

Annual Governance Statement – September 2016

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all Governing Bodies, the three core strategic functions of the Board of Governors are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the Federation's schools and pupils;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governance Arrangements

The Board of Governors of the Queens' Federation is currently made up of:

2 elected parent Governors (1 from each school)
1 Local Authority Governor
The Executive Headteacher
1 elected staff Governor
3 partnership Governors
13 Co-opted Governors

There are also five associate Governors, who do not have voting rights, made up of our 4 Deputy Headteachers and the Federation Business Manager. Biographies are available on our website.

The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulation 2013 states that "the Board of Governors should operate at a strategic level, leaving the Headteacher and senior school leaders responsible and accountable to it for the operational day-to-day running of the school. The Board should avoid its time being consumed with issues of secondary importance."

The annual School Development Plan is the key document which focuses the work of the Governing Body. This is presented at the first meeting of the school year and evaluated at the last meeting of the school year.

The Governing Body carries out its responsibilities in a number of ways. These include:

- Developing and reviewing a range of written policies and procedures to address both statutory requirements and local priorities
- Delegating many of its responsibilities to committees and/or individual Governors
- Contributing to and reviewing the school development plan and using this document as one of the key resources for setting priorities and monitoring impact
- Using a combination of reports, visits, results and other activities and information in monitoring the progress of the schools

As well as full Governing Body Meetings our Governors also form the following sub committees:

- School Improvement Committee
- Resources Committee
- Management and Communication Committee

Other committees and working groups are also formed when necessary.

Attendance record of Governors

Governors generally have good attendance at meetings and last year we only once had to cancel a sub-committee meeting because it was not “quorate” (the number of Governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made).

Individual Governor attendance is available on the website.

Work that we have done on our Committees and as a Full Governing Body

Each year we are required to elect the Chair and vice-Chair and approve the Terms of Reference for our full Governing Body and the Committees. We do this at the first meeting of each academic year.

The Governing Body had five scheduled meetings and two extra meetings, dealing with Pupil Premium and Safeguarding.

Scheduled meetings dealt with a number of issues, including:

- School Development Plan
- Data Monitoring, including data from Raise On Line, FFT Aspire, and Perspective Lite, as well as from internal monitoring of a range of aspects
- Scrutiny of children’s work
- The development of British Values and the Prevent strategy within the school
- The development of assessment strategies in the context of post-levelling

Link Governor visits were carried out and reported on, with special attention paid to key aspects of the Development Plan, such as the Growth Mind-set approach to positive learning behaviour and the outcomes for vulnerable children (including Pupil Premium children).

Some visits were dedicated to issues such as support for Pupil Premium children, which followed the dedicated Governing Body meeting on the issue. Governors were informed about the breadth of enrichment opportunities being offered to these children, including a dance club and pre-school booster classes, and were impressed by the uptake.

Much attention was given to extended provision, including that of the After School Club.

Safeguarding arrangements were audited by Chris Meddle of the Local Authority and Governors were told about evacuation procedures in case of emergency. Additional measures were discussed, for example the fitting of an outdoor intercom, the removal of one gate and the locking of another. The management and use of the Single Central Record was reviewed by the Safeguarding Governor.

An Ofsted preparation visit was carried out by a Local Authority specialist at Queen Edith: as a result of this the Governors discussed approaches to evidencing interventions for children in their books, encouraging greater variety in the subjects of school displays and the application of Target Tracker to the changing context of assessment.

The Governing Body was very impressed by new developments on the school website (see Management and Communications committee for further details).

Governors were updated about changes to the Year 5 residential trips and gave full support to Queen Edith school in its decision to change one of them into a three-day school-based programme of activities. Staff briefed the Governors fully on their proposals for activities, which were rich and varied.

Governors supported the Executive Headteacher in allaying some parental concerns about the proposed change.

Governors encouraged the Federation to have confidence in its values and ethos and ensure these are clearly and explicitly displayed in the two school buildings.

In July, the Governors were delighted by the learning outcomes from across the Federation. Moderation of EYFS and KS1 results had been very successful, and although it was very time-consuming for staff, those involved felt that the results fully justified all their hard work. KS2 SATs were well above national standards. Governors offered congratulations to all teaching and support staff and thanked them for their helping the children to achieve such high standards.

Management Committee

A major initiative from the Management and Communications Committee was the creation of a Governors' blog. Administered by Jason Sepetauc, this allows Governors to share ideas and to post articles and links of interest to other Governors. It has also allowed us to maximise the use of electronic paperwork in committee meetings and provides a central store for Governing Body paperwork. The Committee spent some time analysing the overwhelmingly positive responses from the Parent Questionnaire, highlighting some areas which parents thought might benefit from further thought or development.

The committee continues to analyse attendance across the Federation. This is generally high but there are some pockets of concern and the Committee has discussed in detail with the Federation a range of strategies to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

An important part of the Committee's responsibilities is the area of Safeguarding and the Committee has devoted considerable time to looking at the Federation's Safeguarding procedures, including carrying out a Safeguarding Audit and checking the status and thoroughness of the Federation's Single Central Record.

In response to concern expressed by staff and by many parents, the Committee spent some time looking into the situation with regard to inconsiderate parking and driving in the vicinity of both schools and has liaised with the police in finding ways to tackle the issue.

The Committee is pleased to report a constructive and co-operative relationship with the After-School Club; the Committee has regularly reviewed the issue of out-of-hours provision, which continues to be well run and popular with children and parents.

Resources Committee

The work of the Resources Committee closely follows the various stages of planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation arising from both the school and the financial year. The format of meetings allows for a consistent pattern of tracking and monitoring all budgetary matters throughout the year and the committee works hard to plan for sustainable development within the resources available. The committee scrutinises all aspects of income and expenditure and regularly receives

reports from the Headteacher, Business Manager and other senior staff. Decision-making is well informed and the committee is mindful of the responsibility to balance the needs of pupils and staff with the requirement to ensure best value for money. The work of the committee is undertaken within the regulations and procedures set out by the government in the Schools' Financial Value Standard (SFVS) and the committee reports, as required, to the local authority within this national regulatory framework. When necessary the committee updates policy and guidance documents, in particular, the Whole School Pay Policy.

The Resources Committee regularly reviews the budgets for Queen Edith's, Queen Emma and the Queen Emma Nursery, planning for all anticipated future expenditure as well as responding to any unanticipated demands on resources that may arise. Detailed consideration is given to teacher and support staff costs, curriculum funding, training budgets, buildings, maintenance and catering costs as well as the implementation of health and safety measures where necessary. The recruitment and retention of skilled staff is vital for the continued success of the Federation and the Resources Committee consequently spends a considerable amount of time discussing personnel matters including staff promotion, staff turnover, mid-year changes, advertising and recruitment, staff cover and flexible working requests.

There are considerable pressures on school budgets at present and the committee is keen to advance the cause of fair funding for all schools while also fulfilling its responsibilities towards the efficient management of resources and the effective running of all three institutions within the Federation.

School Improvement committee

During this year the school improvement committee has continued to monitor the progress, assessment and outcomes of pupil learning. The committee also discusses matters of curriculum, regularly hearing input from teachers about curriculum development and enrichment. Feedback about the behaviour of children across the federation is discussed. This is a very positive aspect of both federation schools, and new innovations such as the training of some older pupils as 'peer mediators' and the on-going focus on restorative justice strategies further support children in maintaining a calm and happy learning environment.

A major focus for the school this year has been the continuing development and refinement of assessment processes now that there are no longer any government defined 'levels of attainment'. In addition to this new tests and teacher assessment criteria have been brought in which particularly affect spelling, punctuation and grammar, and mathematics at KS1 and KS2, as national expectations have been significantly raised.

Governors on the school improvement committee have regularly had the opportunity to look through pupils' workbooks, with staff on hand to explain the very detailed marking systems which give personalised feedback to children.

The encouragement of positive learning attitudes has been a key feature of classrooms this year with house-points, class rewards and certificates being awarded for focus and concentration, working together, perseverance and children challenging themselves.

Progress of children for whom 'pupil premium' funding is provided has been regularly monitored, with governors kept informed of the interventions in place to support the learning of these and other vulnerable children. The needs of these pupils are diverse and in some cases very complex. In particular the committee appreciated the provision of pre-school booster classes for those year 6 pupils who needed additional support in making satisfactory progress.

It was a great pleasure to end the school year with extremely positive report from specialist visitors who examined children's work, successful outcomes to moderation meetings and the prospect of very encouraging published results. The committee never ceases to be impressed by the constant desire of the staff to improve outcomes for children. Their dedication and hard work is a credit to the Queens' Federation.

Other work

During the last school year we held elections for new parent Governors at both schools, appointing 2 at each school. At Queen Emma we had a significant number of candidates and a very high turn out, which was very pleasing.

At the last meeting of school year 2015/16 we accepted a **statutory amendment** to the make up of our Board of Governors **allowing only one elected parent Governor at each school.** (Please see our new Instrument of Government on the website for information.) We were delighted that in order to meet the terms of this amendment two of our four parent Governors agreed to become co-opted Governors so we could retain their very important contributions to the work of the Governing Body.

We also appointed two further co-opted Governors, both of whom are parents.

Final Minutes of our full Governing Body and Committee meetings are available on the website. Please note that minutes have to be agreed by Governors at the following meeting and signed by the Chair before they are made available. You can contact the Clerk should you have any concerns relating to minutes.

Future plans for the Governors 2016/17

The Board of Governors is looking forward to the challenges which the Autumn Term will bring. We will be finalising the School Development Plan and considering last year's data from FFT Aspire, Perspective Lite and other supporting documents.

The Chair and Vice Chair completed an audit of the Governing Body and we will be reviewing the training needs of the whole Governing Body as identified in the audit. One area already identified is that the Governing Body needs to recruit a new co-opted Governor with a financial background to sit on the Resources Committee and to take responsibility for SFVS (Schools Financial Value Services).

In response to our parent questionnaire some parents expressed dissatisfaction about the range of meals offered to pupils and concern that they are not nutritionally balanced. During the first half term of this school year Governors will be visiting both schools to see learning in action and staying on to have a school lunch so they can see first hand the range of fresh salads and fruits that are available at every lunch time.