

# MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Held on Wednesday 17 January 2024 at 17:30 on Microsoft Teams

## **Governors:**

*Ms Adelaide Amofo\**  
Mr Tim Hellings\*  
*Ms Caroline Davies\**  
Mr John Donnelly\*

## **Headteachers**

Ms Tammy Day  
Ms Jennifer Gumbrell  
Ms Kate Baptiste  
Ms Celeste Fay  
Ms Nuala Husband  
Mr Dominic Smart  
*Ms Gillian Taylor\**

## **Academies:**

*Ms Helen Thomas\**  
Ms Susan Ellingham  
Mr Aaron Livingston  
Ms Androulla Nicou (Chair)  
Ms Zoe Thompson  
Mr Stephen Way  
Vacancy

## **Schools' Members**

*Primary*  
Primary  
*Special*  
Secondary  
  
Secondary  
Secondary  
Primary  
Pupil Referral Unit  
Primary  
Primary  
*Special*

## **Non-School Members**

Mr Kurt Hintz  
*Ms Angela Palmer\**  
Mr Tony Cuffaro  
Mr Andy Johnson  
Mr Ian Hewison  
*Cllr Margaret Greer\**

16-19 Partnership  
*Early Years Provider*  
Teachers' Committee  
Education Professional  
Head of Admissions  
*Overview & Scrutiny Committee*

## **Observers**

*Cllr Abdul Abdullahi\**  
Mr Byron Russell

*Cabinet Member*  
School Business Manager

## **Also, present:**

Mr Peter Nathan, Director of Education  
Ms Annette Trigg, Strategic Head of Corporate Finance  
Ms Sue Sehanger, Finance Manager – Education & Schools  
Mrs Sangeeta Brown, Education Resources Manager  
Ms Claire Docherty, NEU  
Mr Mervin Cato, Head of Enfield's Secondary Behaviour Service  
Ms Alex Stainton, Flourish Outreach Vision Impairment Service  
Mr Ryan Olmetti-Wilde, Flourish Outreach Vision Impairment Service  
Ms Bharti Solanki, Haringey Hearing Support Service

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

- (a) Apologies for absence were received from Ms Amofo, Ms Taylor, Ms Thomas, Ms Palmer, Cllr Abdullahi and Cllr Greer.

### **NOTED:**

- (i) the absence of Ms Davis.  
(ii) Membership  
– This was Mr Cuffaro's last meeting as a Union representative on the Schools Forum. Ms Claire Docherty was taking over from Mr Cuffaro.

The Forum thanked Mr Cuffaro for his support and contribution to the work of the

Schools Forum.

- There was a vacancy for an Academy Representative and a vacancy for a School Business Manager observer. Nominations will be sought for these vacancies.

## 2. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to identify any personal or prejudicial interest relevant to items on the agenda.

**NOTED** that no declarations were received.

## 3. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**RECEIVED** the minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on 6 December 2023.

**NOTED** that:

- (a) Minutes were a correct record of the meeting.
- (b) There were no matters arising from the minutes.

## 4. **ITEMS FOR PRESENTATION**

### (a) **Enfield Behaviour Secondary Support Service**

This item was presented by Mr Cato, Head of Enfield's Secondary Behaviour Service (EBSS)

**RECEIVED** a presentation from Mr Cato that provided key highlights from the annual report.

**REPORTED** the academic year 2022/23 was challenging with the increase in number of students being supported by the four teams within the EBSS and this resulted in:

- Outreach Team: there were no permanent exclusions for the fourth consecutive year;
- Alternative Provision Team: Again, with retention rate of 100%, resulted in no permanent exclusions for the fourth consecutive year;
- Reach Team: 95% of the students successfully returned to their original school after leaving the service;
- Behaviour Panels: 8 panels were held that involved 11 schools and 88 students;
- Nexus Team: the Team was awarded the 'Delivering Better Outcomes' award at the MJ Local Government Awards ceremony in June 2022. Since NEXUS was formed, 27,604 students had participated in the initiatives provided through NEXUS. In addition, the Family Liaison Officer had supported 112 families using Solution Focused therapy.

**NOTED:**

- (i) Across all four teams. there was a significant increase in demand for support. This included the number of pupils seen via Inclusion Panels nearly doubling from 48 in 2021/22 to 98 in 2022/23 and Nexus support in engagement rising from 9,153 to 13,139.  
It was acknowledged the rise in demand was adding pressure to the available resources.
- (ii) 90% of students achieved an English qualification and 84% of students achieved a Maths qualification in either GCSEs or functional skills.
- (iii) In response to questions:
  - the percentage of the progress results being achieved, it was stated that this information was not available for this meeting;
  - to support the significant demand at Year 7 and Year 10, a transition group had been formed and had begun to work with a group of Year 6 pupils last term;

- the Service was aware of the impact of lockdown on mental health and the difficulties being faced by schools. As well as the wider service supporting schools, Nexus was linking schools to organisations that were able to provide further support.

It was commented that some schools had their own mental health and counselling teams or were commissioning these services.

- to further improve resilience, it was stated that there were insufficient resources available nationally and locally, however the Authority was working with key partners such as Health, CAMHS, Mental Health and Wellbeing Board and professionals to improve support.
  - due to the increase in demand, there was some prioritisation. However, the Service was continuously exploring other funding sources as well as working with schools to build capacity and follow a holistic approach to prevent situations escalating.
- (iv) Through working and delivering training to schools, the Service sought for the schools behaviour officers and SENCOs to link up and work together.
- (v) It was commented that Enfield Carers Centre had been accessed by significant number of young people. It was important others were aware of the Centre and the emotional mental health support that it could be accessed from the Centre. It was noted that it was not always easy to identify young carers and advise them how the support that might be available to them as carers.

The Forum noted the EBSS annual report and thanked Mr Cato for attending to present the annual report.

**(b) Flourish Outreach Vision Impairment Service**

This item was presented by Ms Stainton and Mr Olmetti-Wilde, Flourish Outreach Vision Impairment Service.

**RECEIVED** a presentation from Ms Stainton and Mr Olmetti-Wilde that provided key highlights from the annual report.

**REPORTED** the Service (formerly known as Joseph Clarke Outreach Service) supported children and young people (CYP) from early years to post 16. During 2022/23, 174 pupils across 70 schools were supported, of these 98 pupils were from mainstream and 78 pupils from special schools.

**NOTED:**

- (i) The Service deployed the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NSIP) suggested criteria when considering the level of support to be provided.
- (ii) The support provided to pupils included managing within their immediate environment and also assessing and using IT tools to access the curriculum. In doing this, the Service also gave advice, guidance and training to schools, parents and families on how the CYP could be supported at school and within the home.

In response to a question on whether the Service was using assisted technologies to the CYP, it was confirmed that the IT Manager was continuously researching and assessing how new technologies could support CYP, such as converting text to braille and use of voice over software for written work.

The Forum noted the Flourish Outreach Visual Impairment annual report and thanked Ms Stainton and Mr Olmetti-Wilde for attending to present the annual report.

**(c) Haringey Hearing Support Service**

This item was presented by Ms Solanki, Hearing Support Service.

**RECEIVED** a presentation from Ms Solanki that provided key highlights from the annual

report.

**REPORTED** similar to the Visual Impairment Service, the Hearing Support Service used the NSIP suggested criteria to assess level of needs for CYP from birth to post 16. The number of pupils supported between 2021/22 and 2022/23 had reduced from 277 to 258. During this period, the number of new cases had decreased from 38 to 28. This was due to hearing for 15 CYP had returned to within normal limits. Also, training had been provided to staff in special schools to be listening champions, so that they became the first point of contact.

**NOTED:**

- (i) The number of CYP supported was stabilizing.
- (ii) The Service was now fully staffed and was buying in more technical support because a new system for allocating and monitoring radio systems had been introduced.
- (iii) This year the focus for the Service was developing a child/young person's personal understanding of deafness.
- (iv) It was commented that the case study included in the report was very insightful and showed the impact when a child/young person was given the right support.

The Forum noted the Hearing Support Service annual report and thanked Ms Solanki for attending to present the annual report.

## 5. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & DECISION**

### **(a) Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 – Update**

**RECEIVED** a report detailing the 2024/25 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget settlement received on 19th December 2023 and Enfield 2024/25 draft schools' budget.

**REPORTED** the DSG received by Enfield totalled £431.8m , an increase of £18.2m compared to the amount received in 2023/24. However, the majority of the increase was to fund the expansion of the early years offer. The increase for the Schools block was £2.36m (0.9%) and High Needs block 3.19% with a decrease of 1.63% for the Central Services Schools block.

**NOTED:**

- (i) One of the factors for such a small overall increase in the Schools block was due to the falling pupil numbers. The change from October 2022 to October 2023 was a drop of 527 (1.08%) pupils.
- (ii) As the Forum was previously advised the local mainstream formula being presented at this meeting had applied:
  - the 0.5% transfer from the Schools to the High Needs block to support schools with high number of pupils with EHCPs;
  - the national funding formula units rates; however, the per pupil amount had been adjusted to bridge the £1.5m funding gap;
  - estimated figures for Non-Domestic Rates because final figures were not available to use;
  - a 0% for the minimum funding guarantee;
- (iii) In response to questions:
  - It was confirmed that local formula was based on the national funding formula and the only difference between the current arrangements and the final step of moving to a hard national formula was likely to be that the ESFA would manage the process in a similar way to grant funding and local authorities responsibilities would be limited to passporting the money to schools. This change was anticipated to be introduced

either for 2025/26 / 2026/27 but could only be done after a legislative change;

- The variance in the per pupil funding detailed in the illustrative model was due to the impact of the various formula factors, for example schools with low number of pupils with free school eligibility or other similar factors, this would result in the schools receiving lower amount of funding through these factors.

**RESOLVED** to note and agree:

- the formula factor unit rates for the 2024/25 primary and secondary funding formula;
- the draft 2024/25 schools' budget presented and the associated risks and uncertainties with the proposed approach to address any further changes that may be required as part of the ESFA validation process to the 2024/25 school funding formula rates;
- the indicative allocations to schools.

**(b) High Needs Update and Draft Deficit Management Plan**

**RECEIVED** a report that provided an update on the budget, high level data on the rising demand for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support, update on the DfE's Delivering Better Value programme (DBV).

**REPORTED** the situation being faced by schools and local authorities was very challenging. Schools were experiencing extreme pressures in trying to support pupils with complex and varying needs that had been exacerbated by the impact of Covid within the current financial constraints. The Authority was also under pressures from the Council and the DfE due to the financial position of the high needs block. Under the current regulations, the deficit was earmarked against the following year's DSG, however if the changes that were being suggested to the regulations, then the deficit would be included in individual Council's accounts. This was of significant concern for individual Councils, as well as the overall high needs deficit being added to the national risk register.

Attached to the report was a draft Deficit Management Plan (DMP) with some initial information. Officers were working to finalise the DMP. The DMP would become a live document and regular updates would be provided to the Forum.

**NOTED** the work with the DBV team and submission of the grant bid was completed at the end of the Summer term 2023. The proposal on the use of the grant was approved early during the Autumn term. However, the final confirmation of grants money was received just before Christmas. The delays were due to changes made to the grant conditions. Initially, the grant money could be spent over a three year period, then it was changed to eighteen months. This would have meant the money had to be fully spent by March 25, which was not feasible. Following some discussion, the changes to the conditions have reverted back and now provided an appropriate period of time for use of the grant to develop and implement the opportunities identified through the DBV programme.

The Forum was informed a further high needs report would be presented at the next meeting. It would include details of places to be commissioned for 2024/25 and also further updates on the DBV initiatives.

**6. WORKPLAN**

**RECEIVED** and **RESOLVED** to update Workplan from this meeting.

**ACTION: MRS BROWN**

**7. FUTURE MEETINGS**

**NOTED** that:

- (a) Date of next meeting is Wednesday 6 March 2024 at 5.30pm on MS Teams.

(b) The July meeting was planned to be held in person. There was some discussion on the arrangements for this meeting including whether it should be hybrid, the start time of meeting be changed, etc.

**RESOLVED:**

- a form be sent to members to complete and provide their views on future meetings;
- If held in-person, then provisionally the July meeting will be held at Enfield County School for Girls.

**ACTION: MRS BROWN & MS GUMBREL**

(c) Dates of future meetings are detailed below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
03 July 2024	5:30 - 7:30 PM – in person
02 October 2024	5:30 - 7:30 PM – online
04 December 2024	5:30 - 7:30 PM – online
05 March 2025	5:30 - 7:30 PM – TBC

**8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

No items discussed within the agenda were to be treated as confidential.