



**Full Governing Body Meeting**  
**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 6.00 p.m.**  
**Queen Edith Primary School**

**AGENDA**

Governors Present:

Ambili Nair  
 Craig Dyer  
 Fran Hughes  
 Hannah Lewis  
 Harriet Phillips  
 Joanna MacKenzie  
 Nicole Wilson  
 Richard Wilson  
 Sarah Jarman (EHT)  
 Sean Lang (Chair)  
 Stanley Wilson  
 Steve Rothwell

Others present:

Cath Stubbs  
 Hayley Brooker  
 Julia Neal  
 Nicola Simmons  
 Rachel Holman  
 Zoe Vassiliou (Clerk)

	Item	Supporting Paperwork and notes	Notes	Action
1	Apologies for Absence (Clerk)		Siobhan Dickens and Sarah Steele sent apologies for absence which were accepted. Sulochana Subramaniam did not attend.	
2	Declaration of Interest (Chair)		No declarations of interest was shared.	
3	Agree minutes of the last meeting (All)	Minutes 29.01.2024 for agreement.	Amendments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Item 9, penultimate bullet point under SEND, add “, but the current post-holder hasn’t yet resigned.”</li> <li>Add Aspens Contract review to the F&amp;R Agenda on 29.04.2024.</li> </ul> Governing Body are happy that once the amendments above are made that these should be signed.	<u>Clerk to amend</u>
4	Matters arising (All)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Craig Dyer has shared a governor hub training link with the Clerk to be circulated to all governors. They provide very useful information about how to raise questions in meetings</li> </ul>	<u>Clerk to circulate.</u>

			<p>and provide access to governor training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Following discussions under item 6 have governors been in for visits in the 3 areas agreed – Leader in Me, Phonics and Maths.</b> Phonics and maths have been scheduled for early in the Summer term and Sean Lang will arrange a date with Julia and Cath to meet the pupil Lighthouse Team at each school.</li> <li>• During discussions on the SEND Policy, governors had asked the EHT to provide a report during the Summer term detailing risk assessments that have been under-taken to manage</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Chair to arrange LiM Visit</a></p>
5	EHT – Spring Term Report (SJ)	Executive Headteacher’s Spring Term Report 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our school improvement advisor has visited this half term to set targets for school improvement. The current year 6 may not do as well in national assessments compared to last year’s cohort. Children have made good progress during this school year and staff are working very hard to ensure children do as well as possible. Targets are ambitious and were discussed in detail at the Standards and Improvement Committee meeting and recorded in the minutes.</li> <li>2. Year 1 children did not visit Castle Hedingham as reported, but visited Mount Fitchet.</li> <li>3. Science week took place at Queen Edith and was very successful. We were very lucky that many visitors and parents with scientific back-grounds came into school to host sessions with children.</li> <li>4. A Science day was held at Queen Emma thanks to a grant of £800 from the Royal Institute of Science. They provided workshops for all children around a theme of ‘explosive food’ as well as a CPD session for staff. In the evening families could attend a participation event with a theme around rockets which was very well attended. We have received very positive feedback from families.</li> <li>5. A SENDCO on secondment from the local authority, who has been working at Queen Emma 1 day per week, will not be with us in the Summer term. This will place an additional burden on senior leaders to cover the SENDCO work.</li> <li>6. <b>Challenge: Do the local authority have a view on how this might impact our statutory requirements?</b> We have been informed that as long as we have a member of staff who is undertaking the training, and who will be qualified in 3 years’ time, then that is sufficient. Therefore work has been handed over to Rachel Holman and Hayley Brooker will provide support.</li> <li>7. <b>Challenge: Are senior leaders happy about this?</b> Although it does provide us with a cost saving it does place an additional burden on school leaders.</li> <li>8. Nurture provision has now been in place for a term at each school and we are pleased with the positive impact this is having.</li> <li>9. <b>Challenge: At Queen Emma 34 children have been supported and at Queen Edith 6 children have been supported which is a big difference.</b> At Queen Emma staff are running groups to support children, however at Queen Edith they are focusing on</li> </ol>	

			<p>working with children on a one-to-one or one-to-two basis.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. <b>Challenge: how do you measure the success of this provision?</b> The impact will be measured against baseline assessments which have taken place. The day to day impact on staff of children’s emotional de-regulation has lessened which is helping ease the burden; classrooms are therefore more settled so other children are not disrupted in their learning. As governors can see there are less suspensions taking place across both schools which is positive.</li> <li>11. Alice Rayment, our Art Therapist will be spending one day per week at each school instead of 1.5 days per week.</li> <li>12. Governors were advised that there has been a permanent exclusion at Queen Edith and this decision was approved by a panel of governors, also attended by an access and inclusion co-ordinator from the local authority. Governors need to be mindful that if suspensions for one child exceed 15 days in one term then we have to report this to the local authority and convene a panel. A new system for requesting support for children who are receiving regular suspensions has been put in place by the local authority.</li> <li>13. We are having to consider whether we can afford the Leader in Me moving forward and have taken the cost out of the budget. It would be a shame to lose this as it underpins our visions and values and our behaviour policy. We are asking the PSFA at each school to see if they might consider funding this.</li> <li>14. We have been selected to take part in an NHS initiative known as the Mental Health Support Team. They will provide free support to parents who have children with mild to moderate anxiety issues through trained and trainee practitioners. Queen Emma was originally selected for this initiative due to the high number of referrals that we provide to external agencies.</li> <li>15. Attendance is improved when compared to the same time last year which is positive.</li> <li>16. Following guidance from the DfE we have strengthened our policy on the use of mobile phones and other smart devices to make clear that they are prohibited in school.</li> <li>17. Nicki Simmons has been seconded to Over Primary School as Acting Deputy Headteacher two days per week (Monday and Tuesday). They have requested that Nicki continue in this role during the Summer term for 3 days per week (2 full days and 2 half-days) which she has agreed to. Ofsted visited the school for an inspection last week.</li> <li>18. Queen Emma has received a Stronger Schools grant from Tesco so that we can develop our forest school area further.</li> <li>19. Guttering around the swimming pool at Queen Edith needed replacing. When workmen came to visit the site they spotted there were holes in the roof which need to be</li> </ol>	
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			<p>repaired. There is also concern that there may be asbestos in the roof. Scaffolding has been put up today so work can start, but this does very unfortunately mean that we will be unable to hold swimming lessons in our school pool this Summer term.</p> <p>20. <b>Challenge: What will happen in the longer term if running the pool becomes unviable?</b> We are confident it won't become unviable and will be ready to use once the repairs are completed and the swimming pool has been properly lined, either with tiles or paint. We have money in the capital budget to cover this cost.</p> <p>21. Following the EHT's fund-raising bid to the housing developer CALA they have confirmed they will fund cycle racks at Queen Emma and funding for a Forest School at Queen Edith. They will also cover training costs for a member of staff and the costs of providing cover while the staff member is on training. This will start in October 2024.</p> <p>22. Y6 at Queen Edith have visited Astra Zeneca and participated in running experiments; Y6 at Queen Emma are visiting in June.</p> <p>23. EHT has attended a meeting with Sir Martyn Oliver, the new head of Ofsted, with Julia Waters and 2 other Headteacher's who left education following very difficult Ofsted Inspections; both had NDA with the MATs they had worked for. Ofsted have launched their 'big listen' and EHT shared that local authority schools have a fear of being forced into MATs and has been advised to complete the Big Listen form to share these concerns further. Rory Gribble, the former senior advisor to Gillian Keegan was also present and continued the meeting on after Sir Martyn Oliver had left.</p> <p>24. Governing body thanked the EHT for her very fulsome report which acts as a reminder of all the very positive things that are taking place in our schools.</p>	
6	QF financial position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the causes of the Federation's financial problems (SL).</li> <li>• Financial scenarios (SJ)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Analysis</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We received a note of concern from the local authority on 21.02.2024 relating to the deficit position across the Federation and the Chair has prepared a paper for governors providing analysis of the main causes of the deficit.</li> <li>2. The main reasons are long-term staff sickness and high demand for maternity cover, shortcomings in our internal processes relating to the hire of agency staff, high demand for specialist SEND support and the introduction of SBS.</li> <li>3. The federation is also suffering financially from a fall in pupil numbers, particularly at Queen Emma; this leaves spaces throughout our schools and we are being required to accept pupils with very high SEND needs or high level behavioural problems. This is having a very significant impact on staffing costs as we have to provide TA cover sometimes on a 2:1 basis.</li> <li>4. The local authority is behind in providing funding for EHCP children e.g. 4 children at Queen Emma have not received full funding by require full-time support. In effect the Federation has to meet the needs of these children without the necessary funding and</li> </ol>	

			<p>covering the shortfall from its own resources. There remain a number of outstanding queries sitting with the SAT team from both schools, submitted during the Autumn Term. We have been told that there are 18 members of staff absent in the SAT team which is making their work-load very difficult.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. It should also be noted that the funding received for an EHCP has not been increased for many years.</li> <li>6. <b>Challenge: Has the responsiveness from the SAT team got worse?</b> The response from the SAT team definitely takes longer than previously.</li> <li>7. The very poor introduction of SBS (the new budgeting and reporting tool) meant that the Federation Business Manager was unable to provide reports to the finance and resources committee for six months. In the meantime the committee used a chart of accounts and CEA report in June and November 2023 and the overspend on agency support was noted at every point from June 2023 onwards. The Chair has spoken to other governors locally and they have had problems with the introduction of SBS impacting their ability to have oversight of their school finances.</li> <li>8. The first RIG (Rapid Improvement Group) meeting will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> April and the Federation will need to share their plans to balance the budget.</li> </ol> <p><i>Financial Scenarios – Queen Emma</i></p> <p>The current deficit balance is £136,227.53 and we need to consider how we might cut our costs to have a balanced budget for 2024/25.</p> <p><b>Scenario 1</b> – is to apply for an extended deficit licence of £136,227.53 + the amount owed from 2023/24 with the deficit remaining for 2024/25.</p> <p><b>Scenario 2</b> – to set a balanced budget we could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of 7.5 TAs @£14k each (Sept to March) to save £105k.</li> <li>- Loss of admin hours (Sept to March) £14k</li> <li>- Reduction in office expenses and site maintenance £7k</li> </ul> <p>This would reduce the deficit to £9,617.</p> <p><b>Scenario 3</b> – to set a balanced budget we could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of an M6 teacher (Sept to March) £35k</li> <li>- Loss of 5 TAs (Sept to March) £70K</li> <li>- Loss of admin hours - £14610</li> <li>- Reduction in office expenses and site maintenance - £7k</li> </ul> <p>This would reduce the deficit to £9617.</p>	
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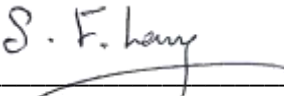
		<p><b>Scenario 4</b> – to set a balanced budget we could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of ICT Technician (50%) - £5k</li> <li>- Loss of 7 TAs @£14k each (Sept to March) to save £98k</li> <li>- Reduction in office expenses and site maintenance £7k</li> <li>- Loss of admin hours £14k</li> </ul> <p>This would reduce the deficit to £11,551.53.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Challenge: With regard to scenario 3, how could we lose an M6 teacher?</b> As numbers for Reception 2024 are low at Queen Emma we have considered that we could run only one class therefore needing only one teacher in Reception. This is something that the EHT will raise at the RIG meeting, as a member from the place planning team will be present.</li> <li>• <b>Challenge: What happens when teachers are off sick?</b> Classes are being covered by the deputy headteachers or EHT, or divided into small groups and shared out to other classes.</li> <li>• We have considered the deputy structure; that there should be 1 x DHT Curriculum, with no second DHT and NS coming over to provide cover two days per week at QEM. We could then employ an M6 SENDCo and the Acting DHT could go back into class, however, this does only recoup £5k.</li> <li>• All these scenarios rely on their being a £0 budget for agency staff.</li> </ul> <p><i>Financial scenarios – Queen Edith</i></p> <p>The current deficit balance is £87,183.30 and we need to consider how we might cut our costs to have a balanced budget for 2024/25.</p> <p><b>Scenario 1</b> – is to apply for an extended deficit licence of £87,183.30 + the amount owed from 2023/24 with the deficit remaining for 2024/25.</p> <p><b>Scenario 2</b> – to set a balanced budget we could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of 6 TAs @ £14k each (Sept to March) - £84k</li> <li>- Reduction in office expenses and buildings maintenance - £3,183</li> <li>- This would reduce the deficit to £0.</li> </ul> <p><b>Scenario 3</b> – to set a balanced budget we could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of a 77% teacher on UPS3 (approx. £50679 per annum) (Sept to March) - £29,563</li> <li>- Loss of 4 TAs @£14k each (Sept to March) - £56k</li> <li>- Reduction in office expenses and buildings maintenance - £1,620.</li> </ul> <p>This would reduce the deficit to £0</p>	
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			<p><b>Scenario 4</b>  Loss of ICT Technician (50%) (Sept to March) - £5k  Loss of 5.5 TAs @£14k each (Sept to March) - £77k  Reduction in office expenses and buildings maintenance - £5117.  This would reduce the deficit to £0.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Challenge: How would you replace the loss of a 77% teacher on UPS3?</b> We have a cover teacher who could be moved to teach a class full-time.</li> <li>• <b>Challenge: Can we raise more money by raising lettings costs?</b> We have put up the charges for our lettings, however we need to recoup a large sum of money which will not be raised by just putting up charges. EHT and DHT are providing support to other schools and this is bringing in money.</li> <li>• <b>Challenge: If we look 6 months to a year ahead what will be the impact of these cost saving measures on the children’s teaching and learning?</b> It is a risk that the cost saving measures may impact on the educational outcomes for our children and our ability to provide interventions and support for the most vulnerable.</li> <li>• <b>Governors: We need to know how many TAs are needed at each school to meet statutory requirements so that we can consider TA redundancies realistically.</b> EHT will consider minimum requirement for TAs to cover EHCPs and will up-date governors at the next meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Challenge: Do all children with an EHCP require a 1:1 TA or can a TA work with more than 1 child?</b> Where possible we have been proactive and the general TA supports EHCP children in their class. However we do have acute need often in different year groups, particularly in our EYFS and KS1 and these children do need a full-time 1:1 TA. We have some children who are awaiting special school places.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Work out TA requirements</u></p>
7	<p>Review actions arising from the pre-Ofsted Governance Check (All)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Ofsted Governance Check – June 2023</li> <li>• RAG rated actions arising from pre-Ofsted Governance Check for review and discussion</li> <li>• Training Record – April 2023 to March 2024 for information</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actions arising from the Pre-Ofsted Governance Check have been RAG rated and shared with governors.</li> <li>2. Governors have identified key areas for their school visits; these are Phonics, Maths and Leader in Me and visits will be set up for the Summer Term.</li> <li>3. Chair will set up a working group to review the governing body’s effectiveness including its constitution by undertaking a self-evaluation which will feed in to the Governor Development Plan. Hannah Lewis and Joanna MacKenzie agreed to form the working group. Queen Edith DHT will also join the group.</li> <li>4. Training needs to be undertaken, with a focus on finance and resources committee.</li> <li>5. Priorities for the financial year 2024/25 are: ensure financial oversight, staff well-being,</li> </ol>	

			impact of cost savings on SEND provision and ensuring standards.	
8	SFVS (HP) – to be agreed by Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queen Edith SFVS Report</li> <li>Queen Emma SFVS Report</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SFVS (Schools financial value standard) checklist provides an assurance framework; this has been completed for both schools by Harriet Phillips and was presented to the FGB.</li> <li>As SBS was not functional for many months HP has referenced that this impaired the committee’s ability to have full oversight of the Federation’s financial oversight.</li> <li><b>Challenge: Did other Governing Body’s manage to have better over-sight?</b> Having spoken to other local Chairs of Governors SBS has been a problem for other governing bodies. It was particularly tricky for us as SBS had not been set up for Federations and the business manager and finance manager had been provided with passwords that did not work. We also had to use designated ledger codes rather than those we had set up.</li> <li>In retrospect the finance and resources committee wishes it had pushed the local authority harder for a resolution and made our concerns known at an earlier stage, however we were in the throes of challenging Ofsted and preparing for inspections at both schools.</li> </ol>	
9	Federation Development Plan (Governors) – to complete outcomes for 2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan priorities 2023/24.</li> <li>Leadership Development Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Governors and staff to complete evaluation of Items L4 under the leadership and management section of the school development plan ready for the S&amp;I Committee meeting on 22.04.2024. Attendance case studies have been presented at the S&amp;I Committee and safeguarding case studies will be presented in Summer B.</p> <p>Safeguarding governors have been in to each school termly for a safeguarding visit; they have also audited the SCR at each school with the EHT.</p>	
10	PRfE Data for Spring Term (SJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRfE data – Queen Edith</li> <li>PRfE data – Queen Emma</li> </ul>	<p>Spring term PRfE (Prejudice reporting for education) data was shared with governors. There has been one reported incident at Queen Edith, with one further incident being reported on Friday, that isn’t captured in this report.</p> <p>There have been two reported incidents at Queen Emma School.</p>	
11	Training link governor (SJ and SL)	Appoint a training link governor	Craig Dyer is confirmed as the training link governor.	
12	Safeguarding up-date (SJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federation Safeguarding Visit Report (SL and JM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sean Lang and Joanna MacKenzie had met with a cross section of teaching and support staff to discuss their experiences of safeguarding. They had prepared questions focusing on discovering how the systems work in practice, whether staff knew who the designated safeguarding leads are and how MyConcern works and their views on training and support.</li> <li>It was clear that safeguarding is woven into everything that the staff do and is part of the fabric of school life.</li> <li>The detailed safeguarding visit report was shared with the governors.</li> </ul>	
13	Up-dated policies for review		None	
14	Feedback from Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal Controls Audit (SL and</li> </ul>	Reports had been shared with the FGB.	



	Training, Governor Visits and Link Governor Visits	RW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Meal Visit (RW)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richard Wilson had attended Queen Emma to have a school meal. He had sat in the dining hall with some year 6 children and had the opportunity to talk to them about the school meals. Richard had found the portions to be large and been able to have limitless salad.</li> <li>Sean Lang and Richard Wilson had been in to conduct an internal control check. They had spent time with the business manager and the finance manager following through the procedures relating to placing and paying for orders, especially agency teaching and support staff. They were talked through the process by which invoices for services are raised and how and with whom they are placed, following through an example from initial order to payment.</li> </ul>	Follow up check to take place shortly after Easter.
15	What is the impact of decisions made during this meeting upon the standards and improvement of the Federation? (All)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have considered the financial scenarios that have been shared with us and have requested further details about teaching assistant requirements for the next school year.</li> <li>We have set priorities for the financial year April 2024 to March 2025.</li> </ul>	
16	Receive Minutes of Committee Meetings	04.03.2024 Standards & Improvement (CD) 18.03.2024 Finance & Resources (HP)	Committee minutes were received.	
17	Items to be reported to parents			
18	Correspondence Circulated	LA – letter of financial concern and response from Chair.		
19	Any Other Business		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Craig Dyer will come in to do a Maths visit in Summer A</li> <li>Harriet Phillips will come in for a Phonics visit in Summer A</li> <li>Sean Lang to meet with the Lighthouse Teams.</li> </ul>	
20	<b>Date of next meeting:</b>		<b>Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024, 6.00 pm</b> <b>FGB Budget Meeting, followed by Finance and Resources Committee Meeting</b>	

Signed:   
 (Dr Sean Lang, Chair)

Dated: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024