

Finance & Resources Committee Meeting
Queen Emma School
Monday 19th January 2026, 5.30 p.m.
AGENDA

Present:

Sean Lang (CoG)

Stanley Wilson

Sarah Jarman (EH)

Nicole Wilson

Paula Sugars (Federation Business Manager - FBM)

Cath Stubbs

Julia Neal

Richard Wilson

Charlene Monk (Locum – Clerk- joined remotely)

	Item	Supporting Paperwork	Notes	Actions
1	Apologies for absence		Apologies were received from Richard Baldwin and Harriet Philips were accepted. No apologies were received from Isabel Nicolson. In the absence of the F&R Committee Chair (HP) the CoG (SL) chaired the meeting.	
2	Declaration of Interest		None declared	
3	Agree Minutes of the last meeting.	Minutes 24.11.2025	No amendments and the minutes were agreed. <u>Actions from previous meeting held on 24.11.2025.</u> 3.0 3 x corrections to be actioned by Clerk – <i>completed</i> . 4.0 Document titled 'Audit for the first HR Committee Meeting' found in the F&R 06/10/25 documents. Phil Kirkman is to replace Steve Rothwell on the document once he has completed the training. Action – PK – <i>completed</i> . 5.0 Clerk to Contact JD for Clerking Job Description – <i>completed</i> . 7.0 : To be added to H&S Site visits; Clerk to check with EHT wording required for CCTV & Surveillance and governor involvement – <i>completed</i>	

			12.0 HP to complete a governor visits report – <i>completed</i>	
4	What is the impact of decisions made during the last meeting upon the standards and improvement of the Federation?		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governors noted the ongoing impact on the Clerking role due to the absence of a substantive Clerk. 2. The new Federation Business Manager, Paula Sugars (FBM – PS), has now taken up post. Governors expressed their appreciation to EHT for managing a significantly increased workload during the transition period. 3. A security concern at QED has been reported, regarding the doors. A quotation for required works is currently being obtained, and actions are underway. Governors were assured that QED site security is being actively addressed and remains a high priority. 	
5	Matters Arising		AOB – Clerk to Governing Body role.	
6	Staffing Updates (SJ)		<p><u>QEM</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher Resignation: Resigned close to their leaving date at Queen Emma. Post advertised twice with no suitable applicants. Currently covered by agency staff with LA agreement . Impact extends to end of academic year, avoiding potential redundancy costs. 2. TA resignation: TA left without required notice; the role supported two pupils with EHCPs. Recruitment not possible in time, so agency cover is in place to ensure statutory provision as agreed with the LA. EHT has followed up with EPM how to chase payment for this member of staff who is calculated by them to owe the school 5 days' worth of holiday pay. <p><u>QED</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EYFS Stage Leader and Reception teacher at Queen Edith: On long-term sick leave; role covered internally. 	

			<p>2. Clerk to Governors: Clerk (also part-time secretary at Queen Edith) resigned just before Christmas. Secretarial duties redistributed. Temporary Clerk sourced from LA. Now in the third recruitment round for a permanent replacement.</p> <p>3. Business Manager: New Federation Business Manager commenced post January 2026.</p> <p>4. Vacancies & Budget: All staffing vacancies reviewed for potential savings, with all staffing changes reflected in the budget.</p>	
7	FBM Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FBM Report – January 2026 	<p>The EHT confirmed that the FBM Report (Jan 2026) will remain in its current format . The EHT completed this report due to the timing of the meeting. The FBM will take over for the next meeting.</p> <p><u>QED Budget Monitoring 25/26</u></p> <p>The EHT highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current nursery/extended care uptake is low; further analysis is underway. A January 2026 intake is expected to increase numbers from 15 to 22 (an uplift of 7 pupils). Lower numbers present a financial risk; increased admissions may help stabilise early-years income. EHCP Applications: Awaiting outcomes for 8 EHCNAs; 4 pupils have been seen by an Educational Psychologist but no draft EHCPs have been issued. Some applications are now 18 months old. Successful EHCP allocations would bring in additional high-needs funding and could remove any projected and potential deficit. 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMER for November 2025 shows --£6,152.13, but revised income adjustment now shows for December 2025 as £111,527.27 • The budget Vs actuals report shows a projected year end carry forward of £90,035.04 • Work to separate nursery funding has now stabilised, and the school budgets are recorded separately. • The next step is to further separate the nursery and extended care budgets for each school. • Historically, QEM and QED budgets were combined, but this has now been broken down more accurately, providing clearer financial figures. • Significant work has been undertaken, and further separation of each school's nursery and extended care budgets is planned. <p><u>QEM Budget Monitoring 25/26</u> The EHT highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery Pupil intake remains strong. • The current budget is built on the assumption that Reception will continue as a one-form entry. • At the Full Governing Body meeting on 1 December, governors agreed that QEM will move to a permanent one-form entry; the consultation closes on 19 January 2026. • A business plan for re-organisation plan is being prepared for governor review, alongside modelling potential savings to support submission of the updated deficit recovery plan before year end. 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income and expenditure—particularly for extended care and nursery provision—will continue to be closely monitored. From November 2025, nursery transactions have been allocated more accurately between the two schools. Awaiting outcomes for six submitted EHCNAs—most now beyond the 20-week timescale. One EHCP still awaiting drafting following the EP assessment. These delays continue to place a significant budget pressure on QEM estimated at approximately £63,000 per year. SMER for November 2025 shows -569, 259.71, and for December 2025 shows -534, 684.31 The budget Vs actuals report shows a projected year end carry forward of -£404, 720.56 that is against an agreed budget of -£511, 129.38 <p><u>Benchmarking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking reinforces the key spending areas requiring governor oversight and action, as outlined in the financial recovery plan. This annual data is repeated here to keep these priorities at the forefront for all stakeholders. <p><u>QEM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing under review The EHT reported an additional expense: the QEM heating system requires an air handling unit, which is currently affecting the system's efficiency. A bespoke unit is needed at an estimated cost of £9,000 that the LA is unlikely to meet the cost of 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The heating system is still unable to be zoned into separate areas and can only be manually switched on or off. Although repairs had previously been scheduled, these have not yet been completed. • The required replacement is not a Local Authority cost. The existing £40,000 QEM capital allocation is in place, but there is reluctance to draw on this funding due to the concerns this money may have to be used elsewhere. • Playground safety matting replacement: Two external quotes were received; however, both suppliers had misunderstood the scope of the required work. FBM to revise the specification and request new quotations for the playground floor matting. • Solar panels removed May 2024, PCM was instructed to commission a contractor to identify and resolve for the solar panels can operate and generate income to offset energy costs. A drone survey was conducted early January, awaiting the report. <p><u>QED</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current staffing metrics are above threshold levels and consistent with benchmarking data. Governors are asked to consider appropriate measures to prevent further increases, as projected within the budget. • Just over £20,000 in anticipated utilities income was received at the end of December 2025, following considerable time spent pursuing the outstanding amount. <p><u>Charging and Remissions Policy</u> The EHT drew Governors' attention to the Charging and Remissions Policy, noting that the policy permits the school to</p>	
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			<p>seek reimbursement from parents for damage caused wilfully. A parent has agreed to cover the cost of a damaged fire panel but refused to pay for the replacement pane of glass (£340, chargeable to the QED budget) and the parent has since refused to contribute and further damage if it occurs. The EHT informed the parent that the matter would be reported to the Governing Body. Historically, costs have been successfully recovered from other parents and cooperation has been good.</p> <p>Action: Summer Term – Governors to review the Charging and Remissions Policy when this becomes due</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Do other schools use similar wording in their Charging and Remissions Policy? The EHT suggested perhaps they do. . The ET suggested the only way to further pursue costs would be to go through the small claims court that might not prove best value for money.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Regarding funding for EHCPs and the national financial position, can Governors raise this with the local MP? The Government is currently preparing SEND Reform proposals, although progress has been delayed, with an expected deadline in April. Under the proposed model, funding would shift from allocations for individual pupils to a broader, needs-based lump-sum system. It is anticipated that this is likely to be the response provided by the MP. SL said that the local MP has been contacted but has not yet responded.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Would a lump-sum funding model provide a more direct and less restrictive funding route into</p>	<p>Summer Term – Charging and Remissions Policy to be reviewed by Governors.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Overview – December 2025 	<p>schools?</p> <p>The lump-sum model is intended to offer a more streamlined and flexible funding channel. Schools would be able to use the allocation in the way that best meets identified needs, ensuring funds are used as effectively as possible.</p> <p>The EHT reported an increased focus on SEND training for staff. Current staffing does not have the specialist skillset required to meet the needs of pupils who require specialist approaches rather than mainstream provision. These pupils need highly individualised or small-group support, which differs significantly from whole-class teaching expectations. The report, circulated to Governors ahead of the meeting, also included updates on capital expenditure.</p> <p>The EHT highlighted that quotes are currently being sought for repairs to the QEM play surfaces located beneath the outdoor play equipment, following issues identified during the recent inspection.</p> <p>The report additionally covered general updates and contract reviews, noting that initial enquiries into the catering contract have commenced. Site issues and Health & Safety matters at QED, as well as site issues at QEM and updates relating to caretaker properties, were also included.</p> <p>The EHT provided Governors with an overview of the Queens Federation Budget 2025–26 KPIs and highlighted the following points:</p> <p>QED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key staffing metrics currently sit at 90.11%. The predicted year-end revenue carry forward is £90,000. Revenue carry forward figures show November 2025 SMER at –£6,152.13 and December 2025 SMER at 	
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			<p>£111,527.27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capital carry forward, is more modest, recorded as £22,232.61 in November 2025 SMER and December 2025 SMER £22,232.61 The percentage spend is satisfactory and showing greater stability compared to last year. <p><u>QEM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a significant discrepancy in figures between varying reports. Next steps include separating the nursery and extended care budgets as this may be contributing to the identified deficit. Further work is required to analyse this and to identify the percentage spend for each area. Revenue carry forward figures show November 2025 SMER at –£569,259.71 and December 2025 SMER at –£534,684.31. Although the school has made savings, the figures are still not anywhere near a balanced budget. The capital carry forward appears high, recorded as £40,666.50 in November 2025 SMER and December 2025 SMER £40,392.22; this was explained in relation to the financial year. <p><u>Projected EYFS Pupil Numbers – Academic Year 2026/27</u></p> <p>The EHT highlighted to Governors the national deadline of 16 January 2026 for PAN EYFS pupil numbers for the academic year 2026/27.</p> <p><u>QEM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33 first-choice applications 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 second-choice applications • 32 third-choice applications • These figures indicate a full EYFS class. <p>QED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47 first-choice applications • 31 second-choice applications • 18 third-choice applications • Numbers have increased significantly. <p>Governor Challenge: What influences families' school preferences? The EHT explained that each school has its own distinctive strengths and identity. QED benefits from long-standing, generational familiarity within the community, while QEM is still in the process of establishing this reputation.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Are there predictable patterns in second-choice applications? The EHT noted that only a small number of second-choice preferences follow identifiable patterns, often linked to family movements in and out of the QED catchment during the summer period.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Do families often list both schools as first and second choices? Yes. Many families apply to both schools, with 31 applications listing one school as first choice and the other as second choice, and vice versa.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Does the high number of second-choice applications for QED indicate that QEM is being heavily selected as a first choice?</p>	
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			<p>The EHT advised that this level of detail cannot be reliably interpreted from the available data.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the EHT for the informative reports. The Chair reflected that progress is being made, noting that the financial deficit at QEM is gradually reducing. Although the deficit remains significant and requires substantial action to address fully, it is positive that the position is not worsening.</p>	
8	Policies for review and ratification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redundancy Handling Policy and Procedures 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The policy is due for review. EPM have proposed amendments and adding more detail in the policy, including extending the consultation period section to 30 days. Page 8: Governors discussed Part 2 and, following EPM guidance, agreed that the Local Authority policy will apply, including pay protection for support staff. Point 13.2 “The Governing Body will/will not grant premature retirement benefits for an employee aged 55 or over and a member of the Teachers’ Pension Scheme if made redundant.” The EHT will clarify this point, as the associated pension strain costs could be substantial. Point 13.1: A typographical error was noted and will be amended. Point 14.3.2: Governors discussed the provision that, where a reorganisation results in redeployment to a lower-paid role for support staff, the Local Authority’s pay protection policy will apply. This was agreed. <p>Governor Challenge: Does the 30 days consultation period refer to calendar or school days?</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Parental Leave (Adoption) • Shared Parental Leave (Birth) Leave of Absence Policy • Leave of Absence Policy 	<p>The EHT advised that it is likely to refer to school days but will seek clarification from EPM.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Will the school be responsible for covering the costs of premature retirement? Yes, the school would absorb the associated costs. Policy accepted based on the amendments above.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The policy is an EPM model policy. 2. Adoption – Cost and earnings levels have been adjusted as required. <p>Policy accepted based on the amendment above.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The policy is an EPM model policy. 2. The terminology “birth parent” and “non-birth parent” has been adopted in the policy in place of “mother” and “father” to provide clear and consistent binary distinctions for the purposes of the document. <p>Policy accepted based on the amendment above.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Point 2.4 Appeals Process – Governors noted that, in situations where the EHT must withdraw from the process, decisions may need to be made solely by Governors. It was therefore agreed to amend the policy wording to three Governors (for example, where the EHT must recuse herself). In such cases, the decision of the panel of three Governors will be final. 2. Point 3 Discretionary Leave of Absence, including the table outlining examples of discretionary leave with pay, Governors discussed the consideration of 	
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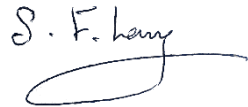
			<p>previous requests. It was noted that different types of requests—such as bereavement or emergency situations compared with religious festival requests—should continue to be treated on their individual merits, and that the reference to previous requests is intended to apply broadly without binding future decisions.</p> <p>3. Point 3.1 Discretionary Leave of Absence, the following was agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 5 days for Compassionate Leave, at discretion of EHT b. Due to varying levels of severity and the need for consistency, non-urgent medical appointments will generally be unpaid. The EHT highlighted that employees can be asked to arrange routine medical or hospital appointments outside working hours where possible. c. Although EPM suggested leaving the number of days of Dependant to EHT discretion, Governors agreed to retain the current wording of granting 1 day on each occasion. <p>4. Point 3.2.2 Attendance in court as a witness - Governors discussed this section and noted that attendance as a subpoenaed or summonsed witness is currently designated as unpaid leave. Given the legal obligation to attend when formally required, this was felt to be potentially inconsistent.</p> <p>Action: The EHT will contact EPM to seek clarification on the rationale behind this provision of unpaid attendance in court as a witness.</p>	<p>The EHT will contact EPM to seek clarification on the rationale behind this provision of unpaid attendance in court as a witness</p>
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			<p>5. Point 8.8 Pay during parental bereavement leave – Governors agreed Option 2 – employer offers parental bereavement pay.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: How frequently can the “1 day” dependant-care leave be taken? How does the EHT determine this? The EHT explained that the allocation of 1 day per occasion remains at their discretion and is dependent on the individual circumstances. Situations such as a child suddenly becoming unwell or a genuine crisis may justify the use of this provision. Where a longer period of absence is required, this would normally fall under compassionate leave, which is considered separately.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Do staff submit absence requests using the policy’s Appendix 1 form, or do they make requests via email? The EHT confirmed that staff currently tend to submit their requests by email.</p> <p>The policy was accepted subject to the agreed provisos. The EHT will seek clarification from EPM and will update Governors on the outcome.</p>	
9	Health and Safety Report (NP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queen Edith H&S Minutes • Queen Emma H&S Minutes 	The minutes from the Health & Safety Committee meeting held on Friday 19 December 2025 were circulated to Governors in advance for review. The Committee formally received the minutes.	
10	Safeguarding		<p>Internal entrances doors at QED At QED, part of the ongoing project to replace the internal entrances doors has been expedited. The EHT confirmed that the internal entrance doors by the office are now at the end of their life, triggering a safeguarding review. Quotes are</p>	

			currently being gathered for the replacement of the security fire doors. This work is considered essential and will be funded through QED capital. Progress is currently on hold while the remaining quotes are awaited.	
11	Correspondence Circulated		<p>The CoG outlined the required consultation process linked to the proposed PAN change, as set out in the business case. This included engagement with local groups, staff, and wider stakeholders. Letters were issued by the Chair in December 2025 as part of this process.</p> <p>Two responses were received from parents requesting further information. A follow-up letter was sent to parents explaining the rationale for the proposed change and clarifying the use of the term <i>permanent</i> in contrast to <i>temporary</i>. One parent replied positively, and the CoG acknowledged the helpful nature of the response.</p> <p>This term, a similar communication process has taken place at QEM, with all staff being informed. Governors discussed the importance of clear explanation when speaking with staff. Two further responses were received—one from a member of staff at QEM, who was provided with a reply addressing their questions.</p> <p>A meeting will also be with the CoG and Alison Cramer, LA Assistant Director of Education, to support the consultation process and the hope of answering staff questions</p> <p>This evening, a response was received from Alan Fitz, Cambridgeshire, indicating no objections. The Local Authority will continue to monitor factors such as housing development,</p>	

			<p>which may in future require consideration of increasing the PAN for QEM.</p> <p>The CoG met last week with Local County Councillor Young. The Councillor confirmed that £300,000 has been allocated to QEM through Section 106 funding to support potential future expansion. However, this funding was agreed prior to awareness of the recent decline in QEM numbers and demographic changes.</p> <p>It was noted that any impact from Section 106 developments would take at least five years to be realised. Discussion emphasised that the immediate benefits are more likely to be seen at QED, where one-form entry capacity remains available. Place-planning considerations for QEM in relation to this funding will continue to be monitored.</p>	
12	Items to be reported to parents		None	
13	Any other Business	Clerking Role	<p>At the previous meeting, the EHT confirmed that an existing member of staff had undertaken the clerking role. The Clerk, AB, left the Federation on 12 December 2025.</p> <p>Following advice from Governor Services, Governors agreed to use an ad hoc Local Authority remote clerk as an interim measure.</p> <p>The EHT reported that the clerking post has been advertised twice—in December 2025 and January 2026—with no applicants received to date. The current advert closes on 25 January 2026.</p> <p>The EHT asked Governors to consider extending the LA remote clerking locum cover for the remainder of the Spring</p>	

			<p>Term and to confirm whether the LA could continue providing cover during another recruitment phase. Governors also discussed the option of subscribing to the LA Clerking Service from September 2026, depending on recruitment progress.</p> <p>Decision: Governors agreed to continue the LA remote clerking locum cover for the remainder of the Spring term, and potentially for the rest of the academic year, while recruitment efforts continue.</p>	
14	Date of next meeting	16th March 2026, 5.30pm		



Signed:
Dr Sean Lang, Chair of Governors and Acting Chair of Standards & Improvement Committee)

Date: 19/03/2026