queen Edith were discussed at item 6 (8). The mobile classrooms at Queen Edith leak when there is heavy rain; this needs repair and we are waiting to hear from PCM. Challenge: Has the old mobile been removed yet? CKC are waiting for a surveyor to look at the removal of the old mobile, ahead of them putting a new unit there to provide extra space. The heating broke at Queen Emma on the January training days, following a leak of the 404 gas which activates the heat pump. 	
10	Health and Safety Report (CM)	Queen Emma H&S Minutes – 06.11.2024	<p>Governor: Has the tree at Queen Emma been cut back? No. Richard Rice at the Local Authority has agreed that they will do this and cover the cost; they have not yet been.</p>	CM to arrange H&S visit at QED
11	What is the impact of decisions made during this meeting upon the standards and improvement of the Federation?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors understand the need to make savings across the schools in order that we have a balanced budget for 2024/25. To improve pupil numbers we need to think of ways to raise our visibility. EHT has been in touch with Cambridge Independent who are going to run an article about our schools. Challenge: What marketing do you do? We do use Twitter, but are going to look at other platforms that might be more appropriate. <p><u>Ideas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Push harder after our Open Mornings Consider an Open Evening for prospective parents to target those who work Ensure website is up-to-date and promotes our schools positively Facebook / Instagram? Add PR/ raising awareness to the PA job description Tik Tok video of the mentor dog 	

12	Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated lettings policy Lettings safeguarding update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023 has been amended to strengthen guidance around external providers safeguarding policies and procedures. To meet these requirements the Federation has amended our lettings policy and procedures (Item 14). External providers now have to confirm and share their safeguarding policy and procedures with the Federation, or sign up to our policy and procedures. We also offer the opportunity for all external providers or peripatetic teachers to attend our training. This will all be saved on file and reflected on the SCR. Challenge: Is this applicable to one-off children's party? No, but we very rarely have one-off bookings as our long-term lettings take all available times. 	
13	Correspondence Circulated		None	
14	Items to be reported to parents		None	
15	Any other business		None	
16	Date of next meeting:		Monday 18th March 2024, 5.30pm, Queen Emma School	

Signature:



(Harriet Phillips, Chair, Finance and Resources Committee)

Dated: 18th March 2024