

**Finance & Resources Committee Meeting**  
**Queen Emma School**  
**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 5.30 p.m.**  
**MINUTES**

Present:

Sean Lang (CoG)	Ana T Rego
Sarah Jarman (EHT)	Cath Stubbs (Associate)
Richard Baldwin (joined remotely)	Richard Wilson
Liz Gooster	Nicole Wilson
Phil Kirkman (joined remotely)	Stanley Wilson
Ambili Nair (joined remotely)	
Isabel Nicolson (joined remotely)	
Julia Neal (Associate)	
Harriet Philips (Chair)	

In attendance:

Holly Hodge (Locum Clerk) and Paula Sugars (School Business Manager)

Apologies: Rachel Holman

	Item	Supporting Paperwork	Notes	Actions
1	Apologies for absence		Apologies were received.	
2	Declaration of Interest		No declarations of interest were received.	
3	Agree Minutes of the last meeting.	3.0 Minutes 19.01.2026	There were no amendments to the minutes. The minutes were approved as an accurate record.	

			<p><u>Actions from previous meeting held on 19.01.2026.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave of absence policy - The EHT will contact EPM to seek clarification on the rationale behind this provision of unpaid attendance in court as a witness – <b>complete and amended policy accordingly.</b></li> <li>• Security doors – <b>on the agenda.</b></li> <li>• Clerking arrangements – <b>to be covered at the next meeting.</b></li> </ul>	
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"> <li>1. Impact through the redundancy policy.</li> <li>2. Monitoring budget has informed governors business plans.</li> </ol>	
5	Matters Arising		No matters arising.	
6	Staffing Updates (EHT)		<p>The EHT advised that the staffing updates are covered in the business plan which was shared and discussed at the previous EFGB meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The finance manager has resigned – an advert is being drafted.</li> <li>• Teaching assistant advert went out and nursery assistant.</li> <li>• The site manager has expressed that he intends to retire soon.</li> </ul>	
7	FBM Report (Federation Business Manager)	<p>7.1 QEM Jan 26 Nursery Income</p> <p>7.2 Budget Overview – January 2026*</p> <p>7.3 ICT quotes for consideration*</p>	<p><u>Budget Overview (7.1 &amp; 7.2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-end budget will go to the county team on Monday.</li> </ul>	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget setting has been started for both schools for 2026/27. This needs to be complete by 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026.</li> <li>• Queen Emma water pumps being replaced in the Easter holidays (£1,700)</li> <li>• Local authority representative advised that Queen Edith gate cost estimated at £35-40k. This includes sensor work as well as replacement of a fire door and building a partition wall near the entrance to prevent visitors seeing children in the hall. Because of the potential safeguarding concern, funding support from the local authority is being sought.</li> <li>• Repairs to Key Stage 2 library now complete.</li> <li>• Queen Emma heating work – a contractor is coming in to change the panel. Will be able to control the heating off site and zone off the school so not heating classrooms that aren't being used.</li> </ul> <p><b>Governor challenge:</b> A governor asked for an update in terms of the Queen Edith play equipment? Response: The EHT responded that there were plans to replace all of the Key Stage 1 equipment as it is beyond repair but have had to prioritise the safeguarding gates issue. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) are ready to support with the funding when gate/sensor work is complete.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge:</b> A governor commented on the SBS benchmarking data that was shared at the finance improvement meeting and questioned what the data was based on? Response: EHT confirmed she would find out what the data was based on.</p>	<p>EHT to find out what the SBS benchmarking data is based on.</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall the nursery is having a positive effect on the overall deficit but more work is required as it is based on predictions rather than actual data.</li> </ul> <p><u>ICT quotes for consideration (7.3)</u> The EHT outlined that 3 quotes had been requested and 2 had been received back.</p> <p><b>Current provider (Irvine Knight) - £13,500</b> <b>Local Authority ICT Service - £15,500</b> plus approximately £2k because of storage.</p> <p>The pros and cons of remaining with the same provider were discussed. Concern was expressed over the business continuity provisions of the small current provider.</p> <p>A decision is required by the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.</p> <p>It was agreed that the quote from the current provider would be accepted if they could satisfy concerns over business continuity, and their quote remained considerably lower than the third quote (once received).</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge:</b> A governor asked about the catering company procurement and when this would take place? Response: The EHT confirmed this was not yet up for renewal.</p> <p>The EHT explained that a deficit recovery plan has to be submitted at budget setting. Approve budget and submit savings with the financial adviser. This will be shared at the</p>	<p>EHT to speak to Irvine Knight about business continuity plans.</p>
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			next meeting but will be the same as the business plan. When it is finalised a governor will be invited along to the meeting.	
8	Review of nursery fees	<b>8.1 Nursery Fees Comparison</b>	<p>A nursery fees comparison was shared ahead of the meeting. The EHT commented that comparisons were difficult because of different offerings in terms of session lengths for example.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both Queen Emma and Queen Edith nurseries are significantly below other settings.</li> <li>• A terms notice has to be given to parents if fees are changed.</li> <li>• Fees were increased last year but had not been increased for a while before that.</li> </ul> <p>The SBM (PS) commented that raising fees may put some people off using the provision. Clarity was also sought on the proportion of children that didn't receive funded hours and therefore would be affected by a fee increase? Response: The proportion of children was unknown.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge:</b> A governor asked if the nursery was full? Response: the EHT confirmed that it was.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge:</b> A governor asked whether nursery places could be increased with the increase in classroom space? Response: The EHT responded that this would bring staffing challenges.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> that nursery fees be increased by 10% (cost per day for 2- and 3-year-olds and cost per nursery hours) from September 2026.</p>	

			<p>It was <b>agreed</b> that wrap around care fees would increase by the rate of inflation (3%). This would cover ages 2s and 3s for breakfast club and 3% on extra nursery sessions.</p> <p>Thanks was given to Jovita for the work that had gone into producing the report.</p>	
9	Policies for review and ratification	<p>9.1 Grievance Procedure 9.2 Menopause Policy 9.3 Security Policy 9.4 Social Media Policy</p>	<p>9.1 Grievance Procedure It was agreed that in section 7.2, where there is reference to stage 2 grievance meetings, a Human Resources rep would be included. This rep would be provided by EPM at no extra cost. A union representative can also be present.</p> <p><b>The policy was ratified with the amendment above.</b></p> <p>9.2 Menopause Policy The EHT advised that this was an adapted EPM policy.</p> <p>It was agreed that the policy would be reviewed every 2 years.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge:</b> A governor asked how the policy implementation and effectiveness would be monitored? Response: The EHT advised that this would be through checking with individuals that the policy is working and ensuring people are aware of the policy as well as normalising.</p> <p>A governor commented that posters about Menopause Matters could be displayed.</p> <p><b>The policy was ratified.</b></p> <p><u>9.3 Security Policy</u></p>	<p>EHT to update the Grievance Procedure to indicate that a HR representative would be included in stage 2 grievance meetings.</p> <p>EHT to amend menopause policy review schedule to every 2 years.</p>

			<p>The policy goes with the security risk assessment which was in the document bundle.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge:</b> A governor clarified whether security procedures were kept in desk files? Response: The EHT responded that they were and this will be checked as part of the health and safety walk taking place soon. They also appear in the staff handbook.</p> <p><b>Policy accepted.</b></p> <p><u>9.4 Social Media Policy</u> <b>Governor challenge:</b> Should the reasons for not bringing phones in be widened out beyond cyberbullying? Response: There is also a mobile phone and carriable devices policy, it was agreed this would be linked to the social media policy.</p> <p>The EHT raised that there had been approaches regarding the Smartphone Free Childhood movement but as a cluster it was felt that it was not the place of the school to determine this choice.</p> <p><b>The policy was ratified with the amendment above.</b></p>	EHT to add a link/reference to the mobile phone and carriable devices policy in the social media policy.
10	Health and Safety Report (SW)	10.1 Safety Committee Inspection (Spring 2026) 10.2 Queens' Federation Security Risk Assessment H&S Minutes – 23.02.2026	<p>SW advised that he had undertaken a health and safety walk.</p> <p><i>RB left the meeting 18.59</i></p> <p>CCTV monitoring at Queen Edith isn't working and this is being looked into.</p>	
11	Safeguarding		No further additions.	

12	DfE benchmarking April 2024 to March 2025 *Please follow the DfE benchmarking links	12.1 Benchmarking Spending <a href="#">Benchmark spending - Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool - GOV.UK.</a> 12.2 School Specific Benchmarking <a href="#">Your school - Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool - GOV.UK</a>	<i>19.03 RB returned to the meeting.</i>  HP and the EHT gave an overview of the benchmarking circulated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DfE provided benchmarking from 2024/25 to compare school finances with other similar schools.</li> <li>• The way things are coded will affect the figures which is why the ICT figure is much higher.</li> </ul> A skills matrix has been sent to governors with a finance role as part of the completion of the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) documentation. The SFVS will be discussed at the next full governing board meeting.	All governors to send skills matrix for SFVS to EHT by Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2026.
13	Correspondence Circulated		None.	
14	Items to be reported to parents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursery fee changes.</li> <li>• Gate changes – Queen Emma gates will be opening at 9.30am after Easter to avoid queues.</li> </ul>	
15	Any other business		The EHT advised that there is an outstanding amount of £695 on the Pay 360 system from 2022/23. It has been requested that this is written off as there is no prospect of recovering it. It would have been from a parent payment. <b>It was agreed that the outstanding amount would be written off.</b>	
16	<b>Date of next meeting:</b>	<b>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 5.30pm</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FGB to meet at 5.30pm to ratify the budget</li> <li>• F&amp;R Committee to meet afterwards at 6pm</li> </ul> Held at Queen Edith School	There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.10.	

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. F. Lang'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping underline.

Signed by:

Date: 16/06/2026

*Sean Lang, Chair of Governors*