

Queensmill Trust Governance Review – May 2023 v1

Overview

This review is intended to provide an approach which is consistent with the DfE recommendations for the review of governance in an academy trust and also to reflect on the governors' and trustees' response to the earlier review in October 2022, which focused on safeguarding and the school's response to inspection.

As recommended, the review will use as its focus the 'six features of effective governance' as set out in the DfE Governance Handbook. These are;

- strategic leadership
- accountability
- people
- structures
- compliance
- evaluation.

The review was conducted by Christopher Sanderson, a former lead inspector, a consultant in leadership, safeguarding and compliance, and an experienced governance expert, who is external to, and independent of, the board and the executive leaders. The review examines the governance structure, operations and performance across the organisation and included interviews with trustees, governors, the governance professionals and finance officers and leaders in all sections of the organisation. A range of documentation made available by the organisation was also considered.

The review was intended to;

- consider the process and impact of decision-making;
- consider the impact of the governance support;
- consider progress since the previous review and the Ofsted visit;
- test compliance with mandatory requirements;
- make recommendations for future improvement;
- enable the board to review the strategic direction of the organisation and to evaluate the effectiveness of its processes and systems.

Terminology

- In this review, the use of the word 'governance' is intended to include the work of both the organisation's trustees and its governors.
- Queensmill School and Kensington Queensmill each has a clerk to the governors, though one of them uses the more recent title 'Governance Professional'. For the purposes of this report, the term 'Governance Professional' is used in relation to both posts.
- The Executive Head is also known as the Chief Executive Officer. For the purposes of this report, the title used is 'Executive Head'.

Summary of the Trust's Provision

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| Queensmill School | Established coeducational school for students with autism in the Hammersmith and Fulham Local Authority |
| Kensington Queensmill | New co-educational school for students with autism in the Kensington and Chelsea Local Authority |

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| Queensmill College | Post-19 provision for students who still have a need for Queensmill's provision |
| Project Search | Linked to Queensmill College, a one-year transition internship programme in a real work environment |
| Q House | Purpose-built residential provision for students with autism |

Framework and Questions for the Review

Interviews during this review drew on questions recommended by the DfE for governance review and form the headings for the paragraphs in each section of the review.

The Report

Overall Strengths and Recommendations for Action

Strengths

- The organisation is a cohesive community in which members of the organisation reported good levels of support from both governors and trustees.
- The Executive Head and the Heads lead by example, set the tone for the organisation and successfully promote a positive and purposeful culture.
- Trustees and governors bring a broad range of skills and experience to the organisation and are committed to undertaking training.
- The organisation has responded positively and successfully to the issues identified by the first Ofsted visit and ensured success when Ofsted paid a further visit.
- Despite the challenges which the organisation has faced, it has maintained a strong focus on making the best provision for students with autism.
- Links between the levels of governance and leadership have improved and attendance at, and engagement in, meetings is strong.
- Leaders, governors and trustees recognise strong support and guidance from the Executive Head, Governance Professionals and Chief Finance Officer (CFO).
- The work of the post-Ofsted working group and other cross-trust committees has been very successful.
- Governing boards ensure good oversight and review of health and safety, safeguarding and their Head's reports.
- The executive meeting of the Heads and Executive Head works effectively.
- The management and oversight of safeguarding has improved through the introduction of CPOMS.

Recommendations

- Further improve the lines of reporting and communication between trustees, governors and leaders and between the different aspects of the Trust so that:
 - The strategy, views and evaluations of trustees and governors are clearly understood across the trust.
 - Trustees and governors can verify, and see exemplification of, the work of the organisation and its compliance with its regulatory obligations, including for safeguarding and in respect of The Equality Act and the SEND Code of Practice, through a clear range of affirmative evidence rather than simply relying on the absence of negative indicators.

- Governance can verify that the organisation's values are being upheld and its aims met.
- Members of governance can be certain that the organisation is meeting the demands of legal requirements and statutory guidance for the curriculum, including the required provision for relationships and sex education and for careers guidance.
- Q House does not feel to be isolated from the rest of the organisation's provision.
- There are good links between governance and the parents of students in Q House.

Action to achieve this may include:

- Developing a local governing body structure in areas of the Trust's activities which don't currently benefit from this facility, maybe with an interim stage of setting up a steering group.
 - Finalising and finetuning through reflection the procedures for Heads to report directly to the trustees.
 - Developing more formal and structured reporting processes between both Queensmill College's Project Search and Q House and the trustees; these may mirror the new reporting format directly to the trustees.
 - Ensuring that trustees are informed of the outcomes of the governors' periodic scrutiny of the SCR.
 - Considering whether the development of governors' committees would enhance the work of the governing bodies.
 - Ensuring that trustees consider the regular external reports on Q House.
 - Reviewing the structure and constitution of the finance committee.
 - Reviewing the timing of governors' meetings to secure the best levels of attendance.
 - Reviewing and strengthening the relationship and reporting protocols between the Project Search steering group and the trustees, so that Trustees have a clear understanding of this aspect of the Trust's work.
 - Ensuring that link trustees' and link governors' visit are used robustly to verify that the organisation is working consistently in relation to the aims and values and that action points arising from, for example, previous visits and Head's reports are followed up and verified.
 - Enabling governors to periodically attend each other's meetings and also trustee meetings, as observers.
 - Considering areas which are common across the organisation and would benefit from leadership and oversight which replicates the cross-organisation role of the assessment lead.
- Ensure strong understanding, collaboration, and the sharing of good practice across the Trust by considering replicating the work and structure of the post-Ofsted working group and the Education and Safeguarding committees in other areas of the work of the organisation.
 - Continue and complete the current initiative for governors to have a clear understanding of their role, both as a body and as link governors, including ensuring governors' good understanding of the existing well-developed induction programme for governors, the Trust's terms of reference and schemes of delegation. Similarly, develop a parallel induction programme for new trustees.
 - Ensure a good and consistent governors' and trustees' understanding of their code of conduct and secure measures to verify their understanding of the code of conduct and any other documentation which they are required to read.

- Following the resolution of the issues raised by Ofsted and the funding concerns, ensure that trustees and governors regain and sustain a clear understanding of maintaining a strategic, rather than an operational role and develop a longer-term strategic vision.
- Develop procedures for governance to undertake regular formal self-evaluation of its own effectiveness. The organisation may choose to consider again in future the questions used in this review, so that it can both conduct effective self-evaluation and review progress since this report.
- Develop clear expectations relating to the training to be undertaken by trustees and mechanisms, parallel to those for governors, to monitor engagement in such training.
- Ensure that the trustee's annual review is not only produced, but also distributed, as relevant, to stakeholders.
- In relation to engagement with parents, review the contradictory responses in this audit and ensure that engagement with parents and the community is both of a high standard and also known to be so.
- Develop a robust approach to succession planning for the governing bodies, including the development of skills and experience within each governing body.
- At Kensington Queensmill, develop relationships with the local community and its businesses to replicate those which are well established at Queensmill School.
- Develop and implement a plan to counter the negative impacts of Brexit and Covid on the recruitment of staff from outside the UK and the readiness of staff to go above and beyond, for example, in their engagement outside normal school hours.
- Undertake a review of the organisation's aims and values to ensure that they remain a pertinent tool to guide the work and future development of the organisation.
- Ensure that trustees have a relevant understanding of the Headteacher Standards in the context of the performance management of the Heads.
- Monitor, and provide support in the management of, the workload of leaders across the organisation.
- Ensure consistency across the organisation in the way in which the use of physical restraint is reported.
- Include 'an understanding of autism' in the scope of the governors' skills audit.
- Review and improve the medical accommodation at Q House and the provision for the storage of medication.

Section 1. Strategic Leadership

1.1. How do the trustees ensure that there is appropriate governance support across the organisation?

At each level of governance and leadership, those interviewed reported good levels of support from governors and trustees, whilst acknowledging that the organisation is still in its early stages of development and still has a lot to learn and much to set in place and evaluate. Against this backdrop, coupled with the financing challenges and the Ofsted outcomes, the Trust has had to engage in much fire-fighting, rather than developing medium to long term strategy for the organisation. The Trust recognises that this review will be a key factor in moving forward in this respect.

At each level of governance and leadership, interviews showed a clear appreciation of good relationships and communication, both formal and informal. It was recognised that informal

relationships with and via the CEO, alongside the organisation's formal structures are essential. A number of improvements have been implemented recently, an example being a new proforma for Heads of School to report to the board. This has ensured that, as well as the Executive Head reporting to the Trust, the Heads of Queensmill School, Kensington Queensmill and Queensmill College can now also report directly to the Trust. Further finetuning of the process over time, reflecting on this experience, will ensure a good understanding of how best to share information efficiently and effectively. There will be a strong benefit in also adapting this format for use by the residential provision to report to Trustees. This is currently in an earlier format.

A further improvement is seen in the strengthening of links between the two levels of governance and leadership. This includes governors' and trustees' strong levels of attendance at and engagement in meetings, trustee presence at governors' meetings and strong support from the Executive Head. However, although meetings are regular, their timing has posed a challenge to some governors and trustees, and it was reported that some meetings had to be cancelled because they were not quorate. Following time needed for processes and roles to be understood and for relationships to develop, the organisation is still on a journey in this regard and further development in this area will be beneficial.

The organisation's processes have developed further since the October 2022 review; the post-Ofsted working group which brought together different levels and sectors of leadership and management has been a successful venture and its replication in other key areas of leadership will bring further benefit. Members of leadership and the governing bodies reported that trustees provided strong support during and following the Ofsted visit, both formally and informally, particularly in relation to safeguarding and the curriculum, enabling trustees and governors to ask pertinent questions and provide appropriate support and challenge. Collectively, trustees bring a broad range of skills and experience to the organisation, with some trustees having a very high level of expertise. It was noted that overall they demonstrate good skills in questioning assumptions and processes. Strong support, both from trustees and the financial officer, was reported for both the acting and newly appointed Heads. Link governor visits and some visits from trustees, for example in relation to key events or specific issue, have also provided strong support. The governing body at Kensington Queensmill is in only its second year of operation as an advisory board. For much of its first year, governors needed to focus on compliance and on establishing priorities and systems of delegation. Good support was provided in this respect from the Governance Professional, Executive Head and the CFO. In their second year, they have focused on wholly understanding their role. To assist this, governors have benefited from training from the Local Authority governor services. They have taken responsibility for changing agendas moving into the second year and establishing link governor roles, matching these to SIP priorities. This initiative is still emerging.

Queensmill College now benefits from two, rather than one, link trustees. One trustee has a well-established role in this respect and the additional trustee, who brings headship experience, is still developing the role. At the college, the facility to share and discuss issues with the trustees is valued, particularly since the Head does not have a deputy.

Running parallel to the college, Project Search is overseen effectively by its steering group. However, the relationship between the steering group and the trustees is not yet fully developed. Trustees who have engaged with the leaders of Project Search have been keenly engaged and interested in, and have shown strong support for, the work of Project Search and its link with the hospital. However, it was noted that, at the time of the review visit, Trustees had paid only a small number of visits to

Project Search and are still in the early stages of their oversight role, which would benefit from further development. A strategy to address this may include asking trustees to join alternate steering group meetings.

At Q House, the Responsible Person, who is new to the role, reports good support from the link trustee, whose support and challenge benefits from strong depth of knowledge and also experience of autism. The Responsible Person also reported a useful visit from the Chair of Trustees.

1.2 How well does governance work with the organisation's leaders and the Governance Professional?

The regular meetings of the full governing board with their Heads, work well. They are effective in scrutinising the Heads' and other staff reports and in checking health and safety and safeguarding. The Governance Professionals, who are thorough, professional and knowledgeable, received high praise for their comprehensive work from the Heads and others who were interviewed. They noted that they are meticulous and responsive, and highlighted, in particular, their guidance in meetings, their ensuring that regulatory matters are addressed and their verification that governors are meeting their commitments to training. One of the Governance Professionals noted that governors and leaders work well with the person in this role, adding that they are very responsive and have brought suitable educational experience to the school. The response to the Ofsted visit has necessarily resulted in governors becoming more operational and there is a need now for them to focus on being strategic. In this respect, the Governance Professionals work well to steer the governing bodies to be strategic rather than operational.

The work of the Trustees' Education and Safeguarding Standards committees are also effective across the organisation. They serve as a good model for future working and the expansion of this approach will serve well to integrate practice, improve communication and oversight, develop greater consistency and share skills and knowledge. As already noted, the mixed population in the Ofsted working group is a successful model for future working.

In general, communication from the governing boards to the Governance Professional is effective and the chairs are receptive to advice. Workload and the infancy of the board at Kensington Queensmill has resulted in the provision of reports for meetings not always meeting the expected schedule. However, this is improving. Governors and trustees reported a cohesive community in which all stakeholders are responsible and responsive and in which frequent contact from the Heads and Executive Head to the chair of governors ensures good communication, including parental feedback and pertinent articles to read, facilitating the chair's sharing of such information with the rest of the governing body. The work of the school also benefits from effective committee meetings and initiatives such as the medical walks, which result in feedback to the full board.

The executive meeting of the Heads, together with the Executive Head and the Responsible Person at Q House, is seen to be very useful, particularly in enabling the participants to keep in touch across the Trust and guarding against isolation. The meeting facilitates the discussion of strategic plans and the needs of certain students. It enables the understanding of the Trust's financial situation and the discussion of safeguarding issues. Leaders noted that the management of safeguarding is much improved due to the introduction of CPOMS.

Leaders in Q House have a good understanding of the challenges of running such a residential facility within the school building and benefit from regular communication with their link trustee, who brings extensive specialist experience and can report back to the Trust, alongside the regular reporting of the Responsible Person.

1.3 How well have governance and leadership determined a clear and ambitious vision for the organisation, which sets out what it will look like over the next three to five years and the expected outcomes for the pupils?

Given the context of the organisation, in particular its infancy, the Ofsted visit and the financial challenges, it has been difficult to look beyond day-to-day priorities. However, the organisation has sustained a strong focus on autism and a belief that its approach is successful. Developing a longer-term strategic vision is still to be finalised and the current aim is simply to stabilise and plan for expansion. The nature of such expansion is still to be defined, including the extent to which it will affect Queensmill College and the Q House residential provision. However, such expansion is seen as a priority in order for the organisation to settle, survive and develop a plan for the growth which will support financial survival, recruitment and retention. Despite emergency issues dominating the attention of governance, trustees and governors believe that a strong group of personnel is now in place at both governor and trustee level to oversee and monitor provision and plan for growth. It is acknowledged that the organisation faces an exciting and fulfilling future, since there are insufficient places in this challenging area of education, and the organisation believes it has the staff, leaders, governors and trustees to meet such a challenge. Certain cornerstones are emerging in the formulation of longer-term strategy. These include Kensington Queensmill growing from 80 to 130 students, whilst sustaining a focus on educating local children locally and being cost effective for the borough, thus avoiding the need for out-of-borough placements.

The development of the vision for the ethos of Kensington Queensmill, as a new school, has benefited from the ambition to reflect the ethos of Queensmill School in making the best possible provision for students with autism. Such vision is successfully implemented on a day-to-day basis; the organisation now needs to build on this success in developing a clear vision for the future. Queensmill College also benefits from a common goal and strong cohesion across the range of provision in the Trust. Strategic planning in this provision draws well on the college's self-evaluation and includes a desire to find better accommodation, with outdoor space and develop access beyond the age of 25. However, it was noted that the vision for Queensmill College is not specifically shared with the Project Search Steering Group. This may be facilitated through better liaison between trustees and the steering group, as noted earlier.

1.4 How well has governance set out a concise set of measurable aims for the organisation's leadership, to enable it to achieve its vision?

The Trust has set out two key immediate and measurable aims, both driven by external considerations. The first, responding appropriately to a poor Ofsted visit outcome, is now complete. The second, resolving the Trust's financial challenges, remained an ongoing concern at the time of the review visits. Whilst expansion may support the resolution of the financial issues, governance and leadership approach them as separate issues, the latter concern being seen to be generated by income, rather than expenditure considerations, since the Trust has calculated that one local authority pays the school only about two thirds of what it costs to educate each student. These two

immediate aims may appear unambitious. However, their resolution is essential as a secure foundation for developing a vision and aims for the future. Whilst governance at Queensmill School has been successful in overseeing a recovery from the position identified by Ofsted and the setting up of a new school at Kensington Queensmill, work remains to be done in achieving financial stability and, subsequently, articulating a plan for the future.

Within the context of the challenges faced by the Trust, the aims of the schools are set out well in their School Improvement Plans (SIPs). These are reviewed by the Heads with their management teams. This includes, for example, Kensington Queensmill being prepared for its first Ofsted visit and developing a strong focus on staff training. In each school, the SIPs draw appropriately on their self-evaluation and are shared with the Executive Head, who shares them with the trustees, whilst the Heads share them with their governing board.

Measurable aims for Queensmill College include working alongside the Local Authority to develop post-25 provision, within a clearly set out time frame. As noted in 1.3, finding new premises is also a clear aim. However, in this respect there is less certainty. The college is reliant on the Local Authority finding new premises and has only 18 months left on its current lease.

The aims and goals of Q House are discussed in the executive meeting of Heads, with a particular focus on shared goals and strategies, together with discussions of how challenges can be met. This meeting provides a useful platform for sharing the vision for Q House, including a transition to its original purpose of providing respite, rather than permanent provision, and the Trust's objective to expand provision for adults. These aspects of the Q House aims and vision have also been discussed with the link trustee. However, there is a sense that Q House is a little isolated from the rest of the Trust. Discussions have taken place to plan to address this, which is particularly important in relation to any proposed development of provision at Q House.

1.5 How successful is the Trust at remaining strategic, rather than operational, whilst not shying away from key decisions?

The dominant consideration in the Trust's situation at the time of the review is the development and implementation of a strategy to survive and to pay the staff in the current funding conditions. The Trust's survival is, therefore, indicative of success in the short term whilst negotiations to resolve the situation continue. In such circumstances, there is, inevitably, an overlap between strategic and operational activity. Strong leadership at Trust level and well-informed governors at local level have enabled governance to develop a better understanding of working strategically. However, current circumstances have required governance to be more operational. A good separation is seen between strategic and operational activity in, for example, matters of curriculum and safeguarding, where governance has provided insightful challenge. However, this has not been possible in matters of finance. At local level, governors have received useful guidance from the Heads and Governance Professionals to assist them in remaining strategic, where circumstances have permitted this to be possible.

1.6 How well does governance engage with parents and the community, and secure their engagement with the schools?

Ofsted was critical at Queensmill School of the school's level of engagement with parents. Consequently, the school's reputation suffered. As a result of these two factors, the Trust has focused on addressing this area. It has been a point for discussion in governors' meetings, resulting in strategies being adjusted, and a key focus for the Heads and Executive Head, particularly rebuilding parental trust; a trustee commented that the rapport with parents is now as strong as it has ever been. However, a governor commented that engagement with parents is minimal, restricted to a small number of formal occasions. This contradictory view may be a result of not sustaining an awareness of what is provided for parents. Several events have been organised over the last year to bring the community together, including a post-Ofsted celebration event, a creative arts event and themed coffee mornings with guest speakers. Parent governors have provided strong support in ensuring strong home-school links and leaders and governors are both accessible to parents and open to questions.

Parents visit the school regularly and know both the complexity of the schools' challenges and the quality and commitment of the staff. Queensmill School did not experience a trend of parents withdrawing their children as a result of the negative inspection judgements. Its strong reputation for offering a service to the whole family, including breakfast club and weekend provision, has supported the school in the aftermath of the inspection judgements. However, provision outside normal school hours has become more challenging as a result of Brexit and the Covid pandemic. This is due partly to a reduction in staff offering to go above and beyond their assigned responsibilities and partly to the difficulties in recruiting staff from outside the UK, placing limitations on the extraordinary contribution of such people, which Queensmill School has benefited significantly from in the past. In the interviews, no formal link was recognised between governance and the parents of children in the Q House provision. However, the link trustee has strong knowledge of the families due to her work with the organisation over 10 years.

Section 2. Accountability

2.1 Have governance and the organisation's leadership agreed the organisation's aims and values?

When the Trust was formed, Queensmill School was already established as a school. As previously noted, its existing aims and values were already set out and have been exported to Kensington Queensmill and other aspects of the Trust. There has not been significant further work in this respect, particularly in the light of the pressing challenges arising from Ofsted and the financial concerns. A trustee was invited to write a "Queensmill Way" document, to be a manual which provides clarity in respect of the organisation's aims and values. Sustaining continuity in this respect benefits from appointments to key positions of leadership from within the organisation. However, there has been no formal revisiting and review of the aims, largely due to the pressing challenges already discussed. Nevertheless, the provision continues to sustain a strong focus on autism and the quality of its approach, providing locally for local children.

In addition to a shared trust-wide mission statement, Queensmill College has its own mission statement, in order for this to be relevant to its particular provision. Its self-evaluation and improvement plans are agreed with link trustees and the Executive Head. A good understanding of the 'Queensmill Way' is provided to college staff, ensuring respect for the students' autism and providing for the students to be given the tools to know themselves. Similarly, those working with students at the hospital through Project Search must have a good understanding of the students and

the reasonable adjustments staff need to make, rather than expecting students to comply to the hospital's approach.

Overall, across the aspects of the Trust, there is a desire to agree and maintain aims and values for the future and plan accordingly. It is agreed that this will be more realistic on the resolution of the current significant challenges and that the governors' and leaders' closer work with trustees will facilitate success in this respect, the recent cross-group working parties being a model for future collaborative working. The facility for governance to verify that values are being upheld and aims met should also be a consideration. For example, governors receive the SIP and have benefited from staff members making a presentation at meetings. Through the follow-up work of governors on link visits, a procedure can be developed to verify the extent to which the schools are working consistently in relation to the aims and values.

2.2 How well are these aims and values reflected in policy and practice and to what extent do they result in ethical behaviour and a positive and purposeful culture across the organisation?

The range of interviews provided a strong endorsement that practice in the provisions within the Trust strongly meets the overall aims and values, despite the challenges noted in this report. It was noted that this has been endorsed by external verification, including by the National Autistic Society. In both the educational and the residential provision, consistency is being sustained in this respect, as seen in the strong focus on safeguarding and behaviour as the prerequisites of good education and also the Trust's strong culture of training and monitoring. The Executive Head and the Heads are seen to lead by example, set the tone for the organisation and successfully promote a positive and purposeful culture. This is evidenced in the careful recruitment of staff, particularly in the shadow of the post-Brexit challenges in this respect, and the manner in which the students are respected, valued and helped to manage their autistic characteristics. Evidence of Queensmill College meeting its aims is seen in approximately ten former students now being in paid work across the hospital trust, which demonstrates not only the students' success, but also the hospital staff's understanding of, and engagement with the Trust's aims and values.

2.3 How well does governance acknowledge its duty as an employer, ensuring appropriate staff training and development, staff well-being and safe recruitment?

Governance and Leadership demonstrates a strong commitment to its responsibilities in this respect. This is seen in the strong focus on all staff understanding autism. They have formal training on autism and are provided with a clear interpretation of each Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP). Staff also have training on 'The Queensmill Way'. Governance ensures that staff focus on students being safe, happy and motivated. In the context of working with students with autism, the judgement of safety includes students being confident that staff around them know who they are and what their challenges are.

Governance acknowledges that working with students with autism is still a tough challenge, which requires mental and physical resilience in its staff. The intention to sustain staff wellbeing is noted in the SIPs and the self-evaluation, and is monitored by governance on regular visits, particularly through the face-to-face relationships between staff and parent governors.

Adherence to safer recruitment practice was an issue raised by Ofsted. As a result, recruitment practices have been revised. Through the checking of documentation, the recruitment process, information in the Heads' reports, and visits to the schools, governors are confident that recruitment procedures are now robust, including for the residential provision. Governors have been involved in the appointment process for senior staff, and the Kensington Queensmill Chair of Governors has trained in safer recruitment.

Despite the Trust's circumstances, trustees maintain a strong focus on the welfare of, and support for, the staff. All trustee meetings are reported to now cover matters of safer recruitment and employer's obligations. It was also noted that trustees undertake checks of the central register of appointments. There is a particular focus on the provision of support for staff in respect of the challenging situations faced by the organisation. Trustees have committed to protecting staff training budgets as far as possible. However, the current significant financial constraints have resulted in training budgets being seriously limited to topics such as safeguarding and safer recruitment. The new CFO reported an extremely insightful and supportive induction meeting.

2.4 Does governance have a good awareness of the Headteacher Standards? How effective is the performance management review of the Headteachers and how closely does this relate to the Headteacher standards?

At trust level there is a shortfall in understanding the process and outcomes of the performance management of the Heads. It was assumed to be the role of the Executive Head. However, a desire was voiced to achieve a stronger connection between the trustees and the Heads of school, the college and the residential provision, including their attendance at Trust meetings.

The performance management of the Heads of Queensmill School and Kensington Queensmill involves a contribution from both governors and an external reviewer. The recently appointed Head of Kensington Queensmill noted that the process was initiated for her as soon as she was appointed. Both Heads of School reported that the process made close reference to the Headteacher Standards and that targets align well with the standards, including a focus on wellbeing and ensuring that they receive the support needed in order to achieve their targets. The Head at Queensmill College reported that her performance management includes her link trustee and the Executive Head and also noted that it aligns well with the Headteacher Standards. The Responsible Person at Q House reported that his performance management is led by the Executive Head, but without trustee involvement. He attributed this arrangement to the children's home regulations and the definition of the role.

2.5 How well does governance monitor the workload of its leaders and support them in workload management?

Trustees are aware, through discussions, of the demands of workload on leadership and aware that the school is running efficiently in the context of the current financial challenges. A link trustee expressed concern about leaders' workload, notably in the wake of Ofsted inspection and was impressed by their resilience, noting that workload is monitored through regular contact and informal discussions after meetings. The Heads of Queensmill School and Kensington Queensmill accepted that it is difficult to achieve balance in this respect, particularly in relation to the significant pressure arising from the Ofsted visit and the current financial challenge. However, both Heads feel well

supported by trustees and governors, the new Head, in particular, welcoming the extent of advice provided by the Chair at the start of her role and the subsequent catch-up meetings. The Heads also welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the design of the new template for the report to trustees, which facilitates workload management through the aligning of reporting processes. The workload of the leadership was recently also discussed at the executive committee meeting, with a view to key staff presenting their areas of responsibility to the trustees, thus enabling information and issues to be shared and discussed. Governors' meetings have also been very mindful of staff workload.

Similarly, managing the workload of the Head and staff effectively is a constant challenge across both Queensmill College and Project Search. The Head of the college also has a cross-trust role as leader for careers and qualifications and notes that she is beginning to experience greater understanding and more support from her trustees and the Executive Head in this respect. The Responsible Person at Q House noted that there has been some informal discussion of workload and significant praise from the link trustee in this respect, but no formal evaluation of workload nor support and advice for workload management.

2.6 How does governance hold the leadership to account for the quality of education that pupils receive, ensuring that leadership develops, implements and monitors a broad and balanced curriculum, including the statutory provision of relationships and sex education (RSE) and of careers guidance?

A trustee noted that the Ofsted steering committee was a bespoke solution to address the issues raised in this area. However, there was an assumption that the absence of the reporting of concerns in this area is a positive indicator about the organisation's curricular provision. No specific information was available, therefore, in relation to the extent of provision for RSE and careers guidance. The Heads of Queensmill School and Kensington Queensmill reported that the current focus is on creating processes, which has been supported by the working group. Clear deadlines are linked into SIP and governor visits have taken place to monitor progress. At Queensmill School, this has included joining the Head's learning walks and observations. At Kensington Queensmill, there has been a strong focus on staff training and link governor visits, which have included a focus on careers provision. A robust calendar of lesson observations and learning walks are reported back to governors' meetings. At Queensmill School, the careers link governor is new and still learning the routines and requirements. She has met with the careers team to facilitate this. These initiatives are also reported to the trustees. Similar general reporting is also undertaken to the Trustees' Education and Standards Committee. The Trust has an assessment lead, whose role links across both schools and has been evaluated to be successful for this reason. The organisation is, therefore, considering replicating this approach in other areas, such as the curriculum.

A Queensmill School governor reported that routine reporting and the link governor visits provide the governors with a good understanding of the school's fulfilment of its curricular responsibilities, adding that she has been given good guidance on what to look for on link governor visits. Governors' meetings are used well to probe the topics raised by the Head and other staff, who may be invited to attend, and also to verify the school's action in relation to recommendations made at previous meetings.

The trustees' understanding of curricular provision at Queensmill College is furnished through trustee visits, including a link trustee visit to Project Search. The Executive Head has observed at the college,

though not recently. The college has expanded from 7 to 27 students. With further expansion envisaged, the time is right to consider enhancing governance support and oversight, which may be through the creating of a local governing board, replicating the schools. An interim stage of setting up a steering group should also be considered.

2.7 How well does governance understand how the trust's funds are managed and hold the executive leaders to account for the efficiency, sustainability and impact of the trust's financial planning and management? To what extent are resources allocated in line with the organisation's strategic priorities?

The Trust has a strong and clear picture of the financial picture of the organisation, supported by external review, identifying that the issue lies with an insufficiency of income. Due to the current finance challenges, governance has had to maintain a close understanding of the management of the Trust's funds. Achievement in this respect has included weekly meetings with the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and regular meetings between the Executive Head and the finance department. The key issue facing the Trust is the income stream, not the way finances are spent, as has been verified by an external audit. The organisation is running very efficiently, within these limitations, and expecting to run well once there is an agreement to ensure that income matches well-managed costs.

The Trust's finances are closely scrutinised by its finance committee, which benefits from strong support and information from the CFO. Its work includes rigorous examination of the finance difficulties, linked to Local Authority funding. Processes are robust and transparent. The governing bodies also engage in financial scrutiny; the CFO has presented to governors and also reported on the endorsement of external reviews. In the context of the financial restraints, finances are allocated according to agreed priorities, with a particular focus on staff salaries and health and safety requirements.

The current financial challenges have resulted in very frequent finance and emergency finance meetings, which also involved trustees, resulting in the careful analysis of resources. Trustees have provided the executive team with strong support. However, funding remains difficult, resulting in frustration on the part of trustees as to how they can influence the situation positively.

2.8 How well does governance know its schools and residential provision, their stakeholders and their particular needs, and take into account their views when making key decisions. How does governance report annually on the work of the trust board?

The organisation strives hard to work with and understand its stakeholders and their needs. A trustee noted that there is always more which could be done, even in the context of the clear strength of the Trust in this respect. Parent governors have a strong insight into the complexity of the provision, the challenges it seeks to address and the high levels of skill of the staff, governors and trustees, but there is concern that other parents may not sufficiently understand the range of skills needed to reach and teach students of this nature, including in safeguarding, assessment and target setting. Some governors have a greater knowledge and understanding than others. All are well aware of their school and its nature, but not all have a specialist insight and knowledge in autism. Collectively their understanding is strong, with some governors and trustees bringing significant specialist knowledge, including those who are parents or former parents and have a particular understanding of families'

needs and challenges. The organisation is seen as being very forward-thinking in the way it tailors provision to the needs of the students and their families. Over time, Queensmill School has developed a very strong relationship with the community, particularly in facilitating companies providing work experience for the students. At Kensington Queensmill, an understanding of the wider community is not yet well-developed. This has been identified as an area for future action.

None of those interviewed, including parent governors, could recall a Trust annual report to stakeholders, though there was some recall of regular reporting on the Trust's financial challenges, ensuring an understanding of the root of these challenges. The Trust does produce an annual report, to which all Trustees contribute. It is placed in the public domain and submitted to ESFA. However, it is not currently circulated to governors. The Executive Head noted that the report will be circulated to governors from now on. A governors' induction programme is being created.

Section 3. People

3.1 How well does the Governance Professional co-ordinate the delivery of governance support across the trust, and provide independent clerking of board committees?

The Governance Professionals provide strong support to their schools, as noted in other sections of this report, and endorsed by the ESFA external report. There is good liaison between the Governance Professionals. The Governance Professionals ensure a good relationship between their schools and Governor Services, are well trained and bring good experience to the role. Governors' meetings are usually run well, supported by an advance meeting with the Governance Professional to agree the agenda, and secure strong engagement on the part of those who attend.

3.2 To what extent do governors and trustees bring to the organisation a broad range of relevant skills, expertise and qualifications to meet the organisation's needs?

Trustees and governors bring a strong and varied range of pertinent skills and experience to their roles. The experience of trustees includes law, education, finance, local government and work with the Department for Education. Governors bring to their role a broad range of knowledge and experience, both within and beyond education. This includes educational leadership and finance. Parent governors have a particular insight, including first-hand experience of bringing up children with autism. It was noted, however, that Trustees are not always fully aware of the range of skills and experience which the governors bring to the local governing bodies. In developing their governing bodies, the schools have focused on ensuring a variety of educational experience and the perspective of parent governors. To gain a greater understanding of the working of a governing body, it is suggested that members of the governing bodies periodically attend each other's meetings and also trustee meetings, as observers.

3.3 To what extent is the recruitment to governance founded on an audit of skills, to identify gaps in knowledge, experience and perspectives and to recruit to address them?

A skills audit of trustees has been undertaken. Currently the Trust is not seeking to appoint further trustees. A further skills audit would be undertaken, should this be needed. Following a governor skills audit at Kensington Queensmill, the school made appointments to secure experience in mental health and counselling. The audit also recognised a gap in the governing body not having Local

Authority representation after the previous appointee stood down shortly after appointment. Analysis of the skills audit also helped the governing body identify an aspiration for further expertise in financial oversight. Collectively, this new body now has a clear understanding of strategy and how to operate, but recognises that it may need to draw in other skills as the school moves towards its third year and doubles in size. This is also a factor as the governing body seeks to develop further the role of link governor.

A skills audit was undertaken at Queensmill School and referred to during the recruitment of new governors. The recruitment and retention of governors at Queensmill School has been a challenge, which has been associated with a lack of understanding of the role and the extent of its scope.

The Governance Professional oversees the annual or biennial update of the skills audit. It is then reviewed and used to inform future governor recruitment. At both schools, the recruitment process expects an understanding of autism. However, this is not a feature of the skills audit, since it uses a commercially produced template.

3.4 How does governance plan for succession in its membership?

For several reasons, including the focus on the Trust's immediate challenge and the governing board at Kensington Queensmill being new, it was acknowledged that succession planning has not been a priority. Some aspects of succession planning can be identified; it is considered in the risk register, but has not been formally discussed as an agenda item. However, the meetings do consider whose term of office are moving towards the need for renewal. At Kensington Queensmill, where all governing body members are new, consideration of succession planning is more challenging. However, an intention was noted to enable less experienced governors to develop their expertise, and to enable some governors to take on shadowing responsibilities. This governing body has also planned that the role of chair is a two-year responsibility, to be preceded by a period as vice-chair.

3.5 What is the quality of the induction programme for new members of governance?

It was noted that there is not a formal process of induction for trustees. Some trustees and governors reported being unsure of what is in place for the induction of new governors. However, in contrast, the Heads, Governance Professionals and others interviewed explained a clear and thorough process for the induction of governors, which includes meeting the Head and Executive Head, touring the school, meeting the CFO for a finance induction, a contribution from the Local Authority on roles and responsibilities, and support in signing up to and understanding Governor Hub. They receive and discuss the code of conduct, an NGA governance booklet, the School Improvement plan, KCSIE and the school's safeguarding documentation. Induction also includes an explanation of the expected commitment to training and how this is monitored by the Governance Professionals, who reported that governors are confident to come to them with any queries about their roles.

3.6 To what extent are members of governance committed to ongoing training and development, particularly in relation to safeguarding, to ensure consistency with the requirements of KCSIE?

It was noted that no formal expectations have been established relating to training undertaken by trustees; they are expected to make their own decisions about the training they undertake, with monitoring by the Executive Head where training is related to safeguarding. It is recognised that both

trustees and governors are volunteers and a trustee reported that clearer guidance on the expectations for training for trustees would be welcome.

Governors' commitment to training has improved and is now strong. All governors have undertaken training in safeguarding and the Prevent Duty, which they recognise as a priority. The Governance Professionals monitor governors' undertaking of training and maintain a record on Governor Hub. They issue reminders, where needed and are supported, where necessary, by the Executive Head. The Chair and the Governance Professionals ensure that governors remain aware of what training is available to them and the Governance Professionals reported that governors maintain a good record of completing the training allocated to them. Governors are encouraged to report any relevant training they have undertaken elsewhere.

3.7 How well does governance provide support and challenge to the organisation's leaders?

In the trustee and governing body meetings, the experience of the boards and their chairs has facilitated the provision of the various aspects of the Trust with significant support and challenge. This has included careful and informed questioning about procedures and documentation and pertinent challenge following the Ofsted outcome. In this respect, specifically assigned governance support was provided to assist in addressing the action plan. Governors with particular specialist skills and experience are able to ask questions in greater depth. Governance support and challenge has also shown itself to reflect good awareness and sensitivity, for example, during the Covid pandemic when the school elected to remain open and in the wake of the Ofsted visit. Governance achieves a good balance between asking the difficult questions while remaining supportive and has taken good account of both Heads being new in post.

Although the Trust is young and still establishing itself, link trustees use their expertise well to provide strong support and challenge with enthusiasm, which is readily welcomed by the leadership. The Executive Head also provides challenge on an on-going basis to facilitate the organisation continuing to move forwards. Skills in providing support and challenge at Kensington Queensmill, where the board is new, are developing well. Recent areas in which challenge was provided include workload, attendance, policies, staffing and well-being. For example, governors requested more information on staff absence in order to be able to support and challenge the school better. In a recent governor visit to look at curriculum, good challenge was provided relating to the development of skills in subject leadership.

3.8. Does the organisation have a code of conduct for members of governance? How well is it known and followed?

Awareness of a code of conduct for governance is inconsistent. A trustee noted being aware of an obligation to abide by the Nolan Principles, but was not aware of a code of conduct. Some governors were also unsure about a code of conduct and its contents. However, Governance Professionals gave a clear picture of the situation and other governors were much more certain in their awareness of the code of conduct, noting that it is provided via Governor Hub, is based on NGA guidance and that it is reissued on an annual basis, for both governance and employees who regularly attend governance meetings. This inconsistency may arise from an absence of a verification process to confirm that governors and trustees have read and understood the documents issued to them.

4. Structures

4.1 How effective are the organisation's committees which include governors and/or governors and leaders?

The local governing boards do not have committees. This is a topic which the Trust plans to review. Trustee committees work well and give rise to quality discussion. They are seen to be productive, especially in the committee chairs' reports to the full board of trustees. The cross-Trust post-Ofsted working group has been particularly effective in facilitating and overseeing the response to the action points and in bringing the organisation together with a common purpose and understanding. It was noted that Kensington Queensmill was less involved in this committee. The operation of the finance committee has been challenging, due to the scale of the work to be done within demanding time constraints. It would benefit from restructuring with members who have more time available to address the issues and from having more scheduled input from the CFO.

The Queensmill School governing board's three link governors, take responsibility for education, finance and safeguarding. At the time of the visits, a 4th link governor was due to take up a role to link with Queensmill College. These link governors report effectively to the trustees, having, for example, met with the Heads on different topics, undertaken class visits and written reports. There is scope for governors to improve this process by ensuring that they read these reports to maintain their awareness and, thus provide effective challenge.

At Q House, the Responsible Person is aware that improvement is an ongoing process and would like to draw on his experience elsewhere to introduce other ways of working, to introduce an appraisal procedure and to reduce staff absence. He appreciates the interaction with the link trustee in these matters, but would value a more consistent and regular timetable of meetings.

4.2 How is the structure of governance organised in order to be suitably effective and to avoid omissions and duplication in the organisation of responsibilities?

The post-Ofsted working group and outside reviews have been very useful in reducing duplications and ensuring that there are no omissions. Overlaps had been identified, particularly in the receipt of reports. A structure has now been implemented successfully to address this. An organisational map sets out governance and leadership responsibilities and promotes the organisational structure working well. The executive meeting of Heads is seen as being particularly important within the structure; its evolution reflects the development of the organisation, effectively improving communication and consistency. It was noted, however, that links could be improved further between Queensmill College and Q House, whilst also acknowledging that these are different provisions, which have been brought together. There are clear lines of communication from Project Search via the Head of Queensmill College to governance. This effective structure facilitates the sharing of concerns and expertise, including any related to safeguarding.

It is less easy for leaders and governance at Kensington Queensmill to evaluate the effectiveness of structures due to these being new and some aspects remain to be fully developed. For example, uncertainty was expressed as to whether minutes of governors' meetings are shared with trustees and, therefore, what level of awareness is maintained by the trustees.

4.3 How well do the structures of governance ensure appropriate separation in its layers, the absence of conflicts of interest and completeness in oversight of the school, without unnecessary duplication?

The organisational map sets out a scheme of delegation, which assigns the oversight of major issues, such as the Ofsted outcome and the financial concerns to the trustees. This provides for appropriate separation. However, in some areas, there is an over-reliance on assuming that an absence of negative information indicates that all is well, rather than seeking affirmative verification. The risk of duplication is managed well in the financial operations of the school; the CFO may be asked, when pertinent, to report to both local governors and trustees. Some duplication has been recognised in Heads having to report the same things to both governors and trustees. However, the design of a new reporting format for Heads' reports to trustees seeks to address this by synchronising and overlapping such reporting. Governors have access to Trust meeting minutes so that they can use them to determine questions which provide appropriate challenge.

4.4 Is there a good consistency between the governance terms of reference and schemes of delegation on the one hand, and how these work in practice?

The oversight of the Chair of Trustees, supported by the Governance Professionals and a Trustee who is a local councillor, ensures good consistency between documentation and practice. Nevertheless, a governor noted that a focus to refresh understanding of the terms of reference and schemes of delegation would be valuable.

5. Compliance

5.1 How well has governance responded to the October 2022 governance review?

Members of governance and leadership reported that the review was very useful and that the organisation has taken note of findings. It was noted that the organisation has had a number of external reviews and, whilst it was not easy to disaggregate the particular recommendations of the October review from those of other reviews, the organisation has responded well to the recommendations and advice from each of its reviews. Some of those interviewed also added that the October review prompted a stronger focus on governor training and the introduction of CPOMS, alongside training in how to use this facility.

5.2 How has governance monitored the schools' response to the October 2022 review's recommendations?

The key areas in which the organisation has responded to the recommendations were in relation to safeguarding and safer recruitment, in particular, safeguarding training and the administration of medication. These have been monitored closely by governance, the latter area, for example, through regular medical walks. This identified that new staff did not always know the medical needs and interventions for each child; this has since been addressed.

5.3. How does governance assure itself of the quality of safeguarding in the organisation?

Governors oversee safeguarding through a range of activities to assure themselves that practice meets requirements. This includes the safeguarding governors undertaking visits, scrutinising the SCR and analysing the information recorded on CPOMS. Some uncertainty was expressed regarding how trustees are informed of the outcomes of the governors' scrutiny of the SCR. Governors also receive reports with reference to safeguarding from school leaders and the Heads report on the schedule of staff safeguarding training. Governor scrutiny also includes verification that new staff have undertaken both safeguarding and autism training and understand safeguarding procedures. With particular reference to these characteristics, this includes understanding the difference between safeguarding procedures for verbal and non-verbal students.

At Queensmill College, the DSL liaises with the hospital's safeguarding lead regarding safeguarding provision for Project Search. This liaison works well and is overseen by the Executive Head. A trustee checks the Queensmill College SCR every few months and submits a report. The requirements of KCSIE are applied to this provision, linked to the guidance on safeguarding vulnerable adults. Staff have detailed formal annual training on both aspects, with regular updates. Trustees secure an oversight and understanding of safeguarding provision at the college through trustee visits and discussions, through the Head's reports, which include summary reporting on safeguarding, and through similar activities in respect of Project Search.

A steering group member for Project Search works closely with the hospital safeguarding team and is developing a more extensive role at the hospital. She has undertaken Level 4 safeguarding training and has confirmation that all hospital staff have safeguarding training at an appropriate level. Where incidents have arisen, collaborative working has been good. She also works closely to oversee safeguarding with the sub-contractor where some of the students gain employment. Students learn about safeguarding and keeping themselves safe with the Project Search leader. The Project Search safeguarding lead is featured on the safeguarding posters at the hospital and the hospital also links into the Queensmill College use of CPOMS to ensure good communication of safeguarding concerns and an effective oversight. Trustees have visited the hospital to verify the quality of safeguarding and the Project Search lead contributes to the Queensmill College Head's report.

5.4 How does governance monitor the extent of the organisation's compliance with legal requirements and statutory guidance and achieve confidence that its statutory duties are being fulfilled?

The Trust does not employ a compliance officer. However, trustees are confident in the structures which it has in place. Governors and leaders report that monitoring structures are either informal or are included in other reporting processes, such as the Heads' reports. Trustees are confident that Q House operates in accordance with statutory requirements. Its Ofsted report was shared with the trustees, who also receive a 3-monthly report from the Responsible Person. This is based on a set of KPIs designed to enable the trustees to have information on whether the provision is acting in a compliant manner. However, the Responsible Person noted that there is a regulatory duty to undertake a regular external report, which provides useful information, but is not shared with trustees. Queensmill College is not so heavily regulated, and reporting on compliance with reference to Project Search is via the Head through meetings. This includes reporting on the extent of mandatory training. The trustees' principal focus is therefore the schools, due to their vulnerability under the heavy burden of compliance requirements. Information on statutory compliance at the

schools is communicated largely through the Heads' detailed reports and the governors' own observations.

5.5 How does governance assure itself of the thoroughness and success of the management of risk?

The management of risk is discussed at governors' meetings. They receive a termly risk register, which includes the consideration of safeguarding and finance. Staff are vigilant to monitor and reduce risk. This was noted, for example, in the consideration of the risk of pupil flight, minimising and reducing the use of physical restraint and the management of the administration of medication. Some inconsistency between schools was noted in the reporting of the use of restraint.

Trustees are confident that procedures and policies have been set in place to ensure the secure management of risk. However, there is a tendency to rely on documentation and the absence of negative indicators, rather than seek affirmative verification and exemplification that risk is successfully managed. Risk Management for Project Search is the responsibility of one of its leaders, who liaises with the Head of Queensmill College. Information is communicated to the Trust via the Executive Head. It is also included in the Head's report and accessible, where relevant, via CPOMS. Project Search is also subject to an annual audit, which forms part of the reporting process. KPIs are set for Project Search, which include the appropriate consideration of risk. They are reviewed termly and also included in reporting.

Thorough risk assessment procedures have been set in place at Q House. They begin with a risk assessment linked to the placement assessment, to determine if a student's needs can be met. Such risk assessments become part of the students' care plans, which can be made available to the link trustee. The Responsible Person was unsure how much of the risk assessment reaches the Trust for verification and review. He noted that such review was part of the previous link trustee's weekly visit.

5.6 How well do the trustees ensure and monitor that the Trust is acting in accordance with charity and company law?

The Chair of trustees brings legal expertise to the organisation and can both provide specialist input, and source external professional advice when needed. The legal expertise at trust level is complemented well by the financial expertise of the CFO to ensure that the Trust acts in accordance with charity and company law. The organisation benefits from both internal and external audit services, much of it focussed on compliance. Much of the role of the new CFO will be focussed on compliance in this area. Nevertheless, it is also accepted that the recent and significant financial challenges which the organisation has faced have caused difficulties in this area.

5.7 How does governance monitor the organisation's compliance with The Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice?

There was not a clear recollection of these areas having been discussed at trustee meetings. This is another area where the absence of negative feedback from the organisation is presumed to be an indicator that the practice of the organisation is in good order.

At Queensmill College, compliance in these areas is managed through the creating of policies and the monitoring of their implementation. Such matters are addressed by the Head in staff training and

discussed on trustee visits. The Head ensures close vigilance regarding gender equality and the particular needs of female students in the college, being in the minority. Regarding Project Search, a strong focus on ensuring reasonable adjustments may be discussed informally at trustee visits, but it is not a formal agenda item.

Governors at Kensington Queensmill expressed a good awareness of the school's ambition to be as inclusive as possible, enabling the school to respond to the high demand for pupils with significant need. They are confident, through their governor visits, informed by their own experience, that the legal requirements relating to students with SEND are met and that they are appropriately supported. Staff at Q House draw on guidance in a handbook to ensure that the operation of the facility is consistent with these requirements. They were not certain, initially, how trustees monitor and verify this. However, the Responsible Person's report to the Trust is based on a template which prescribes a list of topics to be covered. This includes safeguarding and compliance. On reflection, therefore, he noted that the report may provide the Trust with this sort of information. There wasn't a consistent picture of trustee visits being used to follow up and verify information provided in these reports.

5.8 How does governance monitor the organisation's compliance with the requirements relating to the supporting of pupils with medical conditions?

There is good governance awareness that the Ofsted visit raised this area as a concern on the first visit and were satisfied on the second visit with the improvements which had been implemented. At the schools, medical walks have taken place to verify how students with medical conditions are supported. Oversight of this area is led by the safeguarding governor. There was less certainty regarding governance verification of the safe storage of medication, other than confidence in the absence of negative indicators.

Clear documentation at Queensmill College supports the provision for individual medical needs, which is discussed with one of the link trustees. Robust procedures for students with medical conditions support their participation in Project Search, including a memorandum of understanding between the Queensmill Trust and the hospital Trust. Students are treated as honorary staff and given appropriate training and an occupational health assessment. An example was discussed of the Project Search response to a particular allergy situation, how lessons were learnt and practice updated, resulting in there being no further incidents. A risk assessment is now undertaken if a student moves to a different hospital department. Information on the completion of training is discussed informally on trustee visits and can be made available to trustees on request.

At Q House, the Responsible Person has undertaken an audit of the handling and administration of medication. He focuses strongly on ensuring staff training on meeting the medical needs of students with autism, and notes that he has identified and raised in a report to trustees that medical accommodation and provision for the secure storage of medication are an area for attention.

5.9 How well do governance and leadership understand which school policies are their responsibility for review and monitoring? How effective is such review and monitoring?

It was noted that the trustees' understanding in this respect is built on clear guidance provided by a DfE schedule, and advice from the Governance Professionals and the Executive Head. One Head

reported not being aware of any Queensmill Trust list of statutory policies, together with details of the responsibility for and required frequency of review. Policies are submitted for review via the Executive Head.

5.10 What is the range of high quality and timely data provided to governance by the leadership? How well does governance review and interrogate such data, and agree resulting action points?

A Governance Professional noted that timeliness in the presentation of data has not been strong but is improving. Trustees receive the information they request and the absence of questioning its quality or comprehensiveness is read to be an indicator of satisfaction. The interrogation of such data, by both governors and trustees, is deemed to be good and to be stronger in the topics where they have particular knowledge and experience. The availability of time determines the level of detail with which some topics are discussed, which, in the shadow of the Trust's current challenges, may result in educational data, being considered in less depth than other aspects of the work of the organisation.

6. Evaluation

6.1 At both governor and trust level, how does governance analyse its own effectiveness, including that of the chairs, vice-chairs, and the contribution and effectiveness of individuals? How well does governance determine the effectiveness of its decision-making and how these have resulted in improved outcomes for the pupils and ongoing financial stability for the organisation?

Governance has drawn well on external auditing and review of the work of the Trust and responded well to findings. There is less information on the extent to which governance self-evaluates regarding its own effectiveness, though this can be seen in the analysis of reports, particularly those from the Heads.

6.2 How good are the standards of communication between tiers of governance, to and from governance committees, and between governance and the school's leadership?

The Executive Head is an effective conduit between the tiers of leadership and governance. However, communication from trustees and governors was noted to lack a clear schedule and formal structure, being to an extent ad hoc and prompted by events and occurrences. There are clear reporting procedures from the leaders of the different aspects of the Trust. Otherwise, structured lines of communication are still developing, including from the trustees and between the different aspects of the Trust.